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\$116 million pledged for a healthier and more active Australia

ASC leads industry on improving behaviour | ASC greenhouse challenge |
Sports Minister urges Aussies to come Full Cycle

Cricket Australia honoured by Ausport Prize



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Contacts

Editorial: journals@ausport.gov.au
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The Manager
Business Development
Australian Sports Commission
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BELCONNEN ACT 2616
Email: copyright@ausport.gov.au

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For general enquiries regarding the Australian Sports Commission:

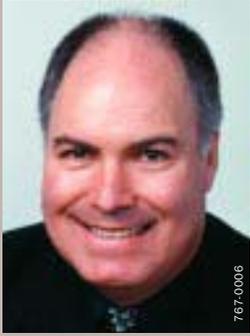
Tel: (02) 6214 1111
Fax: (02) 6251 2680
Email: asc@ausport.gov.au
Web site: www.ausport.gov.au

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From the CEO

I have been lucky in my three years at the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) that the vast majority of my work has been involved in positive outcomes for the sports system in Australia.

Of all the positives, perhaps the most satisfying was the announcement by Prime Minister John Howard at the end of June of the Building a Healthy, Active Australia program, a large part of which will be administered by the ASC.

For quite some time now, the ASC has been making a case that the issues of obesity and loss of motor skills among our kids have the potential to cause serious damage to the health of Australians and the sports system in the long term.

Together with the support of the sports sector, including the Australian Football League, Cricket Australia and Netball Australia, the significance of the issue has been recognised by the Australian Government and some \$90 million of a \$116 million package, announced by the Prime Minister in Launceston, will be spent on a groundbreaking program titled Active After-school Communities.

In essence, the money will be spent over four years — beginning in the first term of 2005 — to establish structured physical activity during after-school hours.

For the past 12 months, the ASC has been working closely with state and territory governments in a series of pilot studies supported by the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

The ASC had partnered with key stakeholders in New South Wales,

Victoria, Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia to pilot alternative models.

This new and exciting program presents the ASC with huge logistical and organisational challenges that we are working hard to meet.

The program will see the employment of 170 physical activity coordinators to work with sporting organisations and state and territory departments to help establish the programs in primary schools and approved after-school care services.

Initially, about 3250 primary schools and after-school care services will be involved in working with a wide range of sporting organisations.

As well as the obvious health benefits, this program has the potential to provide one of the greatest boosts to the Australian sporting system since the opening of the Australian Institute of Sport back in 1981.

Unfortunately, not every part of my job is positive, and the problems of performance-enhancing drugs have again raised their ugly heads as our team heads to Athens.

There has been a considerable amount of mis-information published and broadcast in the media about this issue, as well as, more distressingly, a number of attempts to reverse the normal Australian process of natural justice — innocent until proven guilty.

These points need to be constantly reinforced; the Australian Government, ASC, Australian Olympic Committee, Australian Paralympic Committee and Australian Commonwealth Games

Association and individual national sporting organisations are unwavering in their zero tolerance of the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

We are rigid in our pursuit of any allegations brought to us about illegal drug use, and that will not change.

And that is why the independent investigator, Mr Robert Anderson QC, is now turning his considerable skills to examining whether the processes employed by the ASC, the Australian Institute of Sport and other parties have been adequate and efficient.

If changes are required to enhance and protect the integrity of the Australian sports system, the ASC and other organisations will make the hard decisions and tackle the difficult issues.

Mark A Peters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION

ASC leads industry on improving behaviour

THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION (ASC) IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE SPORTS INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP INDUSTRY-WIDE STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THE COMPLEX ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AND OTHER INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR IN SPORT.

ASC Chief Executive Officer, Mark Peters, supported by ASC Board members Margot Foster, Michelle Ford-Eriksson and Roy Masters, met in Sydney in late April with senior representatives of eight leading sports and senior administrators from state and territory departments of sport and recreation.

Sports represented at the meeting were rugby union, rugby league, soccer, Australian football, netball, cricket, surf lifesaving and basketball.

Coordinated by the ASC Sport Ethics unit, the meeting examined the range of views from within the industry, discussed existing research, and analysed existing and proposed strategies for dealing with behavioural issues.

The meeting acknowledged that while inappropriate behaviour was clearly a societal problem, recent incidents involving some high-profile players in football codes had prompted the industry to look more closely at existing codes of conduct, ethical education and training in sport, and the possible need for a re-statement or codifying of the positive values that sport brings to society.

Mr Peters said that the unique position of sport in Australian life provided an opportunity for the sports industry to use

its high profile and community links to take a leadership role in dealing with such complex and difficult issues.

'Sport is frequently exalted as a means for education, health and fitness, leadership skills, teamwork, fair play and other positive values and virtues,' Mr Peters said.

'Sport is also an integral part of Australian culture, and as such, many athletes and coaches are seen as important role models.'

Mr Peters said that recent publicity surrounding allegations of mistreatment and misconduct involving women had

'Sport is ... an integral part of Australian culture, and as such, many athletes and coaches are seen as important role models.'

resulted in questions being raised about whether sport was engendering and/or tolerating violent and other inappropriate cultures.

He described the meeting as a valuable forum for sharing the experiences and strategies of various sporting codes and for understanding the role that could be played by the sports industry as a whole.

The Sport Ethics unit is working to finalise a charter of sporting values,

which would be endorsed by sporting organisations. The charter would be used to publicise the positive contribution of sport to Australian society and to emphasise the need for consistent ethical behaviour by people involved in sport.

Work is also underway to expand research into attitudes and behaviour in some football codes into a broader range of sports.

Also under review are existing practices and standards of ethical education and training in sports.

