

# ACTive Canberra



Canberraliberals

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## The Importance of Sports Funding

The Canberra Liberals believe that sport and recreational activities are a vital part of Canberra's social fabric. Sport and recreational activities bring our community together. Volunteer sport and recreational groups help to build a sense of community and foster social links between Canberrans from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

**The Canberra Liberals are committed to increased sports funding, to improve the health of Canberrans, to build stronger community bonds and to maintain our strength as the nation's sporting capital.**

The Canberra Liberals recognise that regular exercise and healthy habits are by far the most cost effective approach to preventing chronic diseases. Type two diabetes, obesity and heart disease are just some of the many lifestyle diseases that can be caused by sedentary behaviour.

According to the most recent Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS), 47 per cent of adult Canberrans do not achieve the minimum recommended level of physical activity.

Regular exercise leads to improvements in indicators of health such as blood pressure, blood cholesterol and body weight.

- The Australian Government's Department of Health recommends that people engage in short amounts of moderate-intensity activities totalling a minimum of 30 minutes a day on most days, or 30 minutes of exercise continuously.
- In people leading sedentary lifestyles, just this small amount of exercise will reduce risks of 'lifestyle' diseases (coronary artery disease, stroke and type-2 diabetes) by 30 per cent.
- In young people under the age of 18, the recommended level of physical activity is at least one hour of moderate activity on most days.

A Canberra Liberal Government will ensure sport and recreation programs are given proper resourcing. We will provide stability and continuity, both in funding for the community sector and in capital works to build new facilities and to upgrade or expand existing facilities.

## Labor's Approach

Under the Stanhope Government, sport and recreation has been treated as a low priority, an adjunct to the core responsibilities of government. Sport and recreation has seen drastic cuts in funding and has been repeatedly shuffled between departments.

The budget cuts of 2006 have causing lasting damage. After the cuts, ACT Sport Chief Executive Joan Perry observed that budget cuts were disproportionately focussed on sport.

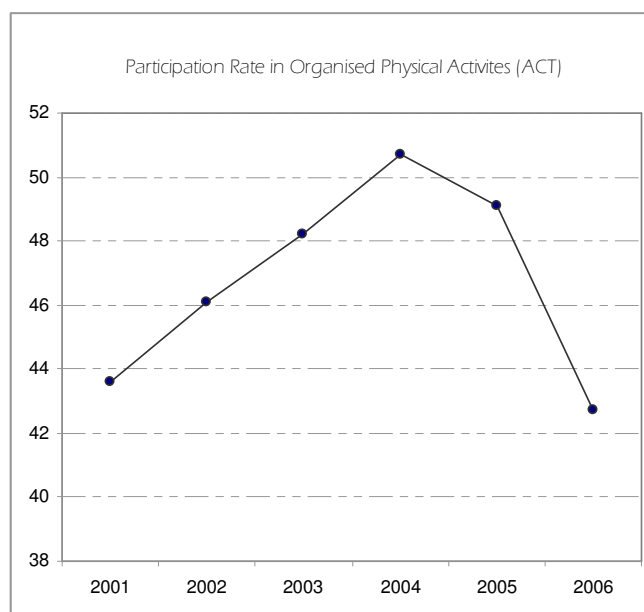
“The Government forecast cuts of \$840,000 yet when the figures were released, that had escalated to \$2.3 million. It was a huge hit. Sport makes up 1.5 per cent of the ACT budget yet when the Government announced a total budget cut of \$35 million, sport was 6.5 per cent of that. ... These budget cuts are making it harder to hire grounds, which is resulting in more cancellations, making it harder for kids to play sport.” (*Canberra Times*, 17/3/2007)

Labor turned off the taps at many of our sporting facilities; the promised to bring up to 40 hectares back on-line, only to shelve those plans. Only when Canberra was weeks away from Level Four Water Restrictions, which would have meant turning off the taps at up to 80 per cent of our playing fields, did the Stanhope Government finally act.

The failure and neglect of the Stanhope Government includes:

- closure of playing fields and an end to watering at over two dozen locations;
- wasting almost seven years ignoring the worst stages of the drought, only coming up with a plan at ten minutes to midnight;
- severe budget cuts, including cuts to sport and recreation community grants;
- the reduction in the Kids at Play program;
- failure to support and enforce legislated physical activity in schools;
- the reductions in scholarships at the ACT Academy of Sport;
- cancellation of the fitness assessment tender in 2001;
- poor provision of sporting facilities in new suburbs, particularly in Gungahlin.

