

**Submission
No 255**

INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

Organisation: Netball NSW

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Netball NSW (NNSW) submission to
the NSW Parliament Public Works
Committee Inquiry into the Sydney
Stadiums Strategy

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Introduction

Netball NSW (NNSW) has grown to be one of the largest independent, not-for-profit sporting organisations in NSW.

With a burgeoning membership of almost 115,000, our organisation encourages and supports members to play and enjoy the game at all levels from local community and school age through to elite professional competition. Netball is also one of the highest participation sports in Australia and is played in cities, suburbs and country towns in all corners of New South Wales.

From their local club team to association representative teams, talent squads and Regional Academies of Sport, talented players are also offered pathways to continue their netball pursuits as they strive to represent New South Wales and Australia.

NNSW's mission is to provide to the NSW community sporting leadership and partnership through netball education and training programs, an extensive range of competitions and national success. This is achieved through professional management and support to all levels of administration involved with the game so that these outcomes are financially viable.

An essential part of the success of our sport is identifying and promoting strong, capable and talented women as role models. One of the most effective methods of achieving this is through the delivery of elite level competition to the community that is affordable, accessible and of the highest quality. This requires that appropriate frameworks are put in place in terms of talent development, sport development and engagement and importantly the infrastructure to enable these outcomes.

NNSW strongly believes, when considering the value of, need for and development of stadia, that a number of principles should be applied:

1. **Value** – the venue needs to deliver value to both the greater community (citizens of NSW) and the stakeholders (spectators, volunteers, administrators, media, sports, coaches, officials, players) that will be impacted by the development. This value will be measured in terms of cost benefit analysis (benefit to cost ratio should be greater than 1 if funds come from Restart NSW), economic return to stakeholders, tourism visitation, ability to attract and maintain premium events, ability to offset its costs and the value proposition experience for spectators.
2. **Multi-use** – the facility will be used by (and made available to) multiple groups of users, rather than provided as a single use stadium therefore increasing the benefit effect.
3. **Well utilised** – the use of the facility will be maximised, with the facility being utilised regularly and by different stakeholder groups without necessitating constant remediation or re-configuration. This means encouraging year-round use.

4. **Appropriate** – venues should be planned and designed in terms of the increasing spectator and participation rates of women and girls and elite competitions. All facilities, including amenities in a stadium should provide for the needs of female attendees e.g. breast feeding rooms with view to live match and TV screens.
5. **Accessible** – the venue will support and encourage usage by a number of different stakeholders by ensuring affordability of venue hire or lease; ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to access the facility for this purpose (i.e. not be monopolised by one user group or advantage one group over another in terms of booking availability; ensure that it meets market expectations in terms of game day experience).
6. **Risk Assessment** – the development must be evaluated utilising a risk management framework to ensure that any likely or possible risk is identified, managed and mitigated. Fundamentally, risk means that there is a chance that you won't receive a return on your investment. Risk categories include strategic (impacted by shifts in consumer preferences or emerging technologies that may make the project obsolete or inappropriate), compliance (concerned with complying with various legislative instruments, bureaucratic rules and regulations or those related to best practice investment practices); financial; operational; and reputational.¹
7. **Wider Benefit** – the development will provide benefit to a wide range of consumers and contribute to the establishment and growth of the surrounding precinct therefore providing social benefit to the greater community and planning benefits to the city. Fundamentally, stadia should be well integrated into their proximal built surrounds.
8. **Ongoing contributions** – the venue will be well managed financially into the future in terms of setting aside funds to maintain, repair or further develop the venue. This means actively managing a whole-of-lifecycle asset management plan. Further, ongoing governance and management arrangements for the venue need to be considered and appropriately set out.
9. **Development opportunities and legacy** – the venue should (where appropriate) encourage use by sports that do not have the financial where-with-all to meaningfully contribute to or finance the development of their own purpose-built facility. Many second or third tier sports are unable to afford the increasingly high venue hire fees for top class venues to host their flagship competitions or events and as such are forced to compromise spectator and participant amenity or simply home ground advantage as other states with appropriate venues successfully bid for these events.

This submission has been authorised by the Board of Netball NSW.

