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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE

Understanding the barriers and bridges to the development and implementation of evidence-informed sports injury prevention policy in NSW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project aimed to explore the perceived barriers, potential motivators and enablers to the development of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW, and to provide the necessary background to advocate for, and promote, future policy development and implementation.

Policy: a “broad statement of goals, objectives and means that create the framework for activity.”¹

This was a qualitative research project which sought the involvement of all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the results were meaningful and acceptable to those ultimately responsible for sports injury prevention.

The project had the following specific objectives:

- a) To map current sports safety policy, practices and planning occurring across state sporting organisations in NSW;
- c) To identify the barriers, enablers, and motivators to sports injury prevention policy development and implementation, as perceived by relevant stakeholders;
- d) To develop a strategic plan for the development and implementation of an evidence-based sports injury prevention policy for NSW.

The project comprised three phases:

- A written survey and telephone interview with a sample of NSW State Sporting Organisation (SSOs) to identify the safety and injury prevention policy and planning activities in place in their sport. These SSOs represented approximately 840,000 registered sports participants in NSW;
- A consultation meeting with representatives of SSOs, government departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) with an interest in sports injury, to explore perceived barriers, enablers and motivators to sports injury prevention, and the feasibility of developing a multi-agency initiative to promote a strategic, evidence-informed approach to sports safety and injury prevention in NSW;
- A further consultation meeting with key interested stakeholders to discuss the best way to progress such an initiative.

The survey identified that although SSOs had a variety of safety and injury prevention policies and planning activities in place, most of those interviewed did not appear to have a strategic approach to sports safety and injury prevention. Furthermore, most needed and wanted assistance and guidance to develop such an approach.

Key barriers to the adoption of a strategic, evidence-informed approach to sports safety and injury prevention by SSOs included the:

- Apparent low priority given to sports safety and injury prevention in NSW.
- Lack of capacity of SSOs and community sporting organisations in terms of:
 - money
 - people
 - expertise
 - access to data
 - organisational management structure.
- Volunteer nature of community sport and the difficulties associated with mandating, communicating and monitoring safety activity at community or grassroots level.
- Lack of control over facilities and environments—often managed by local government or commercial operators.
- Additional barriers for rural clubs and associations including communication, attendance at training, access to resources and isolation.

During the course of the project, it became apparent that the sports safety policy needs and interests of the SSOs were quite different to those of the government departments and NGO's. The SSOs were primarily interested in getting practical assistance and guidance to enable them to adopt a more strategic and evidenced-informed approach to safety in their specific sport. On the whole, they had very little interest in contributing to a broader, more strategic policy that provided a vision or direction for sports safety in NSW. In contrast, while also interested in supporting the development and dissemination of some form of practical guidance on safety, the government departments and NGOs expressed an interest in developing ways of working together to achieve the common goal of building the capacity of the sports sector to adopt a more strategic and evidenced-informed approach to safety and injury prevention.

These differences in policy needs and interests had significant implications for the original project notion of a single policy document for sports safety and injury prevention in NSW and have given rise to the following key recommendations from the project:

1. An inter-agency partnership (a *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group*) should be established to:
 - Develop a strategic vision (*Sports Safety Framework*) for a state-wide, all-of-sport safety initiative, to build the capacity (organisational, workforce, resources, leadership and partnership) of providers of sporting opportunities to adopt a strategic and evidence-informed approach to safety and injury prevention.
 - Oversee the development of a practical resource (*Sports Safety Guidelines*) to assist providers of sporting opportunities adopt a strategic and evidenced-informed approach to sports safety and injury prevention.
 - Ensure a policy response for sports injury prevention for NSW which should be comprised of the Framework (the audience primarily being government departments and NGOs) and the Guidelines (the audience primarily being SSOs, associations and clubs).

Suggested stakeholders to be invited to be represented on the *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group* are listed in Table A.

Table A: Suggested representatives on the *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group*

NSW Sport and Recreation (<i>Lead Agency</i>) NSW Sporting Injuries Committee NSW Sports Federation NSW Health Sports Medicine Australia (NSW) Local government—either NSW Local Government Department or NSW Local Government Association NSW Department of Education & Training State sporting organisations (a selection of both large and small organisations) NSW Association of Disability Sports Department of Fair Trading YouthSafe Kidsafe Insurance industry *consideration could also be given to including relevant experts as needed

2. A small ‘working group’, with representation from interested and committed key stakeholders, be established and resourced to action the recommendations of the *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group* and ensure the development of the *Sports Safety Guidelines*.
3. Simple, flexible, integrated and practical *Sports Safety Guidelines*, aligned with existing safety, injury prevention and risk management resources and programs, should be developed to assist providers of sporting opportunities adopt a strategic, sustainable, evidenced-informed approach to sports safety.
 - The development and implementation of the *Sports Safety Framework* and the *Sports Safety Guidelines* must address the identified barriers to the resourcing, uptake, dissemination and sustainability of a strategic, evidence-informed approach to safety
 - Key potential components of the *Sports Safety Guidelines* are identified as:
 - a comprehensive checklist of safety issues that might be relevant across sports
 - practical tools, templates, and resources which sports can adapt to their needs and context
 - case studies which illustrate successful implementation and outcomes
 - guidance on where to go for additional information and resources
 - Active involvement and commitment, by the following organisations is considered integral to the success of any such initiative: NSW Sport & Recreation; NSW Sporting Injuries Committee; NSW Sports Federation (representing SSOs); Sports Medicine Australia (NSW); and NSW Health. Suggested roles for these organisations in relation to the development of the *Sports Safety Guidelines* are listed in Table B.

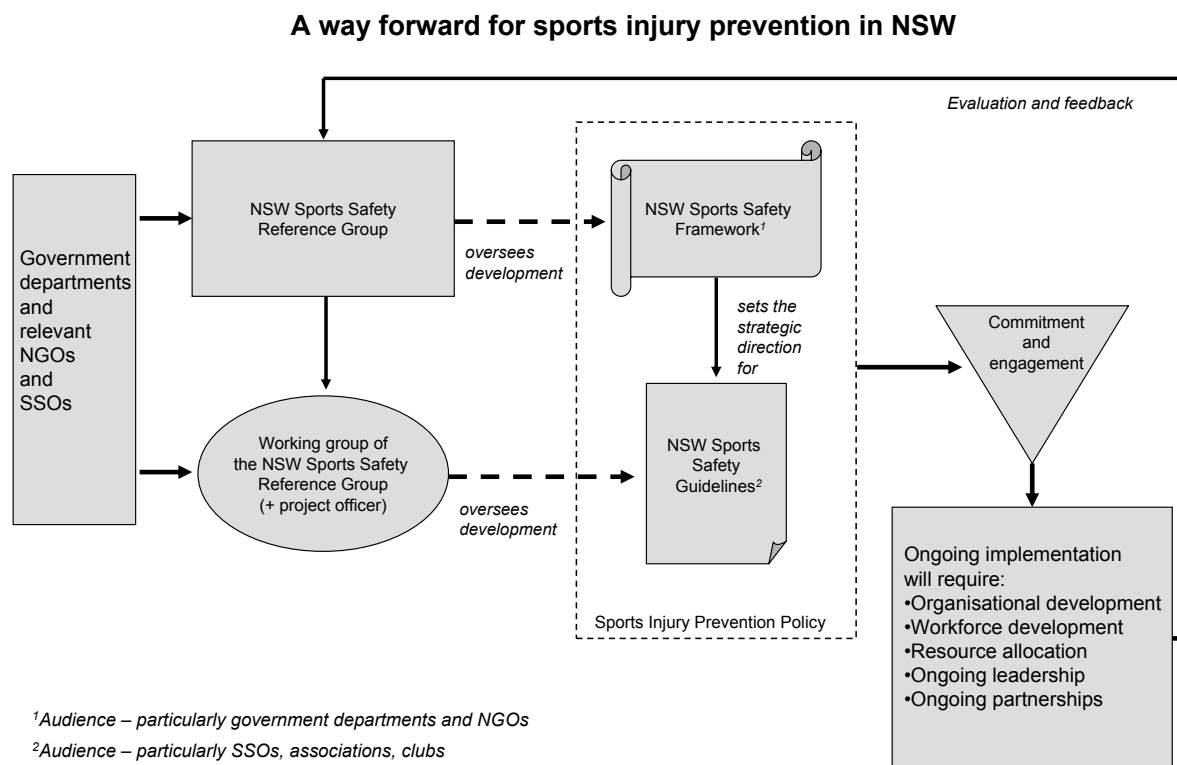
Table B: Potential roles for key agencies in developing the Sports Safety Guidelines

Organisation	Potential role
NSW Sport and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To establish and lead the working group to develop the <i>Sports Safety Guidelines</i> under the guidance of the proposed <i>NSW Sports Safety Reference Group</i>; – To link the <i>Sports Safety Guidelines</i> to other existing sports safety and risk management initiatives. – To promote dissemination through established communication channels
NSW Sporting Injuries Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To provide leadership and direction for a strategic, evidenced-informed approach to sports safety and injury prevention in NSW. – To commission the development and evaluation of the <i>Sports Safety Guidelines</i>. There may also be scope for ongoing education and promotion support for implementation – To promote dissemination through established communication channels
NSW Sports Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To ensure the <i>Sports Safety Guidelines</i> meet the needs of, and are useful to, the sports sector. – To ‘champion’ the use of the <i>Sports Safety Guidelines</i>. – To provide education and training in a strategic and evidenced-informed approach to sports safety for members. – To promote dissemination through established communication channels
NSW Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To provide data (including analysis and interpretation) to inform an ongoing strategic approach to sports safety. – To provide health promotion (particularly capacity building skills) and injury prevention planning and evaluation expertise.
Sports Medicine Australia (NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To act as a repository for up-to-date evidence and policies, and make best-practice examples available, via the internet, to all providers of sporting opportunities. – To synthesise new evidence and develop evidenced-informed policies on relevant sports safety and injury prevention issues. – To promote dissemination through established communication channels

4. The successful implementation and long term sustainability of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW requires ongoing capacity building. This entails:
- Organisational development
 - Workforce development
 - Resource allocation
 - Ongoing leadership
 - Ongoing partnerships

The recommendations are summarised in Figure A.

