



# **AUSTRALIAN NETBALL PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION/ AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION INTERIM SURVEY SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

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## SECTION 1: Sample

The results are derived from one hundred and one players whom represent the eight teams in the Commonwealth Bank Trophy.

The Commonwealth Bank Trophy is made up of the following teams: Adelaide Thunderbirds, AIS Darters, Hunter Jaegers, Melbourne Kestrels, Melbourne Phoenix, Perth Orioles, Queensland Firebirds and Sydney Swifts.

## SECTION 2: Demographic data

The sample age ranges from 32 to 16 years, representing a variance of 16 years with the mean age being 22 years and 2 months as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005.

Table 2.1

### Current or highest education level reached

Type	Secondary	TAFE	Tertiary	Other	N/A
<b>Player numbers</b>	19	13	68	0	1
<b>Percentage</b>	18.8%	12.9%	67.3%	0%	1%

Most players playing in the Commonwealth Bank Trophy are in the process of completing a tertiary degree or already have. Of those in the secondary column it is reasonable to assume that most of them are at an age where they have not had the opportunity to attempt further study. The table demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of players' believe that further education is important to their future as Table 2.4 indicates they are unlikely to make a living from their netball.

Table 2.2

### Employment status

Type	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	N/A
<b>Player numbers</b>	42	15	38	6
<b>Percentage</b>	41.6%	14.9%	37.6%	5.9%

Almost all players are employed in some capacity with most reporting to be full-time or casual employees, according to Table 2.2. People who are employed casually are generally studying, or working the equivalent of full-time hours, as Table 2.8 indicates.

Table 2.3

Seasons played including this year

<b>Seasons</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
										<b>+</b>
<b>Player numbers</b>	23	26	15	11	9	5	2	4	6	0
<b>Percentage</b>	22.8%	25.7%	14.9%	10.9%	8.9%	5.0%	2.0%	4.0%	5.9%	0%

Table 2.3 indicates that 83.2% of players have played five years or less at the elite level. This suggests there is a high turnover of players at the elite level with the highest proportion of people reporting it was their debut or second season.

Table 2.4

Reported gross income received from playing netball

<b>Income</b>	<b>&lt;\$999</b>	<b>\$1000- \$1999</b>	<b>\$2000- \$2999</b>	<b>\$3000- \$3999</b>	<b>\$4000- \$4999</b>	<b>\$5000&gt;</b>
<b>Number of players</b>	38	18	14	14	6	11
<b>Percentage of players</b>	37.6%	17.8%	13.9%	13.9%	5.9%	10.9%

Table 2.4 confirms that of the 101 players who participated in the survey 83.2% (84 players) earned less than \$4000 per season, including extra activities such as clinics.

It should also be noted that a significant 37.6% (38 players) earned less than \$1000 for their efforts, with many reporting they earned nothing.

Table 2.5

Reported gross income from other employment

<b>Income</b>	<b>&lt;\$999</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$40000</b>	<b>\$50000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	<b>9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	
		<b>\$19,999</b>	<b>\$29,999</b>	<b>\$39,999</b>	<b>\$49999</b>		
<b>Number of players</b>	34	16	9	14	12	9	7
<b>Percentage</b>	33.7%	15.8%	8.9%	13.9%	11.9%	8.9%	6.9%

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that in 2002 the average income for a woman was \$39, 754 per year. Only 20.8% (21 players) of women who play netball at the highest level in Australia earn more than this, with a majority earning less than \$10, 000. Also, 72.3% (73 players) of people reported they earned less than the average income stated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 2.6

Hours per week committed to netball in season

<b>Hours</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-25</b>	<b>26-35</b>	<b>36-45</b>	<b>46&gt;</b>
<b>Number of players</b>	0	2	23	35	34	7
<b>Percentage</b>	0%	2.0%	22.7%	34.7%	33.7%	6.9%

Table 2.7

Hours per week committed to netball in pre-season

<b>Hours</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-25</b>	<b>26-35</b>	<b>36-45</b>	<b>46&gt;</b>
<b>Number of players</b>	0	11	41	25	20	4
<b>Percentage</b>	0%	10.9%	40.6%	24.8%	19.9%	4.0%

Table 2.8

Hours per week committed to other employment/education

<b>Hours</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-25</b>	<b>26-35</b>	<b>36-45</b>	<b>46&gt;</b>
<b>Number of players</b>	0	5	11	26	39	20
<b>Percentage</b>	0%	5.0%	10.9%	25.8%	38.6%	19.8%

Tables 2.6 and 2.7 highlight the commitment each woman makes in her life to play netball at the elite level. Three quarters of women reported a commitment of 26 hours or greater during the season and approximately half for more than 26 hours in pre-season per week.

In addition to the full-time commitment most of these women make to netball the majority (84.2%) commit more than 26 hours to employment/education each week.

### **SECTION 3: Issues as ranked by players'**

In November representatives from each of the eight Commonwealth Bank Trophy teams flew to Melbourne to discuss issues surrounding netball. The players' came up with twelve issues that were of concern.