¹ (Griffin, 2018)

Executive Summary

The NSW Government announced the proposed redevelopment of key Sports Stadia in Sydney. Following significant media and public attention and scrutiny, the scope of the redevelopment and subsequent 'Stadia Strategy' has undergone significant change and been the subject of increasing interest.

In April 2018, a NSW Parliament Upper House Public Works Committee was established, responsible for undertaking two related inquiries. This submission relates to the Inquiry into the Sydney Stadiums Strategy.

Netball NSW is one of the largest and most successful not-for profit sporting organisations in NSW and is responsible for the development of the game of netball in NSW as well as the full ownership and operation of 2 teams in Suncorp Super Netball competition, being, the NSW Swifts and GIANTS Netball, both based in Sydney Olympic Park

The reach of the NSW Stadia Strategy appears to be limited to those developments servicing professional, predominantly male, field based football codes.

In this submission, Netball NSW outlines why the stadia strategy should concern itself more widely with developing appropriate venues for many different sporting codes, ensuring adequate opportunities for both indoor and outdoor, male and female participation sports to play at safe, fit for purpose, affordable and accessible venues.

Key Issues

Netball NSW has considered the Terms of Reference (ToR) as published by the Committee for the Inquiry and has provided responses to those ToR (below) that it feels it is most equipped to comment on.

NNSW notes however, that the NSW Parliament Public Works Committee cites a document referred to as the 'Sydney Stadiums Strategy'. Netball NSW has investigated and does not believe in the existence of such a document. It is NNSW's presumption therefore that the Strategy referred to is in fact the NSW Stadia Strategy.

NNSW Responses to ToRs

ToR 1 a) *the process by which the Government developed the strategy, including the input provided by Infrastructure NSW, Venues NSW, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust and other government agencies.*

Given the strategy at this point appears to fundamentally concern itself with the development of football related venues, it is thought that this matter would be best addressed through seeking details from relevant and involved sporting organisations, the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust (SCG Trust), the Office of the Minister for Sport, Infrastructure NSW, Venues NSW, Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA), Office of Sport and developers. Most particularly the National Rugby League (NRL), Rugby Australia (RA), Sydney Swans Football Club (Sydney Swans), Australian Football League (AFL), Cricket Australia (CA), Cricket NSW (CNSW) and Football Federation Australia (FFA) would be presumed as the stakeholders in this matter and would therefore have been engaged by the NSW Government regarding the proposed Strategy.

It is understood that the Strategy also considers the development of an indoor sports stadium, yet this appears not to have been included in recent discussions or budget forecasts. Although there was a public process undertaken in 2016 regarding indoor stadia in Sydney, no feedback has been provided outlining findings or proposals. Netball NSW is concerned that there has been limited or no engagement with affected sporting organisations regarding the development and location of the proposed indoor stadium and has concerns over the location being suggested for the venue.

Further, it would seem that the detail being sought by the Committee should be contained within the documentation tabled under Standing Order 52 made in the Legislative Council 15 March 2018, relating to the Government's proposal for stadium redevelopment² (Parliament NSW, 2018).

² (Parliament NSW, 2018)

ToR 1 b) *modelling or cost benefit analyses that informed the strategy, including the compliance of such modelling or analysis with the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011.*

Brockhoff, (2018) references the '*Infrastructure and its Funding*' position statement³ produced by the Planning Institute of Australia, that states:

- Infrastructure project objectives must be consistent with the adopted strategic planning outcomes sought for places
- Achieving these outcomes should inform the prioritisation of infrastructure to be funded
- Infrastructure appraisal approaches should recognise the spatial context and respond to the wider economic, environmental and social costs and benefits over the long-term term planning horizon and whole-of-life of an asset
- All available options (e.g. non-infrastructure) that meet the project objectives should be considered.⁴

NNSW agrees with this position and with John Brockhoff, that the principles outlined "are useful in responding to the stadium reconstruction program and informing the business case appraisal."⁵

Brockhoff continues on to suggest that, in developing any business case for major stadia, it should:

"..appraise non-infrastructure options as well as consider the performance of all options over the whole of the project's life. It also needs to significantly ensure it is a public benefit. It is not clear that [in the case of the Sydney Stadiums Strategy] this has yet occurred."⁶

ToR 1 c) *economic and social justifications for the strategy, including experiences in other jurisdictions and relevant academic literature.*

NNSW expects that these justifications (or absence of same) would be contained within the full Business Cases for the projects.