Figure A: Diagrammatic representation of the development and implementation of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW



This report draws together the findings of the project and is written for key stakeholders in sports safety in NSW (government departments, NGOs and SSOs). It summarises the key findings of the project and discusses a potential way forward for a co-ordinated, strategic, evidenced-based approach to sports injury prevention in NSW.

PROJECT OUTCOMES REPORT: A PLAN FOR A WAY FORWARD

Background

Participation in sport and physical activity is encouraged for its range of health and social benefits. However, increased participation increases exposure to the risk of injury², and sport and leisure injury is a significant public health issue in Australia. In fact, sports injury was one of the 10 priorities chosen for the development of national goals and targets for injury prevention and control, due to its significance in terms of mortality and morbidity, and the potential for action to reduce injury rates.³

There is a substantial economic burden associated with sports injuries for both individuals and society with respect to the duration and nature of treatment, the amount of sport and/or working time lost, permanent damage or disability, reduced quality of life and other monetary costs.⁴ The cost of sports injuries in NSW during the 1998–1999 financial year was estimated at \$92 million, of which \$40 million was attributable to direct costs and \$52 million to mortality and morbidity costs.⁵ Compared with other mechanisms of injury in NSW, sports injury was ranked seventh in terms of lifetime cost, but third in terms of direct medical costs, after falls and road traffic accidents.⁵

Planning for sports safety policy and injury prevention initiatives needs to be informed by high-quality, relevant data.⁶ Policy responses to promote safety and prevent injury may be limited in the absence of compelling arguments demonstrating significant public health burden⁷. Until recently, such information has not been available for NSW, and this has hampered efforts to identify and respond to sports injury priority areas from a population perspective.

With this in mind, a project funded by the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee, under the Research and Injury Prevention Scheme, was undertaken to provide information on the distribution and characteristics of deaths and hospitalisations due to sports injury in NSW. The report arising from the first year of this project, entitled “A profile of hospitalisations and deaths due to sport and leisure injuries in New South Wales, 2000–2004”, was published by the NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre (IRMRC).⁸ This reported 167 sport/leisure-related deaths in NSW during 2000–2002, corresponding to a rate of 0.85 deaths per 100,000 population during the three year period. The death rate for males was almost four times higher than in females. Those aged 15–24 years had the highest age-specific rate of death in sport and those aged over 35 years had the highest age-specific rate of death in leisure activities.

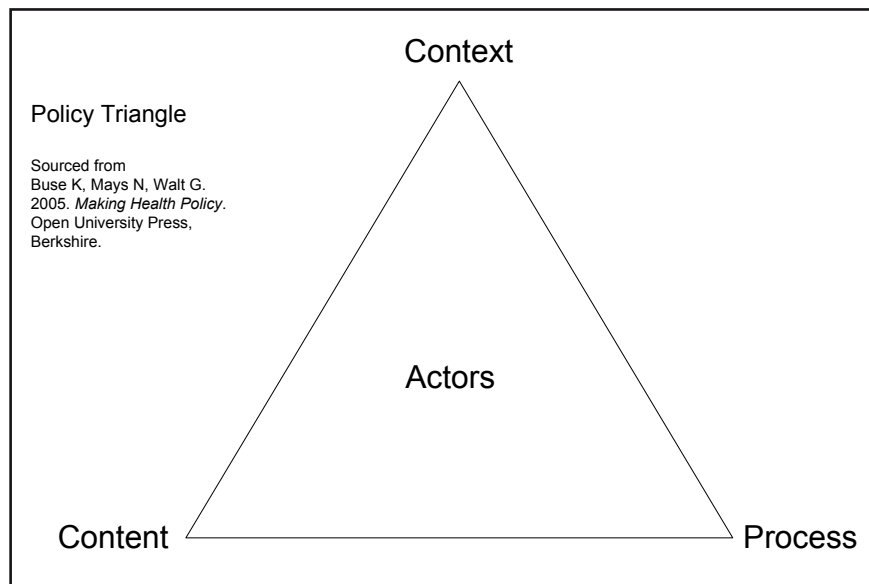
This epidemiological profile also considered serious injuries, leading to hospitalisation. During 2003–2004, there were 25,346 sport/leisure-related hospitalisations, corresponding to a rate of 190.3 hospitalised injuries per 100,000 population during the two-year period. The rate of hospitalised injury was more than three times higher in males than females. Age-standardised hospitalisation rates were highest for rugby football (league and union), soccer, cycling, motorcycle riding, skating and rollerblading, Australian football, equestrian sports, ice and snow sports, basketball and netball.

This epidemiological information in the IRMRC report⁸ identified the extent of the sports injury problem in NSW and clearly showed that it is a significant public health issue requiring a multi-agency response, particularly from the sport and health sectors. It is now necessary to use this evidence-base for priority setting and strategy development, to contribute to the development of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW.

It should be noted that in conceptualizing this project, “policy” was considered in a generic sense to refer to a “broad statement of goals, objectives and means that create the framework for activity”.⁹ However, this project revealed that other terminology (such as framework and guidelines) is more meaningful and preferred by the sporting community and other organisations in NSW, although under our broad definition of “policy” we argue they are part of “policy” themselves. For consistency therefore, and to avoid confusion, “policy” as defined is used, except where we are referring specifically to the preferences of the sporting community (who desired some practical “guidelines”) or to the government departments and non-government organisations (who desired a strategic “framework”).

Before embarking on the task of considering the development of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW, it is essential to understand the complexities of policy making (see Figure 1). In the context of a sports safety policy for NSW, this involves understanding the role of the significant ‘actors’ or stakeholders in sports injury prevention, the ‘context’ or environment in which any policy will be formulated and executed, and the ‘processes’ associated with policy development (the barriers, enablers and motivators to policy development).⁹ This was done through interviews and consultation meetings with representatives from a range of State Sporting Organisations (SSOs), government departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) with an interest in sports safety; and this has enabled some recommendations to be made on the development and implementation of a sports safety policy for NSW, and a way forward suggested. While the project was not intended to consider the ‘content’ of policy, some preliminary ideas have been put forward.

Figure 1



Objectives and Audience

This project aimed to explore the perceived barriers, potential motivators and enablers to the development of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW, and to provide the necessary background to advocate for, and promote, future policy development and implementation. The project sought the involvement of all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the results are meaningful and acceptable to those ultimately responsible for sports injury prevention.

The project had the following specific objectives:

- a) To map current sports safety policy, practices and planning occurring across state sporting organisations in NSW;
- b) To identify the barriers, enablers, and motivators to sports injury prevention policy development and implementation, as perceived by relevant stakeholders;
- c) To develop a strategic plan for the development and implementation of an evidence based sports injury prevention policy for NSW.

This report draws together the findings of the project and is written for key stakeholders in sports safety in NSW (government departments, NGOs and SSOs). It summarises the key findings of the project and discusses a potential way forward for a co-ordinated, strategic, evidenced-based approach to sports injury prevention in NSW.

Interim reports which were developed through the course of the project to draw together the information gathered and to inform the next phase of the project contain further details, and are available from the authors.

Methods

The project comprised three activities:

1. A background study on sports injury prevention activities

A purposive sample of NSW SSOs was invited to participate in a survey about safety and injury prevention policy and planning activities in their sport (refer to Appendix 1). The survey had a written and telephone administered component (refer to Appendix 2 and 3). The survey was undertaken between August and October, 2007. The results of this survey were used to inform the first consultation meeting (Consultation Meeting 1).

2. The determination of perceived barriers, enablers and motivators to sports injury prevention policy and implementation (Consultation Meeting 1)

The SSOs selected to participate in the survey, along with government departments and NGOs with an interest in sports injury, were invited to attend a workshop (referred to as Consultation Meeting 1), held November 14, 2007, to explore perceived barriers, enablers and motivators to sports injury prevention policy, and the feasibility of a multi-agency approach. The meeting agenda is contained in Appendix 4. The workshop was led by an independent facilitator. A draft report of the outcomes from Consultation Meeting 1 was produced and circulated to participants for validation; returned comments were incorporated into an outcomes report to inform Consultation Meeting 2.

3. The development of a strategic plan to promote the development and implementation of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW

Participants from Consultation Meeting 1 were invited to participate in a half-day workshop (Consultation Meeting 2, held December 5, 2007) to discuss ways of actioning the development and implementation of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW. Informed by an understanding of barriers, enablers and motivators, the group considered ways in which barriers could be overcome, and enablers and motivators promoted. A draft report of the outcomes from Consultation Meeting 2 was produced and circulated to participants for validation; these outcomes have informed the final project report.

The project was approved by the Medical and Community Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel of the University of New South Wales.

