



# **THE STATUS OF SPORT IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA:**

## **LITERATURE, RESEARCH AND POLICY OPTIONS**

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# Executive Summary

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This report focuses on the current situation of sport in rural and regional Australia. It examines a wide ranging literature on the place of sport in Australian society (Chapter 1) and then reviews literature on current developments in rural and regional Australia (chapter 2). Important findings with regard to the latter are

1. There are numerous factors impacting on life in rural areas and the overall effect of these is to create complex challenges for people living in rural areas;
2. Rural and regional Australia does not exist as a single, meaningful social entity. All that is 'shared' by the conglomeration of places described by such a general phrase is an absence—they are not part of the highly urban area where most Australians live;
3. Unless actively assisted from the State or Commonwealth levels, local government is unlikely to have the resources to deal with problems of policy or service delivery in the area of sport and leisure needs.
4. Overall, the evidence with regard to sport and leisure in rural areas points more to 'problems and decline' than to 'success and growth', yet the pattern is not uniform for there are areas of development and revitalisation.

An important point that emerges from the literature is that it is essential to tap the views of those people who live on properties and in very small towns in order to ascertain what concerns the 'core' of country people living in extremely rural areas and largely dependent on agriculture—which is only one sub-set of those in rural and regional Australia.

The report then examines the data gathered by various research activities. Chapter 3 reports on the result of an on-line survey placed on the Farmwide website ([www.farmwide.com.au](http://www.farmwide.com.au)). This was completed by 100 people, the large majority of whom lived on properties or in very small communities. The data fitted well with the arguments above—evidence of a broad pattern of decline and difficulty with regard to sport, but overlaid with a complex set of variations. The main needs expressed by the respondents were for better facilities, more chance to develop sporting skills and a general lack of opportunities.

Chapter 4 examines material gathered from sporting organisations. Again, the evidence suggests problems for sport in rural and regional Australia and again the story is one of complexity and variation overlaid on a basis of rural problems and decline.

Chapter 5 makes connection between the background literature and the Farmwide survey. It shows numerous points of continuity and a few of contrast. For example, weekends traditionally developed as a time for sports, but with greater economic pressure and the rise of service industry employment for young people, weekend work in places like KFC takes young people away from sport.

Chapter 6 reports on other consultations with people employed in Departments of Sport and Recreation and also academic researchers. It adds further issues to the debate and summarises findings from the research and arrays a wide range of factors that are affecting

sport in general. These are linked together with the data drawing the following broad conclusions:

It might be attractive to imagine that one could draw a simple conclusion from the research. Perhaps it might look something like this:

*Sport contributes to national identity and well-being. It is also a major source of social capital, especially in rural and regional Australia. However, it is precisely in rural and regional Australia that sport is in trouble—under-funded and declining because of the many difficulties faced by people and institutions in the country.*

*Therefore we should actively support sport in rural and regional Australia and shore up sporting organisations so that they can continue to provide these important services to Australia.*

Unfortunately, the research shows that while this simple conclusion looks attractive and while it is partially correct, there are serious limitations to this way of imagining the problem. The most obvious limitations are.

### 1 There is no single rural and regional Australia

All that the parts of rural and regional Australia possess in common is that they are not metropolitan. Beyond that lies diversity—diversity of problems, of resources and opportunities and hence diversity as to what is needed to respond positively to any difficulties. Hence there is little reason to believe that “one size fits all” even within rural and regional Australia.

### 2 There is no single Australian identity to be supported

There is no single identity to which sport can contribute—Australia is increasingly multi-cultural, increasingly embedded in a global web of communications, information and ideas and there are differing interests (between men and women, young and old, one region and another, etc) which mean that the ‘same’ sport or leisure activity will have different effects in for different people and places.

### 3 Effects on well-being depend on how well-being is defined

The question as to the contribution of sport and leisure to well-being depends upon what is measured. Are we concerned with the link between exercise and health or the link between sporting success and either personal or collective economic growth? These do not always operate in the same direction. The search for outstanding success in sport (e.g. achieving Olympic selection or winning medals) is often perceived by athletes themselves as involving a level of training and effort, which is unhealthy and damaging. Similarly, what it takes to make a winning and successful team may not promote sport and physical exercise in the grass roots.

### 4 Actions designed to maximise social capital and health might undermine ‘sport’

If the goal of policy is to maintain or increase social capital and also increase participation for reasons of health (i.e. following down an *Active Australia* path) then it will not always follow that funds and support will go to traditional sports such as football, cricket and tennis.

### 5 Actions designed to promote participation in a given sport might not support that sporting organisation

If ‘fast food sport’ is the growing and effective mode by which sports like Netball or Indoor Cricket are delivered to the population, it could be that actions designed to further this mode (e.g. tax breaks, investment incentives) would be more effective than actions designed to prop up the State and National Associations that ‘own’ these sports. This would open up the question of how national teams might be chosen—although funded Academies could be the answer. These are not easy choices.

In Chapter 7 the report examines literature social change, especially the move from and industrial modern (IM) form of society to a Post-Industrial, Post-Modern (PP) form and the concomitant shift in organisational forms (IMO to PPO). It concludes that these complex changes help to explain what is happening in sport.

In particular, the changes towards a ‘boundaryless career’ and a ‘portfolio self’, linked to lifestyle/consumption niches embedded in a mosaic of such niches are the wider context in which many of the specific findings can be explained. A preference for ‘fast food’ and pick up sport and a preference for fitness work over competition are all part of such a change. So too are larger scale factors, such as the steady rationalisation and commodification of sport as an entertainment, set in larger field of globalised electronic broadcasting and the Internet.

With regard to policy, the tables indicate that ‘one size fits all’ is no longer the way to go, with a need instead for a web of policies to fit local needs. Furthermore, if the form of government is increasingly towards brokering rather than delivery, with whom should one arrange partnerships, to what ends and how?

Finally, the material on PPOs raises questions about the optimal structures both for sports association bodies and for peak bodies that organise sport-in-general.

Chapter 8 picks up a specific aspect of globalisation and uses the metaphor of ‘the Lexus and the olive tree’ to think about sport in a globalised context. It explores the tension between sport as Lexus—global entertainers with few national ties earning huge incomes as a result of big business sport (e.g. tennis players who win Wimbledon or teams like the ACT Brumbies) and sport as an olive tree, a source of shared identity (e.g. the Davis Cup or a team like South Sydney Rabbitohs). It concludes that, it is not so clear that *sport* has to be one of the ‘olive trees’ that sustains Australians. Perhaps the future of organised sport lies in its ‘Lexus’ character. What if playing in the Davis Cup really *is* B Grade after Wimbledon? What if Souths have no future but the Brumbies do? If the half of the world that is building and buying the Lexus is “dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization”, Australia surely belongs in this half and the process of modernisation, streamlining and privatisation has clearly affected the sports sector.

This dualism is a central challenge, and one that cannot be ignored when we think about rural and regional Australia, for rural and regional Australia has been impacted on, often negatively (see Chapter 2) by just such processes

In Chapter 9 the various themes are brought together and overall conclusions are drawn with regard to policy options. Five ways of thinking about funding sport in general and in rural and regional Australia in particular are examined. These are:

- 1 Sport as a good thing in its own right
- 2 Sport as a bearer of national identity and pride

- 3 Sport as a vehicle for healthy participation
- 4 Sport as an economic product and saleable commodity
- 5 Sport as a basis for social solidarity

Each of these is shown to have some important contribution to make, but none of them are an adequate basis for policy, failing to grasp the complexities of sport today and the challenges facing rural and regional Australia.

Overall, the discussion is best summarised by the dying words of Gertrude Stein:

What *is* the answer? In that case, what is the question?

By clarifying the goals that one wishes to achieve in funding sport and leisure in rural and regional Australia—for example by bringing it under the wider banner of the current initiative by the Federal Government Regional Australia: Making a Difference—it would be possible to create a coherent set of policy objectives for the field. What does not, however, seem possible is to “read off” a simple set of “needs” that are found with regard to sport widely in rural and regional Australia and from this create a response to those needs which will meet them and overcome the major problems. Instead rural and regional Australia as a social entity and sport as an area of social life share the features of complexity and contradiction. What might ‘work’ for netball in Narrandera won’t necessarily ‘work’ for golf in Geelong or baseball in Bundaberg; and even if works in Narrandera it might not in Nhill or Nelligen. Worse still, without a very clear set of goals it is often unclear even what ‘work’ means.

# **PART 1**

# **LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE**

# 1

# Sport And Identity: A Review Of The Literature

## Introduction

Sport is an intrinsic part of the Australian landscape. “To be Australian is not to mind the constant references to football, cricket, tennis, horse racing, surfing and the myriad sporting activities in which Australians are constantly engaged at home and abroad” (Mossop, 1989). In fact, “Australians have long considered themselves the greatest sporting nation in the world, possessed of abundant raw talent, a passion for participation, a craving for competition and an appetite for watching a variety of games” (Stoddart, 1986, 15). Whether it is simply reading the sports pages of the daily newspaper, hearing the sporting results on the evening news or actively participating in a sporting activity, sport plays a role in the daily life of almost every Australian. Considering the size of the population, we are also remarkably successful in both team and individual sporting competitions at an international level and sport plays a larger part in our cultural and economic life than is the case in some other broadly comparable nations such as the United Kingdom and also the United States.

This is by no means a new phenomenon, as sport has been an integral part of the social landscape since colonial times. As a number of historians have made clear it was during the first half of the twentieth century in which ‘the Australian identity’ was shaped and a number of central myths developed. In this period, which Mary Kalantzis calls the ‘white man’s dream time’, sport was inextricably inter-twined with the process of nation building. This involved more than just the celebration of heroes as diverse as Phar Lap and Don Bradman. From peacetime controversy (such as the Body-Line series) to complex links between sporting and combat heroics (‘Up there, Cazaly’) sport was and has remained a central area of Australian social identity.

Further to this, it is vital to note the role of both the local community and ‘the Bush’ in this process. Many of the sports that Australians most strongly identify with – cricket, football codes and more – have thrived at the community level and community based clubs that bore the names of their locality were the source of fierce pride and rivalry. Moreover, boys (and to a lesser extent girls) ‘from the Bush’ played sport in clubs that carried the aspirations of their small towns and communities, providing a grass roots basis to the sports. These grass roots ensured both a steady supply of participants and spectators as well as a continual trickle of raw talent that, in making a success in the ‘big time’ of the city, reinforced the idea that the regions were integral to sports and hence that the central character of Australian life was to be found ‘in the bush’.

In the year 2000, however, it is clear that many of the features of life that may have seemed vital in the immediate post-war period have dwindled away. Sport is more and more a commercial enterprise with huge audiences for live broadcasts on television. As the phenomenon of televised sport has developed so it has co-evolved with the sports

themselves. Cricket, tennis and football codes have all been transformed by the impact of big money, television coverage and the linked ambitions of sporting administrators to widen their appeal. New competitions have been invented as vehicles for this change – such as the hugely successful Rugby Union ‘Super 12’ and the One-Day Cricket Series. And sports new to Australia, such as basketball and volleyball have flourished as television coverage facilitates accelerated globalisation of culture.

In these changes, the role of the community and of the rural regions has diminished for direct and indirect reasons. Directly, the community based clubs that ‘owned’ sports by virtue of running successful teams have seen that control ebb away. Unable to raise the large amounts needed to pay star players and, in some cases, denuded of support as urban (re-) development, industrial change and migration eroded the supporter base, the clubs have become supplicants, begging for a share of the TV rights payments received by their national organizations.

This is also linked to wider social changes that have promoted individualistic values over communalism and home based entertainment over team games and/or ‘going to the club’, especially since the 1970s. Computer games, gymnasium workouts and triathlons seem to be replacing football and other team sports. While ‘fitness’ and ‘recreation’ activities show no sign of declining, the same cannot be said for many of the sports that were essential to Australian identity in the past.

In this same period, concomitant social changes have also occurred in the way that schools operate and deliver (or in some cases, fail to deliver) sport to their pupils. For complex reasons, including the feminisation of the teaching profession, state schools no longer operate to produce strong sports teams in the way they did in the immediate post-war period, although this decline has been less marked in private schools. This decline has had an impact on the sense of identity in rural regions, and may also serve to decrease the level of success of many future-sporting endeavours.

Indirectly, as many commentators have noted in the last 5 years or so, Australia has seen a growing divide between the City and the Country. This has been vividly illustrated by the electoral backlash against establishment figures in ways as diverse as the Hanson vote in the Federal and Queensland elections, the anti-Republican vote in the recent referendum (from a country which appears to be pro-Republican) and the loss of government by Premier Jeff Kennett in Victoria. This backlash has been linked to a more general critique of the process of economic change tagged variously as ‘globalisation’ or economic rationalism. As has become increasingly clear, these processes have been linked with growing economic activity but also with growing inequality and exclusion. The ‘price of this change’ has fallen unevenly on various groups and some are suffering a great deal.

At the level of sport, these changes, combined with the accessibility of sports entertainment on television, has seen a dramatic decline in rural sporting activity (for example, who wants to watch the local rugby league team at the local field when they could be watching professional footballers on television from the comfort of their own lounge?). This suggests that community and regional based sporting participation may be in serious trouble. Yet other and possibly contradictory forces are at work. Fitness and recreational activities continue to rise and sport in the sense of big business, high level entertainment available via the television (increasingly through both cable and the internet) seem to be booming.

Sport is, and always has been, a key feature of Australian society and, as such, is an important area for development and policy. This is particularly true in rural and regional Australia where, in recent times, social change has threatened many of the foundations of community life. The aim of this research is to consider the future for sport in the community and particularly in rural and regional Australia. This section proposes to outline the literature relevant to this issue and to address questions concerning both the role of sport in contemporary Australia and the way that sport contributes to the development of our national identity. To accomplish this we must first examine the origins of sport in Australia.

## The Origins of Sport in Australia

As previously stated, sport has been an integral part of the Australian landscape since colonial times. Organised sport was in fact present at the birth and growth of European Australia. “The European colonisation of Australia took place at an important juncture in the development of organised sport in Britain. It coincided with the reshaping of sporting culture, which was becoming both more fashionable and more popular than ever before” (Cashman, 1995, 1). Organised sport emerged during the second part of the eighteenth century when a new wave of popularity gave rise to a more urban and commercial culture of sport. These changes in sport laid the foundation for a spectacular expansion in organised sport, often referred to as the ‘games revolution’ (Cashman, 1995, 1). Sport, in fact, became a more central and recognisable part of British culture than ever before (Cashman, 1995, 14). It was from this climate of increasing sporting preoccupation that many of the first settlers to Australia came.

Sport served many purposes during the early days of colonisation in Australia. Despite the isolation, hardships and depravity associated with convict settlements, games and pastimes quickly became important in colonial culture (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 22). Initially, sport served to maintain the emotional links with Britain. “Sport, as much as religion or any other form of tradition and culture, was highly regarded by those who colonised Australia. Though it occupied no part of the initial purpose of British settlement, establishing a sporting culture in Australia came to be viewed as an important means of both maintaining British culture in the Antipodes” (Cashman, 1995, 14) Through sport, the early colonists were able to prolong the link with the ‘imperial motherland’ as well as the ‘imperial lifestyle and values’ (Kell, 2000, 28).

The establishment of a strong sporting culture also served as a necessary reminder to those who left Britain of the ‘civilised’ society that they came from. For that reason, officers were keen to establish and promote horse racing and cricket, sporting activities that were characteristic of the English aristocracy and landed gentry (Stoddart, 1986, 16). Establishing these sports also served to define and reinforce the upper classes of the newly formed colonial society, as it was only those with the financial means that were able to freely participate in these sporting activities. It can be said then that along with a fascination with sport, Australia inherited English sports distinctly class-based atmosphere (Stoddart, 1986, 35). Sport for the officers also fulfilled the functions of maintaining fitness, boosting morale and providing an outlet for physical needs. Sport between the army battalions and regiments was also vital in cementing army solidarities and for this reason was actively encouraged by the army (Cashman, 1995, 19).

For those at the bottom end of the newly established class system, the convicts, while sports activities were not unknown given the nature of convict society they were generally not widespread, and were restricted to the informal activities that required the least resources such as fistfights, swimming and wrestling (Stoddart, 1986, 16). The informal sport that existed in the penal settlements also played an important part in physical survival, as fishing and hunting game added to the scarce resources of these colonies. Perhaps the most important function that sport fulfilled during these early years was its role in mental survival (Cashman, 1995, 15). Even at this very early stage, sport meant different things to the different social groups within these small communities. While for some groups it meant social respectability, for others it meant survival. In every case though, it was a necessity to take sport very seriously (Stoddart, 1986, 16).

Change was the hallmark of early Australian society. Initially the bulk of the colonial population was made up of convicts, most were male, and of Anglo-Celtic origin. Convicts were familiar with sporting traditions and were more likely to be found on the rougher edges of organised sport, involving themselves in the more informal recreations often centred around public houses or clandestine meeting places (Cashman, 1995, 17). In the 1820s the development of the wool industry and the changing composition of the population through assisted migration contributed to the balance of economic and political power shifting from merchants and the military to large landowners and graziers (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 23). Also from the 1820's larger numbers of free settlers arrived in Australia, creating an environment in which the institutions of organised sport could emerge in a more sustained and deliberate manner (Cashman, 1995, 21). Convict settlements also began to be transformed into bustling towns by this time. These new settlers to Australia imported British urban ideals, including the culture of organised sport, as well as equipment, practices, codes and constitutions to such an extent that these early towns have been described as 'suburbs' of Britain linked by sailing ships and later by steam (Cashman, 1995, 22). The arrival of these free settlers provided a climate in which organised sport could flourish.

The discovery of gold in the 1850s once again altered the balance of economic and political power, this time towards the professionals and the urban middle class (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 23). This ensured that even greater numbers of free settlers migrated to Australia. While men with financial resources and of 'genteel birth' were preferred by the Colonial Office as emigrants, resulting in new political alliances and social distinctions, the gold rushes also enticed many other European and Chinese workers to Australia (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 29). Sport during this period played an important role, particularly the sports of hunting, horseracing and cricket, in that it helped distinguish the upper classes and reinforce their social status. The formation of sporting clubs during this period also provided members with an opportunity to meet and socialise with other members of the same social standing (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 30). It was also at this time that many new sports and games began to be introduced to Australia, such as baseball (Stoddart, 1986, 17).

Research suggests that the free settlers of lower class enjoyed great freedom in colonial Australia. Publicans and public houses provided venues for the socialising and entertainment and sporting interests of the free settlers. "The close association between sport, alcohol and gambling meant that public houses were a congenial location for sport" (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 31). It was all manner of sports that entertained the largely male clientele frequenting these public houses: cricket, billiards, bowling, boxing and wrestling to name a few. The strong link between sport, drinking and public houses further

strengthened the bond already established between sport and male culture. While women attended the more respectable establishments, most were decidedly bastions of male culture (Cashman, 1995, 23). The link between the public house and sport remained strong until the mid-nineteenth century, as sport was drink based and often linked with gambling. However as sport became more organised and required more sophisticated and expensive facilities, many publicans simply lacked the resources required to organise large-scale sporting activity. It was also during this period that middle-class sporting ideologies of athleticism and amateurism emerged and grew in popularity, necessitating the need for sport to disassociate itself from the public house (Cashman, 1995, 24).

Sport in Australia moved ahead in leaps and bounds during the second half of the nineteenth century. “Australia from the 1850s provided an ideal environment – economic, social and physical—for the creation of a sporting nation” (Cashman, 1995, 34). The discovery of gold increased both the wealth and the size of the population and stimulated the development of a more sophisticated urban society with enough money to spend on sport. It was also during this time that advancements were made in technology, communications, transportation and the mass media, and this all laid the foundations for a more organised sporting culture to develop (Cashman, 1995, 34).

Australia had many advantages for the creation of a strong sporting culture over other comparable societies. Australia was more urban than equivalent societies and developed an influential and progressive working class, which played a role in setting both the political and sporting agendas. The country had abundant land and sporting facilities occupied a prominent place in many country towns and cities. The warm climate and abundant open space were also conducive to the development of a strong sporting culture (Cashman, 1995, 34). The growth of suburbs in Australian colonial cities also introduced local community rivalry to sporting culture. Suburban development impacted heavily on sport, as new jobs were created, and like-minded socio-economic groups were brought together. Voluntary associations further connected these groups and nurtured a strong community spirit and local identity. Suburban rivalry contributed to the development of a local identity and, also ultimately, to a strong and vibrant sporting culture (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 73). “More than any other form of culture, sport became the social cement, which bound together the many new communities that formed Australian society” (Cashman, 1995, 34).

Suburbanisation, however, was not an even process in colonial Australia. It began in Melbourne, preceding Sydney by a quarter of a century, with Melbourne later eclipsing Sydney to become regarded by many as ‘Australia’s sporting capital’ (Booth, 1998, 22). The most promising explanations for Melbourne’s dominance appear to lie in geography and town planning (Cashman, 1995, 41). Early Sydney was a commercial city with dense housing, hilly terrain and little surplus land for sport. Complicating the space problem was the fact that competitive sport was organised by middle-class gentlemen’s and officers’ clubs, boys’ private schools and Sydney University and when regular interclub competition did begin it excluded the working classes. Melbourne, on the other hand, had low-density housing, flat terrain and plenty of space for sport. Gold brought waves of immigrants to Melbourne and the city required an efficient transport system in the form of railways and tramways to cope with the rapidly expanding population. These utilities enhanced suburban identities, enabling local teams and their supporters to freely move about (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 75, Cashman, 1995, 42). “Generally settled by like-minded socio-economic groups, Melbourne’s early suburbs nurtured strong feelings of local identity and a vibrant sporting culture was based on community rivalry” (Booth, 1998, 22). Intense inter-colonial rivalry

was a feature of this time, especially between New South Wales and Victoria and this extended to sport, with Sydneysiders refusing to play Victorian football (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 76). This strong sporting rivalry between New South Wales and Victoria has continued to the present day.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, Australia was one of the most highly urbanised societies in the world. The gold rushes created great wealth that could be spent on more public works, as well as an impressive sporting culture. Consumers were provided with a greater amount of capital and labour shortages lead to the formation of trade unions and better working conditions. In fact many historians refer to this era as a 'working man's paradise'. The introduction of the half-day Saturday provided a greater amount of leisure time and for the first time enabled a regular weekly slot for sport to be created (Cashman, 1995, 35). During this period rapid improvements also began to be made in transportation and communications and the growth of the mass media created the possibility of a more 'sophisticated sporting culture' to develop, supported by an increasingly literate audience for the developing print media (Cashman, 1995, 36). Sport during this time also began to be adapted to Australian social, economic and physical conditions and also started to develop some of its own traditions (Cashman, 1995, 36). Uniquely Australian sports began to develop and expand, such as Australian Football and the lifesaving movement, indicating the increasing level of social advancement of the developing society (Stoddart, 1986, 21).

The changes to sport during this time were impressive. Sporting events became to occur more regularly as competitions, annual events, carnivals and premierships were created, and regular inter-colonial competition was established. Sport during this time was transformed from mere local competition to inter-colonial and later international competition (Cashman, 1995, 42). This change had a profound impact as inter-colonial and later international rivalry strengthened an emerging sense of community identity and pride. This in turn has been used to bring together divergent groups and to promote a national identity (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 73). "The expansion of the Australian economy and population after the gold rushes was the turning point in the fortunes of sport. By 1914 organised sport had become a very important part of the physical, social and mental landscape of most Australians, and central to an emerging Australian way of life" (Cashman, 1995, 53).

World War One was a key source for Australian nationalism and sense of nationhood (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 91). It was also during this time that sport became embroiled in the many class and religious divisions that were emerging in society. The middle classes believed that sport was the perfect training ground for the sharpest battle of all, war. While for the working classes, sport was recreation, entertainment, pleasure, or a way to make a living. Either way sport needed no further justification (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 96). The war had a profound effect on Australian sport. Many middle-class, amateur sporting competitions were cancelled as they were deemed to be a waste of money and distracting from the national war effort. By contrast, working class competitions, such as the New South Wales Rugby League, showed no such inclinations, arguing that sport was 'just another form of entertainment' (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 100). The war also liberated women from the home and as women's lives and opportunities expanded, sport increasingly reflected a broadened gender base. Sport underwent dramatic change during this period in Australian history. While amateurs resisted change and attempted to preserve British sporting traditions, professional players and entrepreneurial interests continued to develop

sport as an entertainment industry, fostering nationalistic sentiments along the way (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 107).

Sport underwent a further dramatic shift in the interwar period, particularly in the 1930s when commercial interests began to alter the structure of Australian sport. Increasingly, commercial mass entertainment forms of sport began to replace the older, class-based amateur foundations of sport (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 125). Underpinning the growth of sport as a form of mass entertainment was the rapidly expanding sporting press, and commercialism intensified with the introduction of new forms of mass communication, most notably the radio (1923) and talking pictures (1928) (Cashman, 1995, 176, Booth and Tatz, 2000, 125). Sport was so popular during this period that even the economic depression could not dampen the nation's enthusiasm. During the 1930s record crowds turned out to watch both football and cricket matches, as sport provided a much-needed emotional outlet for many Australians struggling with the depression (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 126).

The period following the Second World War was golden with Australia experiencing unparalleled economic prosperity (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 136). Similarly, this was a golden era in Australian sport, with many of the sporting success springing from natural talent and an overwhelming belief in sport as a social metaphor for national development (Stoddart, 1986, 26). New champions emerged in many sports, including tennis, swimming, women's track, men's distance running, cricket, Formula One motor racing, golf, cycling and equestrianism (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 136). It was also during this period that Australia dominated world tennis, particularly the Davis Cup, and Melbourne hosted the 1956 Olympics, in which Australians enjoyed unprecedented Olympic success, winning 13 gold medals to finish third on the medal tally (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 136, Kell, 2000, 16). These games are often viewed nostalgically as one of the golden moments in Australia's social history (Kell, 2000, 18). This period of tremendous sporting success was followed by one in which Australians had very little to cheer about and few sporting heroes to support. In the succeeding years, Australia's natural sporting talent was systematically overcome by the scientifically prepared athletes of the both the Eastern bloc and also its Western allies (Stoddart, 1986, 27-28).

Material prosperity and demographic shifts in the 1960s and 1970s and an enduring, almost fanatical dedication to amateurism contributed to sport faltering in the 1970s. Even while sporting performances were declining relative to others, Australia was congratulating itself on being the only genuinely amateur nation left in the Olympic movement (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 138). In these years of economic prosperity, Australia required large supplies of labour and a highly skilled workforce. In an attempt to meet these needs quickly, mass immigration was undertaken, resulting in an increasingly diverse population, with increasingly diverse sporting interests (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 140-141). Compounding the changes in values and composition of traditional geographic communities were the increasing financial demands by players and the growing commercial interests in sport (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 148). Spectators could no longer alone provide enough revenue to both pay players and improve sporting facilities, forcing clubs to look for new sources of funding. Corporate sponsorship stepped in, thereby further weakening community customs and tradition (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 148). It was also during this period that television sport boomed. Australia adopted a more commercial role for sport and the long-standing prejudice against money and professional sport disappeared. Sport itself began to be transformed from a 'game' into big business (Cashman, 1995, 203-4).

These changes continued into the 1980s and 1990s. Traditionally, sport derived most of its income from gate receipts and club memberships. In the 1970s major sports started to supplement these sources with television broadcast fees. By the 1980s however, television had become the major source of revenue, attracting even greater corporate sponsorship (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 187). As a consequence of the increasing reliance on television revenue, various sports have altered their practices and playing conditions to ensure they are best suited to meet the needs of the television networks. The altered timeframe of sport in the television era is the most dramatic example of this. While previously sport was largely confined to weekends and mostly occurred during daylight hours, television has encouraged the expansion of night sport to coincide with the most profitable viewing times, and sport now occurs more often on weekdays and is scheduled around the clock (Cashman, 1995, 181). Sporting culture in Australia has changed irreversibly. Nearly all of Australia's major sporting competitions now use show-business formats for games, which include complementary entertainment packages with fireworks, music, club mascots and dancing girls. In some cases the entertainment appears to have supplanted the actual game (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 193). In fact for many spectators, the game is now more important as an entertainment than as an actual sport (Drane, 2000, 73).

## Issues Confronting Modern Day Sport

As has become evident through this preliminary discussion of the evolution of Australian sport from simply a leisure activity or 'something to pass the time away' into an essential component of 'the Australian way of life', Australia's sporting culture has been subjected to many external forces. Several of these forces warrant further explanation.

### Ethnicity and Sport

The issue of race has been a force in the development of Australia's sporting culture from the time that settlers first arrived. While the early settlers brought with them British traditions, rules, equipment and sports, little is known about the early sporting culture of indigenous Australians. The traditional games and pastimes of this time remain something of a mystery (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 38). The little research that has been done in this area has demonstrated that indigenous Australians did have their own traditions of sport. There were many forms of physical contests such as wrestling, spear-throwing, primitive forms of football and stick games and there were also forms of sport associated with tracking and hunting (Cashman, 1995, 16). Aboriginal sport did not exist as a separate compartment of life. Sport rather was inseparable from both ritual and daily life, whether it was part of hunting and gathering or during leisure periods when one Aboriginal band meet another and took part in many games, pastimes and ceremonies (Cashman, 1995, 16). Hunting, for example which was sometimes done in a leisurely fashion, was neither exclusively work nor leisure. Although plenty of physical activity and contests existed in Aboriginal society, the notion of organised sport, which developed in Britain, simply did not exist (Cashman, 1995, 16).

While little is known about traditional games and pastimes of indigenous Australians, from the time of European colonisation to the 1990's Aboriginals have suffered the indignity of not being present in the empty land, and have been regarded as a 'state-less' society (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 39). While colonial relations between black and white were well

intentioned at an official level, there were many problems in practice. One important aberration to this was cricket. "After 1835 Aboriginals played talented and enthusiastic cricket at a time when, while 'free' legally, they experienced geographic isolation, rigid missionary control, settler animus, poor diet, rampant illness and, of course, killing" (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 40). It is reported that Queensland settlers killed some 10,000 Aboriginals between 1824 and 1908 (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 40). This freedom to play cricket, amid genocidal massacres, promised a degree of freedom and social relationships within mainstream society, but the need to protect Aboriginals was overwhelming. The ensuing legislation produced both legislative fences and administrative decisions to physically locate Aboriginals as far away as possible from whites, beginning the process of exclusion of Aboriginals from Australian society (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 44). This process has continued with participation in Australia's social and cultural life by indigenous Australian's hampered by enduring racism (Kell, 2000, 40).