Resources to address sport issues

The ASC has a range of policies, procedures, codes, guidelines, courses and educational material to help those in the sports industry address issues of harassment, abuse, discrimination and poor sportsmanship. These resources are targeted at athletes, players, coaches, parents, spectators, officials, clubs, administrators, teachers and the media. Full text resources on harassment guidelines, codes of behaviour, sportsmanship and racial vilification are available at www.ausport.gov.au/info/topics/ethics.asp ■

\$116 million pledged for a healthier and more active

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED A FOUR-YEAR \$116 MILLION CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE OBESITY AMONG THE COUNTRY'S YOUTH. THE MOVE IS IN RESPONSE TO DISTURBING DATA THAT INDICATE CHILDREN ARE INCREASINGLY ABANDONING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ORGANISED SPORT FOR THE COMPUTER OR TELEVISION SCREEN.

Spurred by information that shows obesity rates soaring and an almost tripling of cases of type 2 diabetes in the past 15 years, Prime Minister John Howard has announced the Building a Healthy, Active Australia initiative. Focusing on children, the initiative recognises that a balance is needed between nutrition and physical activity if we are to help children live and learn better, and grow to be more healthy and active adults.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) will play a leading role in the initiative, with a \$90 million campaign, called the Active After-school Communities program, aimed at encouraging children to take part in after-school physical activity.

The ASC's Manager of the National Junior Sport program, Judy Flanagan, believes this is a crucial time when younger children can

either develop healthy exercise habits or sink into the lethargy of screen-based activities.

She says modern society stacks the odds in favour of indoor sedentary pursuits. 'There is much less opportunity for children to be involved in what was once the normal practice of going down to the park to play with friends, actively playing in the backyard or riding a bike to and from school,' she said.

Parents are increasingly concerned about the safety of their children. As well as a crowded school curriculum, two parents working and changes to working hours, there is the fact that backyards are getting smaller, and apartment living is on the rise, meaning there are reduced opportunities for active play at home.

After studies over the last 18 months and a pilot program run in conjunction with VicHealth, the ASC decided that after school was an ideal time to promote physical activity for children. 'There is scope to get kids involved in physical activity, while at the same time supporting working families,' Ms Flanagan said.

'It also has the effect of promoting community cohesion because we want local organisations, such as sporting clubs and other individuals and groups, to provide activities for children to engage in.'

She stressed that the ASC believed the program should be inclusive, taking in organisations that already run after-school programs and deal with child health. 'The last thing we want to do is to rob Peter to pay Paul,' she said. 'Our program is free, and obviously people who are currently paying for something are going to gravitate to it, so we have to work out ways to ensure no one is disadvantaged.'

Other components of the Australian Government package are:

- A minimum of two hours a week of physical education in primary and junior secondary schools — a requirement tied to Australian Government funding for schools.
- A healthy eating initiative that will make grants to community organisations to provide alternatives to the chips and pies that many school canteens currently stock.
- A national advertising campaign providing information on how to achieve healthy and active lifestyles, including nutrition, diet and physical activity.

Ms Flanagan said the ASC would be working closely with Australian Government departments including the Departments of Health and Ageing, Education, Science and Training, and Family and Community Services to ensure the delivery of an integrated package. 'There will be a national management committee involving all the major partners to make sure our direction is not just focused on physical activity, but also takes in all other components,' she said.

Beginning in the second week of term one in 2005, and initially targeting 150,000 children nationally, the ASC has the task of establishing a national framework for the strategy.

Regional coordinators will work with clusters of up to 20 schools, identifying



BY GRAHAM COOKE

Australia

needs and resources, and liaising with the schools for their ideas on the programs to be delivered.

'We have been getting a very positive response already from schools and state and territory governments.

'Obviously the target of 150,000 children is not going to reach all children in Australia and we will be looking at partnerships with the states and territories, and sporting organisations, to extend the reach of the initiative.'

The Australian Football League, Cricket Australia and Netball Australia have also been strong advocates for the program and have offered resources and expertise to assist with its implementation. A number of national sporting organisations, including the Australian Rugby Union and Australian Rugby League, have expressed interest in partnering with the ASC to support the after-school initiative. A successful program will certainly provide a rich harvest of recruits for their own weekend activities.

Ms Flanagan said action was overdue. 'The Prime Minister has already pointed out the paradox of Australia being one of the world's great sport-loving nations, alongside this really huge issue of overweight, obese and less mobile kids — and indeed adults,' she said.

'The figures are alarming when you consider that the instance of type 2 diabetes has doubled and is now on the way to tripling in just 15 years. It has been identified in kids as young as four or five.

'We have one of the best environments in the world for physical activity, yet the statistics are showing that if we keep going at this rate, by 2020 one-third of children under 18 will be overweight and the figures will continue to rise dramatically, placing pressure on our health system and increasing our medical expenses.

'If children and young people become



overweight early in life, their chances of gaining and maintaining a healthy weight in adulthood are reduced by over 50 per cent,' she said.

Australia's sporting system, including both the participation and elite pathways, has been the envy of many other countries

but has suffered from a decline in participation in organised sport in recent years. This program has the capacity to promote and grow local communities and their sporting infrastructures, which have always been the backbone of Australia as a sporting nation. ■



Cricket Australia's Graeme Vimpani with all of the finalists and winners across the ten categories of the 2004 Ausport Awards.

Cricket Australia honoured by Ausport Prize for good sports and fair play



Graeme Vimpani from Cricket Australia accepted the overall Ausport Prize from the Hon. Bruce Baird MP for its Spirit of Cricket nomination — seen by the judges as the most outstanding achievement in the 2004 Ausport Awards.

THE 2004 AUSPORT AWARDS PRAISED CRICKET AUSTRALIA FOR ITS SPIRITED NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN CHAMPIONING GOOD SPORTS AND FAIR PLAY.