The twelve issues were: Remuneration, assistance with health, training facilities, warm-up areas, allowances, professionalism v amateurism, selection policy, sponsorship, communication with governing body, use of image, income protection and travel issues.

When the ANPA/AWU visited clubs players were asked to rank these items from 1 to 12 in order of importance so as we could formulate a list of priority

areas. Each issue was described to the player to develop independent thought processes for them to rank items. Some typical questions used to stimulate thought among players are listed below.

**Remuneration:** How satisfied are you with the income you receive for playing netball?

**Assistance with health:** Are you happy with the level of support you receive when you are injured? For example, are your medical costs covered?

**Training facilities:** Are you happy with the quality and location of training facilities?

**Warm-up areas:** Is there sufficient space for you to warm-up before a match and are the surfaces the same as what you play on?

**Allowances:** Do you receive appropriate allowances, i.e. food, parking, tolls, equipment etc?

**Professionalism v amateurism:** Do you think that the sport is asking you to be professional but treating you as amateur?

**Selection policy:** Are you concerned with the way teams are selected?

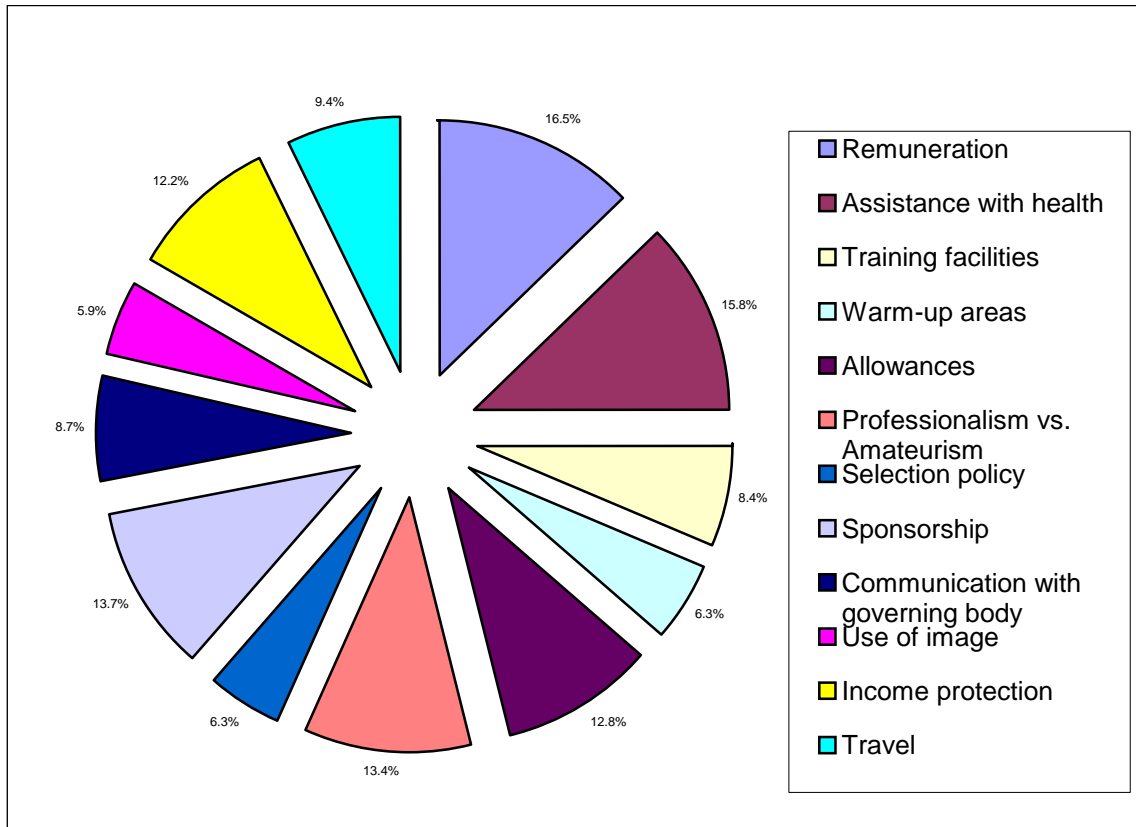
**Sponsorship:** Have you been free to look for personal sponsorship?

**Communication with governing body:** In your opinion do you think communication with the governing body is adequate?

**Use of image:** Has your image previously been used without consent?

**Income protection:** Do you require income protection for other employment if you are injured playing netball?

**Travel:** How does travelling impact on other parts of your life?



**Figure 3.1.** Issues as ranked by playing group as a whole.

The issue that affect most players' was clearly remuneration. This was not unexpected as table 2.4 shows that very little money is currently being paid to players.

The lack of assistance when injury occurred proved to be of almost equal importance to players as remuneration. The qualitative responses stress that this is a priority area that needed to be and should be improved urgently.

Surprisingly most players thought that they were being treated as amateur whilst being required to be professional, and that when they sought sponsorship for this they often faced many obstacles that made it near impossible.