One of the most pervasive images of Australians is their alleged commitment to the principle of social equality, and sport is frequently cited as the exemplar of Australia's egalitarian character (McKay, 1991, 1). Successful Aboriginal athletes, such as Tony Mundine, Lionel Rose and Evonne Cawley are frequently cited as evidence of Australian sport's democratic structure, however this success has generally been limited to male-dominated sports such as football and boxing. Very few athletes have competed at either the Commonwealth or the Olympic Games (McKay, 1991 56). Much has also been written about the way in which sport is a means by which indigenous Australian's can 'step up' out of an impoverished environment and gain social acceptance and economic prosperity. This notion denies the entrenched social and structural barriers that indigenous people encounter every step of the way (Kell, 2000, 39). At a residual level, racism remains embedded in social, political and administrative systems of Australian society, and at an individual level, indigenous people are still subject to vilification. In spite of these obstacles, indigenous people are a minor yet enduring feature of the Australian sporting landscape (Kell, 2000, 40). Sport can provide alternative possibilities for earning an income and to make a break from the grinding poverty of rural and isolated communities, but access to specialist facilities and the sporting infrastructure necessary to make the jump into the more technical and professional sporting environment is extremely restricted (Kell, 2000, 41). This feature of Australia's sporting culture has led to a report calling for the Government to provide better sport and recreation opportunities for indigenous people in rural and regional areas (Shaping Up, 1999, 93).

Sport has often been presented as a mechanism for indigenous people to achieve recognition and legitimacy in mainstream Australian society. In most cases however, the success of an Aboriginal in sport has not led to greater acceptance by the mainstream, or a greater sense of unity between mainstream and non-Aboriginal society. Instead success has made Aboriginal sports people the target of media coverage, which draws attention to their Aboriginality. This has tended to increase the distance between Aboriginal people and mainstream society, and has contributed to fragmentation and division within Aboriginal communities themselves (Kell, 2000, 43). The media success of Aboriginal sports stars such as Lionel Rose and Evonne Cawley in gaining acceptance in mainstream Australia was based primarily on their suppression of an identifiable Aboriginality, as much as on their sporting achievements. They were seen to be different to other Aboriginal people and the media loved them as they painted heart-warming pictures that everybody wanted to see (Kell, 2000, 44). That success is dependent on the denial of a person's Aboriginality does little to enhance the status and prestige of the rest of Aboriginal society. All it does is to

confirm the belief that some talented and excellent individuals can use sport to rise above their Aboriginality. This denial and the adulation of sporting achievements can act to marginalise and alienate sporting champions from their own communities (Kell, 2000, 44).

Recent events have seen a shift in the opinions of many people, however obstacles to mainstream acceptance still remain. Cathy Freeman's display of two flags, the Aboriginal flag and the Australian flag, following her success at the 1994 Commonwealth Games was interpreted as being a genuine expression of national unity and reciprocity by most people, however her actions also drew criticism from some sections of mainstream society. Following her success at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Freeman did not repeat her actions, again drawing criticism but this time it was from some sections of the Aboriginal community (Kell, 2000, 48-9). It was a situation in which she could please neither mainstream nor indigenous society completely, similar to that experienced by Evonne Cawley many years before (Stoddart, 1986, 171).

A further example of the failure to confront or properly comprehend racism in sport is evident in Australian Rules football. Racial taunts from both players and spectators have until recently been seen as 'just part of the game'. The events in 1993, when St Kilda player Nicky Winmar responded to sustained racist attacks from Collingwood supporters, demonstrated the need for a code of conduct to be developed and quickly put into practice. However, even in this on-field incident, officials were quick to put the blame on Winmar, arguing that he had an 'attitude problem' (Kell, 2000, 52). The vilification of Aboriginal people is not confined to 'yobbo' crowds and administrators stuck in a 'time-warp'. Winmar also attracted special attention from the highly rating *Footy Show*, which features a panel of ex-footballers and sports commentators, indulging in 'harmless fun and humorous banter'. In 1999 Winmar was invited onto the show, however he never received the invitation. Perceiving this as a snub, the panel sought to humiliate him with heavy-handed humour, which degenerated into racial abuse (Kell, 2000, 53). The treatment of Winmar was criticised on several fronts and major sponsorships of the show were immediately withdrawn. One of the stars of the show, Sam Newman, was forced to publicly apologise (Kell, 2000, 54).

These two examples highlight the danger for Aboriginal sporting stars of declaring their Aboriginality. Their public declarations of pride in their Aboriginal heritage led to significant public backlash, one that posed a threat to their future careers. These examples highlight the tenuous positioning of successful Aboriginal sports stars in Australian society. Their acceptance is dependent on their ability to be like 'one of us', and their sporting success is often attributed to special qualities that only they have (Kell, 2000, 55). They are portrayed as a rallying point for unity and an affirmation of the egalitarian nature of our society, but their success in gaining social acceptance comes with a price, often leaving them isolated from their own communities and ultimately not accepted by the sporting community to which they belong. While they are held up as examples to their communities by mainstream Australia, they are also vulnerable to attack from that mainstream, and most sadly, they become alienated from their own people. "In this way, the journey for Aboriginal sports stars can be a lonely and at times isolating experience" (Kell, 2000, 56).

Aboriginals have not been alone in discovering the discriminatory strand of Australian sport (Stoddart, 1986, 171). Much of Australian sport is British in heritage, not only in its rules but also in its language, attitudes, beliefs and codes. "Migrants to Australia from outside that heritage face a considerable task in trying to come to terms with it, and not

surprisingly, some have chosen simply not to do so” (Stoddart, 1986, 172). This British heritage of Australian sport has not been the only condition confronting newcomers, particularly non-English speakers. In the early migrant generations at least, status and economic problems provided barriers to full sports participation. Many migrants found the cost of sports involvement to be prohibitive, while some could not afford the time away from work required to participate in sports such as cricket, which may require the whole day or more to complete a game (Stoddart, 1986, 173). While migrants have arrived in Australia from the nineteenth century onwards, they initially did so in small numbers, and possibly found it easier to integrate into Australian society. Since the Second World War, mass immigration has been a political priority. This has made the cultural situation much more difficult, as it has become easier for the larger numbers of migrants to preserve their cultural patterns in a new environment (Stoddart, 1986, 174). This mass immigration has also had a definite impact on the sporting landscape of Australia (Cashman, 1995, 163).

Soccer had its Australian origins in the late nineteenth century, however following the boost to immigration following the Second World War, soccer boomed (Stoddart, 1986, 176). The reason for this may lie in the fact that while the majority of new arrivals to Australia were unfamiliar with most of the mainstream sports, soccer was instantly recognisable (Cashman, 1995, 163). These new ‘European communities’ in Australia developed their own soccer clubs, which quickly became synonymous with the social organisation of these communities generally. For many of these ethnic groups, the soccer club was also a major link with their homeland (Stoddart, 1986, 176). As these ethnic communities grew both socially and economically, the soccer clubs became even more important in keeping professionals, business people and workers of a given migrant group together. They were also important as a base for socialising Australian-born children (Stoddart, 1986, 176). Soccer became so identifiable with non-English speaking communities that it became known as ‘wogball’, and many have argued that its ethnic associations have locked it into being a permanent minority status sport. This has been cause for such concern that there have been determined efforts since the 1950s to de-ethnicise soccer (Cashman, 1995, 165). In an effort to achieve this soccer officials have periodically changed club names and colours, and have made it a priority to develop non-ethnic clubs and a national league. These attempts have failed, as these methods have not addressed the complex social functions these clubs perform. Recently, soccer has pursued a diversification strategy, which has seen a closer alignment with mainstream values. This has seen a revival of the Australian identity in soccer and a renewed purging of identifiably ethnic aspects of the game (Kell, 2000, 170).

The key issue for migrant communities in the choice of football codes does not simply involve the game itself but incorporates a wider social decision—soccer and communal integration, or an Anglo-Saxon code of football and some form of wider social recognition (Stoddart, 1986, 179). Similarly difficult choices face ethnic communities outside the main centres where sport sometimes appears to offer an avenue towards social equality, but in fact interacts with other forms of social discrimination to maintain the structures of inequality. Many have found that sporting prowess alone does not guarantee wider social acceptance (Stoddart, 1986, 179). On the other hand, some ethnic sports have had a considerable impact in Australia, or have at least been able to stand alongside and supplement the traditional sports. Some of these successful ethnic sports are skiing, bocce, handball, judo, karate and kickboxing. Overall, sport has remained one of the main agencies by which both Aboriginals and migrants have had to come to terms with Australia’s dominant culture. For the bulk of Aboriginals and migrants, sport has constituted at least

two major social considerations; it has been a mysterious institution in which many prevailing Australian social orthodoxies are enshrined; and a key informal social institution that has often bolstered the exclusion and divisiveness found elsewhere in Australian culture. Sport remains a monument to the belief in an open society even though the experience of Aboriginals and migrants suggests an entirely different reality (Stoddart, 1986, 181-2).

## Women and Sport

Aboriginals and migrants have not been the only groups in society which have had restricted access to sport. “Women have never been accorded equal access to sport; their activities have never been treated with the same importance as those of men; and attempts to improve that imbalance have encountered long and stubborn resistance from a male-dominated, conservative sports world. In short, sport has been the site of major sexual discrimination in Australia” (Stoddart, 1986,134). Sport has never been an equally important feature between the sexes throughout history. While sport plays a central role in growing up male in Australia, by implication it has some corresponding negative significance for growing up female (Cashman, 1995, 72). Sport has shaped male culture in what most men would consider a positive sense, but it has contributed to female culture in a much less attractive fashion. Sport has helped to shape male attitudes towards their bodies and how they communicate with other males. It has also been a powerful influence on the formative ages of adolescence, when boys are encouraged to participate in sport by peers, schools, parents and the media. Overall, sporting culture provides many attractive role models for young boys (Cashman, 1995, 72). Opposed to this, sport is far less important for girls in the critical years of adolescence, and there are fewer incentives to become involved and to treat sporting achievements seriously. While sport forms an important part of boys socialisation, for girls sport is merely one of the many areas along with the arts, music, ballet and domestic activities. Lacking the encouragement to become involved and indeed stay involved from both peers and parents, adolescent girls tend to drop out from sport at a much higher rate than boys (Cashman, 1995, 73). This is not a recent feature of Australia’s sporting culture rather it has its origins in the birth of sport during European colonisation.

“Sport in Australia before 1850 was almost entirely associated with male culture and male space. The traditional associations of sport with gambling and drinking were part of the reason; others were the links with violence and disorderly conduct” (Cashman, 1995, 73). Further to this is the fact that from the earliest colonial years there was relatively few women in Australia and most of those were transported convicts who had to struggle just to survive. There was no such thing during these early years as leisure time for women and no organised sporting activity. The few ‘respectable’ women that were present during these early years were cast into supportive or decorative roles such as maintaining a home or looking good at dances. Even during these early years, the Australian male was creating an exclusive power domain in sport (Stoddart, 1986, 137). The early colonial period laid the foundations for a particular view of women that increasingly discriminated against those who didn’t conform to middle-class ideals. It was considered that women should marry and raise large families to restore the male-female balance and not to worry about such things as sport, that was a man’s domain (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 35-6). This process was exacerbated by the arrival of settler-colonists, as women followed men onto the land and maintained a home and their family, with little or no time left to pursue other activities (Stoddart, 1986, 137).

The situation underwent a transformation from the 1850s when the Australian male and female were redefined and a greater articulation of specific gender ideologies developed. This occurred as a consequence of the changing nature of work, leisure and living conditions in the emerging urban environment (Cashman, 1995, 74). This superfluous sporting role for women was increasingly developed as Australia began to feel the effects of the Industrial Revolution. This tended to place women even more firmly back in the home, and any recreational escape during the increasingly limited leisure time was to be strictly the domain of the male worker (Stoddart, 1986, 138). Organised sport for women did develop but it emerged slowly and by the 1880s it was decidedly the domain of the middle class. It attempted to look different from men's sport and to supplement men's activities rather than compete against them, and the first sports taken up by women included tennis, croquet and golf, fulfilling mainly social functions (Stoddart, 1986, 139). Overall, while sport contributed significantly to the making of the Australian male, it was of limited influence in determining femininity. There has been far less sporting culture available for girls and women as there were other areas available for the definition of femininity. Sport has constrained female physical expression and until recently many women have been actively discouraged from involvement in many forms of sport. Sport has served to underlie a woman's subordinate and subsidiary role in society at large (Cashman, 1995, 82).

While sport fulfilled many important functions for men from the time of the initial European colonisation, women can be considered late starters missing out on most aspects of the games revolution, which occurred in Australia from the 1850s. This can be attributed to the many restrictions placed upon women with regards to public space, public institutions, education and also the lack of employment opportunities. The slow emergence of educational opportunities for women is considered to have been the crucial disadvantage as schools provided both respectability and legitimacy for sport (Cashman, 1995, 82). The medical profession and the media also actively discouraged sports participation by women. Doctors popularised the theory of 'finite energy' or 'vitalism', which stated that too much physical and even mental exercise would dissipate the energies required for reproduction (Cashman, 1995, 82). One Australian doctor even argued that "...girls should not be educated beyond the primary level in that it 'not only placed them in physical peril, it also put them in competition with men – it desexed them'" (Cashman, 1995, 83). Even as late as 1911 doctors were warning of the dire consequences women faced from too much sport (Cashman, 1995, 83). Women who did participate in sports were frequently considered unattractive. For example it was suggested as late as 1913 that hockey 'produces angularities, hardens sinews, abnormally develops certain parts of the body, causes abrasions, and at times disfigurement' (Cashman, 1995, 83). Overall, the importance of participation in sporting activity for women was strongly downplayed by many of the major influences in society, including the education system, the medical profession and the media, and men controlled many of these important social institutions.

A major turning point in Australian women's social position occurred during the First World War. It was at this time that women were 'allowed' into factories to replace the manpower lost to the war effort and they gained economic and social independence. Even in sport there were new signs of freedom with new competitions being organised, and greater numbers of women actively participating in sporting pursuits (Stoddart, 1986, 145). This change was more than offset by the war's justification of the prevailing manly ethos, which demonstrated the idea that sport trained men for life and service. This served as justification to the serious attention given to men's sport, and the prevailing notion was that sport trained men for the serious business of life, and women to support them (Stoddart,

1986, 147). For this reason, the perceived liberation of the war failed to develop in peacetime as many sportswomen would have liked and for most of the 1920s and 1930s women's sport was hard pushed to improve its low status (Stoddart, 1986, 147).

The end of the Second World War further developed the liberation of women that occurred during the First World War. Women took a more active role in war service and by doing so weakened some of the stereotypes of women as being merely supportive. This change was sustained by the post war rash of successful female athletes (Stoddart, 1986, 150).

“Between 1948 and 1956 Shirley Strickland, Betty Cuthbert and Marjorie Jackson carried Australia to athletic prominence. The high point came at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics when Australian women won seven track and field medals and finished in the first six on ten occasions. That achievement was echoed by our swimming successes...” (Stoddart, 1986, 150). The success at the Melbourne Olympics was almost entirely due to the contribution of the women athletes and swimmers. Despite the fact that they made up only 16 percent of the Australian Olympic team, they accounted for 40 percent of the medals, including more than half of the gold medals (Kell, 2000, 124). Despite this great success, many obstacles and attitudes remained. Shirley Strickland, who was one of Australia's great athletes between 1948 and 1956, was written about by many journalists of the time. These athletic writers were forever stressing that she was ‘essentially feminine in outlook, as her interest in her home, her garden, her clothes and her baby son testify’ (Stoddart, 1986, 151). In other words, while she was a remarkably successful athlete it was her feminine virtues, which were applauded in the media. It was the strong belief of the time, from both men and many women, that women should not be promoting their athletic careers above their family duties. It was also still the concern to downplay the competitive nature of Australian sportswomen and play up the silly side of their activity (Stoddart, 1986, 151).

The success by Australia's female athletes at the Melbourne Olympics occurred despite the male-dominated governing bodies that were resistant to the interests of women, and who have always controlled the participation of women in the Olympics. Unsympathetic amateur administrators adopted at best a patronising attitude to women and at worst, there was active resistance to the selection of women in national teams. Women were required to go to extraordinary efforts to ensure they were included in Olympic teams. This included raising funds independently and convincing male administrators of their calibre as competitive athletes (Kell, 2000, 125). This fight was waged against continued efforts of sports administrators and lobby groups to exclude women from the Olympics entirely. This was based on the grounds that competition was somehow ‘unnatural’ for women and would adversely affect their health. Female participation in sport has always been conducted against a background in which sport was seen as physically harmful to women and was a threat to their feminine virtues and appearances. For this reason, Australian women athletes were under intense pressure to be internationally competitive as well as elegant, demure and ornamental (Kell, 2000, 125). The ‘golden girls’ stereotype was born.

By the 1970s, the women's movement was beginning to affect even Australian sport. In 1969 the McLeod Country Club opened in Queensland, and was only the fourth golf club in the world to be controlled entirely by women. In 1974 the Colgate Company sponsored its first women's golf tournament in Australia and achieved high television ratings. Similar sponsorship followed in tennis, hockey, netball and a number of other women's sports (Stoddart, 1986, 154). The changes were slow to take place, reluctant, frequently token and often double-edged. Women sports writers were only grudgingly accepted and women

frequently found their sports being promoted for reasons other than their skills. For example, women's tennis was found to attract male viewers who liked looking at pretty legs as well as tennis (Stoddart, 1986, 154). Sports such as tennis are beginning now to confront the problems associated with maintaining a production line of young teenage girls for the professional ranks (Kell, 2000, 131). In the modern day tennis is becoming reliant on the sex appeal of players under the age of 20. Anna Kournikova is a prime example of the production of a new tennis star, merging the roles of tennis professional and supermodel in a sport where more people now watch on television than in the stands. Kournikova is an average tennis player, yet she is undeniably a global media star and organisers are quite willing to schedule her matches during peak television viewing time (Kell, 2000, 132).

Tennis is not the only women's sport that has come to rely on the drawing ability of attractive, successful athletes. To lift the profile, generate spectator appeal and boost television and corporate sponsorship, women's sport has had to resort to 'sexing up' the game by 'stripping down', with players either wearing 'less' or wearing uniforms which highlight their bodies. This trend towards highlighting an athlete's feminine curves is exemplified in beach volleyball. "The lithe, tanned and oiled bodies of bikini-clad young women have enabled a formerly obscure sport to experience an explosion of media interest" (Kell, 2000, 132). Apart from beach volleyball, several other sports, including netball, softball, basketball, touch football and hockey, have adopted a uniform code that includes Lycra uniforms, bodysuits or bikinis (Kell, 2000, 132). This has led to a proliferation of sporting calendars of female athletes posing semi-naked (or in some cases completely naked) with the purpose of raising funds or lifting the profile of their sports. "While these calendars are hardly shocking, the concentration on the aesthetic qualities of the bodies of these women distracts from, or silences, their real achievements as athletes" (Kell, 2000, 133).

The eroticising of women's sport has created other tensions in society as well. There is growing concern that female athletes are developing eating disorders in an effort to meet an unattainable body shape. The sense of anxiety and confusion faced by young female hopefuls would not be helped by former number one tennis player Lindsay Davenport claiming that the dramatic improvement in her game was due to losing 10 kilos. The sexing up of women's sport combined with the falling age of many participants has also led to an increased incidence of sexual harassment of young females by male coaches, the incidence of which is causing alarm in many sporting circles (Kell, 2000, 133). The sexing up of sport may also be an attempt to revive the 'Golden Girl' image. It uses the power of youthful physicality and adds eroticism and slimness to achieve the visual embodiment of Australian sporting women. The problem with this is that the mythology of the Golden Girls was also essentially a romantic image of white Australia. It is an image that grew out of the ideals of the 1950s, ideals that were embedded in a patriarchal view of women and society. It was a nostalgic and static cliché of what Australia is really about. The problem with reviving the past is that the Golden Girls of today should be living evidence of a completely different Australia, one that is both multicultural and in which women play an important role in Australia's sporting culture (Kell, 2000, 135).

## Sport in the Country

Sport is, and always has been, a key feature in Australian society. Community sport tends to encourage the adoption of an 'us' versus 'them' mentality, and this is what makes it so successful in binding—sometimes vastly—diverse communities together (Booth and Tatz,

2000, 14). This is particularly the case in rural and isolated areas, where sport is often described as the 'social cement' that holds these communities together, creating a 'community identity' (Cashman, 1995, 34). Many of the sports that Australians have most strongly identify with, cricket, the various football codes and many others, have thrived at a local community level and community based clubs that bore the names of their locality were the source of fierce pride and rivalry. The origins of this fierce community loyalty emerged early on in the establishment of a new community town and sport was seen as a convenient way to develop and enhance the emerging sense of belonging.

The improvements in transportation allowed the creation of many new communities in rural areas after 1850. "These included country towns, large outback stations – which often amounted to self-contained villages – and industrial settlements such as mining communities" (Cashman, 1995, 98). Many researchers have suggested that sporting institutions were established at the birth of a country town. In fact E. C. Buley, noted that at the establishment of a new town the immediate concern of the founders was to mark out the site of the cemetery and the next was to plan the racecourse (Cashman, 1995, 98). The New South Wales town of Grafton provides a good example of the importance of the racetrack to the community. The Clarence River Jockey Club provided a respected venue in which socially prominent individuals could assert their status and leadership claims. The establishment of an annual race carnival provided the town with a community festival, which involved all sections of society. A race carnival was able to affirm the social hierarchy of the town while at the same time advancing the myth of a community. It was also an occasion to boost the image of the town concerning other communities and to stimulate business (Cashman, 1995, 99). In this way, horseracing and the racetrack fulfilled an important social function in the rural community by developing a 'local identity' and it is a major reason that most country towns, irrespective of size, still have a racetrack today.

Sport also provided a focal point for community interest in the Riverina, a region that overlaps the New South Wales and Victorian borders, in the form of football. The growth of sport in this region has been linked to the expansion of the wheat industry and also the improved transport system (Cashman, 1995, 99). Although most of the region fell within New South Wales, the region adopted Victorian football primarily because of its close economic ties with Melbourne. The railway network expanded the wheat trade and led to greater prosperity for many rural towns. Similarly, football followed the railway and profited from it. Railway travel also added to the atmosphere of inter-town competition, creating a festive occasion. Trains were filled to capacity with the teams and their supporters who left town early in the morning, not returning home until late that night or even the next day. An inter-town football match could provide a focus for both the sporting and social activities, and the railway was so important to inter-town competition that rail timetables were consulted at the time of the competition draw. "Football thus became the 'means of social cohesion, team identification and town loyalty'. Country football teams 'cut across class, religious and economic barriers to unify people'" (Cashman, 1995, 99). Country tennis provided a similar focal point for social interaction in rural Australia, and early country cricket was also often simply a social event.

A further feature of life in rural towns, involving whole rural communities, was the annual agricultural show. The show was primarily a display of the farm stock and the produce of the district and was aimed at improving the quality of the local produce. Country shows were an offshoot of the European pre-industrial fairs that provided entertainment for all. Australian shows quickly developed their own sporting contests, including wood chopping,

sheaf tossing and sheep shearing and many rural sports were work contests, such as ploughing matches in country areas, wood chopping in timber-milling districts and hammer and tap contests on the mining fields. Sport as work, however, declined in the twentieth century, as it became more a component of leisure (Cashman, 1995, 100). Sport in a country town was used primarily as a tool to bind communities together and while there were a number of occasions when sport involved a whole country town, social hierarchy was still reaffirmed in reality. “Race meetings were ‘social occasions’ organised by the leading citizens, who took pride of place at the event. Country shows, similarly, reinforced social divisions as well: there was a place for everybody, whether it was sitting down to dinner with the committee or taking a glove in the boxing tent” (Cashman, 1995, 103). It can be said that sport perpetuated and reinforced the social order as it was used to promote the myth of community.

Communities were also formed in the mining and frontier regions of Australia. Sport here tended to be more democratic and egalitarian, as ‘a motley crew of diggers’ from a variety of backgrounds often formed these communities. The conditions were rough and ready, the social structure was fluid but decidedly masculine and relatively few constraints existed on leisure pursuits (Cashman, 1995, 103). There were no structures for sport, and gambling and drinking were the prominent leisure activities. The sports that did prevail, boxing and pedestrianism, required little in the way of resources, and it is from these beginnings that many of the professional running ‘gifts’, such as ‘The Stawell Gift’ emerged (Cashman, 1995, 103). Even these ‘rough and ready’ mining communities eventually developed a social hierarchy, which was later reflected in the new sporting institutions. For example the Charters Towers Jockey Club was ‘primarily controlled by the elite’. The workers had their own racing events and even the Irish-Australians held a separate race meeting (Cashman, 1995, 104). The Northern Territory was a frontier in the nineteenth century and the organization of horseracing reflected this. ‘Punters of all ‘size, shape and colour’ attended and the owners were ‘scarcely different’” (Cashman, 1995, 104). The Bong Bong Picnic Races represent a more recent example of a race meeting, which later developed as a carnival. “During the 1970s and 1980s this small country race meeting in New South Wales became a focal point for a counter-cultural festival which attracted hordes of young people, mainly from Sydney. The unusual feature of this event was that race goers and the revellers were segregated from each other: the race goers occupied the flat area by the course whereas the revellers were confined to the hill inside the racetrack” (Cashman, 1995, 105).

## School and Junior Sport

Children are exposed to sport in its many forms from a very early age. Whether it be watching a football match on a Saturday afternoon with Dad at the local football field, or hearing the sporting results on the evening news or on the radio, children are actively involved in the sporting culture of Australia. This involvement is expanded through participation in the many sporting activities during a child’s school years. In fact the education system was one of the first important social institutions for sport, as school provided both respectability and legitimacy for sport (Cashman, 1995, 82). The importance of the education system in cultivating an interest from children and developing their ability in sporting activities has its earliest origins with the development of education in Australia.

During Australia’s early history sport was often used as a social metaphor for the level of advancement of the developing society. One of the first locations for the development of sport as a social metaphor lay in the education system, especially the private schools that

rigorously maintained British traditions (Stoddart, 1986, 18). In Victorian schools, rowing was quickly taken up with the first Head of the River contest occurring between Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College in 1868. The impetus for this came from both Oxford and Cambridge educated teachers who saw both moral and physical benefit in the sport. Similar contests emerged in Sydney in 1893 and also in Western Australia in 1899, however other states did not begin competition until the end of the First World War. Other sporting competitions also emerged with Sydney Grammar and Melbourne Grammar beginning interstate cricket matches during 1876 (Stoddart, 1986, 19). Football also quickly became popular in schools, and was marked by the same distinctions as occurred in the general development of colonial sport as a whole. In Melbourne schools Australian Rules took a firm hold, while in Sydney Rugby Union quickly became the dominant code. The importance of the school base for a sport was demonstrated early in the twentieth century when a number of Catholic schools in the Sydney area were won over to Rugby League. This conversion virtually guaranteed the code's success as the schools provided a social base for recruitment into and development of a Rugby League tradition and culture (Stoddart, 1986, 19).

Two other points connected to education's influence on sport are of importance here. Firstly, in the state education system sport became compulsory, and many schools, as in the private system, measured their success against their sporting prowess. This provided a solid foundation for the revering of physical rather than intellectual success in Australian culture, a feature that is still present in various forms today. Secondly, the education system moulded the attitudes of girls about their place in the sports world. "The emphasis on non-vigorous activity and the need to value male rather than female sport were both ingrained very early, with wide-ranging social consequences for the position of women" (Stoddart, 1986, 19). One result of this is that women became very keen and vocal supporters of Australian male rather than Australian female sporting heroes (Stoddart, 1986, 19).

The education system did not always neglect the benefits of sporting participation for women. Women did begin to see greater opportunities emerging in higher education from the 1880s onwards, when a number of women's private schools appeared that encouraged sporting participation, and incorporated sport into the curriculum (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 64). Research has suggested that a growing body of women were keen to demolish some of the existing sporting barriers and participate in the sporting revolution. "Many of the principals of the newly established public schools for girls took the view in the 1880s and 1890s that girls should be permitted to enjoy a wider range of physical activity because, apart from anything else, it would make them stronger and more robust mothers" (Cashman, 1995, 83). There was also the more practical issue that a diverse and indeed progressive program of sport could actually increase a school's enrolments.

Sport for women first emerged in the independent Protestant schools rather than in the government or Catholic schools of Australia. One reason for this is that because independent schools were commercial ventures they needed to entice students by the attractiveness of their curriculum, and this generally included a broader range of physical education. Also the teachers that were recruited from overseas were keen to develop alternatives to the monotony offered at most of the government schools at the time. The Methodist schools who were unwilling to include dance in their program, looked to games and physical education instead (Cashman, 1995, 84). From the 1870s sport and recreation was included as a part of the curriculum of the denominational schools. This can be viewed as the construction of a female form of 'athleticism', which was the dominant preference

for male sport at the time. Sport was seen as useful for both discipline and health and while boys were encouraged to participate in sport to prepare for future careers, such as the public service or the army, the rationale for sport for girls was primarily in preparation for motherhood (Cashman, 1995, 84).

From these early beginnings, sport for children has come to be seen as a national priority. “Politicians, bureaucrats, big business, teachers, the media, doctors and parents laud the benefits” (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 20). In fact it is believed that the value of school sport cannot be overstated. “Teaching children physical skills develops their physical capacity for taking on other sport and recreation activities later in life” (Shaping Up, 1999, 90). The key to active participation in junior sport is said to be parents. The whole sporting structure for children depends on a parent’s time, money, energy and emotion, and in the first instance these are all features of economic and social class (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 200). This is where problems can arise. Among lower-income classes, money is a scarce resource and children’s sport is often unaffordable due to the expense involved. “Most Australian parents spend more than \$1000 per sport per kid every year...and costs skyrocket if a child represents a region or the state” (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 20). While money is obviously a factor in a child’s participation in organised sport, time is equally important. Taking to children to sporting events can be a full-time occupation in itself, and along with this is the time required for spectating, officiating, fundraising and coaching. The time demands can be so great on a parent that they may be forced to pull a child out of organised sport altogether (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 200). Australia is a multicultural society, and this can also impact upon a child’s participation in organised sporting activities. “Parent’s cultural beliefs can exacerbate the economic problems associated with children’s sport. For example, many Vietnamese-born Australians consider sport, at best, peripheral. ‘Economically marginalised and of low social status’, their first priority is to improve their children’s standard of living” (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 200-1).

While sport for children is considered by many sections of society to be vitally important, recent research indicates that approximately 80 percent of children turn their backs on competitive sport by the time they are 17 (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 20). The research found that the most commonly cited reasons for the abandonment of sport at this time include; the dislike of the win-at-all-costs philosophy; unbearable pressures; boredom; lack of spontaneity and fun; long hours; and bullying coaches and parents. Teenagers also commonly mentioned a conflict of interests, between both work and study, and the high costs associated with sporting participation. They also identified with non-sporting interests and significantly decreasing parental interest (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 20).

In an attempt to gauge the current status of the attitudes to organised sport held by young people today, *Inside Sport* magazine commissioned an independent two-state poll of 592 Year 11 students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The students, from New South Wales and Victoria, opened up on an array of topics and the format of the poll was mostly multiple choice. These results, while being a snapshot of Australian youth, are considered to be a glimpse into Australia’s possible sporting future (Williams, 1998, 28).