Cricket Australia won the prestigious Ausport Prize, recognising its outstanding contribution to the health and growth of Australian sport. Cricket Australia was judged the best of ten Ausport Awards categories out of a strong and diverse field of contestants.

Australian Sports Commission (ASC) CEO Mark Peters congratulated Cricket Australia for its leading initiative in promoting the Spirit of Cricket campaign during the Year of the Official in 2003. 'The Spirit of Cricket campaign has had a positive influence on the conduct of players and participants to

ensure the spirit of the game stays alive,' Mr Peters said. 'Cricket Australia has made a significant contribution to an ongoing national campaign to promote the integrity, good sports and fair play of Australian sport.'

The Spirit of Cricket promoted and upheld the enduring spirit, traditions and values of the game. This involved educating the cricket fraternity — players, coaches, fans, umpires, officials and stakeholders — not only about the laws of the game, but about the way it should be played.

By the end of the 2003–04 season, the International Cricket Council reported that the on-field behaviour of Australian players

was exemplary and a good example of how to play the game. This spirit filtered through cricket's culture from international test to club levels. Players and teams have been recognised through the Benaud Spirit of Cricket Awards for their good conduct and fair play throughout Australian cricket.

Winners of the 2004 Ausport Awards were announced at the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation's national conference, *Keeping the Dream Alive*.

The 2004 Ausport Awards recognise and reward the achievements, success stories and best practice of individuals and groups within the Australian sporting system.

Improving participation in sport at all levels is a key objective of the Australian Government's sports policy, *Backing Australia's Sporting Ability: a more active Australia*.

ASC CEO Mark Peters congratulated the winners of the 2004 Ausport Awards, all of whom have made a major contribution to the health and growth of Australian sport. 'We are delighted by the strong field of entries — sporting clubs, community groups, schools, and national and state sporting organisations — all dedicated to building a strong, robust and vibrant base for Australian sport,' Mr Peters said.

Schools are fertile ground for nurturing the sporting skills and abilities of young students. Winners of the School-Club

Linkage Awards — Tullawong State School and Casterton Secondary College — deliver a broad range of inclusive sporting activities for students, with close links to local sporting clubs and associations.

Tullawong State School runs programs in soccer, netball, rugby league and touch football during winter, and cricket, softball and basketball in summer. All students participate in athletics and cross-country running. Students are introduced to modified games in Year 4 and can progress through to competitive sport in Years 5, 6 and 7 if they choose. The school established the Tullawong Sports Development Centre to boost the sporting skills and abilities of its students, including those with disabilities. Tullawong has established pathways for students to participate in sporting clubs and associations.

Casterton Secondary College also encourages students to get involved in organised sport. It offers compulsory sporting activities for its students during at least two lunchtimes a semester. Students can choose from a diverse range of areas including a coaching unit in Year 10 to achieve Level 0 qualifications, pathways to Casterton Golf Course and the local swimming club, and education and safety courses in cycling and water sports.

Winner of the Junior Sport Award — the Australian Rugby Union — was credited for

promoting its national education program for schools, which creates fun, safe and challenging sport experiences for young Australians. By the end of 2003, EdRugby was delivered in more than 1000 schools, inspiring young players to embrace the sport's values of pride, teamwork and tradition. It was a leading vehicle to showcase the game to young Australians during the 2003 Rugby World Cup.

In the Rural and Regional category, Kolan Shire Council was recognised for the planning and development of a number of purpose-built sporting and recreational facilities for its local community of about 5000 people. Major initiatives included a multisport facility housing tennis and basketball courts, a combined skate and BMX park, a fishing and skiing venue at Lake Monduran Recreational Facility, walking trails and a community health plan with Griffith University.

The winner of the National Sporting Organisation Community Sport Award — Basketball Australia — is making a difference in the sporting community by improving its management performance and meeting the needs of its members. Basketball Australia introduced an online resource for clubs to manage their web sites, competition and database modules, and a customer service manual to guide and support its members and volunteers at local, state and national levels. >



Basketball Australia's CEO Scott Derwin accepts the National Sporting Organisation Community Sport Award from ASC CEO Mark Peters.



Margo Koskelainen — the winner of the Officials Development Award — accepts the award from the ASC's Brent Espeland.



Stephen Pewtress, son of the late Margaret Pewtress, was on hand to present the 2004 Margaret Pewtress Memorial Award for contribution to women in sport, which was awarded to joint winners, Dr Grace Bryant and Johanna Vescio.

Basketball Australia was an ardent supporter of 2003 Year of the Official, promoting respect and recognition for officials through initiatives such as an officials scholarship, the launch of the *Official Word* newsletter, the Basketball League Referee Educational Series and a Fair Play Award.

Maroubra Swimming Club was acknowledged for its model example of club management. The winner of the Club Development Award, it was rated highly for its best practice in setting a strategic plan and direction for the club.

The development and growth of the Australian sports system also benefited from the wealth and experience of its officials and coaches. Margo Koskelainen OAM, winner of the Officials Development Award, has been dedicated to the development of softball umpiring in Australia for more than 20 years. She has made a significant contribution to advancing the interests of Australian softball officials through the development of training and accreditation programs for umpires, which are recognised and used as models internationally.

Brian O'Shea ASM, winner of the Eunice Gill Memorial Award, was recognised for his long and distinguished service to coaching. He has been coaching rugby union in Australia and Oceania for more than 30 years. Over this time, he has influenced many senior coaches through his involvement at both the elite level with the Wallabies, New South Wales and Newcastle Rugby Union, through to the grassroots level.