³ (Planning Institute of Australia, 2017)

⁴ (Brockhoff, 2018)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ N3 above

ToR 1 e) *the management and adequacy of safety and maintenance at Allianz Stadium. (referred to hereafter as Sydney Football Stadium or SFS)*

NNSW understands that the matter of safety and maintenance of the SFS was the subject of a study commissioned by the SCG Trust in the recent past. It is presumed that the recommendations sought and delivered through this compliance and safety audit were fundamental to the justification for the stadium strategy with regard to the SFS.

NNSW has experienced first-hand the stringent criteria that must be satisfied and the ongoing checks and balances required to secure government funding to build a modern, world class facility. As was the case for Netball Central, a central tenet for the development and management of any sporting venue is the corporate governance structure overseeing the venue that remains responsible for ensuring adequate and appropriate whole-of-life asset management. This includes ensuring that the asset remains fit for purpose, undergoes regular upgrades and refurbishment and complies with any prevailing work, health and safety legislation and regulation, risk management/mitigation requirements or venue specific instruments that require asset management such as the *Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Act 1978*⁷ or *Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001*⁸

ToR 1 f) *attendance rates at Sydney's sports stadiums and whether patrons are from Sydney, regional New South Wales, interstate or overseas.*

This detail should be available through the Annual Reports of the relevant venue managing Authority, that is, Venues NSW, SCG Trust or SOPA or conversely, should be able to be accessed through Destination NSW.

ToR 1 g) *the total cost of the strategy, including acquisition, demolition, construction, compensation to sports clubs and associations, and the reasons for increases in costs.*

In April 2017, the Government announced it would invest \$1.0 billion of the proceeds from the Land and Property Information transaction into sports stadia. The \$1.0 billion is to be transferred into *Restart NSW* and is in addition to the \$600 million for sports stadia announced as part of the \$20 billion *Rebuilding NSW* plan.⁹

The true breakdown of amounts announced in the budget and media has been difficult to verify. It is understood however that the Parramatta Stadium (and Pool) project will cost approximately \$300 million and that these figures appear not to include the often

⁷ (Parliament of NSW) see Part 4 – Functions of the Trust

⁸ (Parliament of NSW, 2018) see Part 4 – Functions of Authority

⁹ (NSW Government, 2017)

mentioned 15,000 seat Sydney Indoor Sports Arena which was estimated to cost \$150 million in 2015.¹⁰

Summaries of the business cases developed for the relevant stadium projects and NSW State Government Budget Papers are in the public domain. It is understood from these (and from subsequent media reports) that the anticipated cost of the stadium strategy is \$2.5 billion which was subsequently reported to have increased to \$2.7 billion due to the SFS knockdown rebuild being costed at \$200 million higher than the original amount.¹¹ Media reports suggest that the reason for this increase was a change to the scope of the project to enable international Rugby matches to be conducted at the stadium.

Subsequently, with the NSW Government's decision to revisit the scope of the funding package for the stadium strategy, the amounts announced for the two key projects are \$810m for ANZ Stadium refurbishment (rather than replacement) and \$729m for the replacement of the SFS. This, according to the NSW Government, will bring about savings in the amount of \$500m from the original estimate, resulting in a revised total of \$1.5bn funding being made available for these stadiums, and shortening the delivery time by 2 years¹².

NNSW is not alone in suggesting that the \$500 million saving through this policy change by the government, from the knock-down and rebuild of major stadiums to refurbishment, should be spent, not only on community sport infrastructure but, on better and more accessible facilities for both female and male participants in far wider variety of sports than the male dominant football codes. This principle is explained in detail later in this submission.

NNSW understands that the NSW Government is committed to providing some compensation to Cricket NSW as the SFS redevelopment requires CNSW to relocate their 'Centre of Excellence' and administration offices. NNSW is however, unsure of any other compensation being offered or agreed, particularly in terms of financial commitments or leasing arrangements, to the football codes, as no doubt this would be considered 'Commercial in Confidence'.

