



PHILLIP ACT 2606

CONTACT@CRICKETACT.COM.AU

CRICKETACT.COM.AU

INQUIRY INTO FOSTERING AND PROMOTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL CAPITAL

Introduction

Cricket ACT (CACT), with the support of Cricket Australia (CA), welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories on the Inquiry into fostering and promoting the significance of Australia's National Capital (the Inquiry).

Background

CACT is the peak body for all forms of cricket in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and surrounding region. Formed in 1922, CACT is one of the leading sporting organisations in the region, with a commitment to innovation and excellence in each of the programs they administer. From grassroots through to high performance and pathway programs, CACT is delivering on its purpose *to enrich and unite our community through cricket* while striving to accelerate their contribution to community and to Australian cricket, now and for future generations.

In recent years, CACT has achieved strong growth in the sport within the region which has resulted in a significant spike in participation, underpinned by greater support for community volunteers, producing elite cricketers who are representing the ACT on a national stage and through attracting and increasing cricket's fan-base.

CACT is a not-for-profit entity.

REPRESENT NATIONAL STORY

Terms of reference: (1) *Requirements for the National Institutions to convey a dynamic, representative national story.*

CACT Response: CACT is committed to providing support and guidance to National Institutions to ensure that sport, especially cricket, is adequately represented as an integral part of Australia's identity.

Currently, the ACT is represented on a national level by the ACT Meteors, who compete in the Women's National Cricket League (WNCL) and have done so since 2009.

CACT has bold ambitions to field Canberra-based sides in the Men's National Competition (Marsh One-Day Cup and Sheffield Shield) as well as the Big Bash League (domestic Twenty20 competition). Through the support and advocacy of both Federal and Territory Governments, CACT can unlock the potential to increase the contribution of ACT Cricket to Australian Cricket and the broader ACT community.



SOURCE OF PRIDE

Terms of reference: (2) *Maintaining the currency and vibrancy of Australia's national capital as a source of pride and international recognition.*

CACT Response: As an international sport, cricket holds a unique place in the fabric of Australian life as well as around the world. It is one of the most popular sports in Australia, including through participation rates, match attendances and broadcast audiences.

Canberra is also home to one of the most picturesque boutique sporting grounds in the world, Manuka Oval. CACT has proudly supported Manuka Oval in hosting women's and men's international cricket over the past decade, including the inaugural test match played at the venue in 2019 and pool matches from the record-breaking ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2020.

Fans throughout the region consistently flock to Manuka Oval to witness the best elite cricketers each summer in Canberra. This has driven significant economic benefit to the community and ensured Canberra has remained at the forefront for international and domestic cricket fans, and through broadcast audiences has showcased Canberra as not only a destination of choice for top-level cricket, but also for our other cultural and tourism offerings. Having an elite male program based in the Nation's Capital will further amplify the economic and cultural return, whilst further elevating the profile of the Nation's Capital.

RAISING PROFILE

Terms of reference: (3) *Raising the profile of Australia's national capital and its symbolic importance in reflecting the character, values and identity of Australia.*

CACT Response: In recent years, the ACT's reputation as a destination for top-level sport was cemented with Manuka Oval playing host to 13 Big Bash League (BBL) matches during the COVID-19 effected 2020/21 season. This represented almost a quarter of the entire national competition being played at the venue, and proved yet again that the ACT can deliver high quality, first-class content and that Manuka Oval is one of the best cricket facilities in the country.

The ACT region also has a proud history of producing talented cricketers, with 10.3% of men's state and national contracts in 2020/21 being players of ACT origin, and six players from CACT programs selected in Australian cricket programs over the past two years. This number is significant when comparing the ACT's population, funding and resources with other state and territory cricket associations.

Establishing an elite male program in the Nation's Capital would provide even greater motivation and enthusiasm for the game within the ACT which, over time, will deliver greater numbers of girls and boys playing the game through increased opportunity and exposure to professional cricket. This will ensure more ACT cricketers become Australian cricketers without having to leave the geographical boundary of their hometown to achieve that ultimate honour.

CACT will continue to support ACT cricketers in realising their potential and has the bold aim of offering more playing opportunities for talented female athletes than in any other sport within the region. Providing opportunities for more athletes to succeed on a national and international level will ultimately entice more talented sportspeople to our region and produce strong advocates and role models for our Nation's Capital.



