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Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works By
submission:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Works/AISRevitalisationProject

Australian Institute of Sport Revitalisation project, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the important institution T'he Australian Institute of Sport', and the process of revitalizing this important Institution to meet the expectations of all Australians and to be positioned to facilitate the necessary support to athletes so they are competitive in the sports of today and the future.

CROSS (Canberra Region Old School Skaters) is an informal group of older aged skateboarders with a shared passion in the sport/recreation and lifestyle of skateboarding.

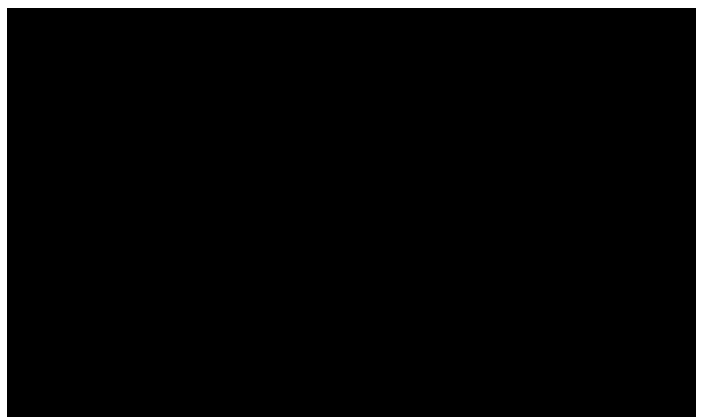
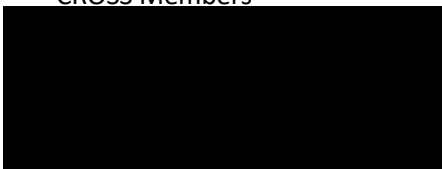
Collectively, the members of CROSS have over 500 years of participation with skateboarding. Most of us have families with children and some of us have grandchildren who also skateboard. Many of us are long term Canberra residents as well as users of Canberra, Interstate and International skateboard parks. A number of us have been involved with the ACT Government in consultation for skatepark designs and funding, as well as being involved in the organization of numerous skateboarding events locally and nationally.

CROSS has an information relationship with the [Canberra Skateboarding Association](#) (CSA), and acknowledges and endorses CSA as Canberra's peak body for skateboarding. Both CROSS and CSA has previously made submissions to the ACT Government as part of its Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT, with the final reports able to be access [here](#) which may be of interest to this project.

Thank you for considering our submission, and we look forward to the Committee's final report.

Regards

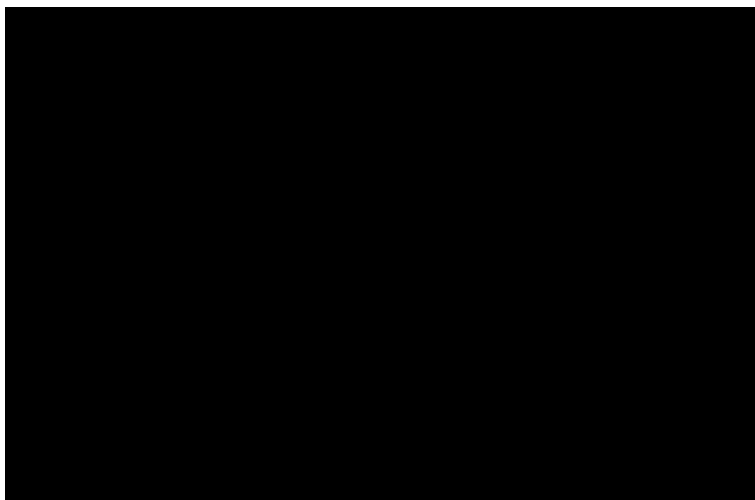
CROSS Members



Canberra Region Old School Skaters

Contents

Australian Institute of Sport Revitalisation project, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory	1
1) Introduction	3
CROSS's Observations and Suggestions	4
2) Resourcing and funding of alternative/extreme sports commensurate with traditional sports in Australia	4
3) Provision of an Alternative/Extreme Sports Center in Canberra	5
4) Skatepark	6
5) Vertical Halfpipe	6
6) Water landing Jumps Park	7
7) Foam Pit jumps facility	7
8) Pump track	8
9) Asphalt track going up-hill and down-hill	8
10) Surf Wave Park	9
11) Mega Ramp	10
12) Mountain Bike Downhill course:	10
13) Artificial Rock-climbing facilities:	11
14) Conclusion:	11



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Canberra Region Old School Skaters

1) Introduction

CROSS (Canberra Region Old School Skaters) was initiated with the growth of the digital age in the 2000's where individuals could connect virtually to discuss and participate in skateboard activities. The number of people associated with CROSS ebbs and flows due to personal commitments and residential changes. The only requirement to be associated with CROSS is to have an interest in skateboarding.