The Stanhope Government has a sorry record of under-investment in sports and recreation, which has seen a drastic decline of 10 per cent in the rate of participation in organised physical activities in our community.



Source: ERASS Annual Report 2006

# Helping Low Income Families with the Cost of Junior Sport

When a young person joins a sports club or a team, that experience will be valuable to them throughout their life. We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to participate in organised sport and recreation.

The Canberra Liberals understand that many families struggle with the costs of club registration fees, uniforms and other equipment associated with children's sport. We do not want to see low income families deterred from enrolling their kids in community sport because the costs are prohibitive.

**To help with the costs of participating in organised sport, the Canberra Liberals will provide \$1.5 million over the four years to help low income families with the costs associated with participation in organised sport and recreation. Grants will provide up to \$200 per child per season. This funding will help needy families with equipment costs such as boots, uniforms, racquets and bats.**

We will work with community service organisations and sporting clubs to develop a fair approach to distributing these funds to help kids from the most needy families.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Helping low income families with the cost of Junior Sport		500	500	500

## Drought-Proofing Ovals and Playing Grounds

The Canberra Liberals will invest a further \$5 million over four years to drought proof our sporting facilities. The drought has led to many playing surfaces becoming dry and damaged.

It is simply not a long-term option for Canberra to relying upon drinking water to irrigate ovals and sporting facilities.

The Stanhope Government has declared that no sports facilities in Canberra will be solely reliant on potable water by 2013. But they have not matched this target date with the funding needed to ensure the target will be met. Sports Minister Andrew Barr has said he expects volunteer sports groups to make a large contribution, even though many of these grounds are government owned assets (Media Release 24 October 2007).

In the 2008 budget the Stanhope Government only provided \$8 million over the next four years towards drought-proofing ovals. This investment is slow to start over the next two years, with much of the investment delayed until late 2010.

**The Canberra Liberals will contribute an additional \$5 million over the next four years to drought-proof our sporting facilities, with the bulk of the extra investment loaded up-front in the next 18 months, ensuring the long term health of our sporting fields.**

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
2008 Budget Capital Funds	500	1,500	3,000	3,000
Additional Canberra Liberal Capital Investment	2,200	1,800	500	500
Total Capital Investment to Reduce Water Consumption and to Capture Non-Potable Water	2,700	3,300	3,500	3,500

This funding will support a range of solutions including rainwater harvesting tanks, better use of drought-tolerant grasses and recycling of stormwater. In consultation with local groups, we will consider investing in synthetic surfaces that are compatible with the type of sport played by locally-based teams.

**As part of the drought-proofing program, we will explore options to collect rainwater from the roofs of large buildings close to playing fields and piping it short distances downhill to water public grounds.**

A number of suburban shopping centres are ringed by concrete and bitumen surfaces and send their rainwater runoff directly to stormwater. Where these centres adjoin playing grounds and are unable to use all their runoff for onsite reuse, we will explore options to improve the capture of rain for tank storage and subsequent use in dry periods. This may involve capture of water from government-owned buildings. We will also enter negotiations with other land-users including shopping centres and churches, to seek their assistance in helping the broader community.

The enhanced investment by a Canberra Liberal Government will deliver the most cost effective options to drought-proof our neediest sporting grounds. The new investment may also be used to rejuvenate facilities abandoned by the Stanhope Government.

## Community Grants – undoing the damage

The Community Grants program under Sport and Recreation experienced savage cuts in the 2006 ACT Budget. The Stanhope Government cut the heart out of community grants, by cutting the funding significantly.

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide \$2.8 million in additional funding over the four years for the Community Grants program. We will deliver significant increases in every one of the next four years, commencing with \$300,000 in additional funding in our first year and increasing the new funding to \$1 million in the fourth financial year of a Canberra Liberal Government.

The breakdown for \$2.8 million in new grants funding is set out below. The increased funding will include provision to establish two new components in the Community Grants program (discussed below).

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Increase to existing Community Grants	100	300	385	570
Training Grants component	80	160	165	170
Field Officer Grants component	120	240	250	260
Total Increase to Community Grants	300	700	800	1,000

## Skilling our Volunteer workforce – Training Grants

Volunteer coaches, umpires, officials, first-aid officers and club administrators are the backbone of our sporting and recreation organisations. The most recent figures prepared for ACTSPORT show that Canberrans provide something in the order of 2.3 million volunteer hours to sporting clubs and other organisations every year, valued at \$44 million.