Joint winners of the Margaret Pewtress Memorial Award — Dr Grace Bryant ASM and Johanna Vescio ASM — have helped advance the status of women in sport. As a leading medical practitioner, Dr Bryant made a great contribution to the development of women's sport through her expertise in sports medicine, science and administration. Dr Bryant is a leading practitioner in sports medicine who has voluntarily dedicated her efforts to the promotion of women's sport at many levels. This includes her involvement as a medical officer for the Australian women's water polo, netball and hockey teams. During the past 24 years, she has encouraged a safe

2004 Ausport Award winners

<p>Club Development Award Maroubra Swimming Club Inc.</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Cumberland United Soccer Club Inc. Emerald Rams Rugby Union Club</p> <hr/> <p>National Sporting Organisation Performance Award Cricket Australia</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Tennis Australia Australian Rugby Union</p> <hr/> <p>National Sporting Organisation Community Sport Award Basketball Australia</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Cricket Australia Surfing Australia</p> <hr/> <p>Junior Sport Award Australian Rugby Union</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Basketball Australia Netball Victoria</p> <hr/> <p>School-Club Linkage Award — Primary Tullawong State School</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Everton Park State School Girrawheen Primary School</p>	<p>School-Club Linkage Award — Secondary Casterton Secondary College</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Kensington Centre Sport Unit Flora Hill Secondary College</p> <hr/> <p>Rural and Regional Award Kolan Shire Council</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Tennis West Texas State School and Texas Multipurpose Health</p> <hr/> <p>Margaret Pewtress Memorial Award Dr Grace Bryant ASM and Johanna Vescio ASM</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Lyn Parker</p> <hr/> <p>Eunice Gill Memorial Award Brian O'Shea ASM</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Jill McIntosh Barbara Fenner</p> <hr/> <p>Officials Development Award Margo Koskelainen OAM</p> <p><i>Highly commended</i> Chris Burton OAM Helen Colaguiri</p>
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playing environment in sport through her support of fun runs, corporate games, community triathlons and Sydney's City to Surf race.

As an educator, Johanna Vescio has played an important role in furthering the interests of women in sport as a volunteer for Womensport and Recreation NSW since 1997 and through her contribution to the Women on Boards project, the Schoolgirls' Breakfast with the Stars, and the Womensport seminar series. Senior lecturer in the School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism at the University of Technology

Sydney, Johanna has developed a research program focusing on strategies to improve the participation of teenage girls in sport and recreation by attracting people from culturally diverse backgrounds, adopting best practices, and through the support of women role models.

In 2005 the Ausport Awards will be part of the ASC's Our Sporting Future forum, to be held in Sydney on 2-4 March 2005. To keep up to date about the Ausport Awards, join the listserv at www.ausport.gov.au/events/ausportawards2004/. ■

Sports Minister urges Aussies to come Full Cycle

If Cycling Australia's new grassroots program is half as successful as it hopes, the Sunday morning peloton will be out and about with renewed vigour and probably a lot less lycra.

Known as Full Cycle, the program hopes to attract 19,000 participants over the next three years and to convert many of them to regular club members.

The Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, launched Full Cycle at the International Cycling Union's World Track Championships at Melbourne's Vodafone Arena in May.

The Australian Government, through the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), is investing \$255,000 in Full Cycle over three years, with the aim of increasing membership of the more than 200 cycling clubs around the country.

'Full Cycle is one of 21 sport initiatives supported by the Australian Government through the ASC's Targeted Sports Participation Growth Program,' Senator Kemp said.

Full Cycle has three components:

- J-cycle, a skill-development program for juniors
- SkillCycle, a skill-development program for adults

- Ridelt, which aims to introduce riders to a structured environment while still maintaining many of the benefits of recreational rides.

Cycling Australia developed these initiatives in response to an analysis of their business, particularly membership numbers compared to the level of recreational riders in Australia. They found that recreational cyclists were reluctant to participate in organised cycling events and competitions because of a perception that they required high skill and fitness levels and a desire to be a 'serious' cyclist.

The three Full Cycle initiatives all concentrate on providing fun, social experiences, training and skill development. They focus on the different needs of cyclists, from juniors to seniors. A willingness to participate and learn is all that is needed.

'Full Cycle is offering all those Australians with a bike just rusting away in the shed a chance to dust off the cobwebs, to have some fun, meet some friends and get fit in the process,' the Minister said.

People interested in joining Full Cycle should get in touch with their state cycling association, which will be able to direct them to the nearest club running the program. For more information, visit www.cycling.org.au.

Full Cycle program

Ridelt

The Ridelt initiative is targeted at recreational cyclists aged between 18 and 65 and includes recreational and non-competitive rides in both regional and metropolitan areas. Participants will be put in contact with a club based in their local area.

Ridelt membership includes 12 months insurance, a cycling handbook and club information, gear pack, cycling services such as technical checks of bikes, pre-ride demonstrations and talks, massages and a regular newsletter.

SkillCycle

SkillCycle is a club-based program for recreational cyclists aged between 18 and 65, offering skill training, fitness development, participation in introductory competitions and a cycling pack. SkillCycle is designed to make the transition from novice to bike club member easy.

J-Cycle

J-Cycle is a club-based program for children aged between 6 and 17 years and is based on JCs, a junior cycling program run in the ACT. The core values of fun, fast and skilled are clear winners in the eyes of children involved in JCs.

The aim of J-Cycle is for young cyclists to become more technically proficient and therefore safer, while also having fun and getting a taste of the excitement that the sport of cycling provides in a competitive setting. ■



ATHENS BOUND



Linda MacKenzie

Mackay 'pocket-rocket' earns coach's praise

Diminutive Mackay swimmer Linda MacKenzie proved the find of the meet at Olympic trials in March, winning the 200, 400 and 800-metre freestyle treble. In the process, MacKenzie touched out her senior AIS team-mate and friend Petria Thomas in the 200 metres.

AIS Swimming Head Coach Pierre Lafontaine, who joined the AIS two years ago after coaching in Canada and the United States, has MacKenzie and his other Olympic swimmers primed to perform at their best. 'Successes achieved by Petria Thomas, Justin Norris, Linda and others is in no small part due to them being pushed at training day in, day out by other squad members coming through,' Lafontaine said.