From being a conduit to organise regular local skateboarding sessions at Canberra's skateboard parks and other areas, CROSS is also involved in:

- Running an annual skateboard racing event on the Canberra Day weekend, including hiring the Stromlo Forest Park criterion track for a dual slalom event
- Helping other Canberra based skateboarders and the Canberra Skateboarding Association to keep the iconic Belco Bowl maintained and painted
 - This is always done prior to the annual [Belco Bowl Jam](#) that is coordinated and run by Canberra based skateboarders voluntarily
 - This attended by local, National and International skateboarders and gets world-[wide media coverage](#), as well and bringing income to local Canberra businesses
- Undertaking minor maintenance tasks at Canberra's other skateboard parks, aiding to keep them safe
- Fund raising to assist skateboarders who have experienced periods of hardship
- Acting as positive role models for younger skateboarders by;
 - Undertaking rubbish clean up and the beginning and end of each skateboard session
 - Encouraging the wearing of safety equipment
 - Encouraging skateboarders of all skill levels to push and extend themselves in a safe manner
 - Being welcoming to all users of all abilities to skateboard park facilities, regardless of the equipment they are using, including scooters, rollerblades, roller skates, BMX bikes and skateboards
 - Endorsing and supporting the Canberra Skateboarding Associations program of free skateboard lessons throughout the calendar year
- Advocating for suitable recreational facilities across Canberra and the wider regional area, with a focus on facilities for skateboarding and other alternative sports

The members of CROSS have observed with delight and enthusiasm over the last 10 years with ACT skateparks being busy and active spaces with families and people of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities using them to ride bikes, scooters, roller skates, and (of course) skateboards. But we

Canberra Region Old School Skaters

are also aware that most of these initiatives have been done without much consideration of the provision of facilities and pathways for high performing athletes to have access to facilities that are comparable with facilities used in elite competitions and the Olympic Games.

We have observed that skateboarders are made up of a community of creative forward thinking individuals. Often skateboarders are ahead of the general community in relation to fashion, music, artistic and community attitudes. For example skateboarders have been welcoming to individuals of all gender identities for some time now. We were proud to witness the positive attitude and comradery that female skateboarders exhibited at the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Further like most of the viewing audience we were thrilled and surprised with the fantastic results by Australian athletes in the non- traditional Olympic sports of Skateboarding, BMX, Aerial and Mogul skiing, over the last few Olympic events. From our perspective being skateboarders we are aware of the outstanding results by Australia's skateboarders given the relative minimal funding and facilities that are afforded to these top level athletes and generally to all skateboarders to nurture a population of competitive skateboarding athletes for the future.

Despite Canberra's small population and dated skateboard park facilities, the ACT has produced some of Australia's most talented skateboarders, including Ethan Copeland (currently sponsored by International companies and competing on the world skateboard circuit), Katie Pike (one of Australia's top female skateboarders who has also competed internationally) and Zac Vanzetti (one of Australia's top street skaters). One can easily imagine an increased profile for Canberra if modern facilities were available, and then to have the new facilities being designed and built in consideration of;

1. The Australian Institute of Sport being based in Canberra
2. The University of Canberra (that offers a Sports Science Degree) also being located in Canberra

CROSS is confident that if a value for money calculation was to be made in relation to the money spent on the alternative/extreme sports compared to the traditional sports of swimming and track & field etc. and the medals achieved by these sports, the spend relative to medals achieved would equate to value for money to the alternative/extreme sports. We would like to suggest that if an increased allocation of money towards these newer sports is made then Australia would be better positioned to have a pool of capable athletes and pathways for young athletes to continue to excel at these sports.

CROSS's Observations and Suggestions

2) Resourcing and funding of alternative/extreme sports commensurate with traditional sports in Australia

It is reasonably obvious that alternative/extreme sports have become more accepted worldwide and socially to the extent that many of these sports have been introduced into the Olympics and there are indications that more sports of this nature are going to continue to be introduced into the Olympics.

Canberra Region Old School Skaters

Many countries have injected significant money and resources into these sports with their athletes being supported and competing worldwide with significant support by their country of origin.

To date Australian athletes have been competitive in many of these sports and in the last two Olympics 2024 and 2022 have realized medals in some of these sports this is outstanding given the relative resourcing and financial support and pathways these athletes have been afforded compared to traditional sports.

One cannot expect Australian athletes to continue to achieve these results without a proportional increase in support in all areas commensurate with traditional sports represented in Australia and similar sports being supported internationally.

CROSS understands that the Olympic Games Organisation is considering the inclusion of other sport that use the same facilities as is used by Skateboarding and BMX so that the facilities are better utilized during the hosting of the Olympic Games.

3) Provision of an Alternative/Extreme Sports Center in Canberra

With the Australian Institute of Sport having a central identity in Canberra and Stromlo Forest Park being centrally located in Canberra and already containing some high-class sporting facilities (including; cycling, swimming), there is a great opportunity for [Stromlo Forest Park](#) to be developed into Australia's and Canberra's extreme sports center, catering for the full spectrum of alternative/extreme Sports including; Skateboarding, BMX, Mountain Biking, Aerial Skiing, Snowboarding, Rock climbing, surfing etc. And to partner with:

- ACT Government
- Canberra University

To maximise the benefits of these facilities.

If a facility was to be facilitated at Stromlo Forest park, then there is the opportunity to allow the general public to use these facilities when they are not being utilized by Australia's elite athletes.