The Canberra Liberals recognise that the work done by these volunteers provides an enormous public benefit, including through improved health outcomes. In an era when there are increasing requirements placed by government on those volunteers who run community organisations (in such areas as financial management, auditing and public liability), there is a strong case for government to provide adequate training for those who carry the burden of responsibility.

**The Canberra Liberals will provide a new category of grants to fund coaching and umpiring courses, first-aid and sports medicine courses and other training to assist club administrators and volunteers. These grants will be provided under the expanded Community Grants program.**

## Community Sport and Recreation Field Officers

The expanded Community Grants program will be used to provide funding for Community Sport and Recreation Field Officers based in local clubs. These part-time field officers will work closely with local community groups and schools to increase participation in sport, active recreation and physical activity programs.

Local sports and community clubs will be able to apply for grants to provide for Community Sport and Recreation Field Officers.

# Encouraging New Sports Professionals

Many of our local sporting and recreational organisations are run by dedicated volunteers. As these organisations grow and their role expands to become more complex, it often becomes a necessity to take on full-time and part-time employees.

Canberra's education institutions provide excellent learning opportunities for young people interested in working in the sport and recreation industry. To help provide a link between education and the sports industry, the Canberra Liberals will provide up to 5 grants of \$5,000 each to clubs and organisations to assist with the costs of employing trainees (these grants can be apportioned on a pro-rata basis if the trainee is part time).

Trainees will be encouraged to work in a variety of areas, including administrative support, activity leadership, event management assistance and in supporting community participation.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Traineeship Grants	12	25	25	25

## Sport and Tourism

Current ACT Government funding for the Events Assistance Program and the Festival Funding Program requires applications to be made during the financial year preceding the event. For the sports industry this poses a significant problem, because bids to host some sporting events must be lodged many years preceding the event.

A Canberra Liberal Government will revise the funding rules for tourism and festival grants, to allow applications to be made a number of years prior to an event. This will allow clarity on whether ACT Government support has been secured, prior to finalising a bid. Should the bid fail, funding will be re-allocated in line with normal arrangements.

These changes to grant rules will not require any additional funding.

## ACT Academy of Sport

The ACT Academy of Sport (ACTAS) assists elite athletes across a wide variety of sports and helps top young elite athletes reach their potential. The Academy is a part of the Australian Sports Commission's National Elite Sports Network and assists athletes in preparing towards Olympic and Paralympic events.

The ACT Academy of Sport suffered extreme cuts under the Stanhope Government, with the number of Athletes supported by the Academy being slashed from around 250 to around 150. Canberra is Australia's Sporting Capital, we believe there are

more than 150 athletes deserving of our support and we do not wish to see these athletes move to other jurisdictions in order to receive this sort of support.

Veteran sports commentator Tim Gavel has observed that:

“because there is so little money to replace rowing boats, the academy is buying them secondhand from private schools. My understanding is that it used to be the other way around. If we are going to be fair dinkum about being competitive with an increased focus on medal winning sports, let’s do it properly.” (Canberra Times 9/12/2006)

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide \$900,000 over four years to increase the number of athletes supported under the ACT Academy of Sport program.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Additional ACTAS Funding		200	300	400

## Better Facilities – Better Planning

Many of Canberra’s sporting and recreational facilities are decades old and need major upgrades or replacement of key facilities. Furthermore, as our population grows, Canberra will need more facilities in new areas.

When planning new suburbs and new developments, the Canberra Liberals will ensure that sporting and recreational facilities are at the forefront of planning and investment. We will ensure that ovals and other sporting and recreational facilities are available to new residents when they move in.

The approach of the Stanhope Government to funding these facilities has been *ad hoc* and has been driven by community groups and sporting groups going cap in hand to the Government to beg for funding.

Over the past three budgets, the new funding for facilities for sport and recreation has ranged from \$0.5 million to \$21 million. The Stanhope Government’s sporadic approach to funding has left our sporting groups with little certainty and little capacity to plan for the long term. Many sporting groups are left feeling that funding is allocated only to groups who, for one reason or another, have the ear of Government.

The Canberra Liberals will deliver a capital works funding model that will provide for regular investment in public sporting facilities in every budget, not just in election years.

The Canberra Liberals will provide additional funding for capital works, totalling \$24 million over four years. This funding will be divided into three categories.

### **Major Works – National/International Standard Facilities**

The Canberra Liberals will provide for construction and upgrades of national and international standard facilities.

### **Major Works – Community Facilities**

We will provide funding to enable the major upgrade of existing facilities and the development of new facilities across Canberra.