Results

Participation

SSOs representing sports with a large number of registered participants,¹⁰ sports with a high number of injuries⁸ and sports for participants with a disability, were selected from the NSW Sports Organisation Directory on the NSW Sport and Recreation web site (n=32); additional SSOs were subsequently identified to cover sports where the initial contact had been unsuccessful (n=6). Thirty-eight SSOs were selected in total; 19 SSOs completed the written survey, and 21 SSOs completed the telephone interview (giving a total of 23 SSOs involved in one, or both components). The appropriate contact person declined to participate in the interview component in 8 cases, and the appropriate person could not be reached in 9 cases after numerous attempts. Sports represented by survey participants are listed in Appendix 1.

Twenty-six representatives from SSOs, government departments and NGOs participated in the Consultation Meeting 1. These included 11 SSOs (including 2 state sporting organisation membership bodies); 5 state government departments; and 7 NGOs (Appendix 5).

The Consultation Meeting 2 was attended by representatives from the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee, the NSW Sports Federation, Sports Medicine Australia (NSW) and NSW Sport and Recreation.

The following is a summary of the overall findings and recommendations of this project incorporating and responding to the information obtained from participants in the survey of SSOs, and Consultation Meetings 1 and 2. The results are summarised under the headings of the policy triangle (Figure 1).

Exploring Context

In this section the “environment” in which a sports injury prevention policy will be formulated and executed is considered. Of relevance here are the attitudes or values embodied by the various actors, the relationships between them and any constraints they may place on action.

1. Sports safety and injury prevention as a priority

- a) Most SSOs, government departments and NGOs consider that sports safety and the prevention of sports injuries is important. It is important to them because of:
 - the financial and legal implications of not taking it seriously
 - the effect that injury has on participation in sport
 - the effect that safety initiatives (or the lack of them) have on the way sport is perceived in the community and
 - their duty of care
- b) The SSOs reported having a wide range of safety and injury prevention policies in place with policies on some issues (e.g. child protection, officiating, coaching standards,

insurance, codes of conduct) in place in most SSOs. However, on other issues (e.g. physical preparation of players, sun protection, heat/hydration) the majority of SSOs did not have a policy in place. In addition, policies were frequently ‘unwritten’ and compliance was not always compulsory. A strategic approach to deciding which issues require a policy was not generally apparent.

- c) However, it appears that safety and injury prevention may not be a high priority for all stakeholders in NSW.
- Of the 38 SSOs invited to participate in the survey of safety and injury prevention policy and planning activities, 19 responded to the written survey and 21 to the interview component (a total of 23). Eleven SSOs (including 2 SSO membership bodies) attended Consultation Meeting 1.
 - NSW Sport and Recreation does not have a formal policy specifically addressing sports safety and injury prevention; there is no specific focus on sports safety in NSW Health policy.
 - Dedicated funding in this area is limited.
 - At present, safety and injury prevention in sport does not appear to be established ‘core business’ for many SSOs or for all relevant government departments or NGOs.

Key Challenges

One of the key challenges in taking sports safety and injury prevention forward in a strategic and evidence-informed way in NSW is to establish it as a priority for SSOs, relevant government departments and NGOs, and building it into their ‘core business’ so it is addressed as part of their everyday activity in a sustainable way. The issue needs to be framed in such a way as to appeal to the “drivers” for sports safety and injury prevention within each sector.

2. Organisational management structure for safety and injury prevention

- a) Many SSOs appear to lack the necessary organisational management structure to be able to be proactive and strategic about safety and injury prevention. The literature indicates that the organisational management structure considered important to developing a safety management system and culture in an occupational health and safety context include: ¹¹
- leadership;
 - two-way communication;
 - appropriate resourcing;
 - accountability/designated responsibility;
 - regular review of policies and systems
- b) Some SSOs reported access to insurance-related injury data. In general, this information did not appear to be used routinely to identify issues that need to be addressed.
- Most surveyed SSOs did not report conducting active injury surveillance or conducting surveys of key stakeholders (administrators, coaches, players, parents, first aid providers etc) to identify safety concerns.
- c) Few SSOs reported having a person or group (committee, working group etc) with specific designated responsibility for safety and injury prevention.

- d) Few SSOs reported having safety or injury prevention as a standing item for discussion on management meeting agendas.
- e) Few SSOs reported having a budget dedicated to safety or injury prevention.
- f) Monitoring and regular review of the safety and injury prevention activities of affiliated organisations (clubs etc) was a challenge for most SSOs and they struggle to do this effectively.
- g) Most SSOs reported a well developed communication network with affiliated organisations (newsletters, emails, distribution of written material, web sites, meetings etc) for information dissemination from the top down. A few reported having a formal structure for information flow from the bottom up, such as forums, incident reports, and risk management checklists at certain events.

Key Challenges

In general, SSOs did not have the organisational management structure to allow them to be proactive and strategic about safety and injury prevention. This is particularly so for SSOs with smaller memberships or those less well resourced. The key challenge here is to encourage and assist SSOs to create such a management structure and to provide them with practical tools to enable them to be more strategic.

3. The volunteer nature of sport

Many of those involved in sport at the “grassroots” level are volunteers. SSOs reported a sense of loss of control the further “down the line” information (such as safety policies) has to travel. The SSOs reported that while uptake of policies was encouraged, it generally couldn’t be enforced.

Key Challenges

To be of value, all safety policies need to be adopted at the “grassroots” level. The challenge is to reach volunteers in community sport, to educate them on the importance of safety so that they embrace a “safety culture” in all their activities, and to create sustainability by building the capacity of volunteers to adopt a strategic and evidence-informed approach to safety.

Exploring the actors

In this section the roles and actions of important groups that are likely to influence the development, uptake, and implementation of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW are considered.

1. State Sporting Organisations

- a) The SSOs tended to see themselves as having three key roles in safety and injury prevention. They consider themselves responsible for:
 - Implementing safety initiatives at specific sporting events that they administer (e.g. carnivals, tournaments, state championships etc).
 - Disseminating information (often from national governing bodies or external organisations such as NSW Sport and Recreation and Sports Medicine Australia) about safety and injury prevention (e.g. policies, training, resources, guidelines etc) to affiliated

organisations (regional associations, clubs etc) and individual participants (coaches, players, administrators etc)..

- Identifying safety needs and injury risks associated with participation in their sport and developing, disseminating and monitoring appropriate responses to these needs and risks.

The first two responsibilities seem to be well understood and carried out but many SSOs seem to struggle to effectively carry out the third responsibility—often due to a lack of time and resources.

- b) The SSOs consider that it is the role of individual providers of sporting opportunities (e.g. clubs, coaches, event organisers, facility operators etc) to implement appropriate safety initiatives. On the whole, SSOs provide guidance and advice as, and when, required.

2. International and national sporting bodies

The SSOs tended to report that the international and national sporting bodies that govern their sport play a key role in safety and injury prevention. These bodies often set policies and rules that determine how the sport is administered and played including rules, equipment and facility standards, coaching accreditation systems, medical requirements etc. Generally, SSOs must adopt these policies.

3. Government departments and NGOs

- a) Other key actors in sports safety and injury prevention in NSW include relevant government departments (particularly NSW Sport and Recreation) that can inform and monitor legislative requirements to which SSOs and all providers of sporting opportunities must comply (e.g. child protection legislation).
- b) Government departments and relevant NGOs (e.g. Sports Medicine Australia, Cancer Council) are also key sources of information about safety issues (e.g. sport rage/ugly parent) and best-practice in sports safety and injury prevention (e.g. heat and sun protection policy guidelines). Such organisations are recognised as credible sources of information and guidance.
- c) Facility owners and managers (local government, commercial venue operators etc) are often responsible for providing a safe environment for sporting bodies to use and also for determining the safety standards that users must comply with.

4. Consumers

It was not part of this project to canvass the opinions of consumers (e.g. sports participants and parents of children participating in sport etc). However, they are important “actors” and should not be overlooked. If educated about safety promotion and injury prevention in sport, consumers could create a demand for safer sporting opportunities, to which providers will need to respond.

Key Challenges

Many SSOs are hampered in their ability to address sports safety and injury prevention because of a lack of capacity. The key challenge here is to assist SSOs to see the benefits that can arise for them from investment in sports safety and injury prevention (that is, to generate interest), and to assist them to develop the necessary capacity (organisational, workforce,

resources, leadership and partnership) in this area. It must also be recognised that the SSOs are frequently required to adopt policies from national and international bodies. The challenge here is to create a sports safety and injury prevention policy for NSW that is flexible enough to accommodate a range of national or international policies.

Similarly, government departments and NGOs face competing priorities. In the short term at least, it appears unlikely that sports safety and injury prevention will become a high priority area outside those organisations most directly related to sports. The lack of commitment from other organisations will limit impact and access to resources. The key challenge here is to develop a mechanism to actively advocate for ‘buy-in’ from all relevant agencies; and to identify the key drivers for each agency that will promote engagement.

Consumers can potentially contribute to the demand for sports safety and injury prevention activity from the ground, upwards. They are key players that should not be overlooked.¹² The challenge here will be to educate and empower consumers. Available opportunities for education should be seized, and may include sports newsletters, and the Parents and Citizens Association.

Exploring content

It was not within the scope of this project to explore, in detail, the substance of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW. However, this section considers some of the initial ideas gathered from the consultations on the format and content of a potential policy.