NNSW acknowledges that the NSW Government is engaging with Cricket NSW regarding the development of a new 'Centre of Excellence', but NNSW believes that the government should be engaging more widely with other sports to potentially include them in future 'Centre of Excellence' developments. By way of example, Cricket Victoria has recently developed (in conjunction with the Victorian Government) a state of the art facility at the Junction Oval, which is now considered within the sport sector to be best practice, in terms of facilities for both genders as well as providing an administration base, high performance unit, training for both men and women, acts as a hub for community cricket and boasts a first class playing field

¹⁰ (Stadia Strategy Steering Group, 2015)

¹¹ (Clennell, 2018)

¹² (Venues NSW, 2018)

capable of hosting domestic competitions (WBBL, Sheffield Shield, WNCL and Premier Cricket) as well as hosting matches for the women's ICC World T20 in 2020.¹³

ToR 1 j) *any other related matter.*

Netball NSW recommends that the NSW Government considers stadia development more widely than those venues catering primarily for football codes that are predominantly male, professional and limited in terms of likely revenues from non-capacity attendance numbers such as football, rugby league and rugby union.

Stadia (or stadiums) by definition, do not singularly refer to field or ground based facilities utilised (or configured) for football codes. 'Stadia' more broadly applied, includes any field, court, stage or even pool that enables spectators to view the competition or production by means of seating or standing areas staggered in such a way as to provide a 'stadium' effect, surrounding the playing area or stage.

NNSW considers the current NSW Stadium Strategy to be limited in terms of its recognition, acknowledgement and understanding of the needs of sports other than football codes and the lack of suitable, adequate and accessible (major) stadia available to these sports.

In line with this belief, NNSW has provided information relating directly to the justified inclusion of other stadia into the NSW Stadium Strategy and outlines the imperatives driving this in the following section.

¹³ (Cricket Victoria, 2018)

Discussion – Evidence, Research and Examples

Background

Netball holds a unique position in the Australian sporting psyche as the organised sport most widely played by women, whereas most other sports that have high participation numbers are traditionally male based football codes.

It is worth noting that netball remains one of the largest participation based sports that is funded from the grassroots ('bottom-up' funding model). That is, the membership of the many netball clubs, associations and state organisations pay registration or membership fees to continue to grow their sport from grassroots through to elite level competition. By contrast, the majority of football codes, with the exception of football (soccer), and cricket for that matter, are 'top down' funded sports where significant revenues are secured through corporate sponsorships and media rights deals assisting those codes to grow their game.

These funding models are noteworthy not only because of the flow of available revenues to the sports but the inherent capacity of a sport to engage beyond the scope of sport and talent development (core business) into ancillary businesses and interests such as facility and infrastructure development. Subsequently, in terms of accountability to their membership, 'bottom-up' funded sports are subject to often greater levels of scrutiny and the prudent allocation of resources.

NSW Stadia Strategy

The Stadia Strategy Steering Group (SSSG) is a body tasked with advising the Government about stadia development in NSW. The SSSG released the '*Stadia Strategy Implementation Report*' suggesting priorities and making recommendations. The third priority outlined is the delivery of a 15,000 seat Indoor Stadium (arena) suitable for use not only by sports such as netball, basketball and tennis, but to host other events. They suggested that this be located in the Sydney CBD because the demolition of the Sydney Entertainment Centre left the Sydney CBD with no major indoor sports facility, with the replacement International Convention Centre "being a theatre style venue[s] not suitable for basketball or other sports such as indoor tennis".¹⁴ The recommended timeframe for this development is the same as that of Priority 2 (the replacement of the SFS) of 3 to 5 years. It is also worth noting that SSSG's Priority 4 (ANZ Stadium refurbishment with roof and retractable seating) was considered less of a priority than an indoor stadium and was to be delivered within 5 to 8 years.

Although Priorities 1 (Parramatta Stadium redevelopment), 2 and 4 appear as part of the NSW Stadium Strategy and are provided for within the Budget Papers and Forward

¹⁴ (Stadia Strategy Steering Group, 2015) - Building on the 2012 Stadia Strategy, and in accordance with the NSW 2021 State Plan, the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan and the State Infrastructure Strategy Update 2014, the SSSG resolved that there are six key recommendations associated with implementing the Tier 1 component of the NSW Stadia Strategy 2012.