Proponents of traditional sports may be dismayed to learn that one-quarter (25%) of the students surveyed stated that basketball was one of the main sports that they played, followed by cricket (21%), netball (21%), soccer (19%), AFL and tennis (15%), swimming (14%), touch (12%), rugby league (11%), and golf and track and field (8%). While basketball was mentioned most often overall, boys were most likely to mention cricket

(31%) and girls were more likely to mention netball (46%). Similarly traditionalists would be horrified to learn that more than half (56%) agreed with the proposition that “there should be more one-day cricket and less test cricket”, and this was more pronounced among boys. Contrary to the view that this is the ‘cyber-generation’, respondents claimed that they spent a lot of time training for sport. Forty percent of boys said they trained for 5-9 hours per week, 18 percent trained 10-14 hours a week, and 7 percent trained 15 hours or more a week. While girls weren’t as active, almost half said that they trained more than 5 hours a week. While girls generally played sport for fun or fitness, one quarter of boys thought they could make a living out of their sport, and the most valued attribute that boys believed sport could give them was money.

An alarming result for those who are trying to rid sport of drugs is that 40 percent of all students surveyed wouldn’t rule out using performance-enhancing drugs. The findings also indicated that many young people could envisage situations where drug use is, if not excusable, then at least understandable. The findings also indicate that the less time per week that a person trains, the more likely they were to suggest they might use performance-enhancing drugs. In other words, the more dedicated trainers were less inclined to abuse drugs. Students were asked “if there was a safe but illegal drug that made you better at your favourite sport, and no-one could test for it, would you take it?” Alarmingly 57 percent wouldn’t rule out using it. In other words, once the threat of being caught and the fear of illness are removed, the moral impediment of cheating, by itself, is not a sufficient deterrent to drug use. The perceived value in winning a gold medal at the Olympics was illustrated by the fact that some respondents said they would be willing to die for it. Students were asked whether they would take a drug that would win them a gold medal at the Sydney Olympics but kill them at 40, while most said they definitely would not, there was still a substantial minority prepared to consider the idea. The vast majority of students (66%) also believed that sports authorities should forget about recreational drugs. Finally when asked if they knew anyone who was currently using drugs to enhance their sporting performance, 15 percent answered yes.

Students were then asked questions regarding the Olympic games. The findings indicate that even Australia’s youth thinks the Olympics are dirty. Only 7 percent of students thought the Sydney Olympics ‘definitely’ would be a fair contest between mainly clean athletes. Despite the concerns regarding debt, traffic chaos and terrorism, a large majority of students were enthusiastic about Sydney hosting the 2000 Olympics. Interestingly however, Victorian students were more keen than their New South Wales counterparts (91 percent approval compared with 85 percent). The results also indicate that boys would prefer the day off school than a stadium seat to watch Cathy Freeman run in 2000 (50% would take the day off, 44% would prefer to watch Freeman). The opinion of watching the Games on television was more popular than purchasing tickets with 68 percent of all respondents saying they would do this. The majority of students also stated that they think the Olympics helps to save the world, with 57 percent saying that the Olympics ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ contributes to world peace. Also 68 percent said they cared how many medals Australia wins in Sydney. While sport and the Olympics are important to young Australians, the survey revealed they are not ‘too’ important. When asked, “If Government funding had to be slashed from the following areas, which order would you choose to make the cuts?” Respondents chose Olympic sports first, followed by social welfare, scientific research, environmental research and AIDS research.

The respondents were presented with the estimated annual salaries (excluding endorsements) of six sports stars and asked to decide whether they were overpaid. The sports stars were Mark Taylor, cricket (\$400,000), Glenn Lazarus, rugby league (\$200,000), Tony Lockett, Aussie Rules (\$300,000), Martina Hingis, tennis (\$1.5 million), Greg Norman, golf (\$3 million), and Michael Jordan, basketball (\$8 million). A majority thought four of the six were overpaid, with Greg Norman faring the worst. Sixty-four percent said that Greg Norman was definitely overpaid. Michael Jordan was next at 63 percent, followed by Mark Taylor at 49 percent, and Hingis at 54 percent. The two footballers did the best with Lockett deemed to be overpaid by 30 percent, and Lazarus by 27 percent. Interestingly, when asked what field their role models came from 61 percent said sport, and this was particularly high for boys at 76 percent. Following this students were asked to name the sports stars they most admired. Michael Jordan blew away the field, receiving mentions from 18 percent of the students and his appeal transcended the genders. Although he wasn't the top pick for girls, as that was Cathy Freeman, he came in at a close second. Finally students were asked their opinion on the chances of "American" sports – basketball, baseball and gridiron – one day overtaking traditional sports such as cricket, rugby and Australian Rules in Australia. Baseball and gridiron were written off with only 16 percent of students thinking that these sports 'definitely' or 'probably' had a chance, however basketball fared much better at 44 percent.

These findings illustrated the importance of sport on school-aged children, and give an insight into the opinions of those involved in junior sport in Australia. It is from the sporting arena that many children find their role models, both local and international, and the behaviour of these role models appears to influence the morals and values of many young people in society. This study presents the possible future of sport in Australia. On the positive side they envisage a fitter community, and a generation of administrators that has a better grasp on the realities of modern sport. On the negative side, they envisage elite athletes in at least equal numbers to today cheating by using drugs, and a likelihood that the penalties will remain inadequate. They also envisage the Americanisation of Australian sport continuing in the form of a move towards sport that is both quick fix and entertainment-driven.

## The Mass Media

The media have long played a vitally important structural role in the creation of a distinctive Australian sporting culture, and this has also had important general social ramifications (Stoddart, 1986, 84). The mass media is very much a part of the social fabric of life and as such it constitutes a powerful force for change (Short, 1984, 720). The term 'the media' covers a wide range of broadcasting mediums, beginning with the print media and the radio and expanding into television and increasingly new technologies such as the Internet. All these information sources have been major forces in the social shaping of Australian sport throughout the years (Stoddart, 1986, 84). It has been assumed by many that modern day sport has been transformed by the advent of television. This assumption ignores the influence that early media technology had on the emerging sporting culture. Television sport, in fact, simply drew on all the previous constructions of sport, which were developed through the other existing media forms (Cashman, 1995, 169). "Organised sport was and is virtually a child of the media: the media gave and continue to give sport its shape, form and appeal. The arrival of the mass media, along with the emergence of photojournalism and the visual media, provided sport with new forms, images, ideologies, and a greater popularity than ever before (Cashman, 1995, 169).

The media, in all of its various forms, has been interested in sporting events from the time of the earliest arrivals of settlers in Australia. The rise of the Australian mass media occurred at the same time that sport was beginning to enjoy an unprecedented popularity, in the decades immediately preceding World War One. The print media, in the form of tabloid newspapers, weekly newspapers and also specialist newspapers, was central to the expansion of Australia's sporting culture. The early sporting press helped both to construct and legitimise the new sporting universe that was organised sport. It created the ideals and values for the players and even defined the appropriate behaviour for the spectators at sporting events. The media, in other words, served to whet the appetite of sporting followers to consume even more sport (Cashman, 1995, 170). The mass media, and also for that matter organised sport, was the product of similar improving economic conditions. There was a substantial rise in real incomes, an increase in the amount of available leisure time, improving communications, transportation and literacy rates, and the growth of urban society. These were all factors in the emergence of a more popular press. Technological improvements and the growth of industry led to a reduction in both the cost of newsprint and also of producing newspapers, and this also led to their increasing popularity with the general public (Cashman, 1995, 170).

The print media had a tremendous influence on both individual sports and also successful sporting individuals, with the ability to elevate such participants to hero status, or to create sporting legends. The influence of the media to produce such stars is still apparent in the modern era with it commonly being argued that sporting 'stars' are simply by-products created by the mass media for consumption by the sporting public (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 22). Similarly the influence of both sporting artists and photographers cannot be underestimated (Cashman, 1995, 171). "Photo journalism and sporting art, along with artefacts like costumes, memorabilia, programs and souvenirs created powerful and attractive symbols which incorporated sporting values, extended the meaning of play and enhanced the appeal of games" (Cashman, 1995, 171). The initial interpreters of sport were artists who produced sketches, engravings and paintings that provide us with invaluable pre-1850 glimpses of both sport and society. Following this, as sport became more prominent in society so did the proliferation of sporting art in all of its various forms (Cashman, 1995, 172). Sports illustration became more prominent in the second half of the nineteenth century following the improvements in lithography and the invention of photography. Photography heralded the introduction of weekly-illustrated newspapers and by the turn of the turn of the century, sport was reported almost as much by images as it was by words (Cashman, 1995, 173). During this time of expanding visual media there was very little criticism of sport. Artists and photographers manufactured an idealised world of sport, which could then be sold to the public. "They helped to manufacture an optimistic world of sport which was above criticism" (Cashman, 1995, 174). One important shift that did occur in sports journalism happened in 1916 when entrepreneur Hugh McIntosh took over the Referee, which was a popular specialist sporting publication of the time. McIntosh was one of the first Australians to envisage sport as entertainment rather than solely a means of social education or harmless recreation. He realised the financial potential of sports promotion (Stoddart, 1986, 90).

There is one further aspect of sports media, which was vitally important to the development of Australia's dominant sporting culture, and that was the development of a distinctly Australian language and imagery (Cashman, 1995, 174). While the language of sport, along with its culture, was at first imported, Australians soon developed their own rich vocabulary of sporting words, idioms and phrases. These included words such as 'mullygrubber',

expressions such as ‘Carn the Tigers’ and ‘Chewy on your boot’, and a multitude of nicknames. This sporting language has also been transposed into other arenas. For example one of the most famous sporting expressions, ‘Up there Cazaly’, celebrated the high leap of footballer Roy Cazaly. This then became a rallying cry for diggers during World War II and the central theme of a Michael Brady song; it is now an AFL anthem. In other words, it can be said that sporting words and symbols are the means by which the media become a part of popular culture in that people themselves create expressions of sport (Cashman, 1995, 174).

The involvement of the media in the development of Australia’s distinct sporting culture was not restricted to the print media. One of the first Australian films ever made was of the 1896 Melbourne Cup, and it was popular enough to enjoy an extended three-month run. The film catered to the demand of the public who were unable to attend the Cup, enabling them to participate in this grand sporting event. The first films of the Cup were brief, yet they helped to extend the traditions of the Cup. The film showed both horses and riders and also focused on more social scenes and the overall fashionable atmosphere of the event. These brief, filmed highlights extended the wider sporting ‘imagined community’ who participated in the event (Cashman, 1995, 175). The tradition of filming and later replaying major sporting events was expanded during the 1930s with the introduction of sound and Cinesound Review newsreels. These Newsreels included a regular sporting segment in the weekly news report and it was one way that sports followers could catch a glimpse of a major sporting event that was happening in another city (Cashman, 1995, 175).

Sports coverage was revolutionised by radio, as it helped to accelerate the process of sport becoming as much an entertainment as a recreation (Stoddart, 1986, 91). Within a relatively short time, less than 10 years, there were sufficient advances in technology to allow a national radio hook up in which listeners were able to follow live sporting events around the country. The first such national broadcast was of the controversial bodyline series, and this did much to sell radio licenses as well as promoting the newly established Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) (Cashman, 1995, 176). The impact of radio on Australian social life remained underrated, particularly in sport where this new medium quickly established new ways of life. For example, listening to the race results in the pub became a Saturday night ritual in every Australian city and country town. The success of radio meant that a new sports market had been created (Stoddart, 1986, 92).

Along with the increasing popularity of the radio sports broadcast, came the development of major radio sports personalities. The first of these was possibly Norman McCance who began calling wrestling matches in 1926. To assist the enjoyment listeners got from his calls, radio’s first sports souvenir programmes were also compiled (Stoddart, 1986, 93). The demand for sports coverage was so great that in 1934 the Australian Broadcasting Commission broadcast the famous ‘ball-by-ball cricket tests in England. Short, descriptive telegrams were sent from England approximately five minutes apart. These telegrams included scores, field placings, weather reports, and any other aspects of the game that were available. A studio team of commentators then ‘described’ play and the impact was heightened by the use of sound effects. The personalities involved in these broadcasts went on to become household names (Stoddart, 1986, 93). Following these broadcasts, the role of the person conveying the news to the listener was substantially altered. Inevitably consumers began to follow the personalities not just for information and instruction but for their opinion and also amusement (Stoddart, 1986, 94).

The importance of the specialist sporting press declined following the increasing popularity of the radio-inspired personality system. This decline of the specialist sporting press was further accelerated by the rise of the movie reel and, twenty years later, the advent of live television coverage. Seeing sporting action was easier and more exciting for the sporting public than simply reading about it in the newspaper. It was also no longer enough to simply provide sporting results, it was now also important to provide personality status and entertainment (Stoddart, 1986, 95). Initially, television had little structural impact on the media coverage of Australian sport, primarily because the equipment available allowed for little flexibility. "For twenty years sport played a surprisingly modest role in Australian television and its consumption patterns—because of technical limitations involved in coverage; because of monochrome, which meant the event was always more colourful on site; because of sports bodies' reluctance to forge links with television; and because the advertising world perceived only limited yields from sport" (Stoddart, 1986, 99). This changed dramatically by 1975 with three interrelated conditions being the catalysts for this change. Firstly, colour television reached Australia that year. This was an immediate success as it allowed viewers to distinguish between teams or players, and it also made it easier to follow the action. Secondly, the American television experience with professional football and golf demonstrated the power of sport as a television draw card. This produced more flexible equipment meaning that sports that had previously been difficult to cover now became more accessible. Finally, direct cigarette advertising was banned from Australian television; this meant that substantial amounts of money could now be used for other forms of advertising (Stoddart, 1986, 100).

In the years that followed the relationship between sport and the media was turned upside down. From previously ignoring media outlets, sports were soon clamouring for attention and for the first time, found they were acceding to television requests for alterations to either the sports themselves or the way in which they were ultimately presented (Stoddart, 1986, 101). Television sport proved to be a major boon to many television station owners in that it provided a relatively cheap way of fulfilling their obligations for programs with Australian content (Cashman, 1995, 179). Two trends emerged out of this. Firstly channels vied with each other not only for the rights to the most popular sports, but also to gain access to the most important segments of particular sports such as finals. Secondly, astute sports organizations slowly became aware of their value to channels, and negotiated figures for the rights to particular sports. Similarly, individual clubs sought lucrative deals with individual sponsors and also found themselves subject to increasingly strict demands from those putting up the money (Stoddart, 1986, 102).

The evolution of the media from print to multi-electronic sports casting can be summed up as six trends. Firstly, there has been a change in the special dimensions of sports casting, with column inches giving way to radio minutes and later television seconds. In other words, there has been a change from words to pictures. Secondly, the coming of television sport not only accelerated the commercialism, which had begun in the eras of print and radio, but also transformed sport in that the networks discovered the advertising power of sport. Television, in fact, has vastly altered the economic environment in which sport itself operates. Thirdly, the media has increasingly calibrated the playing conditions and the practices of various sports. The most dramatic example of this is the changed timeframe of sport. No longer is sport confined to the weekends and daylight hours only, television has encouraged the expansion of night sport to coincide with the largest and most profitable viewing times. Fourthly, in the television era there has been a rapid expansion in player payments. The profitability of television sport has created an ever-increasing spiral of

player salaries though rewards have generally been uneven, with a minority of players substantially better off than before. The fifth trend in the era of televised sport is that Australian sports tastes have been internationalised. The broadcasting of an increasing amount of international and particularly American sport has dramatically influenced Australian sporting practice. Finally, television, along with previous forms of sporting media, has served to sustain sport's status quo. Television has continued to favour those male sports, which were well established prior to the era of television to the detriment of women's sports in many instances (Cashman, 1995, 181-81).

Television, then, has undoubtedly had a far greater impact on sport in Australia than any other medium in the past. In many ways it has totally revolutionised the way sport is played, watched and consumed by the general public. It has also helped to create a much stronger link between sport as big business, helping to transform sport into a highly profitable and influential entertainment industry, and sporting stars into highly profitable business entities within themselves. Television has helped to create and legitimise a new professional world of sport and to sweep aside the last remaining vestiges of amateurism (Cashman, 1995, 182).

### Professional versus Amateur

Initially, sport was simply a pastime, regarded purely as a recreation and it was something the early settlers participated in simply to pass the time. With the changing nature of society, however, sport has come to take on a vastly different role. Sport has become increasingly commercialised in the modern era and it is now a serious profession. Sport, in other words, is big business. Athletes no longer simply represent their village, town or neighbourhood. Instead they sell their athletic labour to the entrepreneurs who have invested capital in sport (McKay, 1991, 42). With the increasing amounts of money becoming involved in sport in the modern era, it is no longer simply an amateur pursuit undertaken for the love of the game. Instead sport has become a 'dream' profession, with many lucrative financial rewards available. For this reason sport is a profession to which many elite athletes in Australia aspire.

The first sports to flourish in Australia were those based on gambling and centred around the public house and they were regarded primarily as a form of entertainment (Cashman, 1995, 54). As sporting culture became more prominent, profitable and ultimately powerful, it was deemed too important to be left to the publicans. The more powerful members of society, educators, clerics, politicians, doctors and entrepreneurs, began to recognise that sport could play a largely positive role in society. The dominant ideologies of this time encouraged the view that sport could build character, enhance social discipline and provide a form of rational recreation (Cashman, 1995, 54). From this, amateurism evolved to become the enduring ideal, which went on to dominate Australian sport for more than a century. With the emphasis on playing for fun, the ideology of amateurism stressed the rules of fair and spontaneous play, including respect for both the rules and for the opposition. To be an amateur, was to be regarded as 'noble'. It meant to participate for pleasure rather than to win, to show self-restraint, to downplay enthusiasm for victory and disappointment in defeat, to play fairly, to cheerfully obey the rules, and to show chivalry towards rivals (Booth and Tatz, 1996, 14). The staunch believers in amateurism regarded money as the one great evil, which had the potential to debase sport (Cashman, 1995, 54). The challenge for those who subscribed to the principle of amateurism was to redefine the purpose of sport and to promote the amateur sporting clubs and associations. Also of

importance was the need to expose those who believed that money and sport could mix freely. During this time there was also movements to purify sports by cutting their close association with gambling. This articulation of the amateur sporting ideology led to increased segregation between the classes, and this at times led to conflict in sport (Cashman, 1995, 54). Although the debate over the merits of amateur verses professional varied from sport to sport in Australia, it was always the issue of class in sport, which lay behind it.

Although amateurism came to be the dominant ideology influencing the development of Australian sport, the issue of 'pay for play' was also with Australia from the time of the First Fleet. Professional boxing matches were regularly held by 1810, and most certainly occurred earlier. Through these matches, boxers, while not pocketing all the proceeds, were able to make a fair living or at least supplement their income (Stoddart, 1986, 118). In this respect, professional sport did initially exist in the colonies, particularly in the early years of settlement and among the lower classes. Although there were the occasional events for amateurs to participate in, it was not until the 1860s that separate amateur clubs and institutions appeared in a number of sports. Following the formation of the Melbourne University Boat Club in 1857, an amateur-rowing regatta was held in 1860, and by 1863 there were 5 amateur rowing clubs in Melbourne alone. Amateur clubs also began to emerge in other sports, for example, the Adelaide Amateur Athletic Club, which was formed in 1864, and the Amateur Athletic Club formed under the auspices of the Melbourne Cricket Club in 1866 (Cashman, 1995, 57).

The establishment of these separate amateur clubs and associations represented an important change, as prior to this there had been no such segregation in Australian sport. Also of importance at this time in Australia's sporting evolution was the fact that the definition of an amateur was decidedly loose prior to 1850 and many amateur rowers were able to compete for money at the 1848 Brisbane Regatta (Cashman, 1995, 57). It was during the next few decades that there was a rapid expansion in the number of amateur clubs, events and institutions. In fact by the 1880s colonial amateur institutions were established in many sports, and these included the NSW Amateur Athletic Association (1887), which was to be the forerunner of a national association, the Amateur Athletic Union of Australasia (1897). The term 'amateur' came to be the tag of respectability that was included in the name of colonial sports associations in swimming, bowls, boxing, and cycling to name a few. Although professional sports continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century, it was the amateur sports, which were to set the sporting agendas of the country by 1880 and 1890 (Cashman, 1995, 58). By late nineteenth century, Australia was largely imbued with a British view of sport, that is sport was mostly a leisure activity and at best was useful training for other areas of life. Importantly, sport should never be used as a primary source of livelihood. In other words, sport was for those who could afford to play for fun and recreation and who had no need to look to sport as a source of income. Sport was not to be viewed as a profession (Stoddart, 1986, 119).

The rise of amateurism in Australia generated a great deal of debate about the nature of sport in Australia, the definition of both amateur and professional and also about the appropriate codes of sporting behaviour. There was the question of who constituted an 'amateur' and this was largely a class issue based upon both occupation and status (Cashman, 1995, 58). This is illustrated by the fact that the sons of the wealthy attended British schools 150 years ago, and custom and a lack of money barred the boys of the working class. Headmasters of these schools encouraged play according to the noble ideals

of amateurism. Well-bred schoolboys went on to introduce rugby union to the world, forming amateur clubs and unions in the colonies (Booth and Tatz, 1996, 14). Also central to the debate over amateur versus professional was the issue of the correct attitude to money, whether an amateur could be compensated for loss of time from employment or because of injury. The relationship of amateurs to professional sport was also a complex issue. There was much debate about the role of the professional in amateur sport and whether an amateur could participate in any form of professional sport (Cashman, 1995, 58). Prior to 1850 many sports were mixed, and the definition of amateur and professional was decidedly loose because of this. However, the growth of a sporting culture and more class-specific sporting associations, clubs and teams created a greater need to define amateurism (Cashman, 1995, 58).

The definition of an amateur athlete varied from one colony to the next, and also from one sport to the next, and this continued to be a problem as late as the 1870s. An article in the Sydney Mail of 12 April 1873 evidences this:

In Melbourne, all regatta committees admit a man as an amateur who does not directly or indirectly earn his living by building, letting or attending to boats or who has not rowed for a money prize; whereas in Sydney and Hobart Town they exclude all who earn their living by manual labour but they have no objection to their gentlemen rowing for a money prize.

The different colonial definitions of amateur status remained a problem for many years, and a conference was held in December 1888 to further debate the issue. This debate was to be continued for decades. The purity of amateur sport was considered to be a powerful and passionate belief in many quarters of society, and was thought of as good, wholesome and worthwhile. On the other hand, professional sport was considered to be primitive, unworthy, and dangerous as it was associated with gambling and was considered to be open to cheating, bribery and corruption. For this reason there were many efforts to make sports more pure and noble by eliminating gambling and removing any taint of professionalism. In all cleaning up those sports that were purported to be amateur (Cashman, 1995, 60).

The rise of amateurism totally altered the landscape and social agenda of Australian sport. By 1900 a number of sports had actually been completely divided into separate amateur and professional associations. Amateurism was the dominant sports creed of the time, and was supported by the leading sports journalists and backed by the most powerful sports officials of the day. It was also the sanctioned creed of both public and private education institutions (Cashman, 1995, 61). For this reason amateurism became the dominant sporting creed which went on to influence Australia's sporting culture for decades to come.

The idealised view of sport as an amateur pursuit endured in Australia. On the eve of the explosion of corporate money available to Australian sport in the mid 1970s, the basic position for players remained that they were not supposed to make money from their skills. Sport was still supposed to be an amateur pursuit, not played for monetary gain. On the other hand, sport did have a long history of commercial gain. One consequence of this duality in Australia's sporting culture was the early departure from many sports of numerous high-class performers. With constant exposure to this hypocrisy, the public has slowly moved from a stiff intolerance of pay for play to a reluctant acceptance of the sporting professional (Stoddart, 1986, 125). In the face of increased commercialism of sport, Australia has been slow to accommodate this change during the course of the

twentieth century. This reluctance has been described as a consequence of the holding on to conservative beliefs about the nature and purpose of sport itself (Stoddart, 1986, 126).

It appears as though the rapid infusion of money has allowed this conservatism to be overcome to a great extent in Australia. The challenge now is to confront what has been termed 'the degradation of Australian sport' – successful commercialism demanding changes in the nature of the game itself, changes that may in themselves antagonise a traditional public. Essentially, it has been argued, sport has gone into an 'aesthetic decline' as the dictates of business bring changes into various sports. "The aim is to speed up play, make it more amenable to television commercial breaks, make the action more spectacular and, most importantly, guarantee a result" (Stoddart, 1986, 126). This new commercialism has caused considerable changes in Australian sport. In cricket, for example, there has been a proliferation of one-day matches, which has caused some critics to bemoan what they see as a weakening in both technique and style. Further, the Australian eight-ball over has been reduced to six, thus accommodating commercial television's need for a greater number of breaks in play to allow for advertising. In tennis, the tie-break method dominates tournament play, replacing the old advantage system. Rugby League also plays an additional competition under lights specifically for television purposes. National Basketball League authorities decided to institute four ten-minute quarters rather than two twenty minute halves for the 1984 season, again a decision relating to the needs of television rather than development requirements of the game. By 1985 the playing season itself had been shifted and the number of teams involved had been reduced, both to meet the demands of television (Stoddart, 1986, 127).

The bulk of the opposition to such changes has come from those in the sports who subscribe to the amateur view. There are two overriding factors that cause the greatest amount of consternation. Firstly is the fact that games have altered their traditional format, secondly is that players now treat the games as a job rather than as a leisure activity (Stoddart, 1986, 127). It seems that established views of sport have been as much reinforced by these changes as they have been removed. Largely because of that traditional approach many of the changes that have been beneficial for games have been overlooked, while other alterations have not seen as much attention as they deserve. The case of club loyalty provides a good illustration (Stoddart, 1986, 127). It used to be that players received little more than 'beer and pies' and modest expenses for their exertions. For this they rewarded their club with loyalty throughout their career. The situation now, however, is very different. "When Ron Barassi left Melbourne Football Club in 1964, lured by offers from Carlton, it was as if a whole new era had begun for the home of Australia's unique game. The city was stunned" (Stoddart, 1986, 128). From that point on inter-club transfers have gathered momentum, cutting more and more into old attitudes and traditions. This situation is not restricted to AFL. Michael O'Connor, who had played Rugby Union for the ACT, publicly admitted that although he had gone to Queensland to further his career he would never feel like a Queenslanders. Not long after, he switched codes to Rugby League. Further examples are evident in Rugby League. A Rugby League test forward that had completed his club contract, through his lawyer, said that while he enjoyed playing for the club, a decision about his new affiliation would be determined solely by financial considerations. Clubs can no longer rely on old-fashioned player loyalty to maintain their team base (Stoddart, 1986, 128-9). Sport has become a corporate world, in which clubs are employers, players have conditions and rights, and market forces are the driving force behind recruitment and retention (Drane, 2000, 21).

This situation has gone one step further in many sports with the creation of new sporting clubs with the sole purpose of winning. The Adelaide Rams are one such example. They were created to fill a spot in the new money-driven competition Super League, which purported to be 'the best of the best'. To many traditionalists, however, the Rams encapsulated everything that was wrong with Rugby League. The players themselves were a collection of individuals who had only one thing in common no other team wanted them. They competed under the banner of "Adelaide", yet not one of them is a local, and there is no league culture in Adelaide or a local competition to foster interest in the game (Williams, 1997, 80). Further to this, none of the players were signed to long-term contracts. Perhaps not surprisingly then, the Adelaide Rams were doomed to failure. This decreasing club loyalty is also being felt by Rugby Union. The attitude among younger players has changed from 'What can I do for the sport' to 'what's the sport going to do for me?' Peter Medway, a North's board member concurs, "...as a club, we're out there among the schools in our district to promote rugby and attract players. Then another club offers them a more attractive proposition and they're off" (Walter, 1997, 102). It appears as though the days of joining a sporting club and staying for the life is no longer the goal of young sportsmen.

It appears as though leading players have now become both trading and tradable commodities. The reason for this is that large capital expenditure demands productivity and this is measured by success. Players are now confronted by two inter-related problems. Firstly, in their attempts to leave or join clubs for financial gain, players have often been branded as money-hungry or disloyal (or both) by club supporters believing the enduring legacy of amateurism. Secondly, the rapid growth in player payments has led to players in many sports discovering the obligations as well as the benefits of professionalism, and taxation issues for many sports stars have become a major problem (Stoddart, 1986, 130). In fact, many Australian sports people now choose to live overseas in countries with more lenient tax rules. A further unforeseen consequence of professionalism that players have been forced to encounter is the simple matter of fitness. When money is absent from sport, there is less pressure for players to take the sports field unfit. Once large sums of money become involved the decision runs a fine line between getting value from an investment and protecting that investment (Stoddart, 1986, 130).

There has been a rapid transformation in sporting culture in Australia in recent decades, particularly since the advent of television. Australian sport, for the best part of a century, was influenced by British class-based ideologies. The proponents of these ideologies believed that sport should serve the moral purpose of creating individual character and team cooperation. It is interesting that amateurism, which was promoted so enthusiastically for so long in Australia, disappeared so quickly and with so little ceremony in the 1970s. It was during this time that there has been a dramatic shift away from the British-inherited ideologies, which dictated the evolution of sporting culture in Australia, to a more American capitalist or globalist model (Cashman, 1995, 71).

## Extreme Sports

Sport means different things for different groups in society. For young people, sport is a means of building character, helping them learn about fairness, success and failure, risk taking, accepting discipline and control, leadership and teamwork. For adults, sports participation brings increased energy, improved fitness and health and greater opportunities for participating in social and community activities. For older adults, the health benefits

from increased physical activity translate into more independent living and improved social links with the wider community (Shaping Up, 1999, 55). Increasingly however, young people have been turning away from the traditional sports that once dominated Australia's sporting culture and investing their time and energy in new, contemporary sports, many of which have been described as 'extreme sports'. These extreme sports have been touted by many commentators as being the sports of the future (Salmon, 1999, 22). This 'quest for excitement' means that traditional sports and facilities need to continuously adapt to attract new markets and participation. The increasing proliferation of leisure pools and sports such as triathlon is one response to this new trend (Carroll, 1995, 24)

Traditionally, time has been the essence of competitive sport. Time fixes results and determines records, and records are an obsession in competitive sport. "Sportsmen and women treasure their personal best times measured in hours, minutes and seconds, and in tenths, hundredths and thousandths of seconds. They want to record their best possible times. Best means fastest. And faster times equate to progress and improvement – the Olympic ideals of sporting development (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 18). Increasingly, this also appears to be behind the move away from the more conventional sporting pursuits. A substantial minority of people refuse to entertain the quest for the fastest and the best. In particular, young people have rebelled as they seek more extreme adventures than can be found on an athletics track or in a swimming pool. They are seeking more than timed records or the defeat of an opponent. They are seeking the pleasures of fantasy and participation. Young people are playing for the here and now, regardless of any records. Sports such as surfing, rock-climbing, snowboarding and skateboarding have become so popular, partially because of the complete disregard for time and space. Skateboarders and roller-bladers are surviving the urban environment, while mountain bikers, hikers, canoeists and rock-climbers are engaging the rural landscape (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 18). Conventional sport needs its bounded and zoned space. But the new wave of 'extreme' sport has no such rules and regulations. Extreme sports in fact extend the conventional boundaries. Participants in such sports are limited only by their imagination. Conventional sport, with its preoccupation with time, rules and records is now a serious business. Fun is flooding back into life on the wave of these new extreme sports. Under less pressure to perform, people are participating for no reason other than to enjoy themselves (Booth and Tatz, 1997, 19).