Known for his indomitable enthusiasm and booming pool-deck voice, Lafontaine was lavish in his praise of MacKenzie's performances. 'While Linda is small she has a huge heart, she's strong, her technique is excellent and she's a great listener. I'm sure she's set for bigger things.' ■

Archers trained to overcome Aeolus, Greek God of Wind

While most athletes are concerned about the conditions they are likely to face in Athens, to the AIS archers heading there it will seem like paradise compared to some of what they have experienced over the past few months.

AIS psychologist Gavin Freeman, in conjunction with AIS Archery Assistant Coach Matthew Lee, has been putting the archers through their paces with a number of drills benignly labelled 'distraction training'. The theory behind distraction training is to improve the archers' ability to concentrate in challenging conditions. Sleep deprivation and shooting among sprinklers and industrial fans are all scenarios employed to test the archers' powers of concentration.

The AIS contingent of archers — Deonne Bridger, Jade Beatty, Jo-Ann Galbraith, David Barnes, Simon Fairweather and Tim Cuddihy — left Canberra in early June with the rest of the Australian archery team for the German and Turkish rounds of the Euro Grand Prix. They would go head-to-head with rivals Korea, Italy and the United States.

The archery competition in Athens will take place in the original 1896 Olympic venue, the Panathinaiko Stadium, with the archers due in the Olympic Athletes' Village in early August. ■



AIS archer David Barnes undergoing distraction training



Australian Sports Commission/Getty Images 7560238

Petria Thomas at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

Good and not so good come in threes for Thomas

Among those going to Athens will be the matriarch of the Australian swimming team, AIS swimmer Petria Thomas. Thomas seems recently to be both dogged and blessed in threes. Athens is Thomas's third Olympics, following her recovery from a third shoulder reconstruction. Thomas also won three individual events at March's Olympic swimming trials at Homebush, which qualified the former Mullumbimby girl for three individual events and three relays in Athens.

Continuing the theme of threes, AIS team-mates Linda MacKenzie and Justin Norris matched Thomas in also winning three individual events at the Olympic trials — a spectacular result considering it is rare for one swimmer to win three individual events at a meet, let alone three swimmers from the same squad in the pressure and competition of Olympic trials. ■

Six sculls prove better than four

After defeating 12-time world champion Germany at last year's world championships in Milan, Italy, AIS coach Lyall McCarthy and his women's quad scull crew are now the benchmark crew coming into Athens. For much of the past year, seats in the crew were up for grabs and competition among the six AIS scholarship holders was intense.

The crew for the quad comprises three of last year's all-AIS world championship crew — Amber Bradley (AIS/WAIS), Dana Faletic (AIS) and Kerry Hore (AIS/TIS). They have been joined by Rebecca Sattin (AIS). Given the intense competition for seats and how closely matched all the women were, Jane Robinson (AIS/ACTAS) and Donna Martin (AIS), who did not make the four, will team up in a double scull in Athens. The double scull team is also a serious medal prospect. ■



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Australian Sports Commission/Getty Images 03049-17

Pierre Lafontaine



Australian Sports Commission/Getty Images 03049-13

Glenn Beringen

Planes, lanes and uncertainties

WILL THE SWIMMING VENUE IN ATHENS HAVE A ROOF? WHAT EFFECT WILL THAT HAVE? WILL PETRIA'S SHOULDER HOLD UP?

In between training, altitude camps, national camps and grand prix meets, these are just a few of the uncertainties Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Swimming Head Coach Pierre Lafontaine has been grappling with in the lead-up to Athens.

Ten AIS swimmers will make up more than a quarter of the Australian swimming team to compete in the first week of the Athens Olympics in just a few weeks time. Joining them on the Australian team will be Lafontaine and fellow AIS coach Glenn Beringen. Before arriving in Athens with the rest of the Australian swimming team, the AIS contingent of Olympic swimmers will have attended numerous training and preparation camps as well as lead-up meets.

The majority of the AIS Athens-bound swimmers spent time in May and June in the United States training at altitude at Flagstaff, Arizona. Before departing, the squad had a great hit out with many top-ranked swimmers from the United States — the country expected to challenge Australia in Athens for swimming supremacy — at the Janet Evans Invitational meet in Longbeach, California.

After only a few weeks back in Canberra, the swimmers met in Brisbane for a series of grand prix meets and national camps. Their busy schedule will continue at a pre-departure camp in Singapore where the swimmers will experience an open-air pool and the hot conditions similar to those expected at Athens.

After the Singapore camp, the AIS swimmers and the rest of the Australian swimming contingent will gather in Sindelfingen, Germany, on 29 July, as they did before last year's world championships. Here they will undertake ten days of intensive training and tapering before arriving at the Athletes' Village at Athens on 8 August.

Swimmers

Frances Adcock	Sarah Paton
Regan Harrison	Adam Pine
Linda MacKenzie	Sarah Ryan
Antony Matkovich	Craig Stevens
Justin Norris	Petria Thomas

Coaches

Pierre Lafontaine	Glenn Beringen
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New Australian Sports Commission web site

www.ausport.gov.au

The new Australian Sports Commission (ASC) web site — www.ausport.gov.au — which includes the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) web site — www.ais.org.au — was launched in early July 2004. The site features new content and a new information architecture (layout and content arrangement) that has been designed following extensive consultation and feedback from its users.

To reflect the diverse range of people who use the site, information can now be accessed through function and client-type gateways:

- function gateways are ASC, AIS, developing sport, coach/official/clubs, information/research, policies/issues, visit and shop at the AIS, conferences and events
- client gateways are clubs, coaches, officials, sports scientists, sports medicos, international users, sponsors, athletes, state institutes/academies of sport, students, teachers/educators, government and the public.