- a. The SSOs want some form of guidance on safety promotion and injury prevention to assist them and their community clubs to develop and implement a strategic approach to evidenced-informed, best practice sports safety and injury prevention action. The guidance needs to be simple, flexible and practical. It must also be aligned with existing resources, programs and initiatives. It must allow incorporation of existing national and international policies and processes.
- b. The SSOs want the following four key things included in such guidance:
 - A comprehensive checklist of all safety issues that might be relevant across sports; from which each sport can select those of relevance to them.
 - Practical suggestions for safety or injury-related risk management that are relevant to the context of sporting organisations.
 - Practical tools and resources (e.g. templates of surveys, sample policy statements etc) and examples of best-practice case studies which each sport could adapt for their own needs and context.
 - Guidance on where to go for additional information and resources.
- c. The SSOs want guidance that is:
 - Flexible to enable different sports to adapt and apply it in contextually relevant ways.
 - Able to take into account what is already being done and the requirement to follow directives from international and national governing bodies for the sports.
 - Based on the underlying concepts of risk management and injury prevention that are broadly understood by, and applicable to, all sports regardless of the nature of activity,

size of organisation, position within administrative hierarchy (national, state, regional, local) or resources

- Process-focused and not prescriptive or mandatory.
- Clear, simple, practical, quick.
- About identifying, prioritising, managing and monitoring unacceptable risk, not eliminating all risk, as this would change the nature of sport.
- Do-able by small organisations with limited resources.
- Useful for bench-marking and comparing against best-practice.

Key Challenges

The development of guidance requires leadership, resourcing and a sustainable, working partnership of key stakeholders. The challenge here is to identify a leader, and to develop and formalise such a multi-agency partnership approach. While many useful resources are available, these are not centrally located. The challenge will be to identify and assess all relevant resources and to warehouse them centrally. Gaps will need to be identified and the development of new resources will require content expertise and funding. Over time, resources will need to be reviewed and updated to ensure they remain evidence-informed and best-practice based. Effective promotion and dissemination of safety and injury prevention guidance to sports at all levels must be achieved; and a training program will be required to ensure the practical application of the guidance. The challenge will be to resource the development of the guidance, and then to fund its implementation. A sustainable program of sports safety promotion and injury prevention will require on-going funding.

Exploring Process

In this section issues pertaining to the initiation, development, negotiation, communication and implementation of a sports safety and injury prevention policy for NSW are considered.

To date in NSW, the broader sports safety and injury prevention agenda has mainly been set in the context of:

- A health issue (focused on injury statistics, health service delivery, and avoiding the cost of medically-treated injuries),
- Research (often non-sporting organisation investigator driven research),
- Sports medicine (generally injury treatment and rehabilitation, rather than prevention) and
- Legal liability/insurance.

These contexts are not necessarily the most relevant for SSOs.

The NSW Sport and Recreation *It's Your Business* program has been successful in terms of profile, awareness and participation among SSOs. However, it has a broad risk management focus with an emphasis on corporate governance, financial management and legal liability, and limited safety and injury prevention specific content. Some lessons can be learned from the success of *It's Your Business* including:

- NSW Sport and Recreation is seen as a credible 'driver' of the initiative;
- The importance of linking it with funding to SSOs, and of building in an accountability/reporting component;

- The need for on-going resourcing, including training and the development and dissemination of support materials

Government departments are familiar with working in partnerships through adopting a ‘whole of government’ and ‘inter-agency’ approach to addressing complex issues. Such an approach requires agreement upon a strategic direction and a framework document that outlines why action is needed, what action will be taken and how this will be done, including information about expected outcomes, partners, funding and links with other government and non-government strategies.

Key Challenges

There is currently no designated leader in this area, no existing partnership in place to develop a state wide sports injury prevention policy, and no immediate funding source available to support sports safety and injury prevention. This being the case, if the contribution of a number of different stakeholders was combined, the overall effect could be significant while keeping the individual contribution of any single stakeholder small. The challenge is to establish a partnership where contributions from various stakeholders can be effectively channelled and focussed on sports safety and injury prevention. However, while such a partnership may be able to drive the development and initial implementation of a sports safety and injury prevention policy for NSW, an effective sustainable program will require that the partnership be supported by significant investment to allow it to build capacity across the sector over the long term.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Sporting organisations in NSW need and want to develop a strategic approach to sports safety and injury prevention

Currently, the key sports safety roles of most SSOs seem to be:

- information dissemination;
- education and training;
- event (championships, tournaments etc) risk management.

Most of the SSOs that participated in the survey struggled to systematically identify relevant injury risks and to develop, implement and monitor evidenced-informed solutions. However, some—mainly the larger, more high profile and better resourced SSOs—have adopted a more strategic, proactive approach to safety. For example, they can identify individuals within their SSO responsible for safety promotion and injury prevention; they collect and analyse their injury statistics; implement significant injury prevention and safety initiatives and undertake their own research and evaluation.

The majority of respondents to the survey of SSOs reported that, although their organisation implemented a range of safety policies and strategies, they did not have a strategic approach to safety. Few reported having a comprehensive sports safety plan or the key organisational management structure to ensure safety was addressed in a strategic or sustainable way. They also felt that input from experts in this area would be beneficial, helping to make their safety plans more comprehensive and more credible and useful to those charged with their implementation (e.g. community sporting organisations).

Most, but not all participants of Consultation Meeting 1 agreed that some form of practical guidance (i.e. a *Sports Safety Guideline*) would be useful to assist sporting organisations (at all levels) to develop a strategic and sustainable approach to developing and implementing evidenced-informed sports safety and injury prevention policies.

In addition, the key government departments and NGOs that attended Consultation Meeting 2 identified the need for a *Sports Safety Framework* (a ‘strategic vision’ type document). Such a document would outline why action is needed, what action will be taken and how this will be done, including information about outcomes, partners, funding, evaluation and links with other government and non-government strategies. Such a document was seen as important in enabling government agencies to make work in sports safety more legitimate and easier to incorporate into on-going core business.

2. A multi-agency partnership should be established to develop a strategic vision (*Sports Safety Framework*) for a state-wide, all-of-sport safety initiative, and to oversee the development of a practical resource (*Sports Safety Guidelines*) to assist providers of sporting opportunities adopt a strategic and evidenced-informed, best-practice based approach to sports safety and injury prevention

It was clearly indicated through the all three phases of this project that a key stakeholder partnership approach was required to develop, implement and sustain any worthwhile state-wide, all-of-sport safety initiative. There was consensus that NSW Sport and Recreation would be the most appropriate and credible organisation to lead such an initiative in partnership with other key government agencies, sporting organisations and relevant non-government organisations.

We suggest a *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group* of key stakeholders be formed and tasked with establishing a strategic vision (*Sports Safety Framework*) for a multi-agency sports safety initiative. The key outcome of this strategic vision should be building the capacity (organisational, workforce, resources, leadership and partnership) of providers of sporting opportunities to adopt a strategic and evidence-informed approach to safety and injury prevention. This should include the development, dissemination and appropriate support of a practical resource (*Sports Safety Guidelines*) to assist providers of sporting opportunities to adopt a strategic and evidenced-informed approach to safety.

We suggest that NSW Sport and Recreation establish, lead and administratively support the multi-agency reference group. The immediate task of this reference group would be to develop the *Sports Safety Framework*. At the Consultation Meeting 2 NSW Sport and Recreation indicated that it was prepared to undertake the work necessary to develop the *Framework* within its usual workload and budget.

Potential key stakeholders in sports safety in NSW that should be invited to be represented on the *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group* are:

- NSW Sporting Injuries Committee
- NSW Sports Federation
- NSW Health
- Sports Medicine Australia (NSW)
- Local government—either NSW Local Government Department or NSW Local Government Association
- NSW Department of Education & Training
- State sporting organisations (a selection of both large and small organisations)
- Department of Fair Trading
- NSW Association of Disability Sports
- YouthSafe
- Kidsafe
- Insurance industry

Consideration could also be given to including relevant experts as needed.

We suggest that a smaller ‘working group’, with representation from these key stakeholders and an appropriately funded project officer be established to ensure that decisions made at

the Reference Group level can be implemented. Initially, the task of this working group would be the development of the *Sports Safety Guidelines*. This would require the co-ordination and commissioning of appropriate expertise in sports safety, injury prevention, health promotion and occupational health and safety. Later, this group would advise on the dissemination, implementation and evaluation of the *Guidelines*.

We consider the following organisations are best placed to take on some of the key roles required to inform, develop and implement sustainable, strategic and evidence-informed, best-practice based *Sports Safety Guidelines*. Suggested roles include:

NSW Sport & Recreation

- To establish and lead a small, multi-agency working group to develop the *Sports Safety Guidelines* under the direction of the proposed *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group*; a project officer and working budget would be needed. Support for this role was indicated by NSW Sport and Recreation at Consultation Meeting 2.
- To link the *Sports Safety Guidelines* to other existing sports safety and risk management initiatives already in place.
- To use established communication channels (e.g. website, “Sports Shorts” newsletter etc) to raise awareness about the *Sports Safety Guidelines* and make them available to providers of sporting opportunities.

NSW Sporting Injuries Committee

- To provide leadership and direction for a strategic, evidenced-informed, best practice based approach to sports safety and injury prevention in NSW.
- To commission the development and evaluation of the *Sports Safety Guidelines*. There may also be scope to support ongoing education and promotion.
- To raise awareness about the *Sports Safety Guidelines* through their existing networks.

NSW Sports Federation

- To ensure the *Sports Safety Guidelines* meet the needs of, and are useful to, the sports sector.
- To promote and ‘champion’ the use of the *Sports Safety Guidelines*.
- To provide education and training in a strategic and evidenced-informed approach to sports safety for members. Support for this role was indicated by NSW Sports Federation at Consultation Meeting 2.
- To raise awareness about the *Sports Safety Guidelines* through their existing networks.

NSW Health

- To provide data (including analysis and interpretation) to inform a strategic approach to sports safety for government departments, and non-government and sporting organisations. Existing resources (e.g. IRMRC Sports Injury Reports, Chief Health Officers Report) and surveys (e.g. NSW Health Survey) could be used to achieve this.
- To provide health promotion (particularly capacity building skills) and injury prevention planning and evaluation expertise.