These new contemporary or 'extreme' sports also contain one additional feature, which has significant consequences for society. Many of these sports involved taking considerable deliberate risks. The term 'extreme' was coined in the sporting field to describe the deeds of experts who dived with their sport's frontiers. "Their trophy was a heightened sense of living borne of a proximity to death, or at least the nearest casualty ward" (Salmon, 1999, 23). One reason cited by those who engage in deliberative risky behaviour is that "it gives back the zest that comfort and routine take away" (Feizkhah, 1995, 48). Daredevil Chris Darwin routinely engages in extreme risk-taking including such activities as ice-climbing to the other end of the spectrum signing books at the bottom of the Sydney Aquarium shark tank, and his reason for doing so "It's only when I'm having adventures that I feel really alive" (Feizkhah, 1995, 48). The popularity of these activities is rapidly increasing in society "High-risk sports such as hang gliding, skydiving, scuba diving, rock climbing, and the like have enjoyed unprecedented growth in the past several decades" (Lyng, 1990, 857). Further, participants in these activities often claim that the only people at risk are those "who don't know what they are doing" (Lyng, 1990, 857). In other words it is the 'novices' who are at risk, experts such as themselves are safe because they know exactly what they

are doing. However it must be remembered however that a mistake within such an activity leads to death.

Once participated in only by a select few, extreme sports are no longer the domain of the lunatic fringe. Instead they have become highly popular mainstream activities, particularly among young males; with many commentators now declaring “these sports now define the male youth culture” (Salmon, 1999, 24). The popularity of these new contemporary sports is illustrated through the development of their own ultimate sporting competition, ‘The Xtreme Games’. In fact our fascination with all things extreme seems to be becoming unquenchable (Salmon, 1999, 23). Society appears to have adopted all things ‘extreme’ to such an extent that “extreme is everywhere and is becoming meaningless as a result (Salmon, 1999, 23). It has been argued that “The word is now so soft and horribly inclusive, anyone who has a whirl on a jet ski can jump off and say, straight-faced, “Yeah, I’m into extreme sports. I guess you could say I’m an adrenalin junkie” (Salmon, 1999, 23). Veteran ski filmmaker Warren Miller states that nowadays extreme is for the whole family. “I think everyone who skis is an extreme skier, and if they don’t scare themselves at least once a day, they shouldn’t do it. If your 85 years of age and going three miles an hour, you can still get the same adrenalin rush as if you just jumped of a cliff” (Salmon, 1999, 23). So for some, ‘extreme’ sports are open to everyone and involve little risk. Prominent extreme athletes however, are always pushing the physical limits of their sports, and mistakes can lead to serious injury or in some cases even death. As described by Myles Rockwell, a 21-year-old downhill mountain biker, “I don’t use brakes, I pedal everywhere. Basically, I’m just pushing the edge the whole time” (Dugard, 1994, 106). It is also how Peter McKay describes motorcycle racer Michael Doohan “He generally loves exploring the limits, pushing to the edge” (McKay, 1994, 50).

From the more traditional ‘alternative sports’ such as surfing and body boarding, to activities such as wakeboarding, young people have a readiness to embrace, or at the very least, sample, an unprecedented range of activities that are only recently being regarded as legitimate sports. These activities are expanding to such an extent that they are not just games; they can become career options (Salmon, 1999, 24). The growth of these sports mirrors the surge in the business of mainstream sports. A flourishing alternative market in sport in the nineties has seen the larger companies act on these now observable trends. For example, snowboarders were once considered the Huns of the slopes. Now, fashion houses like Ralph Lauren, Prada, Armani and Dolce and Gabbana are sewing up their own riding threads (Salmon, 1999, 24). Similarly, television networks are recognising this challenge to the established order of things. In America, while the ratings slipped for baseball’s World Series and regular-season NFL matches, pay-TV network ESPN had little trouble attracting the under-35s with the X Games – their alternative sports Olympics, which was launched in 1995, with a winter version launched in 1997. Taking these trends into consideration, “the future sports fan is going to expect more than just a three-piece diet of baseball, basketball and gridiron. And what’s more, advertising dollars will drift to meet this highly-prized target audience where it prefers to gaze” (Salmon, 1999, 24).

As with the mainstream sports, the key element of these extreme sports is their capacity to entertain and captivate a large audience. While the traditional sports have found it harder to attract the audiences they once did, the animal potency of extreme acts translates easily to viewers. “When watching someone risk his or her neck, the fear, the triumph and the pain are palatable. It’s a fight for life, one of the oldest forms of entertainment, but here, the struggle is against the self, against its emotional and physical limits. For our voyeuristic bent, it’s invigorating fodder: you don’t have to be a die-hard fan of the sport to enjoy

watching” (Salmon, 1999, 27). For this reason, interest in extreme sports is likely to continue unabated well into the future. Similarly no matter how much popularity is able to tame these sports, there will always be a central hard core who will strive to remain detached from the majority. There will always be those who are willing to distinguish themselves with acts of maniacal creativity.

## Drugs in Sport

While the driving force behind sports participation for the majority of Australians is still enjoyment, for many athletes sport is no longer played simply for fun. In fact, for many athletes sport is no longer a game, rather it has become their profession. The most successful athletes are the ones who are most commonly sought after. They are the athletes who are offered large contracts and lucrative endorsement packages. Success in sport in the modern day is equated with winning. For this reason some athletes will resort to almost anything to win. Modern day sport has seen a dramatic increase in the use of banned substances by many athletes from a variety of sports in their quest to win, and this is causing great concern both amongst both amateur and professional sporting authorities.

Three high profile events in recent times making world headlines have made drugs in sport a highly prominent social issue. Firstly, Ben Johnson was caught at the Seoul Olympics and stripped of his 100-metre world record and gold medal after residues of a performance-enhancing drug banned by the International Olympic Committee were detected in a post-race urine test. Secondly, the Senate Committee, which investigated the use of drugs in Australian sport, reported that substances were being used at nearly all amateur and professional levels. Finally, several players in the New South Wales Rugby League tested positive to random tests that were conducted by the newly formed Australian Sports Drug Agency (McKay, 1991, 142). The most publicised of these cases involved the South Sydney Club. Following the charging of one of its players with cocaine possession, the club requested the NSWRL to conduct drug tests. Seven players tested positive for marijuana and were ordered into rehabilitation. Scott Wilson, a 19 year old fullback, was released from his contract after traces of cocaine was found in his urine. Wilson later signed with North Sydney, only to test positive again and was once again dismissed by the club (McKay, 1991, 143). South Sydney is not alone in having a drug problem. The Western Reds, a newcomer to the National Rugby League competition in 1995, achieved great success in their debut year. But this success was an illusion, with claims being made that at least 6, and possibly as many as 15, of its players were using anabolic steroids (Williams, 1997, 24). In fact, “among most of the Reds, steroid use within the club was an open secret” (Williams, 1997, 25). Players from the Newcastle Knights in 1997 also returned a number of positive tests for steroid abuse. These findings have prompted concern that drug abuse may involve whole teams not just individual players (Kell, 2000, 85).

The problem of drug taking in an attempt to enhance an athlete’s personal performance is not confined to contact sports such as rugby league. Positive drug tests have been returned from elite athletes in a number of sports. In recent times, swimming has made the media headlines with the number of positive tests being returned by elite swimmers rapidly increasing. In the 1994 world championships in Rome the women’s swimming was dominated by the Chinese, winning 12 of the 16 events, breaking two world records and coming within a tenth of a second of breaking two other records. The arrival of the Chinese women as the champions in world swimming represented an amazing climb from obscurity to occupying the top world rankings, with 30 Chinese swimmers in the top 50 in 1992,

swelling to 98 by 1993. “The success of the Chinese women swimmers had been greeted with great suspicion by other nations, including Australia, as the physical appearance of many of the swimmers suggested evidence of drug abuse” (Kell, 2000, 79). This controversy was repeated at the 1998 world swimming championships in Perth. Prior to events even commencing in Perth, Australian customs seized 13 vials of human growth hormone found in the luggage of the Chinese women swimmers. The diminutive Chinese breaststroker, Yuan Yuan was allegedly found to have growth hormone in her luggage, and her struggles with the assembled camera crews dominated the media coverage of the day (Kell, 2000, 78). During these championships, several below par performances by the Chinese women led to allegations that the Chinese were lying low, anxious not to attract attention. The Chinese were in fact in a position of double jeopardy, if they won they were accused of cheating but if they did not compete they were accused of trying to avoid detection (Kell, 2000, 81). Evidence of drug taking amongst swimmers has not been confined to the Chinese. At the 1996 Atlanta Olympics the most sensational performances were from Michelle Smith, an Irish swimmer, who won three gold medals. Smith’s previous best performance was 25<sup>th</sup> at the Barcelona Olympics, and the astonishing improvement immediately aroused the suspicions of the world sporting movement. In 1998, Smith returned a urine sample showing evidence of adulteration with alcohol and she was subsequently suspended from competition for four years (Kell, 2000, 89).

Australian swimming has not been free from drug controversy. Almost immediately following the Perth championships Australian swimmer Richard Upton submitted a positive test for a banned masking agent. The Australian backstroker, who had won silver at the championships, submitted evidence that the drug had been prescribed by his doctor along with penicillin for the treatment of tonsillitis (Kell, 2000, 85). A similar case occurred just prior to the 1996 Olympics when swimmer Samantha Riley tested positive for a banned substance during competition at the world short course championships. Riley claimed she had taken the substance during a swimming meeting to prevent a headache and her coach as a one-off response to the sudden headache had obtained the drug. Australian officials challenged the placement of the drug on the banned list, arguing that codeine was not in fact performance enhancing. In both cases the swimmers pleaded ignorance and any blame was assigned to coaches, medical practitioners or the inappropriate banning of drugs (Kell, 2000, 86). Swimmers are not alone, several other high profile Australian athletes have also tested positive recently, including bobsledder Martin Harland, cyclist Martin Vinnicombe, and sprinter Dean Capobianco.

Obtaining a ‘winning edge’ is a fundamental precept of contemporary sport. This is often cited as the catalyst for many athletes to resort to drugs in their overwhelming desire to win. Authorities have established agencies with the sole purpose of testing athletes for drug abuse. However relying on these agencies is fraught with difficulties. “Although athletes cannot indefinitely get away with the defence that ‘somebody spiked my drink’, drug screening programs are liable to a variety of errors” (McKay, 1991, 145). For example, in 1990 the Australian Cycling Federation eventually cleared an athlete whose steroid test had proved positive after the procedures of the Dutch laboratory where he was tested were discredited. There will always remain the chance that some individuals will be judged ‘guilty until proven innocent. There is also the problem that some drugs and techniques remain undetectable. Drug testing, then, remains an imperfect remedy to providing an even playing field for athletes to compete in. “The testing programs attack symptoms rather than causes; the tactic penalises a few individual athletes but does little to target the coaches, administrators and doctors who procure and dispense drugs...Neither punishment, nor

public disgrace, nor medical/scientific surveillance can diminish the 'win at all costs' ethos which pervades contemporary sport. Drug testing also highlights the hypocrisy of sports ownership and sponsorship by alcohol and tobacco companies" (McKay, 1991, 146).

Perhaps the most hypocritical aspect of the current panic over drugs in sport is that the majority of all sports sponsorship in Australia in fact comes from breweries, distilleries, wineries and tobacco companies. Alcohol and tobacco are responsible for approximately 98% of all drug related deaths in Australia. The consumption of alcohol is responsible, directly or indirectly, for a high percentage of absenteeism, injuries and deaths at work, traffic injuries and deaths, drownings, suicides, homicides, rapes and domestic violence, as well as public disorder. It is deemed morally acceptable for footballers to compete in the Winfield Cup, be nominated for a Rothmans Medal, wear Foster's or Power's logos on their uniforms, appear in advertisements for alcohol or smoke cigarettes, yet they can be dismissed for consuming marijuana or cocaine during their leisure time. Until the administrators of sport in Australia 'kick the habit' of accepting sponsorship and ownership from corporations involved in the manufacture of drugs that kill and endanger the lives of so many Australians, their current stance on drugs in sport will continue to have no moral compulsion for athletes (McKay, 1991, 147-8).

## Globalisation

The social and cultural life of any society is constantly subjected to many different external influences, as are the various social institutions within society itself. Sport is one such social and cultural institution in Australia that has been subjected to many outside forces, which in turn has required the sporting world in general, and individual sports themselves, to adapt in order to survive. One of these external forces that is having a dramatic influence on sport in the modern day is what has been termed by many commentators 'globalisation'. Globalisation has meant that a blurring of the boundaries between countries is occurring and this has been facilitated by the ever-increasing availability and sophistication of technology such as the mass media, computers in general, and more commonly, the Internet.

The survival in the modern day of many sports is a numbers game. Participation rates, public perceptions of image and television ratings are linked with the all important sponsorship dollar. This formula ultimately determines the future viability of sports in an environment where sport is not only an event in itself but has far reaching multimedia dimensions (Kell, 2000, 156). For television networks, sport represents the cheapest and thus most profitable programming alternative available. As a result, media organizations are falling all over themselves in an attempt to secure high-profile sporting coverage. Consequently organisers have become all too aware of the need to create an image of excitement, colour and action that will capture the attention of viewers. Simultaneously, viewers are more attracted to the sports where they can relate to the personalities and celebrities who dominate the game. Fans and sponsors now demand a new breed of sophisticated celebrity, heroes who are able to attract as well as retain the loyalty and following of a worldwide sporting audience. These new sports stars have to be recognisable heroes, global celebrities and all around good guys (Kell, 2000, 157).

Modern sports stars such as basketballer Michael Jordan and golfers such as Greg Norman and Tiger Woods have transcended their sport to become global personalities, admired by fans in every town and city in the world. These new sporting celebrities are different to

their predecessors such as Don Bradman and Muhammad Ali. Their achievements on the sporting field and their sculpting as personalities by public relations counsellors has created a shift towards the apparent gentrification of sport. This represents a departure from the overt signs of tension, conflict, violence and hatred that typified sports rooted in tribal loyalty and sectarianism. No longer can tribal loyalty be expressed in the form of vilification as it is 'bad for business' in a global multimedia sports industry. It creates a bad public relations persona and switches off vital sections of the audience and has an adverse effect on the all-important ratings. It is also bad for the all-important product sales as these celebrities have become roving advertisements for a wide range of products, one of the most famous being Nike's Air Jordan shoes (Kell, 2000, 157). The importance of image in the modern global market is reflected in the fact that today athletes like Tiger Woods, Greg Norman, Pat Cash and Robert de Castella earn more from endorsing products than from competing. Norman who does television commercials for Swan Breweries, Hertz and Spalding and wears clothing by Akubra, Niblick and Reebok, is virtually a human billboard for his many corporate sponsors (McKay, 1991, 43).

The new global sporting environment has created a reworked concept of team loyalty, which attempts to span national, regional, familial, racial and religious boundaries in an effort to develop the notion of the transnational global team. Both the Chicago Bulls and the British soccer club, Manchester United are examples of this trend in which the teams are no longer the exclusive property of their cities but operate as a worldwide corporation. Twenty years ago these teams were successful sides in their own national competitions. Now they act as a focus for the world's best players. Teams such as Manchester United pan both the local, with its fanatical hometown loyalty, and the global, with an equally fanatical devotion from chapters of supporters in every corner of the world (Kell, 2000, 159).

These shifting national loyalties have created dilemmas for the new breed of professional athletes. Periodic tensions emerge between national and supranational loyalties when Australian players elect to decline national selection. While playing for your country was traditionally the pinnacle of any sporting career, it is no longer the lure it once was. European based professional football players Harry Kewell and Mark Bosnich have at various stages in their careers been either unable to secure release from their European clubs or unwilling to put their national team duties ahead of professional overseas priorities. "Usually citing injury, to avoid the ire of the Australian governing authorities, professional players have been able to confine their national duties to only the most prestigious occasions" (Kell, 2000, 160). That is not to say that national allegiances have been eradicated, rather they have become subject to negotiation within the wider context of a globalised and highly professional sporting culture. Contractual and career obligations have created a great deal of uncertainty regarding player loyalties, as professional athletes now jockey for career advancement, taxation advantages and contractual stability for the short time that they are in the sporting spotlight. "Loyalty is an expendable luxury to professional sportsmen and women, who are becoming nomads willing to swap citizenship and residency to gain financial security (Kell, 2000, 160).

Tennis is one of those sports that have seen a great deal of international movement with many players opting to switch citizenship and residency status in order to further their sporting careers. Canadian tennis player Greg Rusedski recently defected to the British team on the basis of family connections, while players such as Monica Seles, Martina Navratilova and Ivan Lendl have defected from their home countries to become naturalised Americans. Australia has also been the beneficiary of a recent wave of athletes from

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union such as Victor Tchistiastov and Tatiana Grigorieva, both of which compete in the pole-vault. At the same time, Australian cricketers, frustrated at the difficulty in gaining selection in the national side, have sought selection in other national sides (Kell, 2000, 161).

## How does Sport influence National Identity?

Sport has been an integral part of the social landscape in Australia since colonial times and even today sporting traditions such as the Melbourne Cup, test cricket, football grand finals and the Stawell gift are part of the celebrations that many Australians enjoy. In fact it is almost inconceivable in the modern day for a major sporting event and even some minor sporting contests to be held without nationalistic manifestations (McKay, 1991, 71). Sport as a social institution undoubtedly has the ability to link Australians to their past and bind them in the present. Sport has long been a vital contributor to the creation and maintenance of nationalist sentiment in Australia. In fact, it has been said that sport has played a vital role in nourishing the symbolism, rituals and attitudes that have characterised Australian-ness (Kell, 2000, 23). At the turn of the century Australian dominance in sculling and pedestrianism (foot races) contributed significantly to early national identity. In the 1950s and 1960s sporting achievements in tennis, athletics, squash and swimming consolidated a sense of pride in a country capable of achieving such excellence despite its size and geographic isolation. More recently, when Kieren Perkins pulled away in the final laps of the 1500 metre freestyle final at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, all Australians were bound together in an outpouring of national pride. Sport has been said to foster the social cohesiveness and unity that reinforces our sense of being an Australian (Shaping Up, 1999, 53).

Newly established communities, or even countries, face the problem of unifying what is sometimes a very diverse population. One successful mechanism that has often been adopted to achieve this is sport. W. F. Mandle in an important article has argued that sport, and cricket in particular, contributed significantly to the emergence of Australian nationalism. Australia has had its own cricket team, known as the Australian XI, from the 1870s. Its success against the motherland provided a 'symbol of what national cooperation could achieve' and provided the best example of Federation yet (Cashman, 1995, 105). This success against the motherland also provided reassurance for Australians about their physical fitness and moral worth (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 5). It was argued that victories against the motherland did 'more to enhance the cause of Australian nationality than could ever have been achieved by miles of erudite essays and impassioned appeal'. In other words, political nationalism drew its strength and inspiration from 'a cricketing nationalism' that can be traced back to the 1860s (Cashman, 1995, 105). This desire to beat the motherland has been a powerful motivating factor in Australia for both players and spectators. Equally strong throughout the twentieth century has been the desire to challenge and beat the United States, this is due to the fact that Australia has had greater cultural and economic links with North America and the links with Britain have been diminishing. Similarly the motivation behind this desire by sportsmen and women and spectators alike draws strength from the fact that sport provides an opportunity for a relatively small power on the world stage, like Australia, to have a tilt at one of the superpowers (Cashman, 1995, 106).

Along with the desire to beat other countries including Britain and the United States, regional parochialism has been one of the enduring features of Australian sport. In fact inter-colonial and interstate rivalries have sometimes overshadowed the more prestigious international contests. One good example of this occurs in the National Rugby League competition. Prior to the 1980s Queensland rugby league experienced a continuing drain of talented players to the wealthier Sydney competition, the result was that Queensland was regularly beaten by New South Wales. The Queenslanders welcomed the State of Origin concept as it restored the Queensland-born to the Maroon team even if they were currently playing in the Sydney competition (Cashman, 1995, 108). Consequently, throughout the 1980s and 1990s the State of Origin clash between Queensland and New South Wales has often loomed larger in the public imagination than Test matches. This regional parochialism is present in many sports and is especially strong in the outlying and previously less populated states of Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania and is most often directed at the more powerful States. This parochialism draws its strength from perceived sporting and wider political inequalities which include selection bias, talent drain, the dominance of the more heavily populated States in sporting administration and the greater sporting resources of the more powerful States (Cashman, 1995, 107). Thus while sport can unite a community and even a nation, it is often on an 'us against them' basis (Cashman, 1995, 110).

There can be no question that the enduring links between sport and space have had both important social and cultural ramifications throughout Australia's history. History and sport has appeared to merge in the Australian psyche, with the result being that most Australians are more likely to recall past Melbourne Cup winners with greater ease and clarity than the names of recent prime ministers. Sport in fact occupies such a special place in Australia's public culture so as to ensure that sporting heroes have been named as Australian of the Year as many times as have scientists (Kell, 2000, 24). Sport has been one of the most important elements of the 'social cement' that binds together the often very diverse communities throughout Australia. Sporting culture was well established and immensely popular at the time when the suburbs and country towns were founded. Sport, even more so than religion and the various other forms of culture present, had the ability to unite these vastly diverse communities, creating a common goal, or sometimes a common enemy. Sport was universally popular and better able to cut across both the religious and class divisions that were present. The enduring links between sport and all manner of communities are vitally important reasons why sport has had, and will continue to maintain, such an elevated status within Australian society (Cashman, 1995, 110).

While it can be said that Australia has inherited or borrowed much of its sporting culture from the various corners of the world, this culture has been transformed to such an extent that it has become distinctly Australian. Our culture of sport—from the character of play, the behaviour of players and spectators, the language, architecture and club identity – has become recognised by the rest of the world as Australian. Further, the importance of sport to the Australian way of life is universally agreed upon. Most Australians would be surprised by any suggestion that sport was not the cornerstone of Australian life (Cashman, 1995, 205). As writer Jeff Wells has asserted "Australia has prided itself on being the greatest little sporting nation in the world" (Kell, 2000, 23). Along with this there are also a number of historical reasons that account for the importance of sport in Australia's social, cultural and physical landscape. Firstly, sport was prominent at a formative stage in Australia's cultural formation. The character of Australian society was profoundly influenced by the games cult from the 1870s, often referred to as the 'games revolution'.

Secondly, economic factors (such as the increasing prosperity in Australia following the gold rush), along with political factors (the establishment of trade unions and extension of the franchise) significantly contributed to the elevation of sport. Australia had the financial resources to devote to an elaborate culture of sport and the changing nature of work meant that the majority of the population had the time to devote to leisure activities. Finally, Australia had no great war, no hostile neighbour or past tradition that could be used to unify the population. Both religion and class divided communities. Sport has provided a convenient and common cause that has the ability to unite people (Cashman, 1995, 205).

# 2

## Change In Rural Communities In Australia

It is not possible to understand what is happening with regard to sport in rural and regional Australia without a grasp of the general pattern of changes that are affecting the country regions of our nation. In this section, recent literature is examined in order to gain a sense of these changes.

First, we may note that there have been large-scale changes in social and economic policy and attitudes throughout the nation, linked to worldwide changes often simply referred to as “globalisation”. Every Australian has been affected to some degree by these changes. Black et al (2000) offer the following list of key changes to policy:

- deregulation in the finance sector, involving the floating of exchange rates, the abolition of foreign exchange controls and the removal of interest rate controls
- reduction in general levels of government assistance to industries, e.g. reduction in tariff protection
- privatisation of government business enterprises
- reform of statutory marketing arrangements for primary products
- microeconomic reform and the introduction of the National Competition Policy steps toward labour market deregulation
- wider application of the ‘user pays’ principle *and*
- tax cuts financed by a reduction in public sector and welfare spending Black *et al*, 2000: 13)

These same authors go on to discuss a range of issues that are more specific to the rural areas such as:

- Agricultural adjustment, involving increased mechanisation, changes in genetics, animal nutrition, fertilisers, etc, leading to reduced demands for agriculture and fewer people living on properties or in very small towns;
- A growing shift from family to corporate farms, leading to fewer and larger farms and concomitant population reduction; *and*
- Cultural conflicts over restructuring, such as opposition to newer methods and/or resistance to a more ‘environment friendly’ approach.

Indeed, it is obvious to any observer that in the last twenty to thirty years, rural and regional Australia has been undergoing a series of social and economic changes. These changes can be seen in many aspects both of the social structure and the social functioning of communities and these have had complex effects. Examining the general process of rural restructuring, Matthew Tonts summarises a number of such changes when notes that:

Over the past three decades, Australia's rural communities have experienced profound economic and social changes. Many of these changes are directly associated with the upheaval being experienced in agriculture. Problems such as declining farm incomes, farm amalgamation and enlargement, and the out-migration of the agricultural population are

seriously undermining the economic and social viability of many small rural towns, which service the agricultural sector. These towns have tended to experience a contraction of local economic activity, rising unemployment, depopulation, and the breakdown of local social institutions and networks ... More recently, these changes have been exacerbated by a general shift away from government policies based on socio-spatial equity, towards those that emphasise economic efficiency. The subsequent reforms in public policy have seen the withdrawal of many services that are essential to both the identity and survival of country towns, such as the local school or post office, on the grounds that their provision cannot be justified in narrow economic terms. Needless to say, the impact of such changes on the well-being of rural people has received considerable attention .... (Tonts, 2000: 52)

This paints a fairly bleak picture of change and its consequence. Yet Tonts goes on to point out that the changes are not always negative—“There is, however, evidence to suggest that not all country towns are experiencing decline. Commentators have noted the success of local community initiatives in reviving local economies and reversing demographic contraction and social decay.”

The idea that change affects different towns and different areas in different ways is important, and is borne out by a number of commentators. For example, in a paper presented at a recent conference, Bob Stimson and his co-authors outlined a typology of large regional cities and towns (populations greater than 10,000 at the 1996 Census) that was originally developed by Baum *et al* (1999). This was based on a multi-variate analysis of census data for 122 Statistical Local Areas located outside the mega metropolitan regions and excluding Canberra and Hobart. The analysis showed these large regional cities and towns may be categorised into seven clusters or social and economic groupings characterised by varying levels of advantage (opportunity) and disadvantage (vulnerability). These seven types of communities are presented in Table 2.1, which uses combined data from Tables 1 and 2 in Stimson *et al* (2000).

As noted, the typology identified four ‘opportunity clusters’ and three ‘vulnerable clusters’ (Stimson *et al*, 2000). This important recent analysis is quoted at some length below in order not to miss critical details in the analysis. The authors describe the clusters as follows:

### Opportunity places

Four categories of large regional cities and towns were labelled as places of communities of opportunity. The first category of opportunity communities was a *mining-based opportunity cluster* (7). It was found in regional Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. The five places that made up this cluster were characterised by employment in extractive industries and persons employed in routine production worker occupations<sup>1</sup> There was a high proportion of persons holding only a basic level of education. What distinguished these places as communities of opportunity was the significant proportions of persons earning high incomes—a characteristic of the mining sector in regional localities—and the significant increase in the proportion of households earning more than \$63,500 (1996), together with the significant level of labour force participation.

The second group of five opportunity communities were characterised as a *tourism-based opportunity cluster* (3). This group of communities had significant employment in personal service jobs—often associated with tourism—and had over the decade 1986 to 1996 recorded significant increases in employment and commensurate declines in unemployment. As with the mining-based group, this cluster was characterised by significant proportions of high-income households. The cluster had a significant population increase and significant

proportions of persons employed in producer service occupations, recent arrivals and persons holding a degree.

A third large opportunity cluster comprised a large group of cities and towns, many of which have important regional and rural service functions, which are defined as a *service-based opportunity cluster* (1). These 36 localities account for about one in three of the regional cities and towns in Australia, and are found in all states except Western Australia. Some of these localities have regional universities. Together many of these cities and towns make up a group of large regional centres or non-metropolitan cities. Their economies are dependent to a considerable degree on government funded service functions, including administration, health and education. The cluster has recorded above average increases in unemployment and a commensurate below average employment growth. The cluster also records the lowest labour force participation rate and proportion of high-income households and has the highest rate of unemployment, low-income households, single parents and aged persons. Reflecting the role that many localities in this cluster perform in terms of service provision. These places recorded the highest proportion of persons employed in the social services industries.

A smaller group of 16 large regional cities and towns are distributed across New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland and have been identified as an *extractive/transformation-based opportunity cluster* (4). These regional cities and towns are based mainly on serving agricultural/pastoral regions, but some also are involved in the processing of rural products. These communities had significant proportions of high-income households and relatively low levels of disadvantage-unemployment and households with housing financial stress. Apart from these characteristics, this cluster is similar to the previous mining-based extractive industry-type cluster. It has an above average proportion of routine production workers and persons employed in the extractive industries. The cluster also recorded a significant above average percentage point increase in high-income households; percentage increases in employment and a significant fall in unemployment.

## Vulnerable places

In contrast to the above sub-set of opportunity clusters in Australia's regional cities and towns, the three remaining clusters can be considered as representing the group of vulnerable regional localities.

A cluster of 24 regional cities and regions located in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland, was identified as a *manufacturing-based vulnerable cluster* (2). Many of these localities were developed during early periods of industrial growth in the era of protectionism, and have since seen a reduction in manufacturing fortunes. The manufacturing basis of this cluster is seen in the above average proportion of persons employed as routine production workers and a significant proportion employed in Browning and Singleman's transformative industry category. Other significant factors in this cluster include an above average increase in unemployment and a below average rate of employment growth. In terms of disadvantage, this cluster recorded above average rates of single-parent families, low-income households and high rates of unemployment. The cluster also had a significant number of households paying high proportions of their incomes on housing.

The second vulnerable cluster was identified as an *extractive-based vulnerable cluster* (5), consisting of 24 cities and towns found in all states except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. These places are mainly agricultural/pastoral-based towns that have become stagnant or are in decline. Often they used to have important rural product processing functions, a fact reflected in the above average proportions employed in extractive industries. Whilst the cluster recorded an above average decline in unemployment, it recorded relatively poor growth in employment. This cluster did have an above average proportion of symbolic

analysts, which probably reflects the agricultural base of many of the localities and the fact that property managers are included in this occupational category. In terms of measures of vulnerability, the cluster recorded above average rates of aged households, indigenous population and households in housing stress—paying large proportions of their incomes on housing. The cluster was perhaps not as vulnerable as the other two vulnerable groups in that it had slightly below average rates of low-income households and unemployment.