Estimates, there is no financial commitment outlined for the Indoor Stadium Development beyond mention of a feasibility study to be undertaken by the Office of Sport (OoS). NNSW is of the understanding that this feasibility study has been completed. Presumably, if the study is sound, the successful project will then be subject to the usual stages of Strategic and Final Business Cases and Gateway Reviews.

Current Issues

Indoor (often referred to as 'high ball') sports are faced with very few venue options, with access to indoor sports stadiums in Sydney often being cost prohibitive. It can be difficult to secure bookings at large venues when a more (financially) attractive option presents itself, leaving sports to seek alternative venues that are either not fit for purpose in Sydney, located in regional areas or in some cases (where major sporting events are involved) interstate.

In the case of netball, venues in Sydney that could be used to host Suncorp Super Netball fixtures (national netball competition) include the Sydney Olympic Park precinct venues - Sydney Super Dome (Qudos Bank Arena) and the State Sports Centre (Quaycentre) and the International Convention Centre (ICC) located in Darling Harbour.

Usage of indoor venues nationally has increased thanks in no small part to the new Suncorp Super Netball league. With two Sydney based teams playing out of Sydney Olympic Park, regular attendances at indoor venues has increased annually.

The following is a summary of NNSW's experience in hosting games at these venues:

Sydney Super Dome (Qudos Bank Arena - QBA)

The advertised seating capacity for this venue is 17,471 but, in reality, with a netball configuration, the seating capacity for QBA is 16,900. Some 16,752 people attended the Netball World Cup Final at the arena in 2015, which remains the highest attendance at the venue. The average crowd for a Suncorp Super Netball fixture was 9,798 last season with a high of 11,871 and a low of 6,772. In the current 2018 season, there have been attendances of 9,590 in Round 1 and 8,560 in Round 3. The venue is the home court for the Sydney Kings this season, following the closure of the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Recent crowds attending the Sydney Kings NBL matches this season are encouraging with the lowest at 4,013 and highest (in February) at 9,201.

The management company operating QBA, AEG Ogden, is also the venue manager for a number of similar venues throughout Australia (including the ICC Sydney, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Perth Arena, Newcastle Entertainment Centre)¹⁵.

¹⁵ (New Ownership for Sydney Kings, 2017)

For netball matches, playing or court surfaces need to be 'dropped in' to the venue, with additional significant charges also being applied for the use of the scoreboard and internal broadcast facilities.

Hiring QBA to hold a netball fixture is very expensive, with each game costing NNSW to host, once venue hire fees and on costs, such as catering, ushers and security, are taken into account (but before ticketing revenues are taken into account). These costs increase for double header events. This means that unless NNSW increases its ticket prices or other sources of revenue become available to offset venue expenses, NNSW cannot make home games profitable and cannot therefore generate income for the further development of the sport.

Generally, the venue is also booked out well in advance for major entertainment events, such as Disney on Ice, and major events, such as Hillsong. In 2018 there is a 5-week period during the Suncorp Super Netball season (which runs over 18 weeks) where QBA is unavailable

Although QBA was originally built for sporting purposes at the time of the Sydney Olympics, it now presents itself predominantly as an entertainment venue. This risks sports (in particular second tier 'bottom-up' funded sports) being prevented from being able to utilise the venue because of accessibility issues caused by high venue hire costs and preferences being given to potential entertainment bookings (that deliver higher revenues) over sports event bookings from sports with modest means, but large engaged fans bases who attend live games, wanting to utilise a Sydney Olympic legacy venue.

International Convention Centre (ICC Sydney)

The ICC Sydney is designed and built for conventions, exhibitions and theatre productions, and so its configuration is best suited to stage style audiences, rather than spectators who usually surround all four sides of the field of play. It is expected that, in a netball configuration, the seating capacity at the ICC Sydney will be 7,200.

NNSW has not at this time utilised the ICC Sydney to host a Suncorp Super Netball fixture but anticipate that the audience experience will be inferior compared with other venues, where the atmosphere and viewing range of the event is enhanced and uninterrupted through spectators surrounding the playing area.