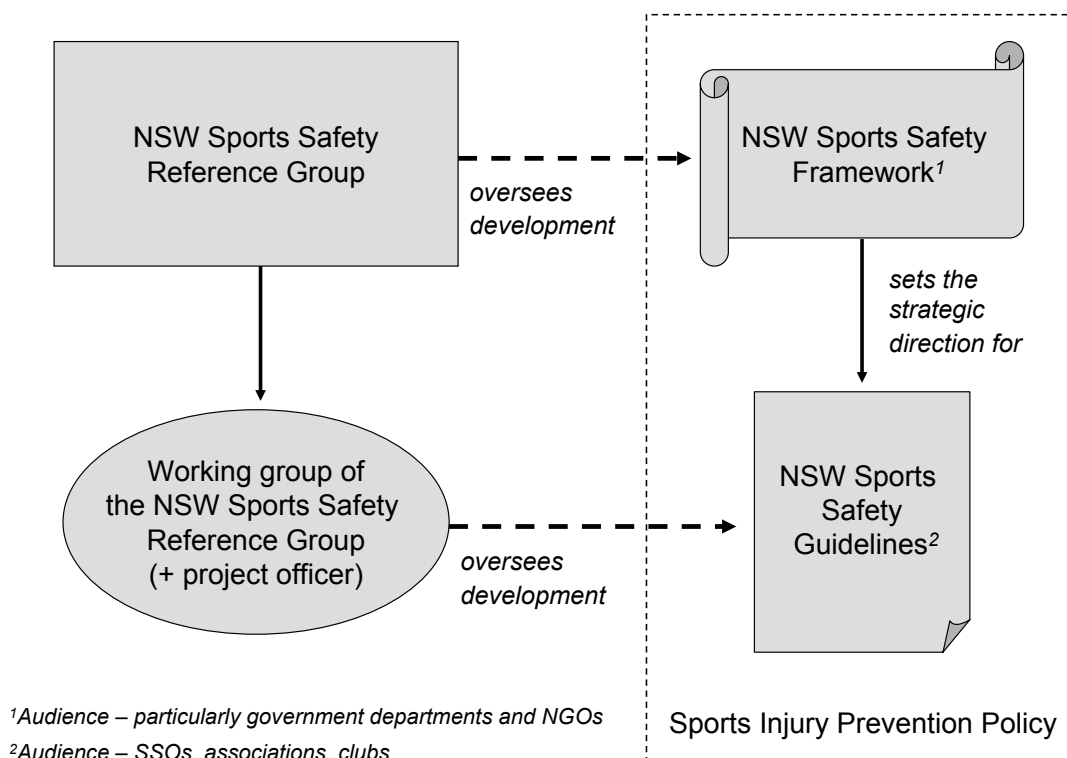
Sports Medicine Australia (NSW)

- To act as a repository for up-to-date evidence and recommendations, and make best-practice examples available, via the internet, to all providers of sporting opportunities.

- To synthesise new evidence and develop evidenced-informed policies on relevant sports safety and injury prevention issues.
- To raise awareness about the *Sports Safety Guidelines* through their existing networks.

The relationship between the reference group, the working group, the framework and the guidelines is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Relationship between Reference and Work Groups and the Framework and Guidelines



3. Simple, flexible and practical *Sports Safety Guidelines* should be developed to support the implementation of a strategic, evidenced informed approach to safety by providers of sporting opportunities

Participants at Consultation Meeting 1 clearly indicated that the *Sports Safety Guidelines* should allow for incorporation of existing national and international sports governing body policies and processes.

The key potential components of the *Sports Safety Guidelines* were identified as:

- a comprehensive checklist of safety issues that might be relevant across sports
- practical tools, templates, and resources which sports can adapt to their needs and context
- case studies which illustrate successful implementation and outcomes
- guidance on where to go for additional information and resources

We suggest the *Sports Safety Guidelines* be developed to assist all providers of sporting opportunities (SSOs, community sporting organisations, NSW Department of Education & Training, facility managers/owners, local councils etc) to adopt a strategic approach to developing and implementing evidenced-informed, best-practice based sports safety policies and practices. We suggest they follow the general principles of risk management as identified in the *Guidelines for Managing Risk in Sport and Recreation* produced by Standards Australia.¹² We suggest the guidelines be based on seven action steps to provide sporting organisations with a comprehensive strategic approach to safety, while incorporating the above key potential components:

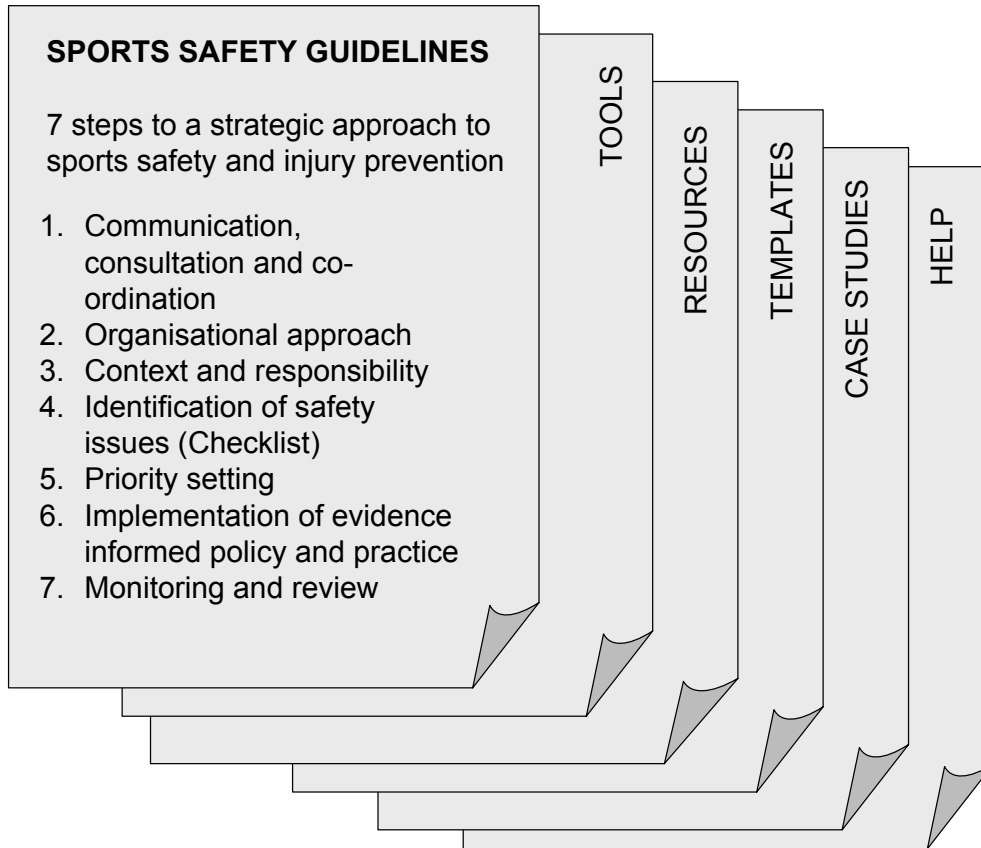
1. Communication, consultation and co-ordination
 - telling people about safety and getting them on board
2. Organisational approach
 - establishing the organisational management structure needed to adopt a strategic approach to sports safety
3. Context and responsibility
 - where does your organisation sit in the bigger picture and what is it responsible for?
4. Identification of safety issues
 - what are the safety issues, concerns and risks that your organisation should consider? (Checklist included)
5. Priority setting
 - short term action and long term goals
6. Implementation of evidence-informed policy and practice
 - deciding what your organisation is going to do. Identify evidence-informed and best-practice solutions to identified risks
7. Monitoring and review
 - how is it going? Has it made a difference? What next?

Each of the seven steps should be supported with a basic explanation, practical tools and templates to assist in their application, illustrations of successful application (case studies) and directions for where to go for further information or help. Refer to Figure 3.

An expanded discussion and explanation of each of the seven steps can be found in Appendix 6 of this report.

The *Sports Safety Guidelines* could be paper-based or web-based with links and downloads. A system similar to that used for the NSW Chief Health Officer’s Report may be useful – a paper-based report is released on a regular basis and a web-based version of the report is regularly updated and contains the latest information; web pages contain active links, and downloads of individual pages are available in a printable format.

Figure 3: Suggested contents of Sports Safety Guidelines



4. The *Sports Safety Guidelines* should be aligned with existing resources and programs

It was generally agreed at both Consultation Meetings that, where possible, the *Sports Safety Guidelines* should be incorporated into existing safety, risk management and sports administration initiatives and linked to existing training opportunities and resources.

We suggest that the *Sports Safety Guidelines* should be linked to the “*It’s Your Business*” program delivered by NSW Sport and Recreation and to the Standards Australia “*Guidelines for Managing Risk in Sport and Recreation*”.¹³ Consideration should be given to establishing “*It’s Your Business*” as a modular program with risk management principles and concepts as a core component and additional, elective modules on applying these to different types of risks (e.g. sports safety, financial risk; legal risk/corporate governance; occupational health and safety etc). Refer to Figure 4.

To build the capacity of providers of sporting opportunities to understand and use the *Sports Safety Guidelines* in a sustainable way, it is essential that training is available to support the development and dissemination of the guidelines. This training should be delivered by trainers with expertise in safety-related risk management (not lawyers or insurance experts). In addition, the training should include support for organisational change and establishing the required organisational management structure (leadership, commitment, communication, designated responsibility, regular review, resourcing/budget, regular item on board agenda etc.) to ensure that safety and injury prevention become sustainable aspects of ‘core business’ for all providers of sporting opportunities.