All issues were important to players but it seemed those of most prominence affected industrial relations, occupational health and safety and the ability to negotiate independent deals to earn income.

#### **SECTION 4: Employment conditions**

Table 2.4 illustrates the income players receive from netball annually. The highest reported income was \$14, 000 with the lowest being zero. However, whilst pay was low it was not the only employment issue that caused concern.

Each club had peculiarities in the employment classification. For example, the following classifications were reported: Casual, Permanent-casual, Part-time and Hobby. All contracts had a start and finish date, however it was expected that athletes turn up outside these dates to perform pre-season training, which has workplace implications.

Superannuation was paid to players in five of the eight clubs that make up the Commonwealth Bank Trophy. However, no player reported that their club paid other entitlements such as long service leave, annual leave, maternity pay or a casual loading.

Players' at one club reported they received money for conducting coaching clinics but did not receive a group certificate, or pay tax on the money received, indicating that the administrators treat the commitment more as a hobby than profession.

Players' at all clubs reported allowances to be inadequate or non-existence. For example, some clubs were unable to order soft drinks or bread at meals, as their budget didn't cover this. No club paid for parking at the airport, toll charges to get to training or many other things people take for granted in employment.



Conducting coaching clinics was something players felt was necessary to promote the game but had reservations about how they were organised. For example, one player reported that she was required to coach 80 children because her state organisation forgot to tell two other players they were required to attend.

Some questioned the distribution of funds raised for clinics. For example, one player mentioned she was paid \$100 for conducting a clinic with 70 children all of whom paid \$40 to attend, totalling gross revenue of \$2800.

Others expressed concern at poor communication of dates leaving insufficient time to inform their employer. Some also reported they lost money because they were required to attend many clinics for free and had to pay travel costs and lose a days wages from other employment.

## **SECTION 5: Occupational health and safety & medical Issues**

Occupational health and safety and medical issues were the second most important issue to the players' behind remuneration.

The first issue that was prominent at all teams was the issue of uniform given to them at the beginning of each season. There were many horror stories of uniforms going to the wrong state, incorrect fittings, and inappropriate amounts. It seems most of these could be overcome by consulting with the athletes. Table 5.1 is a list compiled by the players.

Table 5.1

Suggested uniform issue

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Playing uniform	2
Sports bras	5
Training shirts	5
Training Shorts	3
Bike Pants	3
Socks	5
Shoes	4
Tracksuit	1
Polar fleece	1
Sunglasses	1
Hat	1
Sunscreen	Unlimited

Players' felt it would be beneficial if their club were given priority to train at their State centres, which were built for them. However, it was reported by most clubs that they were often unable to train because social sport was able to generate higher income and took precedent.

Medical issues were foremost on the minds of players when completing the survey. It was clear that the AIS team had a huge advantage over other clubs in access to medical facilities and clearly set the standard others need to follow.

The South Australian player's reported that due to strict time and training budgets they were often unable to seek medical attention. It was also reported that essential medical attention was not always available at training, meaning players' often had to take time off work to seek it.

People playing in Western Australia were unhappy they were required to pay for medical attention outside of game day. They were also unhappy about the limited availability of medical attention on hand at practice due to the physiotherapist leaving at 7 p.m. but training not ending until 9 p.m. which is when most players sort assistance. The players' also made comment they held fundraising activities to pay for the services of a masseuse.

The players in Victoria made comment that the VIS scholarship covered most of their medical costs, if they were able to travel to the appropriate places. However, players raised concern about the lack of medical attention available to them at training with most reporting it to be inadequate. For example, it was reported that if massage went longer than 20 minutes they were required to pay, and younger players' felt they didn't receive the required treatment because senior players often took priority.

In Sydney physiotherapists are provided, however other medical assistance is not readily available. However, most players' reported satisfactions with their medical treatment except that they were required to travel to seek it.

Players' at the Jaegers are concerned that if they need physiotherapy or massage they incur the costs. It was further reported that physiotherapy treatment at training was irregular and was only available in the first thirty minutes of a session.

The playing group in Queensland reported that physiotherapy was provided at approximately half their training sessions but no other medical assistance was readily available. The group raised further concerns that if they sort treatment outside what was offered they had to pay for it before being reimbursed, which often caused financial hardship. However, players were happy that a qualified physiotherapist was available during matches.

A major area of concern for all players at every club was health insurance and the question of who pays the gap. The cost of health insurance ranged from \$850 to \$1800, however younger players often did not know as their parents paid.

Most players' are not aware that they are responsible for paying the "gap" in medical payments when the insurance company does not (except in Queensland). For example, one girl was told by Netball Australia officials to go by ambulance with the belief they would be paying for it, however she received a bill in excess of \$800. Another case involved a player who suffered a serious knee injury during a match requiring a reconstruction, which cost her \$5000 not including the wages she lost from missing work. Other stories include players simply missing physiotherapy appointments because they are unable to afford them, which affects their complete rehabilitation.

## **SECTION 6: Qualitative responses**

These are some of the responses given by the players' when they were asked to explain how netball affects their life.