HIGHLIGHTING POTENTIAL

Terms of reference: (4) *Consider the importance of Australia's national capital in highlighting our sporting, cultural and tourism potential.*

CACT Response: The ACT is a dynamic and rapidly growing community. Over the past 20 years, the population of the ACT has grown by 41%, driven by migration both from within Australia and overseas.

From a cricket perspective, CACT has seen year on year growth of approximately 20%, including throughout the pandemic. There has also been significant participation growth in CALD communities and female cricket. Furthermore, the ACT has the highest participation rate in sport of any state or territory and the highest percentage of volunteers than any other Australian city.

Over the next 10 years, the population of cricket age citizens (those aged 5-44 years old) is predicted to grow by 21% in the ACT, the most substantial increase across Australia. The ACT also has one of the leading growth rates for the female cricketing age population, projected to increase 14.4% by 2032.

CACT has a unique opportunity to capitalise on this predicted growth and elevate ACT cricket to a broader national and international audience. With appropriate resourcing and funding, CACT has the capability to achieve exponential growth and exposure for the region through:

- More ACT cricketers realising their potential on a national scale, and becoming role-models for the region;
- A coordinated approach to community cricket facilities across the ACT;
- Additional and improved facilities in the region;
- A stronger and more sustainable female cricket program – from grassroots to high-performance;
- Healthier Canberrans and ACT communities through promoting positive mental health and well-being through cricket;
- Improved cricket experiences for the community by increasing the sense of belonging and connection through Australia's national sport;
- Increased elite cricket content (and utilisation) at Manuka Oval with subsequent growth in attendances and audiences; and,
- The introduction of an ACT-based Big Bash Club and a Men's First Class side – the ultimate vision for cricket in the ACT.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Terms of reference: (5) *The needs of existing infrastructure and identifying future infrastructure needs to facilitate a), b), c) and d) above.*

CACT Response: CACT is committed to progressing the quality of cricket infrastructure within the ACT. CACT notes that expansion and improvement to current infrastructure is imperative to continue to develop, nurture and retain both grassroots and elite cricketers within the region.

Through the establishment of a community infrastructure program and high-performance infrastructure program, CACT has identified key cricket infrastructure priorities within the Canberra



community and, in partnership with federal and local government, is committed to providing funds towards these key projects.

CACT's priority infrastructure project is the development of a new Centre of Excellence required to cater for the burgeoning needs of a rapidly expanding cricket community within the ACT and surrounding regions.

The facility will ensure the long-term prosperity and sustainability of cricket within the region and will play a significant role in attracting, developing and retaining the next generation of Australian cricketers, whilst supporting the community now and into the future.

The Centre will provide greater community access to both indoor and outdoor facilities through the provision of flexible training options.

The cricket community, from entry level participants to elite contracted players, will have access to a state of the art 12-lane indoor training facility and access to approximately 30-40 outdoor training wickets. The provision of indoor facilities is of vital importance in the ACT as it will allow players to train and prepare all year round, whilst the provision of turf training facilities is critical, given the current lack of these cricket-specific facilities across the ACT region.

Associated services within the indoor centre provide physical preparation, maintenance and recovery options for developing talent whilst supporting a workforce capable of meeting the needs of a growing population and delivery of content for the greater ACT region. Additionally, meeting spaces and other functional areas of this facility will be available to the local community.

This \$25 million project is supported by Cricket Australia, Cricket ACT and the ACT Government and will have far reaching benefits for future generations by stimulating the local economy, promoting and improving health and well-being and inspiring all Canberrans through cricket. Equally, this project will further cement the ACT region as a leader in the development of female cricket and provide important facilities for elite teams whilst supporting the exponential participation rates for young girls.

In addition to the Centre of Excellence project, CACT also supports ongoing investment in, and development of, Manuka Oval to ensure it remains one of the premier boutique sporting ground in the world. Whilst the boutique nature of Manuka does set it apart from other sporting venues in Australia and abroad, the evolution of this facility is of critical importance, particularly in terms of being able to deliver brilliant experiences for cricket fans and participants. Developments could include the redevelopment of the eastern grandstand to enable more fans to watch cricket (and AFL), upgraded spectator amenities, greater parking provisions, enhanced training and preparation facilities and the transition to a more eco-friendly, environmentally sustainable venue.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information or clarification required on any matters raised in this submission can be directed to Olivia Thornton, Chief Executive Officer, Cricket ACT or Brett Wood, Head of Government Relations, Cricket Australia