Figure 4: Suggested schema for a modular “*It’s Your Business*” program.



5. Development and implementation of the *Sports Safety Framework* and the *Sports Safety Guidelines* must address the identified barriers to the resourcing, uptake, dissemination and sustainability of a strategic approach to safety

Key barriers to the adoption of a strategic, evidence-informed approach to sports safety and injury prevention by sporting organisations were identified during the three phases of this project. They included the:

- Apparent low priority given to sports safety and injury prevention in NSW.
- Lack of capacity:
 - money
 - people
 - expertise
 - access to data
 - organisational management structure
- Volunteer nature of community sport and the difficulties associated with mandating, communicating and monitoring safety activity at community or grassroots level.
- Lack of control over facilities and environments—often managed by local government or commercial operators.
- Additional barriers for rural sporting organisations including communication, attendance at training, access to resources and isolation.

We suggest consideration be given to the following strategies for potentially overcoming these barriers:

- Framing the issue of sports safety in terms that appeal to sport and highlight the benefits that are meaningful to sporting organisations (e.g. team performance; reduced risk of successful litigation; higher participation levels; marketing etc).
- Ensuring the *Sports Safety Guidelines* and their use are supported by all significant stakeholders and championed by a respected organisation/s.
- Ensuring the *Sports Safety Guidelines* are process-oriented and enable sporting organisations to adapt them to suit their needs. The *Sports Safety Guidelines* should not specify mandatory or prescriptive safety policies to be adopted by all.
- Linking adoption of a strategic, evidence-informed approach to safety to the funding from, and reporting to, NSW Sport and Recreation (e.g. SSO attendance at training). It should be noted however, that this idea was not supported by the SSOs that participated in this project.
- Establishing and resourcing a multi-agency partnership with responsibility for:
 - setting a strategic vision (*Sports Safety Framework*) for sports safety in NSW;
 - guiding the development and dissemination of a practical resource (*Sports Safety Guidelines*) to assist the providers of sporting opportunities to adopt a strategic and evidenced-informed approach to safety; and
 - building the capacity of sporting organisations to adopt a strategic evidence-informed and sustainable approach to safety

- Advocating for the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee to allocate a proportion of funds to NSW Sport and Recreation to lead and develop a sports injury prevention policy for NSW, and later, for the evaluation of the policy.
- Generating a demand for safety among community sports consumers, particularly parents.
 - This could be done by developing and disseminating a ‘checklist’ and ‘questions to ask’ resource for parents to use when selecting a sport and a club for their children.
 - Dissemination could be enhanced by using the existing networks of NSW Sport and Recreation, NSW Department of Education and Training, and Parents and Citizen Association etc.
- Advocating for NSW Health and the insurance industry to provide at least ‘in kind’ support for the implementation of a strategic approach to sports safety and injury prevention, through the provision of timely and relevant data on sports injuries (e.g. annual sports specific reports).
- Ensuring the particular needs of regional and rural providers of sporting opportunities are identified and addressed.

6. The successful implementation or long term sustainability of a sports injury prevention policy requires ongoing capacity building.

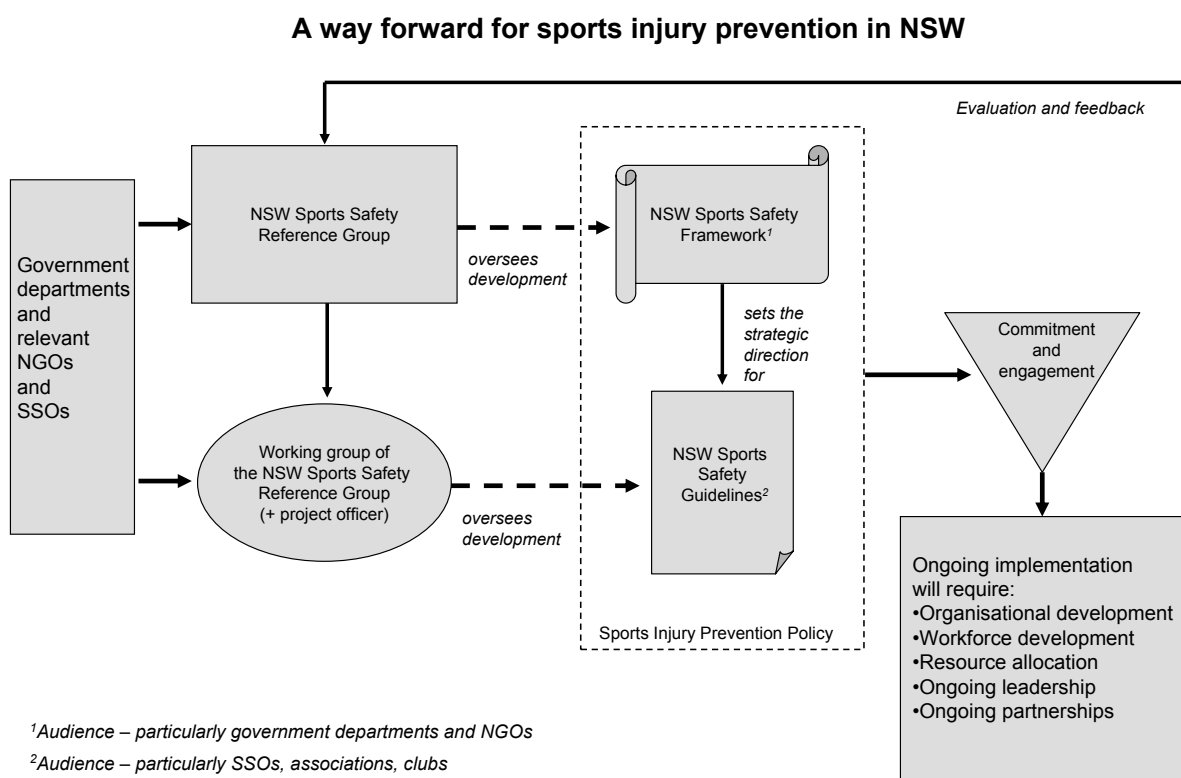
It must be recognised however, that establishing a *NSW Sports Safety Reference Group* and a *Working Group*, and developing a *NSW Sports Safety Framework* and *NSW Sports Safety Guidelines* will not guarantee the implementation or long term sustainability of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW.

For this to happen, attention will need to be given to meeting all the requirements for successful capacity building in an ongoing way:

- Ongoing leadership – strategic visioning,
- Ongoing partnerships – shared goals, planning, implementation, evaluation, sustained outcomes
- Resource allocation – financial resources, human resources, physical resources, administrative support, access to information
- Workforce development – training, support
- Organisational development – strategic directions, organisational structures, information systems, recognition and reward systems

This is illustrated in Figure 5. Developing and implementing a strategy to meet these requirements should be the continuing role of the NSW Sports Safety Reference Group using the principles of the NSW Health capacity building framework for guidance.¹⁴

Figure 5: Diagrammatic representation of the development and implementation of a sports injury prevention policy for NSW



Project Limitations

There are some significant limitations in this project which must be considered in accepting its findings and recommendations.

- The results of the project reflect the actions and views of those SSOs willing or able to participate. Of 38 SSOs invited to participate, 19 participated in the written questionnaire, and 21 in the telephone interview (a total of 23 participants). This may limit the generalisability of the project’s survey results.
- Similarly, there were some notable absences among SSOs, government departments and NGOs at the Consultation Meetings. These absences may reflect either a disinterest in sports injury prevention, or the alternative, that sports injury prevention is well done. Therefore the consensus arrived at in the Consultation Meetings may reflect the views of agencies and SSOs with the keenest interest or the greatest need, and significant work may be required to get others “on board”.
- The survey of SSOs drew on their self-report of policy and process, and is therefore subject to bias. It was outside the scope of this project to validate responses, or to assess the quality of, the evidence base for, and the extent of implementation of reported policies.
- This was investigator driven research, and therefore subject to investigator bias. Several checks and balances were employed to give rigour to the project and to minimise bias:
 - To avoid influencing the responses of participants, an external facilitator was utilised to lead Consultation Meeting 1;
 - To avoid misrepresenting participants’ views respondent validation of the written reports from Consultation Meetings 1 and 2 was undertaken;
 - To minimise opportunity for misinterpretation, qualitative data was interpreted by more than one member of the project team, and findings were compared and discussed before being finalised.

- ¹ Buse K, Mays N, Walt G (2005). *Making health policy*. Berkshire: Open University Press
- ² Finch C, Cassell E. (2006) The public health impact of injury during sport and active recreation. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* 9: 490-497
- ³ Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health. (1994). *Better health outcomes for Australians. National goals, targets and strategies for better health outcomes into the next century*. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
- ⁴ Egger G. (1991). Sports injuries in Australia: causes, cost and prevention. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 1(2):28-33.
- ⁵ Potter Forbes, M. and Aisbett, C. (2003). *Injury costs! A valuation of the burden of injury in New South Wales 1998-1999*. Sydney, Australia: NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre.
- ⁶ Finch C, McGrath A. (1997). *SportSafe Australia: A national sports safety framework*. A report prepared for the Australian Sports Injury Prevention Taskforce. Canberra: Australian Sports Commission.
- ⁷ Finch C, Hayen A. (2006). Governmental health agencies need to assume leadership in injury prevention. *Injury Prevention* 12:2-3.
- ⁸ Boufous, S., Dennis, R. and Finch, C. (2006). *A profile of hospitalisations and deaths due to sport and leisure injuries in New South Wales, 2000-2004*. Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales.
- ⁹ Buse, K., Mays, N. & Walt, G. (2005) *Making health policy*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- ¹⁰ Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport. (2006). *The Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey. Annual report 2005*. Australian Sports Commission: Canberra.
- ¹¹ Standards Australia. *Occupational health and safety management systems—general guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques*. AS/NZS 4804:2001. Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand: Sydney
- ¹² Boufous S, Finch C, Bauman A. (2004). A. Parental safety concerns – a barrier to sport and physical activity in children? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 28:482-486.
- ¹³ Standards Australia. *Guidelines for Managing Risk in Sport and Recreation*. HB246–2002. Standards Australia International Ltd : Sydney
- ¹⁴ NSW Health Department, (2001). *A Framework for Building Capacity to Improve Health*. NSW Health: North Sydney.