"I moved away from my family and friends to pursue my dream."

"Study revolves around netball, not netball around study."

"Have to study part-time so my degree is taking twice as long."

"Can't work while I'm training and at university so I have no income."

"Playing netball has affected my schooling – many complications including not completing HSC."

"I have to change work times for netball, which is difficult."

"Strained relationships with partners as I never see them due to time commitment."

"Juggling netball and study leaves you very drained and tired."

"Had to make a decision between career and netball, unfortunately had to choose career."

"Rush straight from work to netball, resulting in feeling run down."

“It’s hard to fit in homework after school.”

“I miss the social life as well.”

“It is a mass stress getting to training on time.”

“Always have to go to dinners/birthdays late because I have training.”

“Did year 12 over two years because of netball commitments.”

“I had to lose shifts at work, i.e. give up money.”

“Travelling is the worst, because so much petrol is needed.”

“I must sacrifice time spent with family and friends.”

“Forced to take annual leave when travelling interstate.”

“Don’t see partner during the week, because of work and netball.”

“Can’t work full-time with all the commitments and suffer financially.”

“I left home for two years to go to Canberra, and then to Melbourne, so I have effectively moved my life.”

“I am often anaemic during the season due to training late.”

“Netball requires me to miss school if I have an away game.”

“Pressure to do things and spend more time doing appearances without payments and during work hours.”

“Increase tiredness as very little time for recovery – extra sleep needed.”

“Have to reduce responsibilities at work.”

“There may be 5 minutes to catch up with my partner before bed, very frustrating for both of us.”

“I had to give away my job simply because there is not enough time.”

“It gave me a big health scare, as I had pushed my body to the limit.”

“It means that I have less time for a social life.”

“My marks at university are not as good.”

“Fatigued constantly throughout the season.”

“Reduced choice of furthering career.”

“Financial pressure, i.e. unpaid leave from work.”

“No ability to put any extra effort into my work.”

“Missing birthdays, weddings of family and friends.”

“Difficult to find enough time to work enough shifts and support myself.”

“I have to miss family events.”

“Not earning money when I am away from work do time away means struggling with rent payments etc.”

“The time spent travelling and training is very demanding.”

“I had to give up career as netball commitments prevented full-time work.”

“Tired!”

“Leaving early from work puts strain on business relationship with employer.”

“Costs for netball is always above the amount you get paid.”

“Work is put under pressure to compensate for time spent away due to netball.”

“People don’t realise that it is just not training time, it is the getting ready and recovery too.”

“Travelling means whole day of university is lost which at times can’t be made up for individually.”

“I have had to move back home.”

“I struggle to pay university fees, bills etc.”

“It affects all aspects of my life.”

“Increased stress, lack of relaxation and juggling commitments.”

“Restricted opportunity for career promotion.”

“I miss out on many social occasions.”

“High injury rate.”

“Mainly problems with not seeing boyfriend very often due to commitments.”

“Because I have no time to work therefore can’t afford to buy a car, which is essential, I rely heavily on mum’s which is annoying to her.”

“My study is affected due to time committed to netball, hence my grades are not that good.”

“I often lack sleep due to busy schedule, hence I get sick and then I have to pay my own medical bill.”

“My parents have to support me financially as I cant work as many hours as I would like.”

“Moved away from home to play in Newcastle and was unwell throughout the season and extremely unwell for the 3-4 months post season.”

“I am limited in my choice of employment as we are forced to miss multiple Friday’s from work or risk not being selected.”

“Fatigue affects quality of full-time work, as I am exhausted.”

“It is extremely difficult to find an employer who is sympathetic to my position.”

“Whole life revolves around netball commitments, rush from the gym to work, work to training before getting home at 8:30 p.m. EXHAUSTED.”

“Career has been put on hold – everything revolves around netball.”

“As I am at university and between training, games and study I have very little time to work and earn money.”

“I had to leave job last year because of commitment to netball.”

“I’m very dependent on my parents financially.”

“Taking time off from work costs money.”

“Constantly working, studying and training leaves no time.”

“I play netball because I love the game, however when as a player you do not receive adequate support, respect and consideration you can only love it so much.”

**“NETBALL DOESN’T AFFECT MY LIFE, MY LIFE IS NETBALL.”**

## **SECTION 7: Local issues**

The players identified issues that were specific to their club needs. For example:

When players’ from the AIS Darters stayed an extra night in their hometown to visit family they were forced to pay the difference in airfare back.