In addition, the home page of the web site highlights:

- recent media alerts concerning the ASC and AIS
- the Australian Sports Directory — a searchable database of contact details for Australian sporting organisations. This also includes links to a number of other useful industry directories
- Calendar of Events — a searchable database of Australian sporting events as well as links to other industry events and conferences



- NSO Online — soon to be the web site portal for national sporting organisations, offering them all the resources and services of the ASC in one area.

The launch saw the demise of several domains previously used by the ASC. These domains will continue to be supported for 12 to 24 months with user redirects to the new web site. The domains no longer in use include:

- www.activeaustralia.org
- www.coachingaus.org
- www.officiatingaus.org
- www.aisport.com.au.

In addition, the web addresses for many areas have changed and users with links should update their web sites where necessary.

Feedback regarding the new web site can be sent to webmaster@ausport.gov.au.

Athens Olympics and Paralympics

During the Athens Olympics and Paralympics, the ASC web site will provide the following information pertaining to Australia:

- teams
- results by day and sport
- listing of medallists and medal tallies.

The link to this web site will be from the home page. ■

Latest sport research shows women outdo men

ON AVERAGE, WOMEN LIVE LONGER THAN MEN. THAT IS A FACT. WHAT IS NOW ALSO ESTABLISHED AS FACT IS THAT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ARE PARTICIPATING IN SPORT MORE OFTEN THAN MEN. THIS IS ONE OF THE FINDINGS TO EMERGE FROM THREE YEARS OF RESEARCH DATA FROM THE EXERCISE, RECREATION AND SPORT SURVEY.

Every three months for the past three years the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has conducted the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey, measuring participation in sport and physical activity. The findings are collated and published annually.

Trends in Australian sports participation

Since 2001, overall participation has increased markedly on the back of some exciting initiatives being conducted by the ASC. Results show a steady and consistent trend towards more people participating more often over the three years of the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey. The key trends are:

- an increased frequency of activity per week
- a small increase in organised activity
- increases in club, school and commercial organisation activity
- women participating in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport more often than men.

More frequent

There are two positive trends in terms of the frequency of participation in activity. More people are participating three or more times a week and fewer people are participating less than once a week. Whether or not this means more people are participating in organised sport that involves both training and playing is not clear from the data. It is, however, a positive trend.

There has been a small but consistent growth in the number of people aged 15 or over participating in activity organised by a club, association or other organisation. >

Figure 1: Percentage of participants in any activity by frequency 2001–2003
Base = Australians aged 15 and over

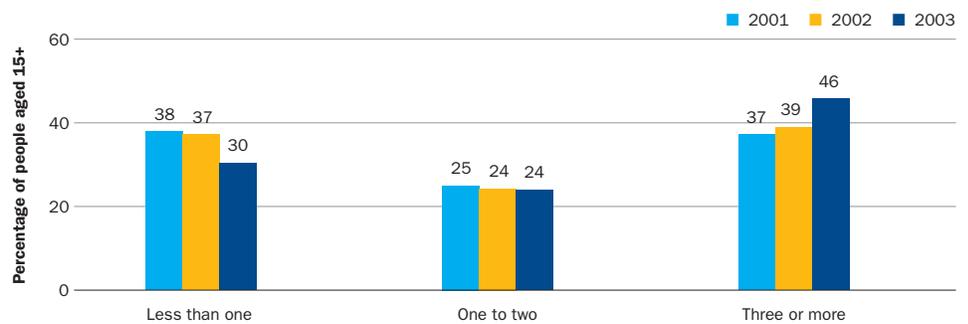


Figure 2: Growth in organised participation by type of organisation 2001–2003
Base = Australians aged 15 and over

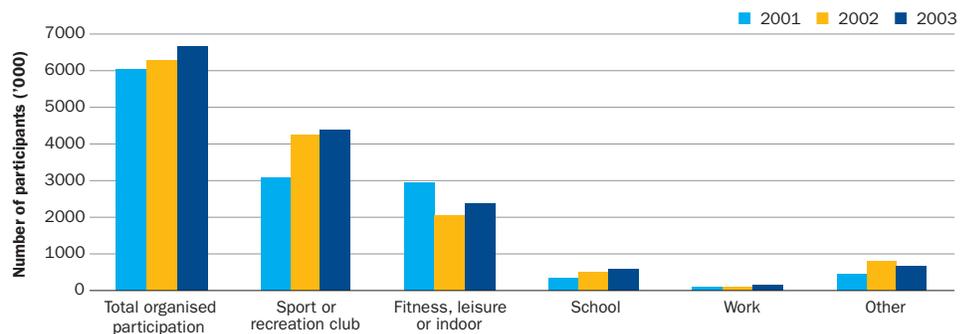
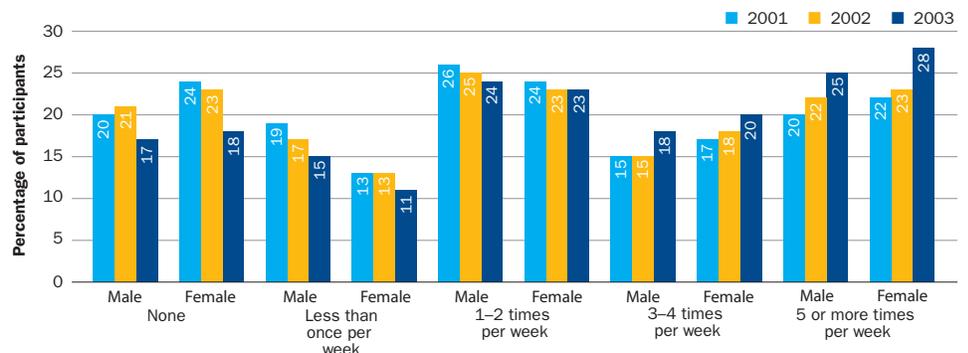


Figure 3: Frequency of participation by sex (%) 2001–2003
Base = Australians aged 15 and over



Milestone for Club Development Network

THE KELMSCOTT BASEBALL CLUB IN PERTH IS THE 4000TH MEMBER TO JOIN THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION'S (ASC'S) CLUB DEVELOPMENT NETWORK.