Although venue hire costings for Suncorp Super Netball fixtures at the ICC Sydney have not yet been finalised, it is likely that hiring costs will be at least comparable to QBA's venue hire costs; with a drop-in playing surface also being required, as well as lighting upgrades required to meet broadcast standards. These are one off costs that NNSW must bear for each game at this venue.

There are also anticipated operational issues such as our ability to fulfil corporate partnership arrangements and benefits already contracted.

State Sports Centre (Quaycentre)

This venue is the home venue for the NSW Swifts. Operated by SOPA, it has a seating capacity of approximately 3,800. This restricts attendance numbers and the direct consequence of limited seating is that NNSW must restrict the number of club memberships, which in turn places a monetary cap on the revenue potential from membership sales to NNSW. Although it is an intimate venue in terms of size, the spectator experience is not as pleasurable as other venues in terms of facilities and catering options.

The playing surface is a parquetry (unsprung) floor that is unforgiving for the players wellbeing but the permanent nature of the flooring does mean no additional costs for games at this venue.

By comparison with other venues for Suncorp Super Netball matches, the hire costs for the venue are reasonable, and the State Sports Centre has been a long term venue option for netball in Sydney over many years.

Opportunity

In addressing the issues outlined above, Netball NSW suggests that ***a re-development of the Sydney Olympic Park Tennis Centre may be a cost effective and timely way*** to ensure sports requiring an indoor stadium are able to access one.

Sydney Olympic Park Tennis Centre

The Centre has a seating capacity on centre court of 10,500. It is only utilised for the Sydney International Tennis Tournament (SITT) for two weeks in January and occasionally for RAVE parties.

Two of the key issues for the players and spectators utilising the Tennis Centre during the SITT is the unbearable heat experienced at that time of year (January) and the small amount of shade available for both players and spectators. Compounding this is the likely occurrence of summer thunderstorms that notoriously delay scheduled matches during the tournament. The issue of spectator amenity and play delays from weather events is not uncommon in tennis and sporting codes and governments are being forced to seriously address the issue of 'climate proofing' sports stadiums¹⁶.

A number of facilities seek to address these issues through the construction of a permanent or retractable roof structure over their main playing court and in some cases, their second show court¹⁷. The obvious benefit to spectators and players is not the only upside to a roof over these stadia, it has also provided options for the

¹⁶ (Govind, 2018)

¹⁷ As is the case with Melbourne Park, Wimbledon and most recently Arthur Ashe Stadium which hosts the US Open Tennis (Associated Press, 2018).

previously single-use facility to increase utilisation during the non-tournament period with the facility able to host other sports and events, therefore enhancing its cost-benefit to the wider community.

NNSW is aware that the NSW Government has considered the options associated with placing various styles of roof over the Tennis Centre's centre court. A canopy style fixture is estimated to cost approximately \$20 million while a more robust solid construction roof (and some minor refits of the facility) is costed at \$50 million. If a canopy style roof over the Ken Rosewall Arena was to be undertaken, it would be reasonable to estimate that work to be delivered within the next 12-18 months.

The allocation of funds for this project will apparently be sourced from within SOPA budget lines.

NNSW find it incongruent that funds are not being provided for this project from alternate funding pools and that SOPA is required to utilise their budget for this, whilst the SCG Trust is not required to provide funds from its budget for re-development work in their precinct.

It is short-sighted to limit the re-development of the Tennis Centre to a canopy structure when other jurisdictions that are directly competing and bidding for events, are recognising the need to upgrade their facilities to remain relevant and competitive in the market and committing funding to realise these plans.

NNSW is unsure of cost estimates for a retractable or solid roof re-development and other infrastructure upgrades but would consider it likely to be comparable to the re-development cost of Memorial Drive in Adelaide (\$150 million).

By placing a solid structure or retractable roof over Ken Rosewall Arena, a cheaper and faster option is presented than constructing the new indoor stadium in Sydney CBD. This option provides a realistic and affordable alternative within the SOP precinct that is serviced well in terms of parking and public transport access.

By creating an indoor venue, usage of the facility will be greatly improved and other sports will have more venue options.