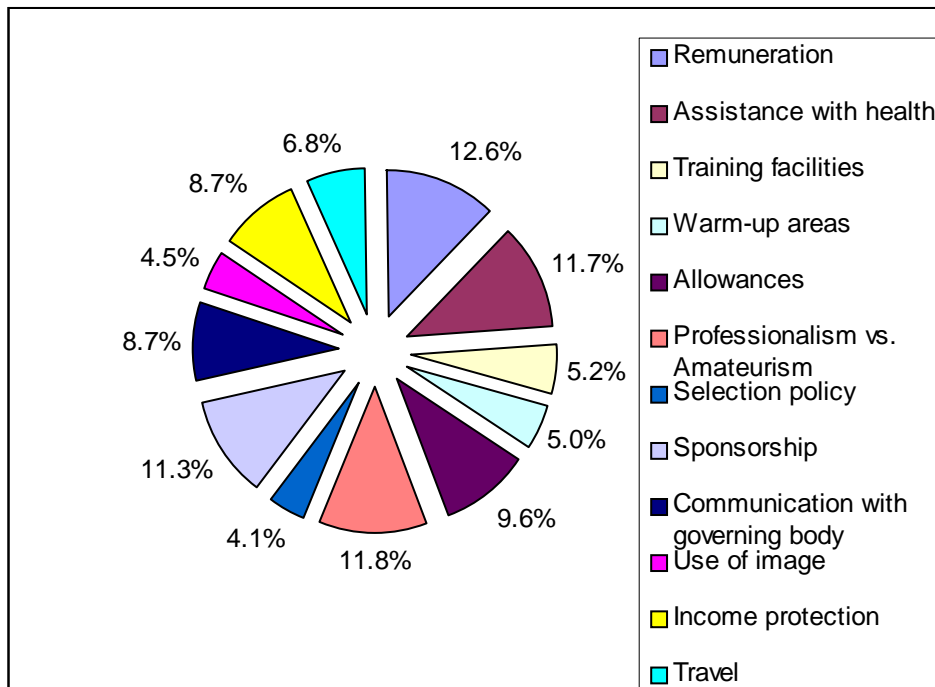


Figure 7.1: Issues as ranked by Darters playing group

Players' at the AIS Darters are concerned that at the completion of their scholarship they will be unable to earn an income from the sport they play. Additionally, they have raised concern about restraints placed on them organising their own sponsorship deals, and the level of professionalism asked of them whilst still being treated as amateurs.

Players' from the Adelaide Thunderbirds are concerned that they will only be given one nights accommodation when they play in Townsville.



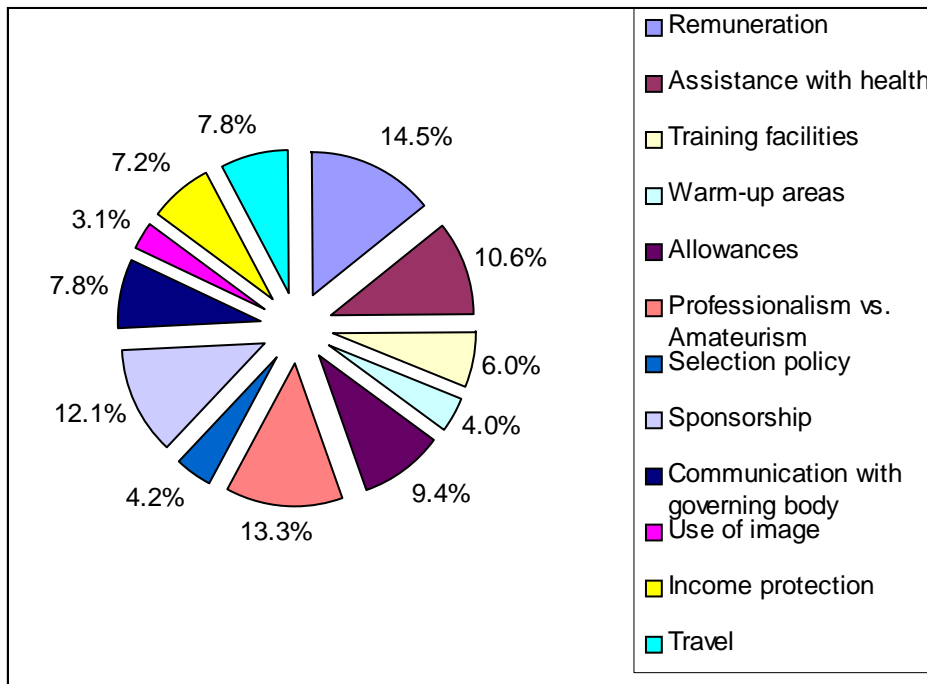
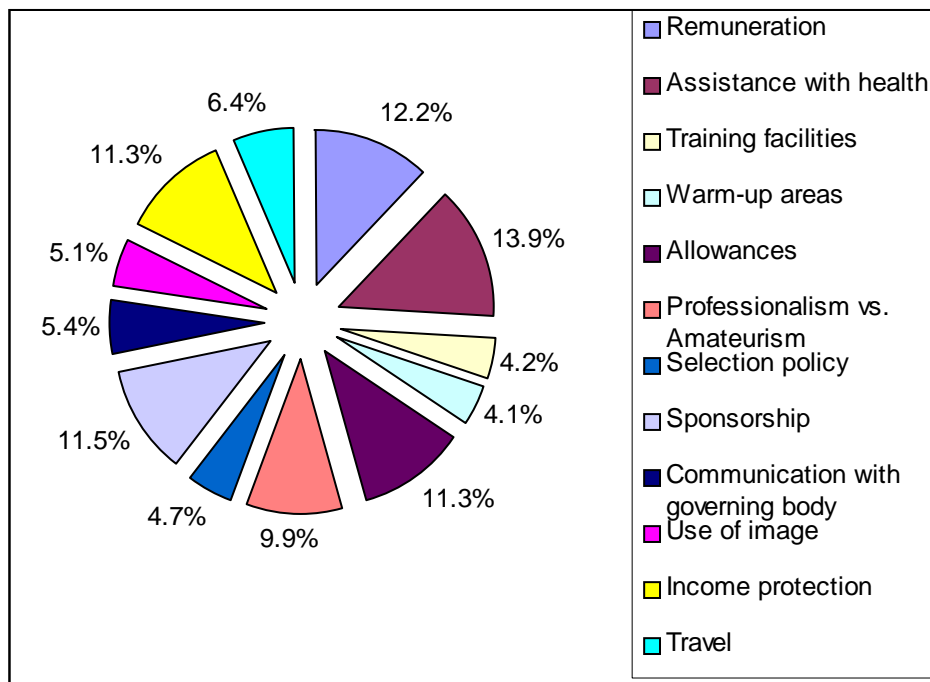


