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'Sport for All' and Major Sporting Events: Project Paper 1: Introduction to the
Project**

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Faculty of Business**

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This Project Paper is one of four papers available on-line in the School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper series available at: www.business.uts.edu.au/1st/research/research_papers. Details of the papers are as follows:

- Project Paper 1:* Frawley, S., Veal, A. J., Cashman, R., and Toohey, K. (2009) *'Sport For All' and Major Sporting Events: Introduction to the Project*. School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper 5, Sydney: UTS.
- Project Paper 2:* Veal, A. J., and Frawley, S. (2009) *'Sport For All' and Major Sporting Events: Trends in Sport Participation and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, the 2003 Rugby World Cup and the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games*. School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper 6, Sydney: UTS.
- Project Paper 3:* Toohey, K., and Veal, A. J. (2009) *'Sport For All' and Major Sporting Events: The Sporting Legacy of the Sydney Olympic Games: Some Observations*. School of Sport and Tourism Working Paper 7, Sydney: UTS.
- Project Paper 4:* Frawley, S. *et al.* (2009) *'Sport For All' and Major Sporting Events:: Governing Body Development and Promotion*,. School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Working Paper 8, Sydney: UTS.

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1. Introduction

This paper is the first in a series arising from the research project: '*Sport for All*' and *Major Sporting Events*, funded by the UTS Faculty of Business Research Grant program. The paper is an edited version of the grant proposal and sets out the background, aims and methods of the study.

2. Sport for All

'Sport for All' is a collective term used to describe a range of policies adopted by governments to promote active participation in sport in the community. The origins of the Sport for All movement lie with the Council of Europe in the 1960s (McIntosh and Charlton, 1985: 10), but it is now espoused by governments worldwide and by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Concerns about obesity among young people and about the need to maintain mobility and health among an ageing population have made Sport for All a policy of increasing potential importance for community health and well-being.

One among many measures adopted by governments to promote Sport for All is to support participation in, and the hosting of, major sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games and the Rugby World Cup. Public funding of major sporting events reaches a peak when a country hosts the Olympic Games or the Commonwealth Games, but continues at a lower, although still substantial, level in many countries in the intervening years. Australian Federal and State government support for elite sport amounts to several hundreds of millions of dollars each year (Australian Government, 2001; ABS, 2002). The federally funded Australian Sports Commission (ASC) provides support for national team participation in international events in a range of sports and State governments pursue the hosting of international sporting events by maintaining offices specifically to attract events, including sporting events, to their jurisdictions.

Sporting events are seen to have a number of public benefits which legitimise government expenditure; among these is inspiring people to themselves participate in sport. The process by which mass sports participation is stimulated by public exposure to elite sport is referred to as the 'trickle down' effect. As long ago as 1975, a government-commissioned report stated:

... the focus should not be on the number of gold medals our competitors can win, but rather on the inspiration and impetus their success gives to the citizens of our nation for mass participation in physical activity in all age groups and at all levels of ability (Bloomfield, 1975: 3-4).

Hogan and Norton (2000) provide quotations from three Ministers for Sport and a number of national sport administrators indicating a belief in the 'trickle down' effect. Hindson *et al.* (1994: 17) quote the senior sport administrator in New Zealand as saying that world-class performances by New Zealand athletes and teams have '.. clear flow-through to national esteem and increased sports participation'.

Three issues are addressed in the current research:

1. Does the 'trickle down' effect work?
2. If it works, is it cost-effective in delivering social benefits?
3. Are administrative mechanisms in place to encourage and facilitate the 'trickle down' effect?

1. Effectiveness

Whether this effect actually works, and if so, whether it is cost-effective, is unknown. The evidence available on the effectiveness of the policy is at best anecdotal. It is pursued largely as an article of faith on the part of governments and sporting bodies and can be seen as part of the rhetoric involved in securing public funding for elite sport. Far from promoting participation, it is even possible that major sporting events may have a 'discouragement effect' because the standard of performance of elite athletes is seen as impossible to emulate (Vanden Heuvel and Conolly, 2001). The current research is concerned with the question of whether or not the trickle down effect works.

2. Cost-effectiveness

Hogan and Norton (2000) relate the public expenditure costs of supporting the Olympic Games to the number of medals won – the winning of medals being therefore seen in part as a 'public good' benefit with a public expenditure price tag. But if the 'trickle down' effect works, part of these costs should be set against the social benefits of increased participation in sport. While there is research available which seeks to place a money value on the benefits of participation in sport and physical recreation (eg. Roberts and Thompson, 1988), this has not been related to the cost of supporting major sporting events.

3. Administrative support

It seems likely that the effectiveness of any trickle down effect will vary from sport to sport. In some cases it could work without intervention by sporting organisations or government – for example in the case of people taking up individual activities which require little infrastructure, such as running, cycling or surfing, or where casual access to existing infrastructure is possible, such as attending swimming pools or fitness centres. In other cases, such as team sports with high-skill entry requirements, increased participation may depend on sporting organisations developing specific policies to promote and accommodate increased participation. In any case, follow-up promotional activity to reinforce the 'message' of the sporting event, may be influential. In its 2001 policy statement, *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability*, the Australian Government appeared to recognise this in stating that it intended to:

... build on the legacy of the Sydney 2000 Games by implementing, in partnership with the Australian Olympic Committee, an Olympic Youth Programme to provide an enduring message of sports participation and healthy, drug-free lifestyles to school children and local communities (Australian Government, 2001: 6.7).