### **Minor Works – Community Facilities**

We will provide funding for minor upgrades to local facilities. This funding may for instance support refurbished change-rooms or canteens, provision of minor storage facilities and minor upgrades to a playing surface.

Examples of projects on which we will consult with the community and prioritise according to genuine community need under this program include the following.

- A master-plan and development of the Hawker sports facilities, including Tennis, Football, Softball and an opportunity to include Baseball.
- Upgrading tennis facilities and multi-purpose facilities.
- A new facility for Basketball.
- Improved facilities for the Woden Gymnastics Club.
- Upgrading facilities at the Belconnen Magpies in Kippax.
- New walking/running tracks.
- Multi-purpose facilities, particularly for active recreation.
- Enhancing trails, including horse trails and providing for other equestrian facilities.

In allocating this funding, consideration will be given to genuine community need, the state of existing facilities and the capacity for multi-purpose and year-round use.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Capital – Sport and Recreation - new and upgraded facilities		6,000	8,000	10,000

## Equestrian Facilities

Horse-paddocks on the urban fringe have long been a feature of Canberra. We believe these facilities are important to the character of our city, as well as to the many families who participate in equestrian activities.

The Stanhope Government has treated the ACT's equestrian industry with complete disdain. During the life of the Stanhope Government, decisions have been made to withdraw some horse paddocks in West Macgregor. In addition, the Stanhope Government proposed the loss of horse paddocks in north Tuggeranong (to accommodate a power station) and in Hume (for industrial development). In every case there has been a lack of consultation with the equestrian community.

A Canberra Liberal Government will work with the equestrian community to identify suitable land for the ongoing needs of horse owners in the ACT. We will invest in equestrian facilities as part of our capital program.

# The Bruce-Lyneham-EPIC Sports Precinct

There is considerable potential to develop a comprehensive sporting and recreational precinct by expanding facilities in the nearby areas of Bruce, Lyneham, EPIC and Thoroughbred Park.

By collocating sports facilities in this area we can build Canberra's future capacity to host major national competitive events. An expanded precinct will attract more sports-related businesses and professionals to locate to the area.

The Canberra Liberals will develop a Master Plan for this extensive site, building on existing studies, to evaluate the prospects for further sports and recreational development and the opportunities to achieve shared use of certain facilities such as car-parking.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Capital - Master Plan for Bruce-Lyneham-EPIC Precinct	500			

## A Hall of Fame and a home for Sport in our Sporting Capital

ACTSPORT, the peak body representing state sporting associations in the Canberra Region, currently manages ACT Sports House on a former school site in Hackett. The buildings at this site are run-down and, in the not too distant future, will become unsuitable for continued use by ACTSPORT.

The government staff who have responsibility for policy and program development for sport and recreation are currently located within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services. These staff have not had a consistent or stable location and this has been very disruptive for this important industry.

A Canberra Liberal Government will invest in a feasibility study to assess the business case for developing a new building to house ACTive Canberra, ACTSPORT, the ACTSPORT Hall of Fame and co-located space which would be available for lease by the administrative arms of other sporting and recreational organisations. In addition, consideration would be given to providing offices and rooms for sports related services and professionals. A suitable location for this building may be near the gateway to the Lyneham Sports Precinct.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Capital – Feasibility Study – Sports House	200			