Finally a cluster of 13 large regional cities and towns was identified as a *welfare/retirement-migration vulnerable cluster* (6). They are located in coastal New South Wales and Queensland. Specific localities—a number of which are often referred to in discussions of ‘sun-belt migration’ growth—and included Coffs Harbour and Byron Bay in New South Wales and Hervey Bay in Queensland. In terms of disadvantage, the cluster recorded a high proportion of low-income households and unemployment. These unemployment figures are significantly higher than all the other clusters and reflect the welfare characteristics of the cluster. Reflecting the sun-belt migration function of a number of the places in this cluster also recorded an above average level of population change. Additionally, the cluster had the highest proportion of aged households and the lowest labour force participation rate.

The details of the clusters are shown in the Table 2.1 (see next 2 pages), which is adapted from two tables in the original. What the table illustrates quite strikingly is that, even within a particular State or Territory, some areas fall into opportunity clusters while others fall into vulnerable clusters. Take for example, WA. Kalgoorlie/Boulder, Port Hedland, and Roebourne fall into the mining-based opportunity cluster, Broome falls into the tourism-based opportunity cluster while Busselton, Harvey, Manjimup, Bunbury and Esperance fall into the service-based opportunity cluster. On the other hand, Geraldton and Albany are in the manufacturing-based vulnerable cluster.

It follows that what affects Kalgoorlie and what may be helpful for Kalgoorlie may not be what is affecting, or is helpful for Geraldton.

The variability within States and Territories is not confined to the socio-economic variables that Stimson *et al* discuss; it is also visible in many other aspects. For example, rural and regional Australia is said to experience population decline. But the decline is not uniform. In any given region, what is most likely is that there will not only be areas of sharp decline, areas of moderate decline and areas that are stable but also areas of moderate or sharp growth.

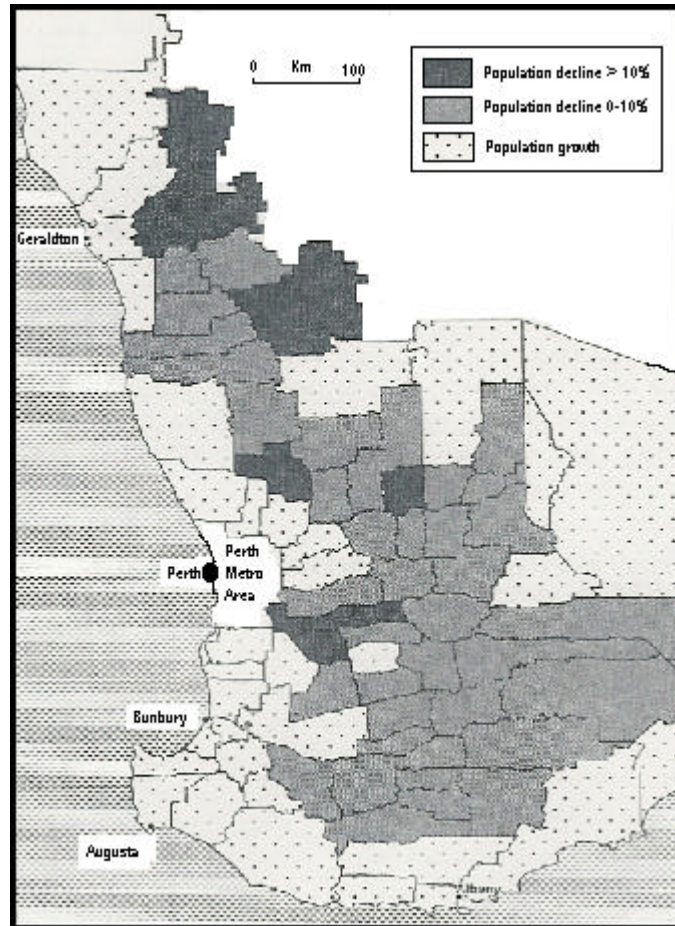
**Table 2.1: Local community 'clusters' in Australia's large regional cities and towns. (Adapted from Tables 1 and 2 in the original)**

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Mining-based opportunity cluster (7)	<i>Above average:</i> Employment in extractive industries Proportion of high-income households Routine production workers Persons with basic education Change in high-income households	<u>Western Australia</u> Kalgoorlie/Boulder Port Hedland Roebourne <u>Queensland</u> Mount Isa <u>New South Wales</u> Singleton
Tourism-based opportunity cluster (3)	<i>Above average:</i> Employment in producer services/personal services Proportion of high-income households Persons with a degree Employment growth Increase in population	<u>New South Wales</u> Snowy River (Jindabyne) <u>Victoria</u> Alpine-East (Bright/Mt. Beauty) <u>Western Australia</u> Broome <u>Queensland</u> Cairns Douglas-Port Douglas-Mossman
Extractive/transformational-based opportunity cluster (4)	<i>Above average:</i> Employment in social services and personal services Persons with a degree Labour force participation Increases in unemployment	<u>Victoria</u> Ararat Baw Baw West Campaspe-Echuca Glenelg-Portland Horsham-Central La Trobe-Traralgon Mildura Mitchell-North (Seymour) Wangaratta-Central Warrnambool <u>Northern Territory</u> Wellington-Maffra Wellington-Sale Ballarat <u>Queensland</u> Colac Greater Bendigo Greater Shepparton Wodonga Indigo-Beechworth Macedon Ranges (Macedon)
Service-based opportunity cluster (1)	<i>Above average:</i> Employment in extractive and transformative industries High-income households Routine production workers Persons with basic education Labour force participation Declines in unemployment Increases in high incomes <i>Below average:</i> Unemployment Housing hardship	<u>Victoria</u> Mitchell-South (Broadford) <u>Western Australia</u> Busselton Harvey Manjimup Bunbury Esperance <u>Queensland</u> Hinchinbrook (Ingham) Whitsunday (Proserpine/Airlie Beach) <u>New South Wales</u> Griffith Leeton Maitland Muswellbrook

<p>Manufacturing-based vulnerable cluster (2)</p>	<p><i>Above average:</i>  Increase in unemployment  Proportion of single-parent households  Employment in social services and distributive services  Persons with basic education  Housing stress  Unemployment  In-person service workers and routine production workers</p> <p><i>Below average:</i>  Population growth</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Victoria</u>  E. Gippsland-Bairnsdale  La Trobe-Moe  La Trobe-Morwell  <u>Queensland</u>  Gympie  Maryborough  Warwick-Central  Bundaberg</p>	<p><u>New South Wales</u>  Broken Hill  Casino  Grafton  Inverell  Port Stephens  <u>South Australia</u>  Port Augusta  Port Lincoln  Port Pirie  Whyalla  <u>Western Australia</u>  Geraldton  Albany  <u>Tasmania</u>  Burnie  Central Coast (Ulverstone/Penguin)  Devonport  Waratah/Wynyard  Launceston</p>
<p>Extractive -based vulnerable cluster (5)</p>	<p><i>Above average:</i>  Symbolic analysts  Low-income households  Aged households  <u>Employment in extractive industries</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Victoria</u>  Campaspe-Kyabram  Gannawarra  Moira-West (Nathalia/ Nunurkah)  Moynes-South (Port Fairy/ Koroit)  South Gippsland-Central  <u>Queensland</u>  Atherton  Bowen  Burnett (Burnett Heads/ Bargara)  Mareeba  Johnstone (Innisfail)</p>	<p><u>New South Wales</u>  Bega Valley  Cowra  Forbes  Gunnedah  Moree Plains  Mudgee  Narrabri  Parkes  Tumut  Young  Taree  <u>South Australia</u>  Murray Bridge  <u>Tasmania</u>  Huon Valley  Meander Valley (Prospect)</p>
<p>Welfare/retirement-migration vulnerable cluster (6)</p>	<p><i>Above average:</i>  Low-income households  Unemployment  Population change  Aged households  Proportion of single-parent families  Housing stress</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Queensland</u>  Livingstone (Yeppoon)  Hervey Bay</p>	<p><u>New South Wales</u>  Ballina  Bellingen  Byron Bay  Coffs Harbour  Eurobodalla (Batemans Bay/Moruya)  Great Lakes (Forster/Tuncurry)  Hastings  Kempsey  Lismore  Maclean  Nambucca</p>

This pattern is evident in data presented by Tonts (2000). Examining the South West of WA, Tonts shows that the pattern is a mix of local government areas that have experienced a population decline greater than 10%, those with a decline between 0 and 10% and others that have grown (see figure).

#### POPULATION CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN SOUTH WEST WA, 1991-97



As the figure (which is derived from fig. 4.1 in Tonts, 2000) shows, a broad crescent-shaped swathe of LGAs lying north, east and south of the Perth metro area experienced population decline in the time period 1991-97. At the same time, the coastal belt and areas further east, affected by mining and minerals, grew.

The area in decline corresponds broadly to the WA wheat belt, an area that has experienced a number of difficulties (and where sporting organisations are under great strain). Here, population decline is associated with numerous problems.

But it would be wrong to make an association along the lines that decline=problems and growth=no problems. Population growth can be an indicator of positive links; for example when people flow into an area because it is economically strong and offers employment and leisure opportunities. On the other hand, the inflow may be driven by an outflow from another, more depressed area and may reflect a search more for safety than for opportunity. Under such circumstances, net population growth is associated with, for example, an increase in people who are welfare dependent and whose resources (economic, social and psychological) are depleted in various ways. This type of growth is not associated with an increase in opportunity.

In the case of WA, for example, we can see the contrast between areas where growth is linked with opportunity and those where it is linked with difficulty by comparing the area around Bunbury and that around Geraldton. The Stimson analysis places Bunbury into the service-based opportunity cluster. This is an area where there is:

- above average
  - employment in extractive and transformative industries,
  - high-income households
  - routine production workers
  - persons with basic education
  - labour force participation
  - declines in unemployment *and*
  - increases in high incomes
- and below average
  - unemployment *and*
  - housing hardship.

On the other hand, Geraldton is in the manufacturing-based vulnerable cluster. This is an area of

- above average
  - increase in unemployment
  - proportion of single-parent households
  - employment in social services and distributive services
  - persons with basic education
  - housing stress
  - unemployment
  - in-person service workers *and*
  - routine production workers,
- and below average
  - population growth

The dilemma of a city like Geraldton was captured in the Human Rights Commission’s Bush Talks in 1998:

It’s not possible to provide equal services everywhere. But Geraldton is close to Perth and a big city. Yet the services here are inadequate. If that’s acceptable, then three-quarters of the State is written off in terms of improving anything. (cited in Sidoti, 2000 p.vii)

The lack of a uniform pattern of population change is even more marked when one examines towns as opposed to LGAs. For example, figures provided by Driscoll and Wood (1999) for South West Victoria are shown in the following table.

**Table 2.2. Population Change in LGAs in SW Victoria**

LGA	Town within the LGA	% change in LGA	% Change in Town
Glenelg	Portland	-1.1	-4.6
Southern Grampians	Hamilton	-1.2	-4.6
Warrnambool	Warrnambool	+0.8	+8.7
Corangamite	Camperdown	-1.0	-5.2
Colac Otway	Colac	-0.6	-4.5

The pattern that is clear here is that within an overall trend towards population decline:

- The small regional towns (Colac, Portland, etc) *declined more* than the overall LGA; *while*
- Warrnambool *increased more* than the overall LGA.

In population terms, Warrnambool was the big ‘winner’ in all this. Like many regional centres it is a ‘sponge city’, absorbing people from the surrounding areas and growing as a consequence. In this case, according to Driscoll and Wood “Warrnambool is the key growth centre for the region, reflecting the pattern evident across Victoria of population clustering in strategic regional centres... [and] ...has diversified its economic base which includes, but is not solely reliant upon, agricultural industries” (1999:24).

As with WA, there is in Victoria no clear link with growth/decline and opportunity/threat. Colac and Portland both experienced sharp population drops in the 1991-1996 period yet are listed by Stimson *et al* as being in the extractive/transformative-based opportunity cluster.

What is, however, clear is that none of the Stimson opportunity clusters are centred around agriculture *per se*. Instead, non-agricultural industries (tourism, mining, etc) are seen as the basis for opportunity.

This tension emerges in another recent study. Black *et al* (2000), reported to the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) on the priorities for research for rural communities. The first recommendation was that:

...for the purposes of its program of research on rural communities and rural social issues, RIRDC should focus primarily on people living on farms or in agricultural service centres. Although there is also a need for research on mining towns and coastal holiday/retirement communities, it is further from RIRDC’s core concerns and should generally be sponsored by other agencies. (Black, et al, 2000: ix.)

Of the four ‘opportunity clusters’ identified by Stimson *et al*, this criterion would immediately rule out three, leaving some parts of the fourth—the extractive/transformative-based opportunity cluster—to be included as of relevance to the RIRDC.

What these differences and tension make apparent is that when one refers to rural and regional Australia, or to rural and remote communities the phrase lumps together a highly disparate group of communities. Those communities may seem to share something in common, but in reality the more one searches for common themes the more elusive they become. As Sidoti puts it with regard to rural and remote communities, they are:

...by no means homogenous—indeed there are great differences by state and territory, size of town, wealth and environment. What they have in common is a small population spread across a vast area. (2000: vii)

But while ‘rural and remote communities’ may share this defining feature, it is less clear that the more commonly referred to category of ‘rural and regional Australia’ shares even this one feature. Warrnambool, Wagga Wagga and Whyalla (not to mention Geraldton, Gladstone or Geelong) hardly fit the model of ‘...a small population spread across a vast area’ yet all are part of ‘rural and regional Australia’.

In short, the first key point to stress from examining literature on rural communities is that **rural and regional Australia does not exist as a meaningful social entity**. All that is ‘shared’ by the conglomeration of places described by such a general phrase is an absence—they are not part of the highly urban area where most Australians live.

The second point to stress is that for any identified feature—such as population change—there does not seem to be any one set of effects that can be ‘read off’ as the necessary consequences of change. For example, population change has numerous effects, depending not only upon how much the population increases or decreases in a set period but also which people move. Two variations that have differing consequences include:

- the resources of those who move—losing people who have energy, skills or wealth or gaining people who are needy in these regards usually depletes the resilience of a community, while gaining those who have energy, skills or wealth and losing those who are needy will strengthen a community; *and*
- the age range of those who move—losing or gaining younger or older people will have complex effects of a variety of institutions from schools to bowling clubs.

It is important also to note that similar forces are affecting local government, the major force that provides services for the population at the ‘grass roots level’. As Daly explains, local government is entwined with globalisation in complex ways, often with the effect that it is reduced in its effectiveness and loses popular support:

... local government is the only organisation at the local level that potentially represents the whole community. In every community there are a range of organisations: service groups (such as Lions or Rotary), church groups, sporting organisations, youth or aged groups, and special interest groups (concerned with a range of issues from local industries through to heritage and conservation). The council is the natural link between these disparate forces. It is also usually the only organisation with a statutory base, and so has the capacity to present and argue community concerns with the outside world, especially with the State or Commonwealth government. Where issues need a regional, rather than a local voice, councils are usually the natural agents to work together to develop a coherent view on regional issues.

Councils might then be seen as the natural representatives of local communities. They can link communities to the higher levels of government in developing responses to social and economic problems. Yet in practice this does not always happen. There are many reasons why councils have not been as effective a force for local communities as might be expected. One concerns the resource base in which they have to work. *Caught between an ever increasing set of demands by their State government masters and their limited abilities to increase revenue, local government is often too straitened by demands and expectations. It becomes an inadequate vehicle for addressing issues that arise from declining industrial bases, high unemployment and falling incomes, infrastructure inadequacies, and the challenges arising from new technologies. It is clear that the expectations that local communities have of their councils is greater in the poorer, smaller and more remote places, and in districts that have suffered from the negative consequences of globalisation.* (Daly, 2000: 196-197, emphasis added).

A second key conclusion that we can draw therefore is that **unless actively assisted from the State or Commonwealth levels, local government is unlikely to have the resources to deal with problems of policy or service delivery in the area of sport and leisure needs**.

Turning to the way that changes in rural Australia link to the specific focus of this report, a number of important links can be identified. For example, in the important chapter by Tonts that examines the broad issues that have already been discussed, the author goes on to note that:

Alongside these broad population shifts, there are a number of other important demographic changes affecting Australia's rural communities. The majority of people leaving declining country towns are aged between 15 and 35 years (Hugo, 1994). This section of the population tends to leave rural areas because of the lack of employment and educational opportunities, and the greater lifestyle options available elsewhere .... For rural communities, though, this young adult population is vital in terms of providing a pool of marriage partners, maintaining birth-rates and, eventually, reproducing the school age groups. There is also evidence to suggest that this younger population cohort tends to generate economic growth through higher levels of spending than some other sections of rural communities ... Furthermore, the loss of this section of the population, together with the retention of older age cohorts, can contribute to a distorted age profile, with significant consequences for local social interaction and community sustainability. *The younger age groups are important in maintaining local social institutions and organisations, such as sporting teams and voluntary organisations, and in contributing to new and fresh ideas for rural communities.* (Tonts, 2000: 59, emphasis added)

Another interesting set of links is provided by McKenzie (2000). In asking where people "...fit into the rural equation" she describes some of the complex ways in which sporting organisations are linked to other rural social institutions and notes that:

A large number of participants in this research project have increased the land-size of their farm enterprise in order to achieve economies of scale and sufficient return on investment. Many of the same farmers expressed regret and concern about the dwindling rural population and the shrivelling of a sense of community. With little prompting, many conceded that a farm enterprise 'buying out' another farm enterprise translates to fewer children in the school, fewer teachers in the community, fewer customers for the local community, and so the cycle continues. This supports Lawrence and William's ... claim that 'a more productive agriculture is coming to mean less productive and viable rural communities'. This trend seems cumulative (McKenzie, 1994; Lawrence & Williams, 1990), and becomes self-sustaining as it leads to service diminution and subsequently out migration.

*The social and cultural aspects of restructuring have affected social institutions such as community repertory clubs, sporting clubs and service organisations.* Most respondents and interviewees were loath to overtly describe their town as 'dying', but it was obvious that many felt their town was struggling to remain socially, if not economically, viable. In the focus groups, residents were asked if it should be accepted that some towns be allowed to die, given the historical reasons for the location of towns and the current mobility of population. This caused a great deal of emotive discussion. It was suggested that the three large regional centres were a long distance from many farm enterprises, and that the time to travel to access services in these centres was time away from productive work and therefore a significant cost. Also, an attractive feature of rural life is a sense of community that has the potential to enhance the environment and the satisfaction of the individuals within that environment. Focus groups mentioned the importance of keeping older people in the community, and unless there are services to help maintain them, they will drift away to other centres. Older citizens are valued for their voluntary contributions around the district and their business.

Maintaining the younger generation was seen by some as a very important goal for local communities. If events and occasional entertainment are provided for younger people in the district, it is hoped they will be encouraged to stay. Few communities in this region had been able to provide facilities for youth entertainment, apart from hotels. In most towns children

congregate at hotels, even though legally they are not able to imbibe alcohol. Children go to the hotel because it is where parents and friends congregate. Most interviewees agreed that underage drinking was no more a problem in the bush than the city, but that pubs are sometimes the scene of unacceptable behaviour, and that children are often exposed to it at an early age in the bush, because pubs are often the only regular social gathering place in some communities. *Sport was the only other option most towns had to offer as a community activity, although sporting teams struggle for numbers as communities shrink. If one town's club or team amalgamates with that of another town, hotel, food and other entertainment outlets inevitably suffer in the town, which loses its organisation.*

Community activities are an avenue for establishing the friendships and social support that sustain individuals when services are not available. [...]

Maintenance of the sense of community often falls to civic-minded citizens who are prepared to give their time and energy. Nonetheless, community involvement comes at a cost to individuals, families and businesses. *Anecdotal evidence suggests that as economic margins narrow for some farm enterprises, farmers and their families spend less time contributing to their community and being actively involved in sporting teams, service organisations and recreational clubs.* (McKenzie, 2000: 81-2, emphases added)

Specific features of the social changes we have seen can have unexpected, and unintended consequences for small towns. For example, a decision to 'downsize and rationalise' made for economic reasons by a large national employer, such as Telstra or a major bank may have indirect effects on the levels of skills found in a town:

... branch closures usually lead to the direct loss of relatively highly paid and trained staff from the affected community. The multiplier effects of these direct losses can be significant, with the loss of even a few bank staff and their families causing 'knock-on' effects upon schools and similar services which often cannot afford to lose many students for fear that staffing levels will be reduced. A less easily quantifiable aspect of bank branch closure is its impact upon the overall level of financial acumen and expertise of the community. Prior to the early 1990s, bank managers at the local level could generally be regarded as repositories of local knowledge, having intimate knowledge of the relative credit worthiness of a range of local operators. The shift in recent years towards more centralised and instrumentalist modes of assessing the credit rating of loan applicants has eroded the value of this 'embodied' knowledge ... *Key bank staff, with their embodied knowledge and training, also often filled high profile and important positions within local sporting and social organisations. The loss of this pool of personnel therefore drains a community of one of its key resources of social capital and morale.* (Argent & Rolley, 2000: 157-158, emphasis added.)

Sport and leisure, then is intertwined with a myriad of social institutions and processes in the rural areas and in many cases we can see that the signs seem to point more towards 'problems and decline' than they do towards 'success and growth'.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to conclude this section on a completely negative note. As the excellent report by Driscoll and Wood (1999) has shown, a wide variety of possibilities exist whereby with imagination and effort, small communities have been able to find creative and successful responses to their problems, generating new sport and leisure activities and revitalising those that already exist. Such strategies, of course, are neither simple nor are there endless pain free options. For example, the story of Australian Football's Port Campbell Football Club (PCFC) (Driscoll and Wood, 1999: 95-97) is a case in point. Many people in Port Campbell felt that "...if you don't have a football club, you don't have a town". In the end, however, it proved impossible to sustain the club. But the

‘social hub’ that the club represented was replaced by a newly created and now thriving surf life saving club.

This story is optimistic viewed from the perspective of the town or those concerned with social capital. But it is less optimistic if it is viewed from the perspective of those who bank on a future for Australian Football.

This dilemma may be repeated in numerous examples—a town ages as younger people move out and older ones move in. As this happens the junior tennis club closes, football struggles but Lawn Bowls thrives. Is this good for the future of sport or not? It depends on your perspective what you think the answer is.

These examples from the literature lead to a third conclusion. **Overall, the evidence with regard to sport and leisure in rural areas points more to ‘problems and decline’ than to success and growth, yet the pattern is not uniform for there are areas of development and revitalisation.**

## Conclusion

A review of some key recent research and writing on rural Australia shows four key findings that are relevant to the task of this report:

5. There are numerous factors impacting on life in rural areas and the overall effect of these is to create complex challenges for people living in rural areas;
6. Rural and regional Australia does not exist as a single, meaningful social entity. All that is ‘shared’ by the conglomeration of places described by such a general phrase is an absence—they are not part of the highly urban area where most Australians live;
7. Unless actively assisted from the State or Commonwealth levels, local government is unlikely to have the resources to deal with problems of policy or service delivery in the area of sport and leisure needs.
8. Overall, the evidence with regard to sport and leisure in rural areas points more to ‘problems and decline’ than to ‘success and growth’, yet the pattern is not uniform for there are areas of development and revitalisation.

# **PART 2**

# **THE RESEARCH**

# 3

## The Survey Findings from The Farmwide Website

*“Once upon a time, in the country, the Sunday afternoon cricket match was an occasion for a social gathering—Mum would watch (score, maybe) and Dad (and sons) would play. It was a place of community gathering and building. Alas gone. “*

*‘Sport plays a vital part in outback town life because of the isolation many towns face’.*

*‘Sports will always play a big part of the Australian culture—whether it is a small town or not.’*

*‘I see our community profiting and building our facilities at the expense of the other communities around us. I see sport being really recognised as an integral part of a healthy community, and an important stress valve for rural communities like ours—under enormous stress from globalisation and the cyber revolution—struggling to redefine ourselves.’*

One of the major research needs that the study identified was a method to collect views from ‘real country people’—that is, from those people who live on properties or in very small towns. It is clear from the research on regional development that was reviewed elsewhere in this report that there is no single ‘rural and regional Australia’ with uniform patterns of change or need. Clearly, larger towns and regional centres are dissimilar from the very small town and properties. For example, while the latter experience population decline the former—the ‘sponge cities’—experience growth.

Ignoring such differences, it can be easy, but misleading to think that what people in Wagga Wagga or Warrnambool think is what ‘rural and regional Australia’ Australia think.

In discussions with Wendy Craik, then of NFF, it was discovered that FARMWIDE, a subsidiary organization of the NFF, maintained a website ([www.farmwide.com.au](http://www.farmwide.com.au)) and had a large list of people on-line in rural and regional areas.

It was decided, therefore, to place short, self-completion survey on their website and alert their subscriber list to its existence. In addition, RIRDC also alerted its subscriber list to the existence of the survey. As individuals completed their answers, the material was electronically relayed to QQSR for analysis.

In total, 100 on-line surveys were completed and received. Although there was a wide variety of detail given by respondents, there were a number of consistent themes that emerged. These are described and explored more fully following a sketch of the demographics of the respondents.

## Demographics of respondents

Gender was evenly distributed across the sample, with 46% of responses from females, and 54% from males. With regard to the age split of respondents, the distribution was more clustered towards people aged above 30 years old. Fewer than 16% of the sample were under 30 years old, 62% were aged between 31 and 50, while the remaining 22% were aged 51 or over.

Similarly, the spread of the sample geographically across Australia was clumped, with 47% responding from NSW. Percentages of the other states were: VIC – 12%, QLD – 13%, WA – 11%, TAS – 2%, SA – 12%, and ACT – 2%. No surveys were received from the Northern Territory.

The majority (73%) of respondents live on a property or in a community/town of less than 1000 people. The remainder of the respondents lived either in a town of 1000-5000 people (19%), in a larger town/regional centre (6%), or in a major city (2%). This is a most gratifying breakdown. The intention was to ensure that the survey would give picture of the concerns of rural people—not the views of those in the larger regional centres not the views of sporting bodies. The fact that virtually three-quarters of the sample came from properties or very small communities means that this intention was achieved.

Over two-thirds (69%) of the surveys were received in response to an email that Farmwide sent to their mailing list of on-line farmers. Another 20% of surveys were completed as a result of people finding the link on the home page of the Farmwide web site. People who found the link on the RIRDC web site submitted a further 3% of the surveys.

## Involvement in sport

The themes that are identified in this section are identified as far as possible by induction (that is, by comparison and observation) rather than by pre-supposing their existence. Of course, given the existence of a theoretical scheme, such induction is never completely ‘innocent’, but as far as we are able we allowed the material to determine the categories rather than imposing the categories upon the data.

Nearly 70% of respondents indicated that they are directly involved in some sports or physically active recreation, either as a participant or as an official/club member.

The range of involvement was vast. The most popular sports (in descending order of popularity) were:

- Tennis;
- Rugby/football/touch footy;
- Golf;
- Horse riding/sports;
- Swimming;
- Lawn bowls;
- Cricket; *and*
- Netball.

Other sports/recreational activities that were also mentioned include: Shooting; Hockey; Basketball; Coaching; Cycling; Running; Athletics; Squash; Indoor Cricket; Walking; Indoor soccer; Sailing/dragon boats; Gliding; Snow/water ski; and Gym/fitness Centre.

## Perceived need for sports development

*Just over 60% of the surveys received reported people feeling an urgent need for sporting/recreational facilities or sport development in the area in which they lived.* The reasons were very varied; however they can be categorised into three main groups, with a few outliers.

**Facilities.** The most commonly mentioned need related to facilities: twenty-two people described a need for better quality facilities; and eight people said they have limited access to facilities. Comments included:

‘As population reduces the maintenance of facilities is becoming too large a burden’.

‘There needs to be more support and funding for sporting facilities and clubs, as most clubs struggle to cover costs and meet weekly costs, while providing decent grounds for the sport to be played on’.

‘It is a mainstay in rural life and continually needs to be improved’.

**Skills.** The second most commonly given answer relates to the foundation of skills among the population of their area. Ten respondents said they lacked skilled coaches in their areas and five people mentioned a lack of people with administration skills to operate teams/clubs. This shortfall of skills reportedly causes problems for the ongoing operation of organised sports in various areas. This was particularly true for the more rurally located respondents, some of whom said:

‘Greater awareness of opportunities for volunteers to improve their administrative skills which will enable them to better manage and improve their club.’

‘Quality coaches, judges, referees etc are hard to retain. Compulsory Update courses for officials are city based, long distances are needed to remain accredited officials.’

‘We have many groups that have facility development or maintenance needs. They are struggling to know where to best use their resources. There is little professional knowledge of planning or project management skills.’

‘Urgent \$ spent to upgrade the facilities & funding for training participants & increasing the skills level of coaches, particular reference to girls sports.’

‘Funding to be able to access top trainers on a regular basis.’

**Opportunities.** The third category relates to opportunities for different ages and different sports that areas can offer to the residential population. Eleven people in total mentioned limited sport opportunities and limited range of sports in their area, with particular emphasis given to the need for junior sports. For example:

‘Need a separate competition to the adult teams because some towns have young populations and others do not. But there is still the trend for all sport to revolve around the senior team structure. Travel is a killer too. Families have to travel over 100 kms to weekly activities. Nothing for children under the age of 8 in rural communities. No mini swimming programs etc.’

As can be seen from the following quotes, parents indicated that the education system plays a vital role in the involvement/encouragement of youth in sport, suggesting that if the school does not encourage participation, then sports may struggle to survive in the area:

‘Sport has to be recognised at school level to get a % coming through into senior sport which requires commitment from schools to recognise the importance of sport and other extra curriculum activities in children’s development.’

‘The kids from the properties need some kind of sport camp incorporated into the distance education curriculum. These rural kids do not have the opportunity to have the same sport training as the town school kids. Sporting plays a big part of acceptance in boarding school (which these kids have to attend) and it would be a very important step if the School of Distance Education could provide the students with a bit of a sporting background.’

‘Local school is not encouraging sport or supporting children in their endeavours.’

‘My children will have to travel to Mildura/Horsham or Swan Hill, all over 150 kilometres away if they demonstrate some serious interest. Other than that, what they get at school will be all they will get.’

‘Lack of sport in primary school is appalling.’

‘Sports generally are declining because they are not supported by the education department.’

‘The education and encouragement to younger kids is lacking and they are the future of all sport and communities.’

A positive influence from schools can, in turn, lead to a positive impact on youth in sport:

‘I sent my children to boarding school so that they could participate in weekend sport at larger regional centres. It worked for our family and now I have a daughter studying to be a physical education teacher and representing her area in at least four or five sporting fields.’

Another respondent said that a number of sports flourish in their area “because the three schools in the town promote sports”.