Figure 7.2: Issues as ranked by Thunderbirds playing group.

Remuneration and the professionalism of sport are the issues that cause most concern for the Thunderbirds playing group. Players felt that the two issues were connected because with amateur skills it is impossible to become professional, hence you don't get paid accordingly.

The Hunter Jaegers are concerned that moving to Newcastle left them out of pocket as the allocated \$750 didn't even cover the removalist costs. Comment was also made that in the past the team manager reheated meals on away trips to save money.



**Figure 7.3:** Issues as ranked by Jaegers playing group.

Players' at the Jaegers are most concerned with the lack of assistance afforded to them when they are injured, believing that if income protection were available it would help to alleviate this problem.

The Melbourne Kestrels are concerned about programming that will require them to play home games in Geelong, without compensation for extra time travelled.

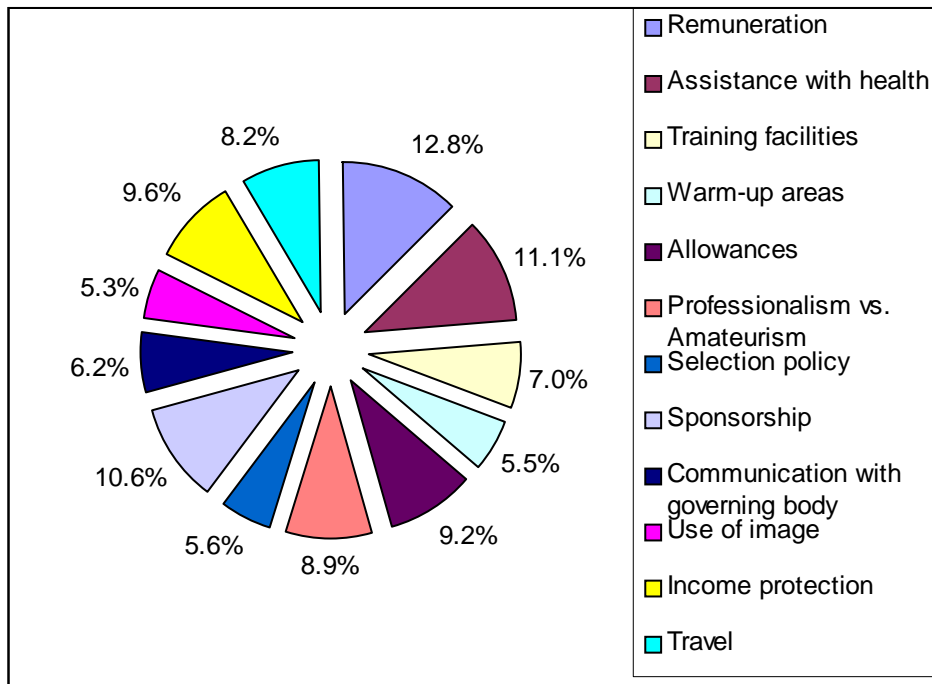


Figure 7.4: Issues as ranked by Kestrels playing group.

Kestrel players' believe the issue of most importance is remuneration and all others flow from it. However, it is clear from the order in which they ranked issues they believe the sport is struggling to become professional whilst remaining amateur. For example, it is not feasible to expect that an amateur organisation can organise things such as sponsorship, allowances and assistance with injuries that the players all believe are important issues.

The Melbourne Phoenix raised concerns of inadequate medical assistance at training, as they rely on one of their team members for physiotherapy treatment.