Over the three years of Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey data, there has been an increase of almost 630,000 people aged 15 and over participating in organised activities.

The figures are even more encouraging when looking at the types of organisations in which Australians participate. The number of people participating in activities organised by a sport or recreation club or association has increased from just under 3 million in 2001 to almost 4.4 million in 2003.

When looking at the types of organisations in which people are participating, there has been an increase across the three years in the number of people participating in a sport or recreation club or association and an overall decline in the number participating in fitness, leisure or indoor sports centres.

More women

Women are now participating in activity more often than men. For example, 28 per cent of women undertake activity five or more times a week, compared to 25 per cent of males. The good news that comes from looking at the frequency of participation figures is that both men and women have shifted up a gear, participating more often.

Other facts

Despite the national pride generated by the outstanding success of our sporting teams, Australians prefer to participate alone, or at least in small groups, rather than in larger teams. The sorts of physical activities with the largest number of participants are walking, aerobics/fitness, swimming and cycling.

A more detailed analysis of the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey trends for 2001–03 as well as complete Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey publications are available on the Australian Sports Commission web site at www.ausport.gov.au/info/topics/statistics/asp. ■

Kelmscott Baseball Club celebrated the 4000th milestone at a special ceremony with the Member for Canning, Don Randall MP, representing the Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp.

The small and vibrant family-based club of around 400 members will benefit from membership of the Club Development Network. The Network is a free web-based program that supports the management and development of sporting clubs in the key management areas of leadership, planning, people and members.

Through its policy, Backing Australia's Sporting Ability: a *more* active Australia, the Australian Government is committed to improving participation in grassroots sport.

Clubs are the 'nursery' of Australia's world-class sporting system. Attracting, training, rewarding and keeping players, officials and coaches are essential to the viability of sporting clubs.

Kelmscott is well supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who generously give their time to run the club. It fields three teams in AA, B and D grade of the local baseball competition.

ASC CEO Mark Peters says the main principles of the Club Development Network are to drive continuous improvement of management and to provide better services to members. 'The Club Development Network helps clubs run better, providing online tools they can use to develop and deliver quality



Mr Don Randall MP, Member for Canning, presents Mr Adam Stevenson, committee member of Kelmscott Baseball Club, with a plaque commemorating the club becoming the 4000th member of the Club Development Network.

services and programs for their members,' Mr Peters said.

Kelmscott has adopted inclusive practices to get people involved in baseball, claims its treasurer, Adam Stevenson. 'We welcome new members of all ages and abilities to try baseball and to participate in club life,' Mr Stevenson said. 'We strive to deliver affordable services to attract new members and to keep them involved in the club.'

Kelmscott Baseball Club will use the Club Development Network to expand its services to members to include the support of a junior team.

To join the Club Development Network go to www.ausport.gov.au/clubs and click on 'free membership'. ■

The adventures of AIS massage therapist, acupuncturist

A Google search on the name Barry Cooper will produce a host of 'pretenders', from a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, to a Massachusetts-based physics professor and a London hypnotherapist.

What it will not give you is a link to the adventures of the real Barry 'Baz' Cooper, the former Surrey rock musician and draughtsman who became an Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) icon.

Baz joined the AIS in 1984 and next month will work at his fourth Olympics as part of a select group manipulating the tired and aching muscles of Australia's team in Athens.

The past 20 years have been a fascinating journey for Baz but it is the adventures of Barry Cooper pre-AIS that are possibly even more remarkable.

Few staff could lay claim to the fact they owe Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts a serve of cheese on toast and a coffee. Fewer still could claim to have performed with David Bowie (pre-Ziggy Stardust, admittedly). Or to have met Jimi Hendrix (and no one born after 18 September 1970 would dare suggest they had).

In London in the late 1960s, Baz played keyboards with a band called the Downliners Sect at the many rock clubs in London. An online history of the band describes it as having a reputation as one of the best rhythm 'n' blues outfits in town, comparable to the Rolling Stones and the Yardbirds.

Baz was described as 'an eccentric gentleman who shocked both band members and audience by wearing pyjamas on stage'. He did other weird things on stage too, like sitting under the organ while playing.

'To my knowledge, I have been one of three keyboard players to work with the Downliners Sect. The first was John Paul

Jones who played on one or two of the albums. He went on to be part of Led Zeppelin. My immediate full-time predecessor, Mathew Fisher, went on to Procol Harum [who sang 'Whiter Shade of Pale']. And then there was me who went on eventually to the AIS.'

Born in South Croydon, Surrey, Baz had a life-changing experience in the mid-1970s when he forsook the mother country and joined the cruise ship *Patris* to play music on board, steaming around Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

Naturally, this provided an entrée to Australia, where he disembarked to play in a Melbourne band, which 'split up before I arrived'.

Baz did find work in the music industry, eventually becoming national marketing manager for the instrument division of CBS. By the late 1970s, he was running a music shop in Brisbane, but soon after found his way to Sydney.

'I started getting fit,' said Baz. This is somewhat of an understatement, because it too proved to be 'life-changing'. Although he did not know it yet, it set him on the road to the Olympics. He got so fit that he ran seven marathons, including a proud personal best of two hours and 57 minutes. His Olympic journey, though, would not be as a competitor.

His interest in fitness and running turned to an interest in nutrition. 'I did a short course and one of the teachers was a naturopath. Through him, I became interested in natural therapies, massage and eventually acupuncture.'