In facilitating a new facility consideration should be given to sports specific facilities as well as facilities that multiple sports can utilise as well as leveraging the unique terrain that this location has to offer. This will be expanded on later in this paper.

CROSS believes that any facility provided should be an all-weather /seasons facility so that athletes attending the Australian Institute of Sport are able to use the facilities no matter what time of year or weather conditions they are in attendance.

Further with Canberra University offering a Sport Science Degree, CROSS believes there are opportunities for any facilities provided to leverage / integrate consideration for Sport Scientists so that;

- Athletes,
- Australian Sport Commission (AIS Staff)
- Canberra University (Students)

Canberra Region Old School Skaters

Can achieve the benefits of Sports Science in their practice/training.

4) Skatepark

Concrete skateparks are a common facility use by skateboarders, BMX, Rollerbladers, Scooter, Roller skaters and other users. Generally these facilities can have a park/flow area and a street area. Since hosting the Skatepark events at the Olympic Games the layout and design of both the street and flow facilities has varied and is expected to vary for each Olympic Games.



Bayswater skateboard park in Western Australia,(with a halfpipe in the foreground)

5) Vertical Halfpipe

CROSS understands that potentially the Vertical Halfpipe event may be added to the Olympic Games, this facility is used by a range of sports including; skateboarding, BMX, Rollerblading and Roller skating.

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6) Water landing Jumps Park

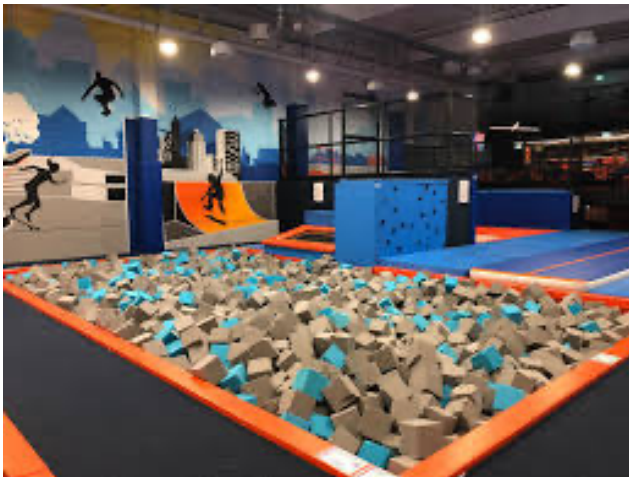
A number of sports including, aerial skiing, snowboarding, mogul skiing, skateboarding, BMX, Roller blading, could use a water landing jumps park facility to expand their trick development with the knowledge that they have a safe and soft landing



An example of a Water Jumps park, that can be utilized by a range of athletes to develop their skills

7) Foam Pit jumps facility

Similar to a water landing jumps park, a foam pit facilitates a safer landing area while athletes practice complex progressive tricks and skills



An example of a foam pit

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8) Pump track

Although not a competition facility, a pump track provides an ideal environment to develop cardio fitness and other areas of develop for athletes



An example of a sealed Pump Track that can be use for cardio fitness and balancing skills

9) Asphalt track going up-hill and down-hill

With the perfect terrain at Stromlo Forest park, an asphalt course going up and down Mount Stromlo without motor vehicle utilization, would provide a safe environment for a wide range of athletes to maintain their fitness and develop their skills including; cycling, running, walking, skateboarding and a range of gravity sports. Consideration being given to usage by a maximum number of sports / athletes with a variety of course for athletes to utilize.



An example of athletes using a sealed asphalt road without motor vehicle use

Canberra Region Old School Skaters

10) Surf Wave Park

It can only be assumed that to ensure that the surfing program in the Olympics can be held during the two week Olympics period that consideration will be given to holding this event in an artificial wave pool/park. If this is the case serious consideration should be given to facilitating one for athlete to train in.



An example of an artificial waves park

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11) **Mega Ramp**

Somewhat ambitious but potentially the inclusion of a Mega Ramp would make the venue a destination location.



An example of a Mega ramp

12) **Mountain Bike Downhill course:**

With Stromlo Forest Park already having extensive mountain bike tracks and previously hosting a World Cup event, it would seem to be a logical consideration to continue to develop these facilities so there is the opportunity for Stromlo Forest park to be a destination location for Mountain Biking and to host World Class events in the future.



International Mountain Biking event

Canberra Region Old School Skaters

13) Artificial Rock-climbing facilities:

Although there seems to be many commercial rock-climbing/boulding facilities, the facilitation of dedicated facilities along with the multiuse facilities so that climbing athletes have a full range of facilities in the one location would seem like a good idea.



14) Conclusion:

CROSS appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this Project and hopes that we are not the only voice advocating for the Australian Sport Commission to consider appropriate allocation of funds and resources towards the non-traditional sports that Australian Athletes participate and compete in (and currently very successfully).

Hopefully with some consideration and initial commitment the Australia Sport Commission can progressively realise a world class extreme/alternative sports complex that facilitates competitive athletes for many years and is the envy of the rest of the world.

Canberra Region Old School Skaters