Sports with possible usage options for such a facility are basketball, netball, badminton, volleyball, table tennis, football (futsal), roller derby and tennis. Similarly, this type of facility could also be a realistic and affordable option for stage sports such as weightlifting, martial art sports or boxing. A table outlining possible sport event usage and main season timings follow:

Sport	Events/Competitions	Main Season
Badminton	Australasian Age Championships Oceania Championships Australian Open NSW Open SCBA Sydney Open National Championships Asia Pacific Masters Games Australian Veterans Championships Australia Para-Badminton Other International Events	Year Round
Basketball (Amateur)	Waratah League Women's and Men's National Wheelchair Basketball League SEABL	March-August March – July April - July
Basketball (Professional)	WNBL – Sydney University Flames NBL – Sydney Kings Invitational International Games and Exhibitions FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup	October - January October – February April - July April - May
Volleyball	Volleyball Nations League Australian Junior Championships Australian Volleyball League Invitational and Exhibition Matches World League World Championship AVC Quals FIVB Women's World Grand Prix	June September – October September – December June June July July
Netball	Suncorp Super Netball – NSW Swifts and Giants Netball Australian Netball League Regional Academies of Sport Metro League Finals Super Club Samsung Premier League	April – August May - July April September July May – September
Tennis	Sydney International Australian Pro Tour (partial dates utilised) Fast 4 Showdown	January January – April September – December January

The table above clearly shows that the Tennis Centre could easily go from a venue used at best 4-6 weeks a year for one sport only, to a venue that is used extensively all year round by numerous different sports. And in so doing delivering strong amenity to many citizens and demonstrating the benefits of wide community, inclusive shared sporting infrastructure.

The boutique capacity and size of the re-developed tennis venue would allow sports to conduct state and regional level events in a stadium rather than these being relegated to local indoor courts, often not fit for purpose and certainly not sport specific.

If the re-development was designed well, the options to quickly and efficiently ‘bump in’ and ‘bump out’ required equipment and surfaces for various sports would be abundant.

A base benefit to tennis however should not be overlooked because, as is the case with other enclosed tennis venues (or those that have the option to do so), this provides tennis with the ability to successfully bid for and win additional significant international events such as Davis and Federation Cup ties and ATP and WTA events.

Other Jurisdictions

Other jurisdictions in Australia are undertaking stadia development and re-development as part of their various sport or sporting infrastructure strategies.

In Victoria, the state government outlined their 2015-2017 plan for Stage 3 of the re-development of Melbourne Park:

“The Victorian Government’s recent \$271 million investment in the Stage 3 redevelopment of Melbourne and Olympic Park, our sporting capital’s world-class tennis and entertainment precinct, is the latest phase of a \$972 million investment to maintain its edge as an unbeatable sports and events precinct. Melbourne and Olympic Park is one of the most enviable sports and entertainment precincts in the world, hosting around 600 events, including the Australian Open, and attracting more than two and a half million patrons annually. The redevelopment places a strong emphasis on the comfort of patrons—with more open space and shade, increased seating capacity, better connections to public transport and the city, and easier movement into and within the precinct. The project is expected to create 600 jobs and will build a new show court, eastern entrance and other facilities needed to attract more visitors to Victoria.”¹⁸

Further, *Victoria’s Major Stadia Strategy – Home Ground Advantage*¹⁹, outlines their approach to stadia development, emphasising the need for major metropolitan venues to be centrally located east and west of the CBD and proximal to rail hubs. They also clearly articulate the key policy considerations that remain central to the development of the strategy (professional women’s sport; regional event attraction; transport integration around major venues; safety and security; and universal design). This document not only provides guidance and sets objectives for the Victorian Stadia Strategy, it serves to inform and educate the stakeholders, spectators, and participants about the strategy and its importance to sport and the wider community at large.