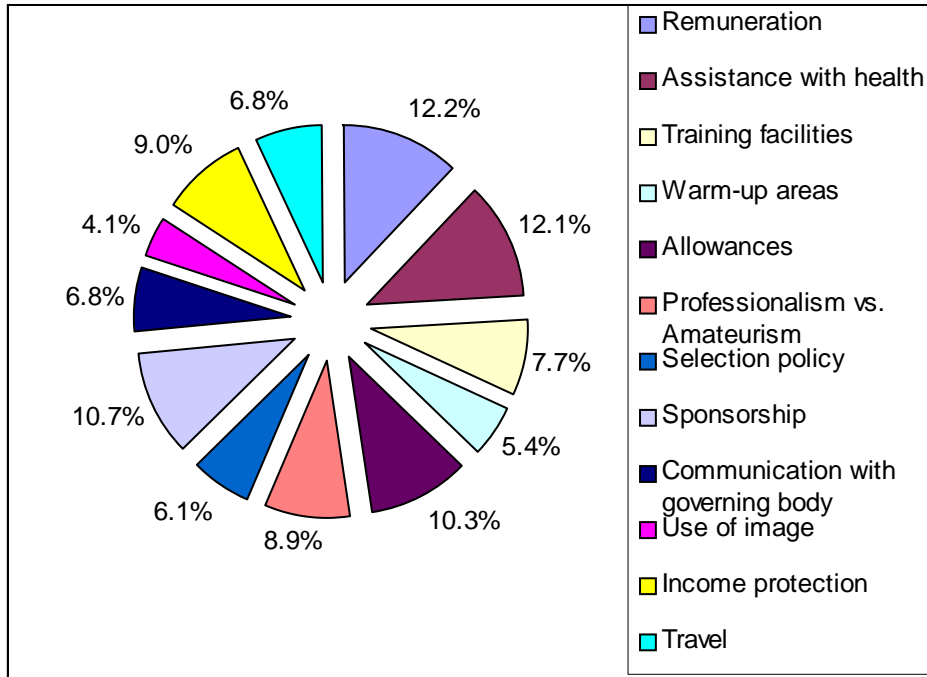


Figure 7.5: Issues as ranked by the Phoenix playing group.

The results in which issues were ranked by the Phoenix playing group was similar to the playing group as a whole. This did not indicate the players' were satisfied with the organisation but in fact felt all issues were important and needed attention.

Players' from the Queensland Firebirds have been asked to raise funds themselves to compete in a compulsory pre-season tournament, which impacts on their time to spend on other things.

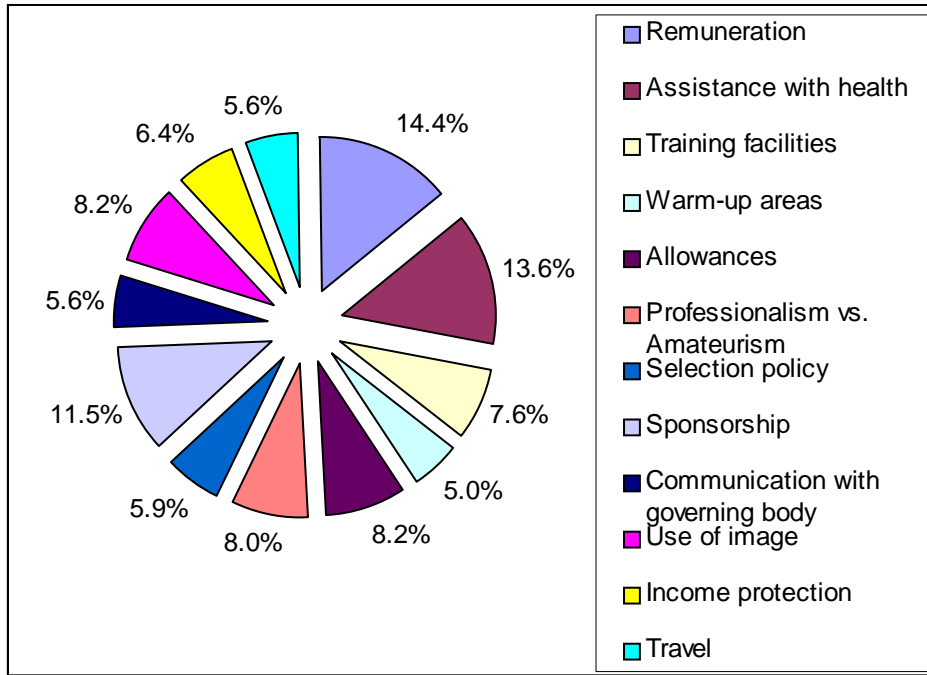


Figure 7.6: Issues as ranked by the Firebirds playing group.

Remuneration and assistance with health when injured were of greatest significance to the Firebirds. The players' believe for the effort they put in so not being rewarded nor are they able to attract sponsorship due to tight restrictions placed upon them in their contracts.

The Perth Orioles are upset they are forced to attend sponsors medical services that they have to pay for rather than choosing their own. Also they have raised concern about the poor allocation of allowances, e.g. on away trips they receive a bowl of soup as a meal, and are not allowed to order a drink.