**Other.** Other needs that were given mention were maintenance (3), equipment (2) and infrastructure (1).

## The decline of sports and recreation activities

In response to the question about the decline of sports and recreation activities, there was a large range of sports given as being on the decline. *The most common response was “most” or “all” sports are on the decline.* Frequently mentioned sports were cricket, football and tennis. (See Table 3.1)

**Table 3.1: Sports Said To Be Declining**

On a property or in a community/town of less than 1000 people	In a town of 1000-5000 people	In a larger town/regional centre	In a major city
<b>Most/all (20)</b> <b>Cricket (10)</b> <b>Football (18)</b> <b>Bowling (2)</b> <b>Golf (6)</b> <b>Tennis (10)</b> <b>Team sports (7)</b> <b>High cost sports (1)</b> <b>Netball (3)</b> <b>Basketball (3)</b> <b>Hockey (2)</b> <b>Horse sports (1)</b> <b>Swimming (2)</b> <b>Female sports (2)</b>	<b>Most/all (4)</b> <b>Horse racing (1)</b> <b>Hockey (1)</b> <b>Gliding (1)</b> <b>Junior team sports (1)</b> <b>Football (4)</b> <b>Non-ball sports (2)</b> <b>Cricket (3)</b> <b>Tennis (2)</b> <b>Surf life saving (1)</b> <b>Little athletics (1)</b> <b>Depth of competition (1)</b> <b>Netball (2)</b> <b>Basketball (1)</b>	<b>Most/all (1)</b> <b>Lesser known sports (e.g. canoeing) (1)</b> <b>Rugby league (2)</b> <b>Athletics (1)</b> <b>Softball (1)</b> <b>Swimming (1)</b>	<b>Rugby league (1)</b> <b>Cricket (1)</b>

There were five themes (i.e. four, plus an ‘other’) identified by respondents as to why these sports are on the decline. These were population, financial, time, and travel. Each of these is discussed below.

**Population.** The size, structure and composition of the population were mentioned as having a significant impact on the decline of sports in an area. Population decline and changing population patterns in rural environments were the most noted. As a rule, the populations are aging as youth leave rural areas to head for opportunities (mostly educational and employment) that the larger towns/cities can offer them. This leaves a shortage of people to participate in sports, as well as a lack of coaches.

‘Most sports are [declining] due to the greater emphasis of government and larger corporations (i.e. banks etc) to focus on the larger capital cities thus forcing closures and people, particularly young people to leave country areas to seek education and employment opportunities. This in turn limits participation numbers and volunteers in all sports in the rural areas.’

‘Most [are in decline], because young people are leaving the communities in favour of bigger towns/the city with bigger opportunities.’

‘Depth of competition, less young people (sporting ages).’

‘Not enough competitors at senior levels so juniors are missing out altogether.’

‘Reduced population in the 17 to 25 age group due to having to leave our communities for education or work.... major impact.’

‘Numbers declining due to declining population; young lads not staying home on the farms compared to years ago; hence the youth are not around; they have to go to the bigger cities to get jobs.’

Not surprisingly, no comments were received from respondents living in major cities, with regard to this problem.

**Financial.** Results from the survey showed that the impact that finances could have on sports was not limited just to the rural areas. Responses in this vein were received from a

wide range of respondents, regardless of the size of the community in which they reside. As shown in the following comments, the economy of an area impacts upon the maintenance of facilities and services, therefore sports opportunities decline if the money is not there to support them:

‘Everything is in decline due to a combination of reduced services and facilities, cost of managing to maintaining grounds, courts, pools etc (changes to water charges for example)...can go on forever on this one.’

‘Depopulation as a result of withdrawal of key government services.’

‘The centralisation of competition in the major centres almost makes the self-funding impossible.’

‘Financial burden is high in small communities who provide facilities from own resources largely, while our metropolitan counterparts have facilities and organisation largely provided.’

‘Sports such as cricket which require a high level of up keep.’

‘Lack of all year round sporting venues.’

‘All [are in decline] due to declining numbers and increasing costs to run them.’

‘Local people ... are keen to participate in a fixtures program if venue closer with lights for night events such as tennis.’

These comments suggest that communities are willing to participate in sport if the facilities that matched the population’s needs were available to them, however a struggling economy prohibits access to such luxuries.

**Time.** When asked about the decline of sports, many responses suggested that time is an issue. That is, that people have less leisure time than in past generations. Furthermore, people don’t have the time (or perhaps the inclination) to make a weekly commitment, or they might be working on weekends when they might otherwise have been participating in sport. Comments included:

‘The organised sporting clubs are reporting having the greatest difficulty surviving in a world where everyone works 80 hour weeks. People want sport on tap, but they can't afford to be tied in competitions because of work pressures. I initiated the fitness centre in our community because I like so many other people wanted a fitness activity that I could do at 6 am or 6 pm—on my terms, without having to be committed to a team. We have filled a real niche.’

‘People are less attracted to commitment week in week out e.g. for a season long sport. I guess partly because we all travel so much more for w/e etc due to ease.’

‘Younger people (ages 14 -20) have part time jobs which include a lot of weekend work. E.g. Woolworths, McDonalds, KFC etc all employ a lot of young people who previously would have participated in sport on Saturdays.’

‘People have less time and maybe less energy!!’

‘All Sports [are in decline] due to no organisation, lack of commitment & community apathy’

‘Both partners who work do not want weekend commitments.’

‘Due to population moving to larger centres, greater demands on volunteers (such as doing ever increasing amount of book work) means less interest in covering all sports.’

All of the comments received in relation to this theme were submitted by people living on a property or in a community/town of less than 1000 people. This does not suggest, however, that people from larger populations do not feel the impact of time; it may merely reflect that the survey sample is heavily skewed towards the more rural populations.

**Travel.** A fourth theme that emerged as a contributor to the decline of sports was travel. This is intertwined with both of the last two themes (financial, and time), as it was mentioned that travel was either too expensive or took too much time. The vast majority of travel related comments were received, not unpredictably, from people living in rural communities. Comments included:

‘We are an hour from "town" hence team sports are difficult to maintain with the travel involved.’

‘Sport will still be an important leisure activity in the well-populated rural areas but will continue to decline in the lesser populated more remote areas which will force people to travel if they wish to continue to participate in their chosen sport.’

‘Members and their supporters have to travel anywhere up to 4 hours one way to play one game and the cost of these trips becomes too expensive.’

‘A lot of junior sports [are in decline] because of the declining employment and high costs to travel the long distances that have to be travelled to compete.’

**Other.** In addition to these four above mentioned themes, there were other factors that were noted as contributing to the decline of sports. These included the impact of media, commercialisation, and the range/type of sports available.

With regard to media, it is interesting to note that respondents reported its effect on particular sports rather than all sports in general. These comments were received only from those living in communities of 1000-5000 people (small towns). They related to the impact of television (in particular, with regard to horse racing), and poor media coverage in rural areas. *The implication from these comments is that if particular sports are not well televised in an area, then interest in that sport dwindles.* Comments included:

‘Rugby union/poor administration by NSWCRU and poorer media (TV) coverage in rural areas.’

‘Non-ball sports are declining, media hype (and sponsorship) centres around ball sports.’

‘Horse racing—because of government interference, no broadcasts from ABC any longer.’

Commercialisation was also mentioned as a factor:

‘The commercialisation of sport has had a negative impact on club games—our footy club is going back to not paying players, because the emphasis on the game changed to winning at all

costs, instead of playing the game to your full potential. But they are one of the few clubs who have taken this step—it's a shame more don't try it.'

The percentage of surveys received from people living in major cities (2%) was significantly small, however it is still possible to see a difference in the problems facing sport. While the rural residents tend to find a lack of sports available in their area, the major cities seem to have an abundance, which makes it more difficult for all to survive. For example:

'Rugby league—it is no longer the only choice i.e. Competition from other sports and leisure activities.'

## Thriving sports and recreation activities

The most common response to the question about sports that might be flourishing was that “none” are flourishing. This confirms the pattern outlined above that “most or all” sports are in decline.

Nonetheless, this is not the full story. Similar to the decline of sports and recreation activities, there was a large range of sports that were noted as thriving. Some of the sports in fact were the same as mentioned for declining. Those most commonly identified as flourishing were golf, lawn bowls, tennis, horse sports (in particular, camp drafting), football (various codes) and soccer. (See Table 3.2.)

**Table 3.2: Sports Said To Be Thriving**

On a property or in a community/town of less than 1000 people	In a town of 1000-5000 people	In a larger town/regional centre	In a major city
<b>None (16)</b> <b>Family oriented sports (1)</b> <b>Low cost &amp; low maintenance sports (1)</b> <b>Golf (7)</b> <b>Bowls (7)</b> <b>Fishing (1)</b> <b>Tennis (6)</b> <b>Auskick (1)</b> <b>Camp drafting/horse sports (5)</b> <b>Junior football/soccer (4)</b> <b>Junior netball (2)</b> <b>Junior basketball (1)</b> <b>Football (7)</b> <b>Local recreation club (1)</b> <b>Junior tennis (3)</b> <b>Swimming (3)</b> <b>Basketball (3)</b> <b>Touch football (1)</b> <b>Netball (3)</b> <b>Cricket (2)</b> <b>Triathlon (1)</b> <b>Junior cricket (1)</b>	<b>None (1)</b> <b>Horse sports (1)</b> <b>Rugby league &amp; union (3)</b> <b>Football (1)</b> <b>Netball (1)</b> <b>Tennis (1)</b> <b>Ball sports (1)</b>	<b>None (2)</b> <b>Basketball (2)</b> <b>Football (7)</b> <b>Development programs for youth (1)</b> <b>Olympic sports (1)</b> <b>Hockey (1)</b> <b>Cycling (1)</b> <b>Netball (1)</b> <b>Soccer (3)</b> <b>Touch football (1)</b> <b>Golf (1)</b> <b>Armchair sports (1)</b> <b>Cricket (1)</b> <b>Tennis (1)</b>	<b>Women's soccer (1)</b> <b>Indoor sports (1)</b>

It might seem that this stands in contradiction to the earlier finding. How can the same sports both be in decline and flourishing? The answer is relatively simple and hinges on two factors. First, there is no single, uniform trend across the whole country. Second, even with the “same” evidence in front of them people draw varied conclusions. Of these two factors,

the former is more important to our study. The lack of uniformity across the country fits with the point developed elsewhere in the report to the effect that there is no single “rural and regional Australia”, which in turn makes the idea of a policy more complex to develop.

Turning to the details on sports seen to flourish, there were five themes (i.e. four, plus an ‘other’) identified by respondents as to why these sports are on the decline. These were population, community support, financial, time, and access. Three of these are the same as were mentioned for the decline of sports. This is not as contradictory as it first may appear; it is simply two sides of the same coin. That is, what makes one sport decline is the same thing as makes a different sport thrive. For example, if a sport that youth generally play (such as football) is declining due to an aging population, the survey results show that a sport more congenial to an older population (such as bowls) is likely to thrive.

Each of the themes is discussed below.

**Population.** Sports that thrived in an area were reported as doing so in response to the population make up of a given area. That is, if a sport matches the population composition (such as games that need a low number of players, or are not age specific) then it succeeds. As with decline, population was only noted by those living in rural communities. Comments included:

‘Junior football and netball are OK because the youth have not reached the age they need to leave home to find jobs. ‘

‘Tennis, it is not gender or age specific.’

‘[Nearby] larger town drawing on an active young population.’

‘Bowls—aging population.’

**Community Support.** If a community has a good structure, a high level of enthusiasm and support for a sport, then the sport is very likely to thrive. This is true for communities of most sizes, up to (but not including) major cities. Comments illustrating the importance of community support included:

‘We are a very family oriented town—so any sport that emphasises family does well.’

‘Our town is very supportive of sport.’

‘Thriving in the local township because of easy access and enthusiastic community who enjoy a wide variety of sports and have adequate facilities to play them.’

‘A few dedicated families sustaining a comprehensive set up.’

If a community supports particular sports or activities, then it is almost certain to be available and accessible to local residents, furthermore enhancing its chances of success. The following comments show the importance of access, as well as community support:

‘Scrubby Creek Sports Club—a locally based recreation club that has tennis, golf, clay target, and cricket facilities as well as a water hole—why, it is 100 km from the nearest town—the local community built it and maintain it so they use it.’

‘The swimming club has built one of the best facilities in the region, so they do quite well.’

‘Facilities are in town and available all year round.’

**Financial.** As could be expected (and as was seen in the above section on decline), finances greatly impact upon the survival of a sport. If a sport is inexpensive to participate in, then it is likely to grow. Similarly, if there is funding available to develop, maintain, and attract players (in the form of salaries or bonuses) then a sport is likely to dominate. For instance, Rugby league and football were identified as advancing due to available funds. One respondent called it the power of the “Mighty Dollar”. Other comments included:

‘Development programs in place are extremely good; money is available to run school programs, holiday camps etc, which of course is self-generating in terms of new athletes.’

‘Rugby league- because there is money in it.’

‘Tennis—it is a cheap sport.’

**Time.** It was mentioned earlier that time was a contributing factor to the decline of some sports. People don’t want to commit on a weekly basis, or are simply too busy to find the time for sports. It is not surprising, therefore, that the survey results show that some sports are thriving because they are quick to play, or take little time and commitment from players and supporters (e.g. parents).

‘[Indoor sports]... the games are quick and occur in all weather conditions.’

‘Basketball, touch football, netball ... fairly quick (for parents) generally well organised.’

‘Games not too long for parents to move children to and from sport.’

**Media.** Exposure through television, as well as promotions broadcast and endorsed by media, leads to the likelihood of particular sports becoming popular in the community in receipt of that coverage. Survey results show that this is truer for the communities that are more urban, such as the larger towns and major cities. Comments included:

‘National exposure through TV, etc. Kids are keen to play the sport.’

‘Depends a bit on the fashion ... when I first moved to this area soccer was all the go. Now with the AFL promotions it is on the increase.’

‘In the short term the Olympic sports will have a positive impact in terms of increased participation numbers but this will level out over the next 12 to 18 months.’

‘Women’s soccer—the Matilda’s effect, a game of skill for all sizes and shapes (unlike basketball), soccer mum effect.’

‘[Basketball, Aussie Rules, soccer, cricket, tennis] thrive due to exposure of these sports, at the expense of non ball sports, in the media.’

## How is the future of sport perceived?

The survey asked respondents how they perceived the future of sports. It was readily apparent that the comments here fell neatly into one of two categories – positive and negative assessments about the future of sports. *Sadly, but perhaps expectedly, the negative far outweighed the positive.* Both of these categories are discussed below.

**Positive.** The positive comments that people made when considering the future of sports came mostly from small rural communities. As can be seen from the quotes below, they relate to the younger population expanding and also different types of sports becoming available to children:

‘I think with the young population that there will not be a problem.’

‘Excellent junior player base growing every year.’

‘Children to experience other types of sport.’

‘Lots of people having lots of fun.’

**Negative.** The negative comments reiterate what has been mentioned earlier in this section. There seems to be concern, mostly among the smaller communities, that sport will decline. Several people made mention of particular sports folding, and moving to bigger towns. This, in turn, would increase the travelling distances required for rural people to participate, and would therefore make their participation in (and access to) sport more challenging. Comments included:

‘The Football club as we know it will eventually fold and amalgamate with another town.’

‘Will be none this time next year as cricket club is about to go to town.’

‘More amalgamations and centralisation to the biggest population areas hence more travelling and higher costs

‘More travelling to be able to participate, amalgamations of towns, concentration of major sports, lack of general involvement.’

‘Declining facilities and declining population—people travelling away from the area to source good coaches/trainers and facilities.’

‘Decline and amalgamations with other areas, more travel.’

‘Having to travel enormous distances.’

There is also recognition from residents of a much larger community (larger town/regional centre) of the problems that may face sports in rural areas:

‘Sport will still be an important leisure activity in the well populated rural areas but will continue to decline in the lesser populated more remote areas which will force people to travel if they wish to continue to participate in their chosen sport.’

Finally, the issue of competition and commercialisation was raised again:

'Bigger clubs who are spending more money not necessarily the grass root sides who still play because they are local and just play for the enjoyment.'

# 4

## Links Between The Farmwide Findings And The Literature

Before examining other data gathered, it is useful to make links between the general sports literature that was examined in Chapter 1 and the empirical findings in Chapter 3. This Chapter draws attention to such links. In each case the quote from the literature review is juxtaposed with a finding from the Farmwide survey. In some cases, the link is one of continuity. That is, what was identified in the literature as a past or current theme is shown to continue today. In other cases, what is seen is contrast—something that was true in the past is ceasing to be true today.

### Television:

*(From Lit Review)* ..... And sports new to Australia, such as basketball and volleyball have flourished as television coverage facilitates accelerated globalisation of culture.

*(From Farmwide)* ..... The implication from these comments is that if particular sports are not well televised in an area, then interest in that sport dwindles.

### Celebrities in Sport:

*(From Lit Review)* Consequently organisers have become all too aware of the need to create an image of excitement, colour and action that will capture the attention of viewers. Simultaneously, viewers are more attracted to the sports where they can relate to the personalities and celebrities who dominate the game.

*(From Farmwide)* ‘Women’s soccer—the Matilda's effect, a game of skill for all sizes and shapes (unlike basketball), soccer mum effect.’

### Sport as a “Social cement”:

*(From Lit Review)* (In recent history) ...[m]ore than any other form of culture, sport became the social cement, which bound together the many new communities that formed Australian society [...] an emerging sense of belonging [...] developing a local identity

*(Based on Farmwide)* The same could be said for society today. Farmwide findings showed consistently that community support is important. “If a community has a good structure, a high level of enthusiasm and support for a sport, then the sport is very likely to thrive.”

## Weekends –less time to play sport:

*(From Lit Review)* The introduction of the half-day Saturday provided a greater amount of leisure time and for the first time enabled a regular weekly slot for sport to be created

*(Based on Farmwide)* This is changing. As can be seen from quotes from Farmwide write up ..... ‘Younger people (ages 14 -20) have part time jobs which include a lot of weekend work. E.g. Woolworths, McDonalds, KFC etc all employ a lot of young people who previously would have participated in sport on Saturdays.’

## Commercialisation:

*(From Lit Review)*—Compounding the changes in values and composition of traditional geographic communities were the increasing financial demands by players and the growing commercial interests in sport.

*(From Farmwide)*—‘The commercialisation of sport has had a negative impact on club games—our footy club is going back to not paying players, because the emphasis on the game changed to winning at all costs, instead of playing the game to your full potential. But they are one of the few clubs who have taken this step—it's a shame more don't try it.’

*(From Farmwide)* ‘[The sport has a problem because of] bigger clubs who are spending more money, not necessarily the grass root sides who still play because they are local and just play for the enjoyment.’

## Limited access for rural communities:

*(From Lit Review)* Sport can provide alternative possibilities for earning an income and to make a break from the grinding poverty of rural and isolated communities, but access to specialist facilities and the sporting infrastructure necessary to make the jump into the more technical and professional sporting environment is extremely restricted.

*(From Farmwide)* Limited access to coaches and professional sports skills, limited access to facilities

## Sports as a social thing:

*(From Lit review)* Country football teams ‘cut across class, religious and economic barriers to unify people’ (Cashman, 1995, 99). Country tennis provided a similar focal point for social interaction in rural Australia, and early country cricket was also often simply a social event.

*(From Farmwide)* Once upon a time, in the country, the Sunday afternoon cricket match was an occasion for a social gathering—Mum would watch (score, maybe) and Dad (and sons) would play. It was a place of community gathering and building. Alas gone.

## Schools and sport:

*(From Lit Review,)* In fact the education system was one of the first important social institutions for sport, as school provided both respectability and legitimacy for sport. The importance of the education system in cultivating an interest from children and developing their ability in sporting activities has its earliest origins with the development of education in Australia.

*(From Farmwide)* As can be seen from the ... quotes, parents indicated that the education system plays a vital role in the involvement/encouragement of youth in sport, suggesting that if the school does not encourage participation, then sports may struggle to survive in the area:

## Time for sports:

*(From Lit Review)* While money is obviously a factor in a child's participation in organised sport, time is equally important. Taking to children to sporting events can be a full-time occupation in itself, and along with this is the time required for spectating, officiating, fundraising and coaching. The time demands can be so great on a parent that they may be forced to pull a child out of organised sport altogether.

*(From Farmwide)* When asked about the decline of sports, many responses suggested that time is an issue. That is, that people have less leisure time than in past generations. Furthermore, people don't have the time (or perhaps the inclination) to make a weekly commitment, or they might be working on weekends when they might otherwise have been participating in sport.

*(From Farmwide)* It was mentioned earlier that time was a contributing factor to the decline of some sports. People don't want to commit on a weekly basis, or are simply too busy to find the time for sports. It is not surprising, therefore, that the survey results show that some sports are thriving because they are quick to play, or take little time and commitment from players and supporters (e.g. parents).

# 5

## Responses From Sporting Organisations

### Sport and Identity: Responses from Sport Related Organisations

In July-August 2000, QQSR wrote to many organisations whose primary focus is sport related. Details for the organisation were acquired from the Australian Sports Directory 2000 (published by the Australian Sports Commission).

Responses were received primarily from organisations that were contacted first hand, but also from other interested groups who heard about the project by word of mouth. A list of organisations that responded follows:

- Netball Australia;
- Squash Australia ;
- Australian Softball Federation;
- Australian Sports Foundation;
- Australian Baseball Federation;
- Triathlon Australia;
- ACT Badminton;
- Australian Golf Union;
- Regional Community Development Australia;
- Tennis Australia;
- Basketball Australia;
- Badminton Victoria; and
- Victorian Farmers Federation.

Several other organisations replied to express their genuine interest in the project. Unfortunately, it was with regret that they were unable to give a full reply, as their time was limited due to the Olympics that were looming at the time.

A short list of questions were put forward to organisations, and these covered issues such as:

- The trends (and problems associated with these trends) in sport at the community level and in regional Australia;
- Where sport is headed in the 21st Century; *and*
- How organisations plan to link in with the future of sports.

## Trends in sport at the community level and in regional Australia

It is hardly surprising that trends in sport in regional and rural Australia noted by organisations were similar to those mentioned by the residents of those areas who responded to the Farmwide On-line Survey.

Current sporting trends in rural Australia seem to indicate that sport, while still popular, is beginning to suffer due to a population drift away from rural areas and towards larger cities as people seek employment and higher education opportunities elsewhere. As more people move from the towns, these towns start to 'die'. As a result, services provided are reduced, and the availability of facilities becomes limited or unable to maintain a suitable standard. There are many country towns with limited medical and financial services and some towns have none. Sport simply mirrors what is happening in the town. Frequently, associations in country areas affected by this trend experience great difficulties and some are forced to close down.

Generally sporting organisations reported a decline in participation numbers in rural areas. However, those sports that are thriving according to the Farmwide Survey were the same sports mentioned by organisations as thriving. Tennis participation in rural areas, for instance, enjoys a consistent level of participation. Other sports included golf and squash:

“Golf is generally in a strong position in rural areas across Australia. Most country towns have a golf club and it tends to be a focal point for the local community. We are also finding that the country areas are producing a large number of our leading golfers. This is due to the fact that golf is accessible and relatively inexpensive in the country as compared to the major capital cities.” (*Australian Golf Union*)

“I am aware that regional squash is quite healthy. In some areas it is far more vigorous than in our major cities. I think local community sporting venues are more inclined to be centres of activity in smaller communities than in larger communities, because of the limited range of sporting activities available and the sense of community & spirit of belonging that is more pronounced in smaller communities.” (*Squash Australia*)

Analysis of the Farmwide Survey showed that sports were likely to thrive if the required numbers to participate matched the numbers available in the population, or if the sport matched the population composition. Regional Community Development Australia (RCDA) draw a similar conclusion in regard to sports being connected to the residential population, saying that mixed gender competitions are “probably in response to not enough of one sex to play”.

In addition to difficulties associated with population, rural Australia seems to be facing critical issues dissimilar to those of its urban counterparts. One of these is an increasing difficulty in recruiting volunteers to assist with running clubs and associations. More and more players are indicating that, due to family and particularly work commitments, they do not have time to assist with the administration. ACT Badminton suggested that “the ability to just turn up and play where everything is laid on without feeling any obligation to contribute, may be one reason why many opt to play outside the formal structure of the sport”. Other similar comments include:

“Sport has changed in so far as we only want to play and go home. We now tend to look at sport for recreation away from the struggles of life. Unstructured sport is developing and extreme sports and outdoor recreation will prosper.”(*Regional Community Development Australia*)

“The major problem our sport is facing is decreasing numbers of volunteers and the computer alternatives for young people ... with the change in working conditions, extended shopping hours, etc and the associated legal liabilities with being involved in organised sport, we are finding it difficult to attract people with the time and expertise to drive the game at the grassroots level” (Netball Australia)

“A general decline in people giving their time in a voluntary capacity, which is not specific to rural areas, it is across society. Combine the decreasing number of volunteers with the ever decreasing number of people in a country town and the future of sport in a country area is not healthy.” (Basketball Australia)

“Due to a decline in population and working environments, volunteers are becoming vital to the continuance of sport in the communities. Unfortunately the loss of volunteers is a major factor to the decline in sport. It is becoming apparent that the volunteer administrators are aging and are often reticent to embrace current administration practices and trends.” (Tennis Australia)

“Sporting administration gets more complex and it is harder to find volunteers to coach, support and drive children around or to run the business of the clubs ... It is not even about the administration tasks of managing money, it is getting enthusiasm and commitment to participate.” (Victorian Farmers Federation)

“Badminton as a sport is expanding however, it is not clear whether the expansion is national or restricted to the capital cities ... the unfortunate thing is that most of these players are not interested in competition and merely play socially. The inability of state organisations to attract players to competition or to registered clubs limits our financial resources, which impacts on our ability to market the sport.” (Badminton Victoria)

A further trend in country areas seems to be that the “big sports get bigger”. This can be seen in the following comments:

“Country areas embrace sport with a passion, but this seems to be the case with only the big sports, i.e. football, netball, basketball etc. As softball is not classed as a big sport, it is struggling for growth in country areas as a general rule” (Australian Softball Federation)

“Rural youth, in particular are given opportunities to play a range of sports, however the concentration is with the major sports such as football, cricket, tennis and basketball.” (*Badminton Victoria*)

It was hinted that the impact of sponsors could contribute to the decline of sports in rural Australia. Triathlon Australia, for example, said that many of the top triathlon events held must be in major cities, due to demands from sponsors.

## Sport in the 21st Century

Change is the word that best describes the main theme that arose when sporting organisations were asked how they see the future of sports. In general, the change mentioned was with reference to: how society commits to utilising recreational time for

sport; advances in technology; the meaning behind sport (e.g. elitism versus participation); and funding/financial arrangements. Each of these is described below.

### Commitment

There was a very strong feeling from the organisations that sport is heading towards a 'fast food' style in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is, people will want to play and go, without any additional commitment that might encroaches on their recreational time. This perception is congruent with the results the Farmwide On-Line Survey. Comments from sporting organisations include:

“With the development of the fast food mentality, more people will want to play and run. So new types of scoring and rules will probably be required.” (Squash Australia)

“Sport is certainly heading towards a more 'user pays' and 'fast food' style in the 21st century. Lifestyles dictate that people don't have as much time for recreational activities, so they are forced away from the traditional styles and timings of sporting activities.” (Australian Softball Federation)

“More participation in recreational type sports. Less participation in traditional weekend team type competitions.” (Australian Baseball Federation)

“Fitness programs and strength training will be increased and a more diverse experience will be offered from the normal structured game. University sport will encourage more community involvement and offer more facilities and structures for diverse experiences. Local clubs situated within a University precinct will begin to formalise linkages and University sport will be the leader in Australia. (Regional Community Development Australia)

“There is a move towards 'fast food' sport where people want to play their game and then leave, not becoming involved in the organisation of the activity. This trend will be seen more in the metropolitan areas where the capacity to employ people to fill the roles of referees and scorers is greater. The country areas will lag behind but still head down this track.” (Basketball Australia)

### Technology

With regard to technological advances and its impact on sport, the following quotes demonstrate how sport will need to undergo (and has already undergone) changes in line with IT progress, in order to survive. The changes in IT may well assist in particular with rural and remote areas of Australia that would otherwise have to overcome problematical boundaries such as travelling large distances, higher costs to participate, and so forth.

“It will need to be more adapted to technology; making better use of electronic scoring; recording scores on the Internet for all to see; making better use of Websites to maintain interest & attract players; actually conducting competitions using the Web.” (Squash Australia)

“Rural residents are very adept at using the Internet ... Computers allow for the rural resident to move closer to the large population areas with very little effort and expense. For sport to be competitive in the 21st Century club administrations must be prepared to meet the challenge of change.” (Tennis Australia)

## The meaning of sport

There are two different images existent among the responses from organisations with regard to the meaning of sport in the future.

The following comments show how some sporting organisations perceive sport to be adopting a meaning based around the concept of ‘entertainment’, and suggest that the direction of change will continue towards elitism and ‘lounge chair sports’:

“Likely gravitation to elite competitions on television.” (Australian Baseball Federation)

“Elitist and for entertainment rather than participation – shades of ancient Rome and the gladiators.” (Victorian Farmers Federation)

“Sports are continuing their trend towards entertainment. They do this in order to survive. There will be conflict between sponsorship and the meaning behind sport.” (Triathlon Australia)

In a different way, some other organisations indicate that sports are heading towards participation and health. Comments include:

“A shift towards participation (rather than elite) sport is being seen. For example, ACTIVE AUSTRALIA that is a program aimed at reducing Australian health costs.” (Triathlon Australia)

“Towards physical activity rather than competition. Sport will be used more from a health and suicide issue ... Health and Youth issues can be minimised in regional areas if LGA's could encourage the multi use of facilities and the fit for life type programs.” (Regional Community Development Australia)

## Funding/finances

It is evident that some sporting organisations believe that the way in which sport receives/maintains funding will change in the near future, regardless if whether it is funding obtained in a private/business-like fashion, or funding from government.

The following comments demonstrate how some organisations see changes in the future of private funding for sport:

“Sport administration will need to be more financially self-sufficient.” (Squash Australia)

“Perhaps the future for small sports such as ours lies in the development of privately and publicly funded leisure and community centres where facilities, coaching and competition can be provided by paid personnel and possible elite players can be identified for further development by a local academy of sport.” (ACT Badminton)

“Sport as a commercial opportunity rather than a community recreational activity ... Nationalisation and globalisation of sports that make it more business orientated and regional clubs seeking reward for producing stars that feed into the national and global competitions.” (Victorian Farmers Federation)

The next few comments show a different perspective, with regard to government funding, showing a recognition from organisations that the role government takes in funding sport, be it at the local, state or federal levels, is important:

“If governments of all persuasions and all levels fail to recognise the value of sport at the community level and inject a far greater level of funds (and not at the expense of the elite end of sport) then you will see a drop off in participation levels which in turn will mean a less healthy population (increase then needed in health budget) and a rise in crime and substance abuse (further increases will then be needed here as well). An increase in sport funding, with a view to providing career paths, for coaches, umpires and administrators will also assist (particularly in rural areas) in lowering the unemployment rate. This should be seen by government as an investment in Australia and its people which in the long term will save money and provide a happier and healthy community.” (Netball Australia)

“The sport focus is shifting and there will be strong interest post Olympics, but the impact may be that without govt grants, sponsorship and other forms of funding, the interest in sport may quickly decline.” (Australian Sports Foundation)

“Specific funding for sport in rural and regional areas from the 3 levels of government is vital to continue to provide opportunities for people in the country.” (Basketball Australia)

## How sporting organisations intend to link in with the future of sport

When asked how they plan to link in with the future of sport, the replies received from organisations can be simply categorised into one of two types: adaptability; and partnership building with sporting stakeholders.