¹⁸ (State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, 2017)

¹⁹ (State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, 2018)

In Queensland, an announcement was made in 2017 unveiling plans for a new \$2 billion 'Brisbane Live' Entertainment Arena Precinct. Based above the Roma Street rail lines, the development, which is likened to Federation Square in Melbourne and Madison Square Garden in New York City, will be an 'ultra-entertainment precinct'. The centrepiece of the development will be a new 17,000 seat world class arena aimed at hosting international superstar concerts and performances as well as sporting events. The arena is expected to cost some \$450 million. The central concern of this development however is to ensure that the arena forms part of a larger precinct development including a dining, new hotels, transport and connectivity for visitors. Funding has recently been approved to develop a business case for this project.²⁰

The old Memorial Drive Tennis complex in Adelaide is also undergoing a re-development that will result in the delivery of South Australia's first 'all weather arena' complete with a 'Wimbledon style' retractable roof and crowd seating design designed to attract small to medium concerts and events to the Riverbank precinct. This re-development is intended to attract significant international tennis fixtures such as Davis and Federation Cups and ATP and WTA events. The location of the arena is within the Riverbank sporting precinct adjoining the recently refurbished Adelaide Oval. The plan is likely to cost \$150 million.²¹

Funding Process

The *Restart NSW Fund Act 2011 (NSW) (Restart NSW)* is intended to "improve economic growth and productivity in the State, and for that purpose" inter alia, fund major infrastructure projects. *Restart NSW* further provides that the responsible Minister (the Premier) may make payments from the Fund for part or all of a project that he or she is satisfied meets the purpose of the Act, that is recommended by Infrastructure NSW.

In terms of defining a major infrastructure project, the *Restart NSW Act* refers to the definition in the *Infrastructure NSW Act 2011 (NSW)*. Within these definitions (s4(1)), it is stated that the Premier has the right to nominate a 'special project' to be overseen or coordinated by Infrastructure NSW should it not meet the threshold of having a project value of more than \$100 million.

Furthermore, the proposed project would of course be subject to the NSW Government's Infrastructure Investor Assurance Framework and prevailing NSW Gateway Policy and include registration with Infrastructure NSW to consider the project tier and the Project Assurance Plan.

²⁰ (Brisbane Development, 2018)

²¹ (Tennis SA, 2018)

Recommendations

Netball NSW has not taken lightly the decision to make a submission to this *Parliamentary Inquiry into the Sydney Stadiums Strategy*.

NNSW recognises and embraces its standing as one of the most successful and respected state sporting organisations in NSW and arguably in Australia. As such, NNSW considers it vitally important to identify opportunities to grow not only netball, but every sport in NSW communities and to ensure all sporting organisations are provided equitable access to the best possible resources.

In making this submission and the following recommendations, we trust that the NSW Government will move to engage with more sporting organisations with a view to reviewing and reprioritising the NSW Stadiums Strategy.

The following are Netball NSW's recommendations with regard to the NSW Stadium Strategy:

Recommendation 1:

That the NSW Government allocates funding from within its budget and forward estimates for, and commences re-development work on, the Sydney Olympic Park Tennis Centre in order to maximise its use and enable it to be utilised for various sporting events and competitions and other entertainment events. This re-development will include the building of a permanent, retractable roof on the current centre court; re-design of the access and stage/court area to ensure the correct dimensions are achieved for the various indoor sports; and additional fit-out to maximise internal and external broadcast options and spectator experience.

Recommendation 2:

That the NSW Government develops a stadia strategy for NSW that is inclusive of venues utilised by sports other than football codes and engages with the sport sector in the development of this strategy.

Recommendation 3:

That the NSW Government engages with a wider range of sports to determine the need, viability and appropriateness of sport specific 'Centres of Excellence' in NSW to assist the development of sporting talent in NSW. Further, that the government identifies new funding to be allocated for this purpose.

Summary

Sport and governments recognise that they are part of a very competitive environment in terms of bidding for major sporting events and in order for NSW and Sydney in particular to be at the table, it is necessary to be able to present suitable options for hosting such events. This in and of itself means the availability of state of the art sporting (or other) stadiums and venues that enable sporting events and competitions to be safely and appropriately hosted with the necessary infrastructure available to support such events.

Whatever the stadia being provided in NSW, NNSW considers it essential that these venues are accessible and affordable for the wider sport sector and that the use and values driving their development and availability are in line with the objectives of sport.

Furthermore, NNSW wants to see the Sydney Olympic Park precinct provide a legacy for sports, encourage sports to utilise the facilities and to develop facilities that enable smaller sports to showcase their events. NNSW believes that as long as sport events are viable, as is the case for netball, they should have a place and a legacy at the site of the Sydney Olympics.

NNSW remains keen, willing and available to discuss our submission and the recommendations made within it.

Important Details

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