



Hockey Australia Inc
Level 1
433-435 South Road
Bentleigh, VIC 3204
Tel: +61 3 9555 1500
Fax: +61 3 9555 1565
Email: ha@hockey.org.au
hockey.org.au

ABN: 26 546 955 455 ARBN: 088 988 836 INC: A 2941

22 July 2008

The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on
Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and
Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into a New Regional Development Funding Program

Hockey Australia Inc. is the National sporting organisation for the sport in Australia, recognised by the Australian Government and affiliated with the International Hockey Federation. The members of Hockey Australia are the eight State/Territory Hockey Associations and each state association is comprised of regional associations and clubs.

The purpose of this correspondence, on behalf of the Australian hockey community is in support of additional funding being provided for sport and recreation facilities from the newly established Regional Development Funding Program.

Collectively the National body and our members provide Australians with the opportunity to play hockey from junior and grass-roots levels through to elite competition including Olympic and Commonwealth Games. Hockey Australia has a joint responsibility for delivering these benefits to Australian hockey players with its member states and ensuring hockey in Australia achieves consistent success, a strong and positive public recognition, continuing player support at all standards and a healthy participation growth rate.

Hockey is one of the few sports available to Australians of both genders that can be played on an organised basis throughout a lifetime of ages seven to seventy years. The 2007 National hockey census records thirteen hundred (1,300) clubs and about twenty five hundred (2,500) players from clubs, schools and recreational participants.

In many areas of Australia, hockey is still played on natural grass pitches, however since the early 1980's synthetic surfaces have become the pitch of choice and are now widely installed in all states and territories, with over one hundred and sixty (160) fields nation wide. The cost of installing such a pitch is about \$1m and the cost of synthetic surface replacement, which is required every eight (8) to ten (10) years, is approximately \$400,000. Over the next ten year period our clubs and associations will need approximately \$60m for the resurfacing of existing grounds and to construct new pitches to meet the participation growth in the sport. International hockey is played exclusively on synthetic surfaces.

Demand for more fields is also expected to increase as more local and state governments turn to synthetic surface sporting arenas as part of the strategy to address

climate change and water shortage. At the same time these conditions have created a growing need for funding for initial recycled water, tanks and irrigation systems, which are an added burden for hockey clubs and associations and ultimately participants in the sport. As a non-professional sport, with limited resources and corporate support, our clubs continue to struggle to meet the challenge of building, operating and maintaining these important community facilities.

To date the Commonwealth has in general provided very limited funding for Australia's sporting facilities and we believe this is having an increasingly negative impact on the level of participation in sport in Australia. It is also therefore affecting the social, health and economic outcomes from sport and recreation activities. From our own experiences there is clear information that our participation growth program has been restricted by facility availability.

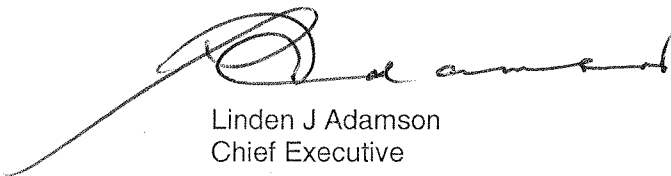
This lack of investment also has the potential to impact on Australia's performance at international level, although currently our men's team is ranked number one in the world and our women's number four. Over recent years however some of our international competitors, notably England, Germany, France, China and India have all recognised the value of sport and are making significantly large investments in facility development. Governments in Australia should now provide similar funding assistance.

Hockey Australia understands that the funding for sport and recreation facilities has been the subject of a number of parliamentary inquiries in the last fifteen years that have not resulted in broadening the base for financial assistance. In the absence of any other program for Australian Government funding for sport and recreation facilities, Hockey Australia strongly suggests consideration that the Regional Development program be sufficiently resourced, on an ongoing basis, to provide such assistance.

There is joint responsibility that the allocation should be provided by Commonwealth, State and Local Governments for both national and regional standard facilities. The program should be developed on the basis of a national audit of all sporting and recreation facilities by state and local governments together with a comprehensive needs assessment.

Facility development is an absolute necessity for the continued participation of Australians in sport and the associated benefits of health and social well-being.

Yours sincerely,



Linden J Adamson
Chief Executive