The first of these is highly predictable given that the section above outlined the widespread change foreseen for the future of sports. Adaptability is virtually a requirement where substantial change is in the works.

Just as inevitably, the goal for organisations to build partnerships with various stakeholders addresses the changes in funding/financial arrangements that were noted in the previous section.

### Adaptability

Comments from organisations indicate a strong intention to be adaptable to meet the abundance of changing needs of both society and sporting groups. It appears that some organisations are considering diversifying the styles and times of sports/competitions. For example, the Australian Softball Federation stated:

“Softball Australia has for some time been developing and implementing alternative styles and timing of softball competitions, for example, Mixed Fastpitch Softball. Many Associations are now installing lights in their venues due to the increasing popularity of playing games at night time.” (Australian Softball Federation)

Similarly, other organisations such as Tennis Australia and Basketball Australia have planned changes to way they operate their sporting programs. The primary intentions of these changes are to improve the way resources are utilised, and to focus the organisations attention towards rural areas. Comments from these two organisations are as follows:

“Basketball Australia is currently developing a primary school and local association program. By developing the content of the program and supporting resources this will assist local basketball associations as they will deliver an established program rather 50 local associations developing their own. This is to reduce duplication of resources for local associations and their volunteers.” (Basketball Australia)

“Tennis Australia sees the need to service our members in rural areas. In an endeavour to achieve objectives in participation and client services, Tennis Australia has allocated funding to each member association for the employment of regional development officers (RDO). The RDO tasks include coordination of the ACE Tennis in Schools Program: establishment of links with clubs/centres and community based programs and management of development programs that include National Tennis Day, Tennis for People with disabilities, Active Australia and Tennis Administrators Volunteer Programs. As an adjunct to this position, Tennis Australia sees the RDO as a vital link to ensuring the continued development of tennis in rural areas. The RDO will gain first hand knowledge of the needs and wants of the tennis community and be in a perfect position to service the clubs.” (Tennis Australia)

A further example of adaptability is the changes that the Australian Golf Union is implementing. The programs adopted focussing principally on the changes in technology:

“We have a number of national programmes underway to ensure the continued growth and unity of the sport. One such programme is Golflink, our national computerized handicap system. This links all golf clubs and golfers across Australia to a national database that has a number of significant benefits, particularly to Clubs in remote areas. We also have other programmes such as our modified golf game, Wilson Go-Go Golf and our National Skills Award Scheme.” (Australian Golf Union)

Along the same line, Squash Australia plans to “develop a more attractive and more regularly updated Website” to demonstrate adaptability to the ever changed world of technology.

### Partnerships

Building partnerships with various sport stakeholders, such as government bodies, universities and businesses was identified by organisations as an essential stepping-stone to the future of sport. Comments include:

“Currently we have identified that securing volunteers with financial expertise is a difficulty and we are working with our major sponsor, the Commonwealth Bank, to trial a project that will link the local branch 'small business advisors' with our Associations – which after all are small businesses. This should be a win-win situation with the Associations receiving financial advice and assistance and the bank having an opportunity to develop business arrangements with the association and promote its goods and services to the individual members.” (Netball Australia)

“Investigate means of generating funds from merchandising and sponsorship.” (Squash Australia)

### Other Issues

A number of other interesting comments were made, all of which were germane to this project. Important examples are:

“Sport often is the main social outlet for Country towns where everyone comes together on a Saturday to watch the local football side take on another town. It is unlikely that trends will affect the importance of sport within a country community.” (Basketball Australia)

“The clubhouse is a social link to the community through mid week competitions and junior/senior competitions on Saturday and Sunday.” (Tennis Australia)

“There are issues about the social fabric of rural Australia and sport enhancing those communities as a good place to live. There needs to be a mix of cultural and sporting opportunities/activities to make any community a nice place to live. Participation in sport either as a player or spectator provides social opportunities and help to bond a community. Disasters also can bond a community, but it would be preferable that sport acts as the social glue.” (Victorian Farmers Federation)

“Revitalisation of rural towns can be assisted through sport and recreation pulling together their resources and offer leisure activities and camps for city dwellers.” (Regional Community Development Australia)

# 6

## Other Consultations And An Overview Of Issues Raised

This chapter summarises issues raised in other consultations and offers an overview of factors impacting on sport.

### Other Consultations

As indicated in Chapter 1, a major initiative was undertaken to collect, collate and review published sources, which were combined into the literature review.

At the same time, a search was undertaken via the Internet and, where source material was identified it was collected and, if possible, researchers/authors contacted via email and/or telephone.

Snowball sampling was then used to move from one contact to another, resulting in contacts with individuals in Departments of Sport and Recreation and in a number of University Centres.

A number of issues emerged via these consultations. Many of them have already been covered and there seems little point in re-visiting them in this chapter. Rather, it will pay to look at things that emerged here that add to the discussion.

First, a key issue that was raised is been the pressure on sporting organisations (especially State level bodies) as sport becomes more professional and big business. In colloquial terms, these organisations find themselves ‘caught between a rock and a hard place’...:

- *The Rock*
  - As the central groups become more ‘professional’ (work office hours for a salary, have a tertiary background in relevant areas, etc) a gap opens up between them and the country regions. This gap is exacerbated when there are problems in the country, as there have been in the last decade. Then the country people feel cheated off and secessionist. Almost like the American patriots who cried “no taxation without representation”, the country people wonder “what can the State sporting organisations do for us...”
  
- *The Hard Place*
  - At the same time, in the cities and local centres, the ‘fast food sport’ outlets compete strongly, taking away players and registrations, depleting the registered number in the sport and reducing income.

This tension admits of no easy resolution yet is familiar in Australia with its ‘tyranny of distance’ problems, emerging in recent times in areas such as telecommunications (with governments requiring universal service obligations of providers to ensure servicing of rural areas) and transportation (with controversy over the access provided to regional

airlines at Sydney airport). However, while telecommunications is so central as to lead to service obligations, it is extremely unlikely that a government would be inclined to attach service obligations to ‘fast food sport’ outlets.

This raises the question, therefore, as to whether conventional sporting organisations have a future. It is not impossible to imagine a scenario in which these centralised agencies, which are not dissimilar to government agencies become, as it were ‘outsourced’ and replaced by market based activities. Were this to occur, it would be likely to exacerbate differences between regions because a market based, ‘user pays’ system will be driven by profit and profit is most likely to be made in densely settled areas.

The connection to economic issues was strongly highlighted in some material provided by Prof Daniela Stehlik from Central Queensland University. Writing of her research in rural areas she noted:

... we did ask people about their ‘voluntary’ relationships with a variety of community institutions (such as e.g. Lions or the CWA) and whether these relationships survived in times of crisis—such as the drought, when other imperatives are more powerful. The general feeling among our respondents, both in NSW and QLD was that as families needed to survive, the energy they had (and the resources they could use) for such ‘non productive’ work was limited.

Many of the smaller communities we know west from Rocky have either closed down Lions and Rotary or are hanging on by a thread. ... Many of the women we spoke to had given up ‘pleasure’ activities which used precious fuel and time such as craft, art and other get togethers. I understand, though, from recent visits to central QLD that while production has resumed and many people have restocked and are getting on with their lives, some factors have changed and I would say their involvement in such social activities have too.

Here in the bush the big thing was tennis parties—they don’t occur that much any more. The other big thing ... is the time that mothers have to drive their children to fixtures and practices. [It seems that] ..many parents needed to move to the city from the country when their children became more than just amateurs, and I suspect that...with the concentration on larger venues in regional environments we don’t have as many opportunities in small towns to actually play the sport and proceed to some skill other than just ‘hitting the ball’.

Another important issue was raised by Prof Margaret Alston of Charles Sturt University (Wagga campus). She pointed out the significance of gender in the local politics of sport:

[Some people implicitly make the]... assumption that sport in rural areas equals football, masculinity etc. This is blinkered. The reality is far different. My study looked at crowds as against publicity amongst other things and found no correlation. The biggest sport in the Riverina by far is netball—based on crowds, participation, etc. [It is true that if]... like Dempsey you look at public space you will find a masculine dominance. In a small town I found the council considering spending their small sports budget for three years on a new football grandstand. It was not justified by the crowds, participation rates etc. In the same town little girls were travelling many kilometres because they didn’t have facilities in their town.

My sport of hockey, like touch, is mixed gender and draws dedicated players and officials etc. The number of hockey players from Wagga to make national and state teams is extraordinary...

[Sure] ... the sports that ...[many people] ... equate with 'rural heritage' are dying (football mostly). However the gender mixed sports are increasing exponentially. Touch has become a phenomenon in Wagga: and you don't have to look too hard to see why. The family can all play together. The same thing happens at the hockey fields and I have also seen it at the water polo comp—family sports with huge followings. Dad, mum and kids all play together at the same grounds. Time pressed families who don't buy into patriarchy are making their own choices and they are working for all. Families have become enriched by this.

These issues and the others referred to earlier were drawn together and a preliminary presentation on findings was made at the Sport Industry Australia AGM in Sept 2000. This resulted in a number of other issues being raised:

- Some sports are saying that the generational changes are affecting sport: previously, as players aged they retired and then some (the keener ones) became club stalwarts. Now, with the "Life be in it" push, baby boomers don't retire—they graduate to 'vets', where they may/may not be club people but are lost as club people for the younger comps. Leading to a crisis of volunteers. Others say this is not the case. Clearly, the impact of generational expectations is complex.
- A related generational issue is that some sports are saying that they get kids from 11-16, then just as they are getting ready for 'rep' status they vanish into a teen culture of cars, alcohol consumption and the opposite sex. Where both this and the previous point apply (Badminton was suggested as one example) the sport is 'bleeding at both ends'.
- Many sports are finding that their recruits are the kids of former players. In itself this is not a bad thing, but it is an indicator that they are not reaching into other fields. Like a species with a limited breeding population, a sport that cannot recruit outside these boundaries is 'endangered'.
- Some people working within the system of the sporting organisation say that complaints from the country areas concerning funding levels, attention received and so on are not based on always based reality—they *do* get their fair share. But of course (a) they may not perceive this; (b) they may pin a wide variety of dissatisfactions on this (that is, it is a 'hygiene' issue). Also some people say the complaint is not whether fair fund allocations are made but what it is spent on that is the issue.
- Several people noted that country areas and clubs need a lot of 'TLC'. Sport needs to look more to partnerships to help out in this difficult time.
- In some sports—like badminton—where there are quite a lot of Asian players, the Asian people do not take part as club volunteers. This suggests that there are ethnic/cultural barriers that are not being overcome.
- There are examples of good models for meeting regional needs. For example, in Wollongong, the council worked with sports bodies to determine what the regional needs were.

Drawing these various elements together, it is possible to make some organised comments on the variety of factors that impact upon the sport/leisure area. This is offered in the next section.

## Factors directly affecting the sport/leisure area

Three groups of factors were identified in the various examinations of the literature and in our research data. The first is the set of factors that affect the range of sports available; the second affects rates and levels of participations in sports; the third groups those things that produce tension within or between sports.

### Factors that affect the range of sports

Some things increase or differentiate the range of sports available while others decrease the range of differentiation. At any one place or time a variety of these factors may be at work, leading to unique configurations in each place/time location.

#### Those That Increase/Differentiate The Range

1. *Spread of sport knowledge via global media*  
There is considerable evidence that with the spread of mass media—especially satellite TV connections, cable TV, the internet and so on—people, especially young people, are more exposed to information about a wide range of sports. This flow is structured to a considerable extent (although not completely determined) by global economic and political power structures. Hence one may expect that Australian youths will come to know a good deal about American basket-ballers or British soccer players, and that this effect is stronger than American youths knowing about Australian cricketers. The evidence points strongly in this direction. For example it was argued in recent years that the sports star most easily identified by Australian teenagers was the basket ball star Michael Jordan.
2. *Active efforts by sports bodies*  
A well-promoted sport with an active body that pushes, promotes and supports activities, especially one that reaches at all levels, will encourage growth of that sport. The evidence gathered in this project suggests, for example, that Rugby Union has recently fitted this model and that this partly accounts for its active recruitment at the expense of Rugby League.
3. *Promotion of sports by governments*  
The expenditure of funds by government bodies can increase the range of sports available in a given region or area. This is especially true if facilities are provided in areas short of facilities, as this creates opportunities, which people may take if starved of other opportunities.
4. *'Fit' between a sport and other actions/values/time demands*  
This is a complex issue, but the broad picture is clear. As available time, money and expectations change, so sports can become popular because they can fit into a different schedule. Good examples include the slow decline of five day cricket test matches and the rise of 'one day' cricket; the creation of the Super 12 Rugby as a 'prime time' competition played to fit TV slots; and the growth of 'going to the gym' over competitive sports as a gender integrated, time flexible activity that suits busy career oriented young people.

## Those That Decrease The Range

1. *Sports that become 'out of tune' with the times*  
Some sports or leisure activities decline because they cease to be in tune with the tempo and sensibility of the times. For example, squash has struggled in recent times, with courts closing or, in larger complexes, being cannibalised into other spaces such as aerobics centres or martial arts arenas. It seems likely that the time slots in which many people played squash (e.g. just before or just after work, lunch time, etc) are being increasingly consumed with other activities, including non-leisure activities, social demands, alternative sporting or fitness activities and so on. Other sports or leisure pursuits are increasingly unacceptable to the mass of the public, ranging from fox hunting (which may soon be banned in the UK) through boxing (which continues to decline and is under pressure from medical authorities and those opposed to interpersonal violence).
2. *Sports that struggle and die because of competition*  
Much like species in a bio-physical environment, there are often only so many 'niches' in a particular socio-economic environment. In the case of cricket, for example, the sport was strong in the USA around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> /20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Indeed, there was talk of the USA becoming the fourth test-playing nation, an honour actually bestowed on the West Indies. As late as the early 1920s the Australian tourists were beaten by Philadelphia. Yet within a few years baseball swept the nation and cricket effectively vanished, much as grey squirrels have driven out red squirrels in the UK. As present, it seems possible that Rugby Union, once the poor relation of Rugby League, is making a major resurgence and it could happen that League will wither away.

## Factors that affect sporting participation

Participation in sport can increase, overall or in a given sport, it can decrease or it can differentiate. Factors involved in these three processes are laid out below.

### Those That Increase Participation Overall Or In A Particular Sport

1. *Increased awareness*  
As awareness increases, so, ceteris paribus, there is likely to be an increase in participation. This is particularly true for any given sport, although some general effect can be observed such as when the Sydney Olympics led to upsurges in activity both in sports that were represented and in others that were not.
2. *Increased range*  
When the range of sports increases then, at least in the middle of the range of increase, there is likely to be more participation as 'different strokes' become available for 'different folks'. Limits to this process are likely to relate to 'critical mass' (if the group of potential participants is divided too many ways there are not enough in any one sport to be viable) and the paralysis created by excessive choice.
3. *Increased facilities and funding*  
This link is fairly obvious, and critical in many country areas. Lacking facilities, it is hard to participate and while the theory that "if you build it they will come" may be a bit simplistic, when facilities are critically short then provision can have positive impacts on participation. Moreover, as the Scrubby Creek example referred to earlier shows, the equation is probably not "if you build it they will come" so much as "if *they* build it they will come". In that case, the question is how to help

“them”—a theme echoed in the Federal Government’s Regional Australia: Making the Difference with its emphasis on empowering communities.

4. *Increased recruitment efforts by groups or businesses*  
Membership and recruitment drives of varied types have a net impact on participation, although often of a temporary type.

### Those That Decrease Participation Overall Or In A Particular Sport

1. *Decreased supply of volunteers to support a sport (e.g. decline in public sector employees in country areas)*  
As noted earlier, sports require not only people to participate but also people to coach, organise and administer. De-population or changing expectations can make people physically or psychologically unavailable both as direct participants and as coaches/organisers/administrators. Moreover, this reduced availability has ‘knock on effects’—if the local teacher who coached the footy team leaves town then not only does the coach go, but also children in that family don’t join the juniors. And so on.
2. *Decreased availability of funds if the local area is being impoverished*  
Sport and leisure cost money. As noted earlier, when the rural sector is under strain and funds are tight, ‘inessential’ things like sport and leisure are side-lined. This too has knock on effects. Once a family ceases to participate, it becomes absorbed in other things. It may not come back.
3. *Declining numbers of potential participants*  
Again, this is a simple connection—no people, no participation. In areas that decline in total numbers, this is a major threat. Such decline might be for ‘natural causes’—that is deaths exceed births—or it might be due to out-migration. Also, as the structure of a population changes, so those in any one age group may rise and fall. For example, in an aging town, junior tennis might struggle as Lawn Bowls thrives. Or the fact that a ‘bulge’ cohort reaches child bearing age may lead to a decline in participation by those entering the parenthood stage. And of course smaller family sizes combined with increased life expectancy has completely altered the population pyramid in Australia over the last century.
4. *Competition from other sports (more people fishing in same pond)*  
For any one sport, loss of participants to another sport can be a major threat. In this sense a dollar spent to support one sport can easily become a dollar spent undermining another.
5. *Fears of parents re stranger danger, traffic, etc so that youngsters are kept at home*  
This type of impact is easy to overlook but may be among the most significant of the long term changes that are impacting sports. It is clear that during the post-WWII period the degree to which children are supervised and contained within the home has steadily increased. While children are still taken to organised sport (see further under 7 below) the decline of ‘pick-up’ sports when kids create their own entertainment on the oval or in the street undermines the spontaneous involvement in games like cricket which used often to be played with minimal equipment but great enthusiasm.
6. *Competition from non-sporting entertainments (e.g. Internet)*  
Linked to the previous point, there is evidence that sporting participation is declining among young people, while at home involvement with electronic

entertainment rises. It should be stressed that while this concern is not new—every innovation from radio to film and TV has met with the same critique in the last 80 years or so—the nature of video games and the Internet is subtly different in that they permit interactivity rather than passive consumption. As such they meet needs for participatory excitement that the others lacked and to which sport outside the home previously provided.

7. *Lack of parental time/energy to take kids to sport*

Over the last century or more, and up until quite recently, the long-term trend was towards reduced work hours and rising leisure time. Indeed, many political struggles were launched by the union movement based on the idea of “an X hour week”, where X might variously be 60, 48, 40 or 35. More recently, however, the trend has been reversing with longer hours worked by adults. This intersects with another long run trend—rising female labour force participation. Numerous studies have pointed to the fact that parents are over-loaded. This is doubly so for mothers and even worse for single parents. In such an environment evenings or weekends can turn into a ‘taxi run’ with concomitant overload on the well-being of both kids and parents. This stress undermines sporting participation.

8. *Lack of time/energy to take self to sport*

Flowing from the points made in 7, the pressure on modern life has reduced the willingness to participate in sport, probably most in the sense of ancillary activities. Busy people, especially busy women, would rather pay extra to play a game that is professionally refereed that stay around and take a turn at refereeing. This contributes to the rise of the ‘fast food sport’ outlet and the demise of traditional clubs. People also opt for ‘social’ rather than competition sport if they feel that their erratic demands do not allow them to commit to a regular time slot. And as noted earlier, a preference develops for participation in healthy leisure (e.g. ‘going to the gym’) ahead of organised, competitive sport.

9. *Less school time devoted to organised sport*

Educational systems, school routines, teacher characteristics and beliefs and the role of the school in the local community have all changed greatly in the last few decades. Schools were often a bastion of traditional sports, especially sport for boys. This is decreasingly true today, outside of the private school sector. This leads to declining participation during school age and reduced flow on to adult clubs.

### Those That Differentiate Participation

1. *Shift from team sports to ‘recreation and fitness’*

As already indicated, there is a general shift away from many of the more traditional teams sports and competitions towards a ‘life, be in it” logic. As a result, activities such as triathlon, in which the majority of ‘competitors’ are only interested in their own time, not in winning have flourished. Of course, the major growth area has been fitness centres and gyms. This growth is intimately connected with several of the following points.

2. *Changing notions about ‘competition’, preference for ‘pick up’*

While by no means ubiquitous, there seems to be a discernible trend among many younger people away from formalised competitions towards ‘pick up’ formats where enjoyment and participation are emphasised over winning. This is linked to ideological changes visible from the 1970s onwards which emphasised the importance of enjoyment over competition in children’s sport (Kanga Cricket, etc)

and is buttressed in part by the shift to a greater feminisation of the teaching profession and away from more ‘masculine’ emphases in school sport.

3. *Changes in gender roles and expectations (rise of mixed-but-non-competitive sports)*

A part of the changes referred to in 1 and 2 above is linked directly to changes in gender roles and role preferences. Sport has, and to a great extent continues to be, gender segregated. In few serious competitions are men and women mixed together, even in sports (e.g. squash) where achievement and ability are heavily overlapping such that the most able women can compete with all but the very top men. This ‘his and hers’ arrangement, however, is at odds with an increasing preference among many young people for integrated leisure. Mixed, social competitions in sports like basketball and ‘going to the gym together’ solve this problem. But the solution undermines conventional competitive sport and creates new modes.

4. *Preference for choice and variety*

In the recent past there were many expectations that a person would exhibit continuity in life. For example, with regard to employment, s/he would grow up, train, develop a ‘career’ and pursue that diligently until retirement. With regard to sport, s/he would find a sport that matched interests and ability and play it regularly for a long period, developing expertise and commitment. In professional sport, the extension of the length of seasons and the depth of competition emphasised this, with a concomitant decline in the ‘dual international’ or other multi-faceted forms of representative sportspeople. Yet recent years have seen a major shift. In employment the talk is of the ‘boundaryless career’ and the ‘portfolio self’. Employers that expect lifetime commitment and rely upon it to ensure a flow through from bottom to top—such as the Armed Forces—are struggling to retain people beyond about 7-8 years. “Time to try something new”, is the motto. This attitude means that sports are also need to rethink how young people will flow into and out of their ambit.

5. *Lifestyle ‘niching’—a sport to fit your lifestyle*

As we shall see later, a marked phenomenon of late modernity is the growth of a complex mosaic of ‘lifestyles’. Each lifestyle is associated with a particular group, a limited range of occupations, residential locations, consumption patterns, etc. In retail sales people talk of ‘niche marketing’ and sell goods that ‘suit your lifestyle’—the marketing of pet food to urban, single, professional people who come home to find only the cat or dog as companions graphically illustrates this. This trend has complex links with sport and leisure, underpinning both the ‘gym and fitness culture’ and also a possibility for faddish associations with particular sports for short periods.

## Tensions within sports

Within the sports field there are a number of areas of direct tension. Two of central relevance are elaborated below.

### Between Amateur And Professional (Esp. Among The Admin Side)

The core of most sports has always been the extensive network of amateur players, officials and support people which formed an almost invisible pyramidal bases upon which the peak of representative sport was based. The two elements existed to a great extent in

symbiosis—the representative level was the pinnacle towards which the average person might aim and the mass of amateurs below was the feeder for representative players.

In recent times, however, the growth of big money professionalism has changed this, with complex outcomes for sport as a whole. Once the major funding comes from TV revenues, for example, that particular piper calls the tune. It is clear that the restructure of cricket to include the ‘one day’ version and the creation of Super 12 Rugby are clear examples. (This should not be taken to imply that these forms of the sport are defective—simply that they owe their form to the TV interests that promote them.)

This is linked to increased opportunities for selling sports and sport related commodities for profit, also encouraging a professional approach.

There are many other factors that drive towards professionalism in administration—increased size of organisations, increased budget responsibility, demands for accountability, pressures towards ensuring safety and managing risk such as vicarious liability—all drive in this direction.

Profit and professionalism, however, create tensions that can fracture the symbiotic link between the levels. As demonstrated earlier, ‘fast food sports’ can develop a profitable operation that gradually erodes the older model of State based associations.

Moreover, once a group has a major interest in elite play it may lose interest in developing grass roots players, because it is more effective to import talented foreigners. For example, in English soccer we saw recently a premier level team take the field without a single player from that country (Chelsea AFC in the 99-00 season had no English players) and the concomitant attitude develops among famous players who then suggest that next to playing for their elite club sides, playing for their country is a second best (Italian soccer star Maldini).

These brief comments do not mean that profit and professionalism are universally bad (far from it—one day cricket has raised fitness and fielding standards, Super 12 Rugby is arguably the best Rugby ever played). But they do point to the fact that injecting funds by this means is also not a simple ‘good thing’.

### [Between Maintaining Social Capital And Changing Away From ‘White Man’s Dreamtime’ Values](#)

Sport had been a focus of community life, especially in small towns and the regions. Sporting teams and sports clubs have often been a hub of community life (see Driscoll and Wood, 1999 for an excellent coverage of this issue). The web of ties and trust that emerges from this is referred to as ‘social capital’ and, ceteris paribus the general rule is that promoting and defending social capital is an ethically warranted and politically desirable objective.

Hence it may seem that there is a simple equation—buttress local sport and maintain social capital.

But it is not quite that simple. As the examples provided by Margaret Alston illustrate, sport in rural areas is not controlled and administered neutrally and for the benefit of all (even though many of those involved think that it is). Instead, many of those involved in

sport administration and in decision making bodies (e.g. local government) are middle aged to elderly men, conservative in their outlook and with a view of sport that is fixed firmly in the rear view mirror.

When such views dominate we are faced with what Melbourne historian Mary Kalantzis refers to as “white mans’ dream time”. Kalantzis uses this phrase to describe the view of Australia that flourished in the years following Federation. Despite the ethnically chequered past of this country and despite the enormous contributions made by pioneer women, the image that was created was of a Pacific based patriarchal clone of Mother England. Buttressed by things like the White Australia policy, trade tariffs and the Harvester decision (which gave men greater wages than women so they could support the family as its ‘head’), the national ideology rapidly moved in a culturally homogenous, insulated, Anglophone and anglophile, “meat and two veg” direction.

It is this consensus model, which arguably reached its peak in the 1950s and was best embodied in the Prime Ministership of Menzies, its most ardent defender, that has steadily broken down in the last 40 years as the country has recognised Aborigines as citizens, opened its doors to migrants from diverse countries, embraced multi-culturalism, provided equal pay and equal rights for women, broken down trade barriers and deregulated the economy—many of these changes linked to the spread of globalisation.

Nonetheless, as Kalantzis implies with her felicitous phrase, those locked in the “white man’s dream time” either do not recognise or do not approve of these changes. As the example provided by Margaret Alston (previous chapter) illustrates, decisions to spend sporting dollars are not necessarily consensus decisions. Instead, they can (advertently or inadvertently) be made in ways that promote one view of the world and one set on interest over others, even while making the claim that what is being offered is in the “interest of all”.

Various competing agendas and divisions are likely to be relevant in different communities. Where there is a substantial indigenous population race may be a critical axis; in another place it may be ethnicity; and gender divisions are common across all locations.

In short, the wholesale pursuit of maintaining sport because it maintains social capital is in tension with the complexities and conflicts of interest groups and cannot solve such problems without a more open vision than contained in “white man’s dream time”.

## Conclusion

It might be attractive to imagine that one could draw a simple conclusion from the research. Perhaps it might look something like this:

*Sport contributes to national identity and well-being. It is also a major source of social capital, especially in rural and regional Australia. However, it is precisely in rural and regional Australia that sport is in trouble—under-funded and declining because of the many difficulties faced by people and institutions in the country.*

*Therefore we should actively support sport in rural and regional Australia and shore up sporting organisations so that they can continue to provide these important services to Australia.*

Unfortunately, the research shows that while this simple conclusion looks attractive and while it is partially correct, there are serious limitations to this way of imagining the problem. The most obvious limitations, which have been demonstrated above or are implicit in what has been covered, are as follows.

#### 1      **There is no single rural and regional Australia**

As demonstrated in chapter 2, all that the parts of rural and regional Australia possess in common is that they are not metropolitan. Beyond that lies diversity—diversity of problems, of resources and opportunities and hence diversity as to what is needed to respond positively to any difficulties. Hence (see also the next chapter) there is little reason to believe that “one size fits all” even within rural and regional Australia.

#### 2      **There is no single Australian identity to be supported**

As discussed above, there is no single identity to which sport can contribute—Australia is increasingly multi-cultural, increasingly embedded in a global web of communications, information and ideas and there are differing interests (between men and women, young and old, one region and another, etc) which mean that the ‘same’ sport or leisure activity will have different effects in for different people and places.

#### 3      **Effects on well-being depend on how well-being is defined**

The question as to the contribution of sport and leisure to well-being depends upon what is measured. Are we concerned with the link between exercise and health or the link between sporting success and either personal or collective economic growth? These do not always operate in the same direction. Research carried out by QQR for ASDA in 1999 indicated that the search for outstanding success in sport (e.g. achieving Olympic selection or winning medals) was often perceived by athletes themselves as involving a level of training and effort that was unhealthy and damaging. Similarly, what it takes to make a winning and successful team may not promote sport and physical exercise in the grass roots (cf. the example of Chelsea FC given above).

#### 4      **Actions designed to maximise social capital and health might undermine ‘sport’**

If the goal of policy is to maintain or increase social capital and also increase participation for reasons of health (i.e. following down an Active Australia path) then it will not always follow that funds and support will go to traditional sports such as football, cricket and tennis (cf. the Port Campbell example cited earlier).

#### 5      **Actions designed to promote participation in a given sport might not support that sporting organisation**

If ‘fast food sport’ is the growing and effective mode by which sports like Netball or Indoor Cricket are delivered to the population, it could be that actions designed to further this mode (e.g. tax breaks, investment incentives) would be more effective than actions

designed to prop up the State and National Associations that ‘own’ these sports. This would open up the question of how national teams might be chosen—although funded Academies could be the answer. These are not easy choices.

# **PART 3**

# **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL RESOURCES**

# 7

## The Pattern Of Social Change

In this third section, the report provides some conceptual material that is useful in setting the research findings into a 'big picture' context. This chapter explores the general pattern of social change, while Chapter 8 focuses on a specific aspect of globalisation.

### Background: Looking at Changes

The last 50 years, since just after the end of WWII, have brought enormous changes to Australia, including:

- The economy, with a movement from primary/secondary industry towards tertiary industry, the service sector, tourism, etc. Implicated in this change has been a shift away from 'blue collar, male' occupations as the mainstay of jobs towards a myriad of jobs, many held by women, most involving more 'brain' than 'brawn';
- Politics, with the growth of new groupings, the realignment of old parties (especially since the Cold War collapsed) and the breaking of simple links between 'class' and vote on the one hand, as well as the way that mass media cover/influence political events on the other;
- Geographical patterns of life, with a continued trend away from agriculture and rural centres and towards bigger cities, in a country that has always been very urban anyway;
- Sporting life, with a movement away from a few, traditional sports played in a gender segregated, local club setting towards a mass of sports, many played both by men and women, often in a mixed context, along with a range of sport/health related activities like aerobics, jazzercise, 'working out' and so on. Sports that do not require a club or location, like triathlon-are flourishing while older sports (e.g., Rugby League) struggle.;
- Marital life, with the prospect now close that non-users and heavy users will come to outnumber light (once only) users;
- Mass media and entertainment sectors, where the rapid growth first of TV and video, latterly of the Internet, have 'privatised' leisure (far fewer people go out in the evenings than was once the case) while at the same time linking us to global communications systems;
- Commercial life, where the old certainties of saving until one could afford something, paying cash and savouring 'deferred gratification' are being swept away in a tidal wave of eftpos, credit cards and instant gratification, and where global commerce is so powerful that people are organising holidays not only to go to Disneyland, but even to go to shopping malls.