APPENDIX 1

Sports represented by participating SSOs: Sports safety and injury prevention survey

Australian Rules Football

Athletics

Basketball

Bowling

Cricket

Equestrian sports

Football (soccer)

Golf

Gymnastics

Motorcycling

Netball

Roller sports

Rugby League

Rugby Union

Softball

Sailing

Squash

Surf lifesaving

Swimming

Tennis

Volleyball

Wheelchair sports

4. Policy on coaching standards (e.g. qualifications, accreditation?)

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

5. Policy on child protection?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

6. Policy on officiating (e.g. qualifications, other duties – inspecting facilities/protective equipment)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

7. Policy on modified rules (juniors, masters, people with a disability etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

8. Policy on codes of conduct (of players, coaches, parents, club officials etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

9. Policy on specific health issues (e.g. sun protection, drugs in sport – other than performance enhancing, alcohol, smoking, healthy eating, hydration, pregnancy, infectious diseases/blood rule etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

If yes, please list the health issues they address

11. Policy on first aid and medical emergencies?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

12. Policy on personal protective equipment to be used by participants?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

13. Policy on the safety of playing or training equipment (e.g. goal posts, nets, etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

14. Policy on standards of playing facilities (e.g. playing fields, wet areas, games surrounds etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

15. Policy associated with ancillary areas (e.g. change rooms, canteen, storage facilities etc)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

16. Policy on assessing ground hardness?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

17. Policy on environmental and playing conditions (e.g. weather, playing surface)?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unwritten | <input type="checkbox"/> | Optional | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not relevant | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

MANY THANKS FOR COMPLETING THIS PART OF THE SURVEY –Together with the consent form, please Fax back to before your telephone interview

TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

The telephone interview should take about 30 minutes to complete. We would like you to think quite broadly about the activities your organisation undertakes to:

- a. Protect the health of participants (e.g. sun protection, child protection, alcohol policy, infectious diseases etc)
- b. Prevent sports injuries from occurring (e.g. protective equipment, coaching qualifications etc)
- c. Reduce the severity of sports injuries (first aid, rehabilitation etc) and
- d. Ensure a safe sporting environment for everyone involved (safe facilities, playing surfaces etc).

The questions will cover:

- Basic demographic information about your organisation,
- Safety promotion and injury prevention within your organisation – what planning and activities you may undertake in this area, and how this is done,
- Any aspects of promoting and protecting the health of participants where you feel more could be done or you might need assistance, and
- Your views on statewide planning, strategies and policies in this area.

If you have any questions about the telephone interview, feel free to ask them when our research assistant calls you to discuss your participation.

APPENDIX 3

Telephone Survey

Demographic information

1. What sport does your organisation represent?
2. What levels of sport does your organisation represent?
3. What is your position in the organisation?
4. Approximately how many registered participants does your organisation represent?
- 5a. Thinking about the administration of your sport, is there a tiered structure that governs the administration or delivery of your sport (Prompt: international, or national bodies, states, regional and local bodies?) What are the tiers?
- 5b. In what ways does this structure influence safety promotion and injury prevention in your organisation?

The following questions ask about safety promotion and injury prevention within your organisation. We want you to think quite broadly about the activities your organisation undertakes to:

- a. protect the health of participants (e.g. sun protection, child protection, alcohol policy, infectious diseases etc)*
- b. prevent sports injuries from occurring (e.g. protective equipment, coaching qualifications etc) and*
- c. reduce the severity of sports injuries (first aid, rehabilitation etc).*
- d. ensure a safe sporting environment for everyone involve.*

Safety promotion and injury prevention process

6. What is the main role that your organisation plays in promoting safety and preventing injuries in your sport? (For example – writing policies, running educational programs, or supporting clubs to implement policies)
7. How does your organisation identify safety issues and injury risks relevant to your sport? (Prompt: e.g. injury incidents, insurance company reports, directives from the national level, feedback at grassroots level or complaints)
8. How does your organisation decide which safety issues and injury risks are important to act on? (Prompt e.g. high profile incidents, money available to address certain issues, high severity types of injury, problems we can do something about.)

[If no activities undertaken, go to question 11] –

9. From where does your organisation get information to help identify appropriate safety promotion and injury prevention strategies? (Prompt e.g. Sports Medicine Australia, NSW Health, Dept of Sport and Recreation, your national body, insurance company, Google)
10. Once your organisation has decided on appropriate strategies, to whom does it communicate these strategies?
11. How does your organisation communicate these strategies?
12. Who is responsible for implementing these strategies? (Prompt: Does your organisation do anything to implement these strategies directly or do you expect and/or train others to implement them?)
13. How do you know these different levels of your organisation are putting things in place? (or how do you know they are doing it?)
14. How do you know if it's working?
15. How does your organisation help regional associations and community clubs to prevent injuries and promote safety?
16. Do you feel your organisation has a comprehensive sports safety and injury prevention plan in place?
 - If yes, could it be improved?
 - If yes: How? What are the barriers to improving it?
 - If no: Why have you been so successful in developing your plan?
 - If no, why not?
 - Is there no need?
 - Have you faced difficulties and what have they been?

Barriers and enablers

17. If a statewide sports safety and injury prevention plan were to be developed, what would you see as the advantages of such a plan?
18. What would you see as the disadvantages?
19. What difficulties would your organisation face in implementing a statewide sports safety and injury prevention plan? How could these be overcome?
20. What other organisations or sectors need to be involved in sports safety promotion and injury prevention to complement the efforts of your organisation?

Summing up

21. Did you have any difficulty filling out Part A of the survey? We asked you about a number of policies that your club may have. Please look at those again:
22. Thinking about the policies in Part A, are the policies you have in place, relevant to all clubs, events, competitions etc?
23. Are the policies relevant to training as well as competitions?
24. That's it for the interview questions – unless you have any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

For the eleven sports which were sent the IRMRC report ask:

The NSW Sporting Injuries Committee recently sent you a sports injury statistics report (from the Injury Risk Management Research Centre) that provided a profile of the injuries in your sport.

25. Was the IRMRC injury profile useful to your sport?
Yes
No
26. How has, or will, your organisation use the IRMRC injury profile?

APPENDIX 4

Consultation Meeting 1 Agenda

Time	Key Challenges
11.30 am – 12.20 pm	The state of play <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is safety and injury prevention important to your organisation?• What lessons can we learn from some of the widely adopted policies? Think in terms of the development, dissemination, implementation and evaluation.• Why did they work?• Why have other issues been less successfully addressed?
12.20 pm – 12.50 pm	Developing a state wide strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would be the benefits of a state wide strategy? What would be the disadvantages?• What should it look like?• What should it include?• What should it do?• What should it not look like, not include and not do?• To whom should it be targeted (SSOs, clubs, individual coaches, players)?• Who are the key partners and how do we involve them? (schools, local councils etc)
12.50pm – 1.35 pm	Lunch
1.35 pm – 2:15 pm	Developing a state wide strategy (continued)
2:15 pm – 3:15 pm	Implementing a state wide strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What support will sport require? What are the difficulties to be faced?• How do we encourage state sporting organisations to use a state-wide safety strategy?• How will we know when we have achieved some outcomes?• How do we reach hard to reach groups?
3.15 pm – 3.30 pm	Coffee and tea break
3.30 pm – 4.15 pm	Driving the strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a need for a lead agency to drive/support the strategy? Who should that be? What should a lead agency do?• Where to from here? Interested people for the next stage?
4.15 pm – 4.30 pm	Summary and close

APPENDIX 5

List of Participants: Consultation Meeting 1

Craig Davis	AFL NSW/ACT
Kim Skerrit	Association of Catholic Schools
Lyndall Jesse	Association of Independent Schools
Steve Hutchison	Department of Fair Trading
Henny Oldenhove	Facilitator
Rita Jaber	NSW Association of Disability Sports
Anna Bacik	NSW Commission for Children & Young People
David Lawson	NSW Cricket Association
David Power	NSW Department of Education & Training
John Egan	NSW Dept. Sport and Recreation
Jeffrey Slatter	NSW Dept. Sport and Recreation
Greg Mills	NSW Golf Association Ltd
Aaron Bloomfield	NSW Gymnastic Association
Claire Monger	NSW Health
Liz Devlin	NSW Health
Rebecca Mitchell	NSW Injury Risk Management Centre
Christina Rollo	NSW Netball Association Ltd
Debbie Kemp	NSW Sports Federation Inc
Jackie Kay	Sailability
Sonia Jenkins	NSW Sporting Injuries Committee
Stewart Priddis	Sports Medicine Australia
Les Beattie	SportsCover
Daniel Pearce	Surf Life Saving NSW Inc
Matt Adair	Swimming NSW Ltd
Alex Donaldson	The University of Ballarat
Ros Poulos	The University of New South Wales
Jane Elkington	The University of New South Wales
Frances Crampton AM	Women's Golf NSW
Kristy Abbott	YouthSafe
Ann-Marie Miranda	Catholic Education

APPENDIX 6

Seven steps to a strategic approach to sports safety and injury prevention: the application of risk management principles to sports safety

Step 1: Tell people about it and get them on board—communication, consultation and coordination

Managing the risks associated with participation in sport requires communication, consultation and coordination. There are many people and organisations that need to be involved and all of them should be informed and actively engaged. Sports administrators need to be committed to the goal of improving safety and reducing risks including developing and communicating organisational statements that identify safety and injury prevention as a core part of the business of the organisation. Facility owners and managers play a key role in providing safe environments for sports participation and it is important that they are supportive and involved in risk management. Coaches, referees, officials, first aid providers, team managers and parents of junior participants are the ‘front line’ risk managers in sport. They need to know what is expected of them and how to fulfil their responsibilities. They are also an important source of information about the risks and hazards of participation in sport and potential, practical and sustainable action to improve safety. Sports participants are the ultimate target of sports safety efforts and it is vital that they are informed and actively engaged in the process of managing the risks of participating in sport.