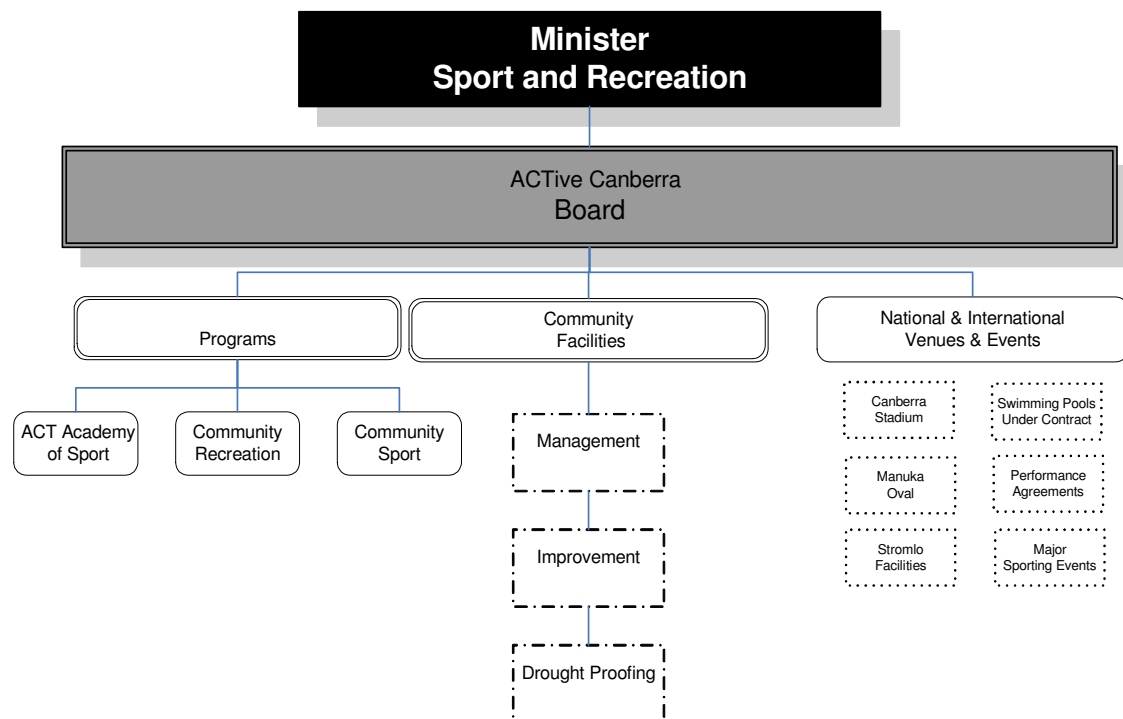
# ACTive Canberra – Canberra’s Sports Authority

Under the Stanhope Government, responsibility for sport and recreation has been continuously shuffled around various Departments. Sport and recreation has been left in a situation of never really fitting in – of having no real ‘home’ department and of never receiving the proper focus it deserves.

Sport and Recreation has moved from the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services; to the Chief Minister’s Department; to the short-lived Department of Economic Development; and finally, to its current home within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services.

The Stanhope Government has focussed on bureaucratic reshuffles, rather than on the development of effective and coherent policies.

The Canberra Liberals will create ACTive Canberra, a statutory authority for sport and recreation, overseen by a board and with a direct line of reporting to the Minister. The proposed structure of ACTive Canberra will be subject to consultation with industry and other stakeholders. An indicative structure is shown in the following figure.



ACTive Canberra will have responsibility for all sport and recreation policies, programs and facilities in the ACT. This includes elite sporting activities, community level sport and recreation as well as the management of all ACT government owned sporting facilities in the ACT. The board of ACTive Canberra will have a co-ordination and oversight role for policy and program development activities, and it will direct the operations of sport and recreation programs, ACTAS, facilities and planning.

Funding to support ACTive Canberra as a statutory authority will come from within existing resources.

### *Fully integrated*

There are important links between sport and recreation and tourism, education, planning, health and urban services. ACTive Canberra will build closer relationships with related areas of government. ACTive Canberra will also oversee Stadiums and major facilities. The board will include representatives from the community, the sports industry and from business.

### *Part of the Community*

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide an open door to all sporting and recreational organisations who wish to give their advice and input, as new policies are developed and implemented. A Community Advisory Group will be established to ensure that the sporting community is regularly consulted and the opinions of the community are heard directly by the board of ACTive Canberra. Appointees to the Community Advisory Group will represent a range of local sports and community organisations and will be chosen from across the length and breadth of Canberra. Funding for the Community Advisory Group will come from within existing resources.

### *Sport is an industry*

Sport and recreation is a significant industry, employing a number of Canberrans. But the economic value of the sport and recreation industry has not been fully understood by the Stanhope Government. The Stanhope Government regards sport as little more than a convenient series of photo-opportunities for an embattled minister.

The Canberra Liberals will build improved collaboration between Government and the sport and recreation industry in the ACT through direct consultation between Ministers and the community, through board representation and through regular consultation by the Community Advisory Group.

### *Evidence Based Policy*

The Canberra Liberals will undertake a full analysis of sport and recreation in the ACT to gain a sound understanding of the economic impact of the sport and recreation industry in the ACT. This analysis will consider the results of the 2004 study which was commissioned by ACTSPORT and will analyse emerging trends. The results of this analysis will provide the basis for decision making for the sport and recreation industry.

The Canberra Liberals will also undertake a full audit of sporting facilities in Canberra and an analysis of future needs. This will include consultation with community and sporting groups and will provide the basis for future capital works funding decisions.