- Personal values and preferences, where there is a growing dominance of those that are secular, materialist, rationalist and individually oriented. Individuals, their feelings and their choices are becoming more and more central to life, in contrast with traditional views of the significance of collectivities. In turn, this links to a growth in concern over intimacy, the self and ‘self development’ as a project, ranging from therapy to adventure.

Examining some overall trends in a more abstract, conceptual way we can use two terms: ‘contrast’, which refers to differences between people, places, seasons and so on and ‘variety’ which refers to what is visible or available at any one place and time. Using these, the general rule is that at any one place and time we can see “decreasing contrast, increasing variety” while over the whole system total variety reduces. A good example of this can be seen in the agricultural area with regard to seed varieties. In any one place more varieties of seed for a given crop become available (more variety) but the same seeds are used in many places (decreased contrast) and the range of seeds available in world as a whole shrinks (reduced total variety). Looking at society we can see:

- Modern societies are becoming increasingly complex *within* nation states but at the same time decreasingly different *between* nation states. (This changes the reality of politics and alters the role of armed forces.)
- The products of commerce become more varied in any one location but they vary less between one time (e.g., season) and another, between one place and another or between one type of consumer and another. Once apples meant autumn—and you only got the local varieties. Now you can buy numerous varieties year round—but the range is much the same in Sydney, Stockholm or San Francisco.
- ‘Lifestyles’ are subject to a similar process and indeed, the idea of varied lifestyles exists as a result of this process. Since ‘lifestyles’ are constructed round consumption and information about consumption, transmitted by mass media, they tend to proliferate in any one location (‘increasing variety’) but also to be reproduced globally (‘decreasing contrast’). Educated, middle class professionals who like to ski look and act more and more alike as they all buy the same magazines, wear the same gear, go the same resorts (the Alps or Colorado in December/January, Australia/NZ in July/August).

Applied to sport, these three trends are also visible—more variety of sport in any one metropolitan location, reduced contrast between seasons and places, reduced range of sports overall as local sports give way to mega sports like golf, soccer or basketball.

Can we make sense of these myriad changes in terms of a general overview model?

## The movement from an industrial/modern to a ‘post-industrial/post-modern’ society

Such a complex shift in the form of society is obviously brought about dynamic processes. What are these processes? Laid out briefly below are two sets of concepts that recent writers have used to interpret the pattern of change. In both case, their concepts are illustrated by reference to examples in sport.

First, Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991) identifies three key factors that link to the ‘extreme dynamism’ of modernisation. They are:

- *the separation of time and space*—the development of an abstract system of global space and time provides and articulation of relations across time and space, removing the privilege of locality, proximity and propinquity. ‘Us, here and now’ becomes only one basis for imagining and creating social relations. Giddens created this argument before the Internet really blossomed as it has in the last 5 years or so, but the Net is an excellent example of this tendency.

In sport, we see this tendency linked to many changes, such as the process of blurring seasons. As this research was being undertaken, for example, Australian and South Africa played a one-day cricket series indoors in the middle of a Melbourne winter, overlapping in time and space with semi-final play offs for AFL and the NRL. Manchester United is about to go on line to its 20 million fans worldwide, and so on.

- *the rise of disembedding mechanisms*—these are systems of symbolic tokens (money is a good example) and of expert knowledge. They allow exchanges across time and space that undermine the specificity of locale.

Witness, in sport the rise of international professionalism in sport where, to take two examples from soccer, we can see a premier level team take the field without a single player from that country (Chelsea AFC in the 99-00 season had no English players) or famous soccer players suggest that next to playing for their elite club sides, playing for their country is a second best (Italian soccer star Maldini).

- *institutional reflexivity*—as we know more and more about how social life works, the knowledge becomes a resource and life is shaped by it. For example, as studies of courtship and marriage explain the demographic and social basis for more (or less) successful partnerships, so individuals and experts, like dating agencies, feed these into selection processes for rating and dating.

In sport, information from sports studies feedback into the selection of youngsters at earlier and earlier ages to stream them into (potential) elite channels.

A second way of looking at this long-term change is provided by Crook, Pakulski and Waters (1991). They suggest three long-term social processes that are the motor of change:

- *Differentiation*: which is defined in terms of the degree of separation between various sub-systems (Adaptation; Goal Attainment; Integration; and Latency, or AGIL) in a social order and progressive differentiation processes inside these sub-systems. The more clearly we see (e.g.) politics separate from religion or art from science, and the more that politics itself internally separates various parts, the more differentiated we are.

An excellent example in sport is provided by the way that it has gradually become less and less possible for any individual to achieve international status in different sports. Once it was common for outstanding sportspeople to excel in different games in different seasons and, for example, to represent one’s country in winter in a football code and in summer in cricket. This is no longer true. In cricket, for example, being an international player is all consuming. Moreover, cricket having become completely differentiated from other codes, has now begun to differentiate internally, with the Australian selectors choosing separate Test and one-day squads.

- *Commodification*: which is defined as the spread of the market, so that more and more of social life is drawn into monetised relations, and exchange values rule daily life. This has two aspects, quantitative (spread of new commodities and new needs via ads etc) and qualitative (new areas of social life are subject to commodification).

For example, there are Japanese families who hire actors to make visits to their parents so they will not have to make the visits themselves. There are full-time businesses that provide concierge services to support busy managers and ‘hire a hubby’ services for career women who want someone to mow the lawn.

Sport is, as we are frequently reminded a big business. Media magnates compete to gain control of various sports so that they can dominate the way high-rating activities are broadcast, transforming the sport itself in the process (‘Packer’ cricket with its coloured uniforms is the classic but by no means the only example). At lower levels, more and more people choose to purchase sporting activity as a direct commodity in preference to joining more traditional clubs where the money costs are lower but people are expected to provide time and effort on a volunteer basis. Like the busy working mothers who would rather pay a levy than serve in the school ‘tuck shop’, so people would prefer to pay to have their game refereed than offer reciprocal refereeing services by staying on to ref the next match.

- *Rationalisation*: which is defined as having three elements—reliance on knowledge, impersonality, and seeking of control. Under the umbrella of rationalisation, we see a tendency for many areas of life to become governed by complex bureaucracies with clear sets of rules, staffed by certified specialists and run on a basis of dispassionate equality (as opposed, for example, to giving favours to people because they are friends or relatives).

In society in general, we rely upon abstract laws that govern equal rights rather than custom or the choices and whims of an all-powerful monarch or despot.

This process is very clear in sport, where the rise of formal organisations from local level (clubs) through State and National levels (Federations) to International bodies (IOC, FIFA, etc) with clear rules, professional administrators and organised competitions have been the norm for many years.

## An overview of change processes

While there is general agreement about the sorts of changes sketched earlier and features of the process (commodification, differentiation and so on) social science literature shows that there are a number of ways that the changes can be understood. Three broad tendencies stand out:

- *the straight line extrapolated along a graph*—that is, trends will continue by extrapolation. Writers such as Giddens (1990, 1991) argue that what we are seeing is merely an acceleration of trends visible since the industrial revolution. Hence there is no post-modernity, only more modernity. (Giddens, by the way, developed the idea of ‘The Third Way’ which is the basis for Tony Blair’s policy approach);
- *an oscillation model*—a sophisticated version of the cyclical models of history, which seeks to understand the future as (in part) a return to the past. An example of this is Peter Wagner (1993) who argues that the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw the re-emergence of liberal individualism similar to, but in a more sophisticated version than, 19<sup>th</sup> Century liberalism;
- *an unpredictable change model*—as Monty Python put it “and now for something completely different”. An example of this approach is a book by three Australian authors,

Crook et al (1991). This argues that we have reached the limits of what is possible under the ‘modern’ form and we are now seeing a switch into a new, but as yet not fully known, form of society.

Whichever of these views one takes—and the debate is complex—a general view can be constructed that, while simplifying things a bit, offers a way of grasping the overall change. This consists of characterising the dominant form of society from about 1800-1970 as *industrial-modern* and describing the new form as *post industrial-post modern* and then contrasting these point by point. The following table shows such a comparison.

**TABLE 7.1 INDUSTRIAL MODERN (IM) SOCIETY VERSUS POSTINDUSTRIAL, POST MODERN (PP) SOCIETY.**

Characteristics of IM	Characteristics of PP
<b>The form of the ‘Nation State’</b>	
Centralised, corporate, welfarist	Decentralised, cross-linked, brokering
Aggregates power and functions	Sheds functions, “upwards (e.g. to EC), downwards (e.g. to regional gov’t), sideways (e.g. to QUANGOs), out (e.g. to ‘the market’)”
<b>The form of Inequality</b>	
Three large groups—the blue collar working man; male boss; the house wife—dominate	‘Mosaic’ of status groups with complex links between work, gender, etc., etc
<b>The form of economic production and consumption</b>	
‘Fordist’ mass production	Flexible specialisation
Mass marketing and consumption	Niche marketing/consumption
<b>The form of politics</b>	
Mass, class based parties with a ‘machine’ character	Social movements with extra parliamentary existence (e.g. Greens, Shooters Party)
<b>The content of politics</b>	
Domestically, concentrates on ‘entitlements’, wages, etc	Domestically, concentrates on mixture of these plus non material issues
Internationally, concentrates on national interests	Internationally, concentrates on treaties, clusters (EC, NAFTA, ...)
<b>The form of policy</b>	
“One size fits all”	Local variation
Solve problems	Manage problems

This contrast can also be observed at the organisational level. Table 7.2 illustrates this.

**TABLE 7.2: INDUSTRIAL MODERN ORGANISATION (IMO) VERSUS POSTINDUSTRIAL, POST MODERN ORGANISATION (PPO).**

<b>Characteristics of IMO</b>	<b>Characteristics of PPO</b>
Clear authority hierarchy	Levelled/blurred hierarchy
Functional specialisation of units	Breakdown of unit barriers
Decisions based on uniform rules	Decision based on negotiation
Hiring/promotion based on training, emphasis on intelligence	Hiring/promotion based on 'feel', teamwork skills and creativity
Lifetime employment in 1 area	Shifting work teams, flexible tasks, boundaryless careers and the 'portfolio self'
Written records as core info., restricted access to these by job	Open access to all info in the organisation
Limited range of right ways and right styles of organisation	Many configurations of organisations, structures

The right hand columns of these two tables offer a powerful way to bring together a number of the themes presented in previous chapters. As organisations move more towards the PPO model and as society moves more into the PP form, so we should expect to see the types of changes and tensions that have already been identified.

In particular, the changes towards a boundaryless career and a portfolio self, linked to a lifestyle/consumption niche embedded in a mosaic of such niches are the wider context in which many of the specific findings can be explained. A preference for 'fast food' and pick up sport and a preference for fitness work over competition are all part of such a change. So too are larger scale factors, such as the steady rationalisation and commodification of sport as an entertainment, set in larger field of globalised electronic broadcasting and the Internet.

With regard to policy, the tables indicate that 'one size fits all' is no longer the way to go, with a need instead for a web of policies to fit local needs. Furthermore, if the form of government is increasingly towards brokering rather than delivery, with whom should one arrange partnerships, to what ends and how?

Finally, the material on PPOs raises questions about the optimal structures both for sports association bodies and for peak bodies that organise sport-in-general.

In the next chapter, one detailed example of social change is examined in more depth.

# 8

## Globalisation: The Lexus And The Olive Tree

In a recent book entitled *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman tells a story which offers a compelling metaphor for change in a globalising world.

I was in Tokyo on a reporting assignment and had arranged to visit the Lexus luxury car factory outside Toyota City, south of Tokyo. It was one of the most memorable tours I've ever taken. At that time, the factory was producing 300 Lexus sedans each day, made by 66 human beings and 310 robots. From what I could tell, the human beings were there mostly for quality control. Only a few of them were actually screwing in bolts or soldering parts together. The robots were doing all the work. There were even robotic trucks that hauled materials around the floor and could sense when a human was in their path and would “beep, beep, beep” at them to move. I was fascinated ... I was impressed.

After touring the factory, I went back to Toyota City and boarded the bullet train for the ride back to Tokyo. The bullet train is aptly named, for it has both the look and feel of a speeding bullet. As I nibbled away on one of those sushi dinner boxes you can buy in any Japanese train station, I was reading that day's *International Herald Tribune*. and a story caught my eye on the top right corner of page 3. It was about the daily State Department briefing. State Department spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler had given a controversial interpretation of a 1948 United Nations resolution, relating to the right of return for Palestinian refugees to Israel. I don't remember all the details, but whatever her interpretation was, it had clearly agitated both the Arabs and the Israelis and sparked a furore in the Middle East, which this story was reporting.

So there I was speeding along at 180 miles an hour on the most modern train in the world, reading this *story* about the oldest corner of the world. And the thought occurred to me that these Japanese, whose Lexus factory I had just visited and whose train I was riding, were building the greatest luxury car in the world with robots. And over here, on the top of page 3 of the *Herald Tribune*, the people with whom I had lived for so many years in Beirut and Jerusalem, whom I knew so well, were still fighting over who owned which olive tree. It struck me then that the Lexus and the olive tree were actually pretty good symbols of this post- Cold War era: half the world seemed to be emerging from the Cold War intent on building a better Lexus, dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization. And half of the world—sometimes half the same country, sometimes half the same person—was still caught up in the fight over who owns which olive tree.

Olive trees are important. They represent everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in this world-whether it be belonging to a family, a community, a tribe, a nation, a religion or, most of all, a place called home. Olive trees are what give us the warmth of family, the joy of individuality, the intimacy of personal rituals, the depth of private relationships, as well as the confidence and security to reach out and encounter others. We fight so intensely at times over our olive trees because, at their best, they provide the feelings of self -esteem and belonging that are as essential for human survival as food in the belly. Indeed, one reason that the nation-state will never disappear, even if it does weaken, is

because it is the ultimate olive tree—the ultimate expression of whom we belong to—linguistically, geographically and historically. You cannot be a complete person alone. You can be a rich person alone. You can be a smart person alone. But you cannot be a complete person alone. For that you must be part of, and rooted in, an olive grove. (Friedman, 1999: 30-31)

It is interesting and challenging to use this model and ask “To what extent is sport today a ‘Lexus’ and to what extent is it an ‘olive tree’?”

The tension between these two poles might usefully be illustrated by reference to tennis. The premier international men’s competition for national teams is the Davis Cup. Australia has a proud record in the Davis Cup and has recently been successful again under the leadership of John Newcombe and Tony Roche. Newcombe in particular is an outspoken patriot for whom the Davis Cup holds strong ‘olive tree’ associations.

Representing one’s country in the Davis Cup is seen by Newcombe and many others as a crowning achievement for male tennis players and at the same time an almost sacred duty. Players like Pat Rafter have been applauded for their role. Lleyton Hewitt, who is more controversial because of his explicit aggression on court and thus to some extent violates the traditional Australian ethic of being laconic and “not skiting” has also represented his country and hence has garnered wider support despite these problems.

On the other hand, the fact that Mark Phillipoussis has not made himself available for some of the Cup-ties has been widely condemned. The Phillipoussis case is complex, but one element that has surfaced is some desire on his part to concentrate upon personal success in Grand Slam competitions like the Australian Open and Wimbledon. To the extent that this is a factor, Phillipoussis’ attitude is not unlike that of the Italian soccer star Maldini who pointed out that for him and many other elite players playing in the national team was a B grade activity compared to playing in the best club soccer where the best players of many nations compete.

In short, Maldini and to some extent Phillipoussis are part of an emerging group of sports stars who operate on a global stage, earning high rewards for providing world wide entertainment. For such people, and for those who market them and many who watch, sport is not an olive tree but a Lexus. Of course, this is complex. European and especially English soccer fans are deeply rooted in ‘their’ club and the identity it provides, ready to fight in the street with rival fans to establish identity and ascendancy. Yet at the same moment that Manchester United fans strut the streets of English cities with their red and white markers, United is a massive worldwide business on the Internet, with newly established fan clubs in countries like the People’s Republic of China.

In similar vein, Super 12 Rugby, while establishing firm local followings in the towns and provinces that the team represent is clearly a game for players for whom the allegiance is to the ‘franchise’ (as the Americans would call it) more than to the region. While the core of the teams are local players (in the broad sense) there is an increasing trend towards skilled imports, as with English soccer. In a sense, the ACT Brumbies are ‘sport as Lexus’ while just down the road in the sister code South Sydney’s desperate fight to rejoin the NRL is ‘sport as olive tree’.

Given Friedman's comments about olive trees and how one cannot live without them, it might seem that this means that we should sustain South Sydney and praise Lleyton Hewitt while admiring, but remaining more neutral towards the Brumbies or Mark Phillipoussis.

But this is too simple. The olive tree metaphor is powerful and useful, but taken uncritically it takes us back to the problems outlined in Chapter 6 concerning conflict. As in the Middle East, where people fight over the olive trees and what they mean, thinking about sport as a metaphoric olive tree does not settle whose tree it is, whom it sustains or what it means.

Furthermore, while we may all need olive trees of some kind, it is not so clear that *sport* has to be one of the 'olive trees' that sustains Australians. Perhaps the future of organised sport lies in its 'Lexus' character. What if playing in the Davis Cup really *is* B Grade after Wimbledon? What if Souths have no future but the Brumbies do? Recall Friedman's comment that the half of the world that is building and buying the Lexus is "dedicated to modernizing, streamlining and privatizing their economies in order to thrive in the system of globalization". Australia surely belongs in this half and the process of modernisation, streamlining and privatisation has clearly affected the sports sector.

This dualism is a central challenge, and one that cannot be ignored when we think about rural and regional Australia, for rural and regional Australia has been impacted on, often negatively (see Chapter 2) by just such processes.

# 9

## Conclusion: Drawing Together The Threads, Forming Policy

In the light of all that has gone before, what are the policy implications of the findings of this research?

First, if one wishes to establish the “state of play” with regard to sport in rural and regional Australia it is clear that there is no one simple pattern to be found. Different sports, different regions and different groups have different experiences. The only generalisation that can safely be made is that sport, as we have known it, is generally in decline in rural and regional Australia and that the pattern of decline is linked to wider social forces.

This conclusion fits the approach outlined last year by the Federal Government:

Australia has long been renowned as a land of opportunity – arguably never more so than today, as our nation captures the benefits of a long period of growth sustained by the Federal Government’s commitment to economic modernisation and responsible budgets. Continuing low inflation and interest rates are providing a secure platform for national development as Australia enjoys the fruits of tackling the challenges of economic reform.

It is now widely recognised, however, that the benefits of economic change have not flowed evenly across Australia. While many parts of non-metropolitan Australia are charging ahead, others are struggling to meet the challenges posed by globalisation and industry structural change. (Regional Australia: Making a Difference, 2000:3).

What might flow from the finding that there is generally a decline and that this is linked to wider changes?

To answer this question, it is important to disentangle various different goals that might be selected as for any sports policy for rural and regional Australia. At least five major goals can be described.

### 1 Sport as a good thing in its own right

It is possible to take sport as a thing in itself and ask what can be done to promote it. Applied to rural and regional Australia the idea of promoting sport for its own sake has some superficial attraction if for no other reason that the fact that ‘the bush’ has traditionally produced more good sportspeople than one might expect given the size of the population and so it is in the direct interest of any given sport to retain a ‘nursery’.

Even with this simple question, however, it is necessary to ascertain the precise goal—is it the maximisation of participation, the raising of standards or ‘winning’ in some competitive sense that is the objective? What would be best for Netball—a 20% increase in the number

of players or winning the World Championship once more? Would one trade the latter for the former?

It is easy to assume that these things are intimately connected as once they may have been, but in the ‘post modern’ world this is not so certain. A game like Netball might increase its overall level of participation by assiduously pushing the ‘fast food’ style outlets and promoting the game as a ‘fun and fitness entertainment’. This strategy, however, would be likely to weaken the State organisations that have traditionally organised the sport (who rely upon levies from players and clubs for funds) and might also increase the number of players that had no interest in representative play. Hence the strategy could yield an increased player base but also a weaker representative competition and structure and a weaker national team.

For a sport, these are difficult choices. They are no easier for a government, unless it links to the next question.

## 2 Sport as a bearer of national identity and pride

This is a more familiar terrain. Here the objective is simpler—if we spend \$X on sport Y will this increase the chances of our team winning the world championship?; if we spend \$P on Olympics, how many gold medals will we win?: If we win world championships and gold medals, will we feel good about ourselves as a nation? As we outlined in chapter 1, in the past sport has had a nationally unifying effect and it has been true that Australians feel good about themselves when the Wallabies whip the All Blacks, the cricket team flogs the Poms or the Hockeyroos bring home gold.

So far as this goes, the goals of funding sport on this basis are pretty simple—world championships and gold medals can be counted and we know when we have been successful. With little doubt, we know that media coverage and public acclaim follows.

Of course, the underlying rationale is usually more complex than this. There are assumed to be connections between the promotion of the elite aspects of the sport and the strength of the sport at grass roots level. The logic is ‘trickle down’, or perhaps even more ‘siphon up’ with benefits in increased participation being yielded indirectly from the interventions at the top levels.

This logic makes some sense if we assume that the symbiotic tie discussed earlier between the top and bottom levels of sport continues to exist.

In the absence of the link, however, the elite funding model may deliver less than is expected.

For example, at a recent conference one of the researchers had a discussion with a youth representative from yachting at which she raised the following points:

- yachting clubs often struggle to recruit the mass of people who are sailing in their region;
- this undermines their reach and their funding base;
- the reason for this recruitment failure where young people is concerned is that the clubs do not promote the ‘fun’ aspects of yachting;

- the reason for the lack of fun is that many senior people in clubs are focused on sailing Olympic classes of boats (with a view to promoting high class representative sailing), most of which are, according to the informant ‘boring’.

It is unclear how representative this view is with regard to yachting. But the example illustrates the dilemma here. If the analysis offered above is correct, funding for yachting directly through the existing organisation/club structure would enhance our international Olympic performance—which was outstanding at Sydney 2000—but would have limited benefits in promoting a wider participation in yachting.

And with regard to rural and regional Australia it is even harder to see how elite funding would benefit the grass roots groups who are struggling in outlying areas.

### 3 Sport as a vehicle for healthy participation

A common link is that by promoting sport and leisure participation the nation’s mental and physical health will increase. This is a clearly a good thing both directly and also indirectly (reduced claims on Medicare, increased productivity, etc).

However, it is less clear what the link is between sport—in the strict sense of competitive games and their organising bodies—and participation in general. As noted in a number of places above the growing areas include triathlon, where the organised competitions sit on top of a pile of self organised training rather than a traditional pyramid of clubs and gym and fitness work. Furthermore, the general health benefits derived from campaigns like Active Australia are not directly correlated with sport in the narrower sense.

The implicit equation is that funding to elite sport ‘trickles down’ both the in the sense covered in 2 above and also in the sense that increased success will, via media coverage, have a flow on effect into public interest and hence participation. This equation is by no means certain. Moreover, it is hard to see how this effect will apply in rural and regional Australia.

In short, an economically rational approach that sought to get the best health ‘bang’ for the sports funding ‘buck’ might not direct any funds to elite sport, or even sport in the narrow and traditional sense, especially if the desire was to deliver the benefit in rural and regional Australia.

### 4 Sport as an economic product and saleable commodity

Sport offers numerous opportunities for economic gain via the construction of commodities that are sold either directly or create indirect opportunities via licensing, advertising embedded within televised sport coverage, and so forth.

It would be mistaken to consider such activities parasitic as some writers imply. That is, the extent to which there is some realm of ‘pure’ sport to which commodified forms attach themselves like leeches is very slender. One can, of course, argue coherently that some goods internal to sport as a practice cannot be achieved by those who focus only on fame and fortune (external goods), a point argued in the general philosophical by MacIntyre (see

Appendix for a brief summary of this argument). Nonetheless, external goods are a major feature of elite sports and have been for many years.

Furthermore, some sporting competitions which are widely enjoyed are either created or shaped by specific interests in the first place or have the range of opportunities and revenues widened by sponsorship, sale of TV rights and so forth.

If the extension of sports at the elite level is desirable as an economic goal—and the a variety of benefits can easily flow from this, from increased tourism to growth in GDP—then it follows that methods to achieve this at the level of government policy are likely to centre upon things such as partnerships with commercial interests, tax breaks and investment incentives and so forth.

What is less clear is how this type of activity would benefit rural and regional Australia. As noted earlier, profits are maximised in densely settled areas with large numbers of potential consumers and it is unlikely that sporting industries could become subject to any universal service obligation.

## 5 Sport as a basis for social solidarity

The link between social capital and sport has been discussed at several points already. As has been noted, the simple connection between the two and the assumed flow from investment in sport to increased social capital runs up against two barriers:

- the vision of sport is often locked inside “white man’s dream time” and thus fails in its imagined goal of social consensus instead promoting old visions and sectional interest; *and*
- if social capital is the goal, it is far from certain that sport is the best way to create it.

Overall, this discussion is best summarised by the dying words of Gertrude Stein:

What *is* the answer? In that case, what is the question?

By clarifying the goals that one wishes to achieve in funding sport and leisure in rural and regional Australia—for example by bringing it under the wider banner of the current initiative by the Federal Government Regional Australia: Making a Difference—it would be possible to create a coherent set of policy objectives for the field. What does not, however, seem possible is to “read off” a simple set of “needs” that are found with regard to sport widely in rural and regional Australia and from this create a response to those needs which will meet them and overcome the major problems. Instead rural and regional Australia as a social entity and sport as an area of social life share the feature of complexity and contradiction. What might ‘work’ for netball in Narrandera won’t necessarily ‘work’ for golf in Geelong or baseball in Bundaberg; and even if works in Narrandera it might not in Nhill or Nelligen. Worse still, without a very clear set of goals it is often unclear even what ‘work’ means.

# 10

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# 11

## Appendix: Virtue in modern life—MacIntyre’s account

In his widely acclaimed book *After Virtue*, MacIntyre reviews the question of the place of virtue in life, tracing the changing conceptions of virtues offered—implicitly or explicitly—by Homer, Aristotle, the New Testament and later writers such as Benjamin Franklin and Jane Austen. Summarising these various writers, MacIntyre notes that:

We thus have at least three different conceptions of a virtue to confront: a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to discharge his or her social role (Homer); a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to move towards that specifically human telos, whether natural or supernatural (Aristotle, the New Testament); a virtue is a quality which has utility in achieving earthly and heavenly success (Franklin). (MacIntyre, 1985: 185)

MacIntyre goes on to ask whether these are merely different aspects of virtue or whether they pose competing claims. He says that historically, they do offer competing claims and that each one has, at the time that it is the dominant account, an institutional support for its conception in that powerful agencies accept and act on this basis.

Nonetheless, he goes on to argue that these accounts can be reconciled, at least to some considerable extent, by concentrating upon a core conception of what virtue consists of. He argues that to understand this, we must first grasp the idea of what he calls a ‘practice’:

By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and the goods involved are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess. Bricklaying is not a practice, architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice, farming is. (MacIntyre, 1985: 187)

MacIntyre is at pains to point out that virtue may be exercised other than in the context of practices, but he argues for a conception wherein the main application of the concept of virtue, and the places we are most likely to find virtues displayed, is in this context. Central to his argument is the idea that there is a key connection between practice and ‘internal goods’. He shows this by the use of a simple example:

Consider the example of a highly intelligent seven-year old child whom I wish to teach to play chess, although the child has no particular desire to learn the game. The child does, however, have strong desire for candy and little chance of obtaining it. I therefore tell the

child that if the child will play chess with me once a week I will give the child 50 cents worth of candy; moreover, I tell the child that I will always play in such a way that it will be difficult, but not impossible for the child to win, and that, if the child wins, the child will receive an extra 50 cents worth of candy. Thus motivated, the child plays and plays to win. Notice however that, so long as it is the candy alone which provides the child with a good reason for playing chess, the child has no reason not to cheat and every reason to cheat, providing he or she can do so successfully. But, so we may hope, there will come a time when the child will find in those goods specific to chess, in the achievement of a certain highly particular analytic skill, strategic imagination and competitive intensity, a new set of reasons, reasons now not just for winning on a particular occasion, but for trying to excel in whatever way the game of chess demands. Now if the child cheats, he or she will not be defeating me, but himself or herself. (MacIntyre, 1985: 188)

It follows, MacIntyre argues that we can now separate out two kinds of goods; ‘external’ goods, those things externally and contingently attached to an activity, such as money, prestige or status; and ‘internal’ goods, those things that can only be had by partaking of the practice and doing so in a certain way. The latter are labelled internal for two reasons. First, because they can only be obtained through the practice in question—doggedly resisting a new ball attack in failing light late on the last day of a test match can only be undertaken in cricket. In ballet, the statement makes no sense at all. Secondly, the value of such activity can only be fully appreciated by those who in some broad sense, participate in the practice in question. Such action cannot be identified or recognised from the outside.

The fact that only those who participate are able to identify and recognise internal goods, grounds internal goods in communities of one kind or another. In general, only communities can identify and label internal goods. And those communities are the actual site of ‘practices’ in the sense that MacIntyre has defined the term.

A further key difference between external and internal goods now emerges:

It is characteristic of what I have called external goods that when achieved they are always some individual’s property and possession. Moreover characteristically they are such that the more that someone has of them, the less there is for other people. ... External goods are therefore characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners. Internal goods are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is good for the whole community who participate in the practice. (MacIntyre, 1985: 190-1)

In turn, understanding internal goods allows MacIntyre to define a virtue:

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods. (MacIntyre, 1985: 191.)

As MacIntyre notes, virtue resides in practices and practices themselves are embedded in, but should not be confused with, institutional contexts. This has two aspects. More narrowly, MacIntyre means that, for example, chess is played in chess clubs, chemistry is practiced in laboratories and what we call justice is pursued in courts. The virtues of chess may, or may not be embedded in the clubs. It is quite likely that it will be this institutional context that will emphasise external goods and pressure individuals to pursue them at the

expense of internal goods. More widely, these specific institutions (chess clubs, etc) are embedded into a wider social context of values and mores.

As to those wider institutional contexts, some are more congenial to recognising and supporting the possibility of maintaining and supporting practices, the pursuit of internal goods and hence virtues than others. Contexts which favour only the pursuit of external goods do not have this character.

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<sup>i</sup> Robert Reich (1991) divides occupations into three categories—routine production workers, in-person service workers and symbolic analysts.