Practical steps to communicate and consult with relevant stakeholders and coordinate safety activity can include:

- Establishing a safety committee or working group with representation from all relevant stakeholders
- Including statements about the importance of safety in key organisational documents (mission statements, annual reports, goals and objectives, marketing material, newsletters, websites etc)
- Incorporating safety components into all contracts, agreements, roles and position descriptions etc
- Seeking stakeholder opinions and input through regular surveys, and at regular board meetings etc
- Regular coach/official training and accreditation sessions

Step 2: An organisational, strategic approach to sports safety

Like managing anything else in an organisation, improving sports safety and reducing the risk of injury in an effective, efficient and sustainable way requires putting systems and processes in place. The following management structures and processes will help any organisation to develop and sustain a positive and productive safety culture:

- Make a formal organisational commitment to safety.
- Ensure someone is designated as responsible for safety planning and that they have appropriate skills and resources (money, assistance and time) to fulfil the role properly.
- Establish a safety committee or working group with representation from all relevant stakeholders.

- Include safety as a standing item on relevant meeting agendas (e.g. management committees, boards of directors etc).
- Have a long-term (3 to 5 years) safety strategy with identified goals and a short-term (12 month) safety action plan with achievable objectives.
- Establish a 'safety budget' with sufficient funds (or identified ways to obtain them) to achieve short-term objectives and long-term goals.
- Balance efforts to achieve 'performance' and safety outcomes.
- Set up effective open, two-way communication processes.
- Gather information to ensure that decisions are based on relevant evidence of need and effectiveness of proposed action.
- Conduct on-going monitoring and regular reviews of safety needs, plans and activities.

Step 3: Establish the context—where does your organisation sit in the bigger picture and what is it responsible for?

Different types of organisations (SSOs, regional associations, community clubs, facility owners and managers etc) will have different sports safety responsibilities. When developing a strategic approach to safety and injury prevention, each organisation should identify what they do and where they fit in the bigger picture. It is important to clearly establish the contribution they can make to improving safety and reducing the injury risk associated with participation in sport so efforts and resources can be well targeted. For example, SSOs should provide leadership for safety in their sport at a state level. This might include monitoring injury data to provide an overview of important issues that need to be addressed; setting safety policies and guidelines that affiliated organisations are required to follow; conducting research into effective and sustainable safety interventions etc. By contrast, a community club might be responsible for making sure all coaches are properly qualified and first aid providers are in attendance at all games and training.

The following questions might be useful to ask and answer when establishing the context for any individual organisation (SSO, club, association):

- What is the external context or environment within which the organisation operates including community attitudes, legal and statutory requirements, local by-laws, governing body policies etc.
- What is the internal context of the organisation itself including its: objectives; core activity and operations; volunteer or professional nature of administration; budget etc.
- What is the organisation responsible for?
- What is the organisation in the best position to do?
- What other organisations are responsible for other aspects of safety related to the sport and how can we find out what they are doing and how it relates to what we want to do?
- Who does the organisation need to inform, or report to about what we want to do?
- What safety standards apply to the organisation's operations?
- Who is involved with the organisation?
- What are the capabilities of the organisation?
- What safety strategies already exist in the organisation?

Asking and answering such questions will enable an organisation to set appropriate and achievable safety goals and objectives.

Step 4: Identify the safety issues, concerns and risks that your organisation should consider?

Once an organisation has established the context in which it needs to consider safety, it is necessary to identify the specific safety issues that should be addressed. An enormous amount of work has already been done by a range of organisations to identify and describe the main safety and injury issues and risks in many sports. The key to gathering relevant information is to know who to ask and where to look. The following practical steps will help to do this:

- Gather, ask for and look at, any available injury data for your sport—insurance claims; first aid records; published reports; health service data etc.
- Ask (through questionnaires, at meetings or informally) people who are likely to know the issues or have concerns—coaches, players, first aid providers, parents, physiotherapists and doctors etc.
- Conduct safety inspections and audits—of playing surfaces; facilities; equipment; qualifications; processes and procedures; injury histories and medical conditions of players etc.
- Consult other relevant stakeholders—international, national, state and regional sports governing bodies; facility owners and managers etc.
- Ask the ‘experts’—Sports Medicine Australia; Department of Sport and Recreation; Health Department; academic researchers, sports medicine practitioners etc.

The outcome of this step will be a long list of safety issues that an organisation could potentially address.

Step 5: Set priorities—short term action and long-term planning

No organisation will be able to successfully tackle all the safety issues identified in Step 4 immediately. It will always be necessary to prioritise safety activities as some issues will be more important to address than others and some will be easy to address with immediate action while others will require longer term strategies. For example, ensuring that all coaches are appropriately qualified might take a couple of years to raise the money required to fund the training while repairing pot holes in a playing surface might require an afternoon working bee. Some practical considerations when setting safety priorities include:

- The ‘frequency’ of the risk—how often is the risk present or how likely is it that an injury will occur?
- The ‘severity’ of the likely injury—if the injury does occur, is it likely to be catastrophic, severe, moderate or minor?
- What can be done about the issue? Is a simple, cost-effective solution available?
- The need to get some quick, short-term outcomes to maintain momentum and interest in the process.
- Legal and statutory requirements—will there be significant legal ramifications if nothing is done and an injury occurs? Is the risk ‘reasonably foreseeable’ and the solution ‘practicable’?

Step 6: Decide what your organisation is going to do—evidenced-informed and best practice solutions to identified risks

Deciding what are important issues to address and knowing what to do about them are two related, but separate steps in developing and implementing a strategic approach to sports safety. For example, reducing ankle injuries might be identified as a priority but is it better to: encourage participants to tape/strap their ankles; include exercises to strengthen ankles and improve landing techniques in the training program; or improve the playing surface? There has been a lot of research conducted to identify effective solutions to many common sports injuries and there are also some injury prevention principles that can be applied to generate common sense solutions including:

- Removing the hazard or risk is the most effective solution. For example, moving a piece of equipment that is in an unsafe position is better than putting protective padding on it and telling participants to avoid it
- Asking people to change their behaviour is unlikely to be an effective stand alone, long-term solution.
- Consider what can be done to: reduce the likelihood that an injury event will occur (remove the hazard); reduce the severity of an injury at the time the injury event occurs (e.g. wear protective equipment); and reduce the severity of an injury after the injury event occurs (e.g. first aid and rehabilitation).
- Multi-strategy approaches including an educational component, an environmental/engineering component and a policy/legislative component are likely to be more effective than single strategy approaches. An example of a multi-strategic approach to sun protection would include: notices in the newsletter and regular announcements over the public address system (education); providing shade for spectators (engineering); developing and enforcing a no-hat no-play policy (policy/legislation); and re-scheduling games and training when necessary (policy/legislation).

The following practical steps will help identify potentially effective solutions to prioritised safety issues:

- Consult other relevant stakeholders—international, national, state and regional sports governing bodies; facility owners and managers etc
- Ask the ‘experts’—Sports Medicine Australia; Department of Sport and Recreation; Health Department; academic researchers etc
- Consult the literature—a Google search is likely to quickly locate any key research and review papers.

Step 7: Monitor and review—how is it going, has it made a difference and what next?

Like all other management issues, safety is dynamic. It is therefore important to have a process for monitoring and regularly reviewing safety plans and activity. This will help to understand if injury risks and concerns change over time, the planned activity is being properly implemented and, if so, if it is making a difference.

Some practical ways of monitoring and reviewing safety plans and activity include regularly:

- Gathering, asking for and looking at, any available injury data—insurance claims; first aid records; published reports; health service data etc.
- Asking (through questionnaires, at meetings or informally) people who are likely to know how things are going and the issues or have concerns—coaches, players, first aid providers, parents etc.
- Conducting regular safety inspections and audits—of playing surfaces; facilities; equipment; qualifications; processes and procedures; injury histories and medical conditions of players etc.
- Consulting other relevant stakeholders—international, national, state and regional sports governing bodies; facility owners and managers etc.
- Asking the ‘experts’—Sports Medicine Australia; Department of Sport and Recreation; Health Department; academic researchers, sports medicine practitioners etc.
- Ensuring someone is designated as responsible for safety planning, including monitoring and review, and that they have appropriate skills, assistance and resources (money, assistance and time) to fulfil the role properly.
- Establishing effective open, two-way communication processes.
- Including safety as a standing item on relevant meeting agendas (e.g. management committees, boards of directors etc).