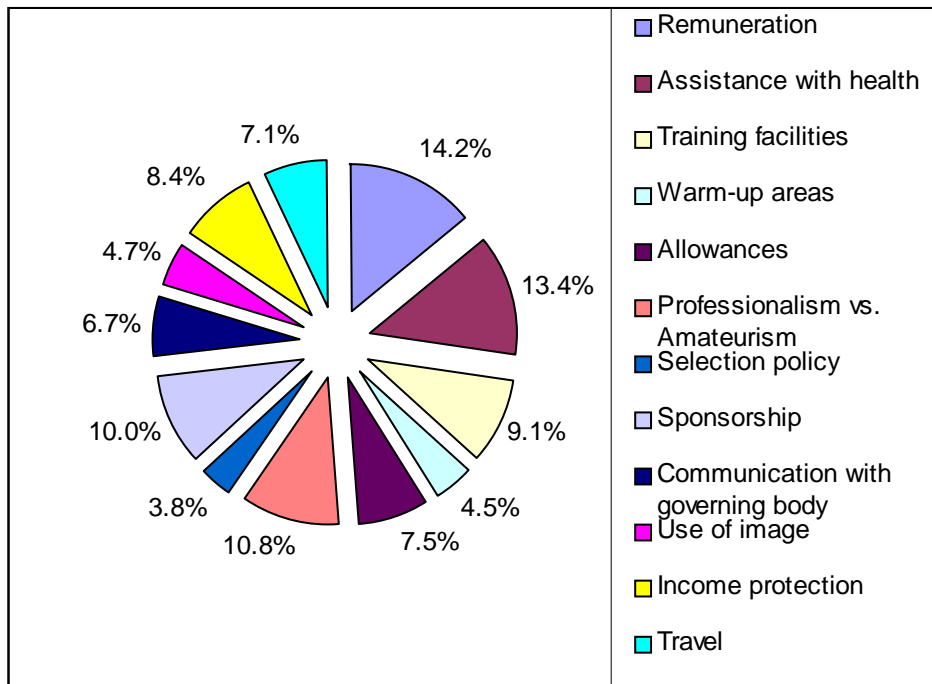
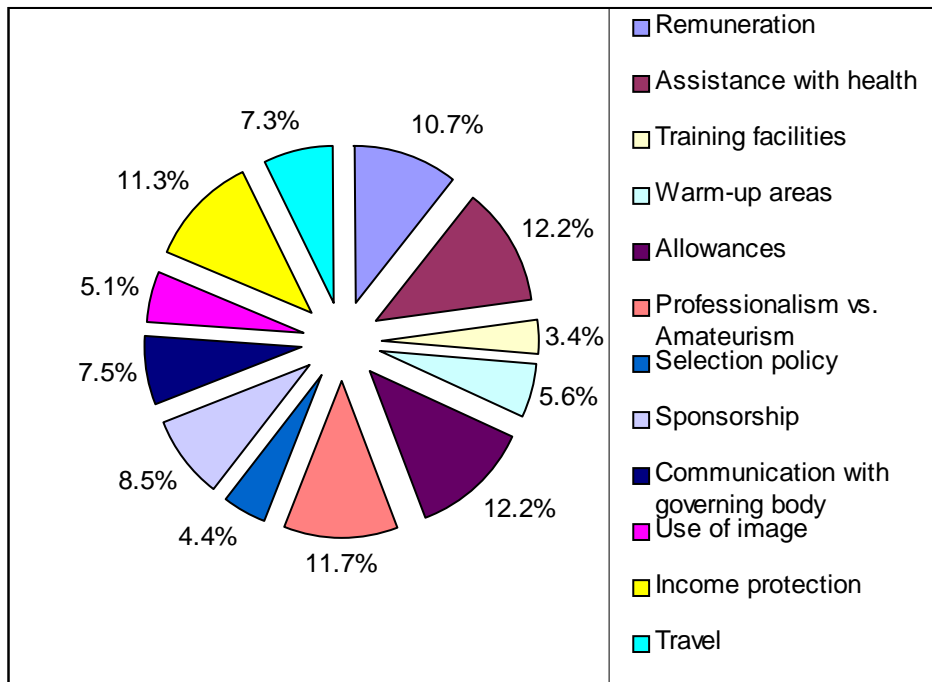


Figure 7.7: Issues as ranked by the Orioles playing group.

The Orioles playing group was particularly worried about remuneration, and assistance with health and injuries. However, this club reported the highest dissatisfaction of any other group with training facilities, this was due to many facilities being used that were inadequate because Challenge was often unavailable.

The Sydney Swifts have an unusual relationship with their employer where they are encouraged to be paid as a hobby rather than as a profession, which raises many employment issues.



**Figure 7.8:** Issues as ranked by the Swifts playing group.

Players' from the Swifts live in the most expensive city in Australia and it was no surprise to see that the lack of allowances paid was of major concern. For example, it was not uncommon for players' to spend \$10 in tolls getting to training, and when combined with other costs not covered by allowances players' felt they were not even being paid enough to cover their costs.

### **SECTION 8: Conclusion**

It is time for netball to follow the path the players have worn and become more professional in the provision of workplace conditions and practices.