This research therefore examines the extent to which sporting bodies in Australia adopt particular policies to capitalise on the potential effects of major sporting events to achieve 'sport for all'.

3. Existing research

There is a small but growing literature on the 'legacy' of major sporting events in host countries, particularly the Olympic Games, but very little of it is concerned with the mass sport participation legacy. Cashman (1999) lists mass sport participation as just one of nine types of legacy, others including: direct and indirect economic impacts; effects on elite sport performance; contributions to urban infrastructure; and cultural/community impacts. The neglect of the participation issue is demonstrated by the published proceedings of a symposium on the Olympic legacy organised by the IOC in 2002 (De Moragas *et al.*, 2003): of the 55 papers included, only four are concerned with mass sport participation, including two concerned with winter sports only.

Six empirical studies of the 'trickle down' effect have been identified.

1. Hogan and Norton (2000) note that, from the 1970s to the 1990s, while Australian federal government expenditure on support for elite sport increased substantially, and with it success in winning Olympic medals, there was no evidence of any corresponding increase in mass participation in sport – if anything the, albeit incomplete, evidence suggested a decline.
2. In 2001 the Sport Development Unit of the Australian Sports Commission conducted a study of the *Impact of Hosting the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games on Participation and Volunteering in Sport and Physical Activity in Australia* (ASC, 2001). The study was largely desk-based, drawing on three series of national sport and physical activity participation surveys (by ABS, ASC and Brian Sweeney Asstes) covering the period 1998 to 2000. The surveys indicate a long-term decline in participation levels, with a small increase in the single post-Sydney Olympics survey, which was only apparent because of a particularly pronounced fall in participation in the survey conducted in the period immediately before the Games. The study also includes a brief summary of some grant-aided NSW local government initiatives designed to stimulate sport participation in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympic Games and reports on anecdotal evidence of increased participation in sport at the time, and successes and failures in organisational responses. Overall, it is concluded that the evidence is not clear on whether the trickle down effect was in operation in Australia following the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.
3. A review of ABS quarterly statistics on sport participation by Vanden Heuvel and Conolly (2001) draws on some of the data in the ASC study but interprets them differently. It observes that the long-term decline in participation over the period August 1998 to November 2000 was arrested in the period August-November 2000 during which the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games took place, suggesting that a trickle down effect cannot be discounted.
4. Preliminary analysis by Veal and Toohey (2004) of available national participation data on individual sports up to 2002 suggests a mixed picture among Olympic and non-Olympic sports, with some showing increases in participation after 2000, some a decline and some being stable.
5. A New Zealand study by Hindson *et al.* (1994) sought to establish whether there was any noticeable increase in sport participation following the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympic Games and the Albertville Winter Olympic Games. This was approached by means of a survey of sports clubs in the Canterbury region and a survey of national sport governing bodies. The results indicated very little impact on participation and few efforts by sporting organisations to exploit the Olympic phenomenon in their own marketing and promotion.

6. Sust (1994) reports on a specific program developed in Barcelona around the time of the 1992 Olympics to encourage children's participation in sport. While the program was successful, the numbers involved were small, so the impact on overall sport participation rates was very limited.

The above research, while for the most part soundly-based, is deficient in a number of respects:

1. with the exception of the Veal and Toohey paper, the Australian research extends only to the immediate post-Sydney Olympics period (to November 2000), giving no indication of the sustainability of any detected changes in participation levels;
2. again with the exception of the Veal and Toohey paper, the existing research is for the most part concerned with sport as a whole, with limited examination of individual Olympic and non-Olympic sports;
3. there is no consideration of state-specific or city-specific participation levels to examine whether there is any differential effect on the host city or state compared with the rest of the country;
4. there has been no equivalent in Australia of the New Zealand work on sporting club and sporting organisations' marketing and promotion activity related to major sporting events;
5. there has been no consideration of costs of supporting major sporting events compared with the potential benefits of increased participation if the trickle down effect works;
6. Australian work has concentrated entirely on the Sydney 2000 Olympics, with no consideration of other Olympic Games which Australia has participated in but not hosted, or other major sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games or the Rugby World Cup.

The current research is designed to overcome the first four of these deficiencies. Additional funding may be sought to address items 5 and 6.

4. Research plan

1. The study draws on data from the annual *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Surveys* (ERASS) conducted by the Standing Committee on Recreation and sport (SCORS), over the period 2001-2005 and the 1999, 2000 and 2002 Australian Bureau of Statistics *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities* (PSPA) surveys to examine whether, in regard to sport participation as a whole, there is evidence for a sustained 'trickle down' effect in Australian, pre- and post the Sydney 2000 Olympics, from 1998 to 2003.
2. Using the same data sources, participation in individual Olympic and non-Olympic sports have been examined over the same period to determine whether there is evidence for a trickle down effect for particular sports.
3. The published ERASS and PSPA reports contain state-specific data, but special tabulations have been obtained of state data broken down by metropolitan/non-metropolitan area, which yields data on capital cities – particularly Sydney, where the 2000 Games took place. While sample size limits the detail of this analysis, steps 1 and 2 have been replicated using NSW and Sydney data to determine whether there is stronger evidence for any 'trickle down' effect in the host state/city.

4. On the basis of item 3, five Olympic sports were selected to examine the activities of governing bodies and clubs in regard to marketing and promotion activities before, during and after the Sydney 2000 Olympics. For each sport, this involved examination of annual reports, interviews with officials of national (some Sydney-based and some Canberra-based) and state sporting governing bodies and interviews with managers of selected sport clubs.

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