More courses followed and as he became qualified, he started treating fellow runners.

Baz started looking for more work in the sports area, but at the time, massage was not a priority element of sports training.

'Prior to the Brisbane Commonwealth Games, the Australian swimming squad



Barry Cooper

and musician

needed help because they were falling to bits and, after speaking to the coach, I started treating them daily. Craig Purdam, who was working in physiotherapy at the AIS, also came up to Sydney to help out with the swimmers. At the time, no one did massage at the AIS.'

Encouraged by his stint with the swimmers, Baz sent off a few letters seeking additional work and found himself accompanying the AIS swimming team on a trip to California.

'It went very well and a few months after that a friend showed me an ad for a massage therapist at the AIS. I had an interview with Craig and also spoke to Peter Fricker. Initially it was to be a shared position involving only 30 hours a week. Demand soon meant that I became full time.'

Since those early AIS days, Baz has furthered his acupuncture studies in

China and become an indispensable part of the AIS and national teams to Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

He describes his work as both challenging and satisfying, especially helping to get injured athletes to the start line or the kick-off.

'We all like to feel as though we have individually made a major contribution to helping athletes recover, although it is usually the combination of the sports medicine team that gets the job done. We all do our best. But it helps that we are treating people who want to be better — usually by yesterday. They are all very motivated.'

Music still plays a big part in the ongoing adventures of Baz Cooper, playing in a range of Canberra-based bands featuring everything from Louisiana swamp rock with Allez-Gator to gypsy and world music with the Feral Brothers. ■



How skill acquisition can influence practice

BY DR DAMIAN FARROW, SKILL ACQUISITION SPECIALIST, AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS SCIENCE SYSTEM, THE CONTRIBUTION OF DISCIPLINES SUCH AS PHYSIOLOGY, BIOMECHANICS, MEDICINE AND THE PHYSICAL THERAPIES TO ELITE SPORTS PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND OBVIOUS. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SKILL ACQUISITION IS LESS APPARENT. THIS RELATIVELY NEW FIELD OF SPORTS SCIENCE CAN, AND DOES, CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE.



Skill Acquisition is a specific arm of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Performance Psychology department that began full-time service provision in 2002.

It is primarily concerned with investigating the factors that affect the acquisition, performance and retention of sports skills in both developing and elite athletes. The Skill Acquisition unit is particularly interested in the way an elite athlete integrates sensory information, such as vision, with the motor system to deftly execute a sports skill.

A related focus is the design of practice methods that accelerate skill development and maximise skill transfer to the competition environment. The information gathered on the above issues through collaborative research is used to assist in providing services to elite AIS and national sporting organisation athletes and coaches.

The role of skill acquisition is best encapsulated in a quote by South African physiologist Timothy Noakes, 'In the field of skill sports, especially those involving teams (such as football, basketball, rugby and cricket), the future lies in understanding the complex neural responses, about which we currently have little idea, that allow the very best athletes to rapidly and accurately process sources of information and to instantly choose the correct winning action'.

While Noakes's suggestion that we 'currently have little idea' is not totally correct, the future he describes is the underlying theme of the work now being completed within the Skill Acquisition unit,



research

reflecting the needs of team-sport coaches. The two key issues of central concern to coaches are charting the improvement in the skill levels of their athletes in ways other than game performance, and optimising the practice environment to maximise learning and ultimately transfer to competition.

To meet the coaches' needs, the Skill Acquisition unit has adopted an action-based research approach to its service provision role. The major tenet of this approach is that many servicing requests provide not only basic support to a program, but are designed in such a way as to provide additional information about the skill intervention that can be confidently applied to other sports with similar needs. To date, there have been a number of favourable results in a variety of AIS sport programs supporting the application of such an approach.

Research influencing practice

An example of this research in action is the current decision-making training program being completed by the AIS Men's Basketball program. Based on initial consultation with the coaching staff, it was decided that decision-making was an aspect of player performance that required increased attention. As a result, all players were initially tested on an interactive video simulation decision-making test designed by the Skill Acquisition unit.

The test utilises near life-size video projections of game situations filmed from the players' perspective. The players are required to interact with the video display as if they were in an actual game situation by watching the play unfold and then making a decision to shoot, pass or dribble at the critical moment. Their physical response is recorded to extract decision-making speed and accuracy measures.

After completing the testing, the players were assigned to different training groups and required to complete three computer-based decision-making training sessions each week for a month before

being re-tested. The computer-based training required the players to watch patterns of play from international basketball games where they were required to assume the role of the player with the ball. The match footage was then frozen at a critical moment where the player was required to decide what they would do (pass, shoot or dribble). Again, the speed and accuracy of their responses were recorded.

Much like a Nintendo game, the players used a computer mouse to make their response and found the training to be challenging, absorbing and fun. Importantly, rather than this computer game being unrelated to their sport, the added bonus of such training is that it is designed to improve the players' on-court decision-making.

In terms of the big picture, a number of advantages are seen with this type of servicing approach. While the athletes simply logged on to complete their decision-making training, broader issues were also being examined, in this case, the most effective method for scheduling such off-court training. Applying the training principles of strength and conditioning, various combinations of volume, frequency, intensity and overload were being manipulated by assigning players to different training groups yet using the same training footage.

While the complete results are yet to be published, the project has been successful in a number of ways. From the players' perspective, the training exposed them to team-based decision-making situations, yet they were able to complete the training as an individual in an off-court environment. This is particularly advantageous, as court time as a team is limited and the physical demands are great. The players' knowledge and awareness of the importance of decision-making was heightened and it is envisaged that this will be reflected in their post-testing results and on-court performances.

From a coaching perspective, while the possibilities of computer-based training had

been discussed for some time, the amount of time to select and prepare the video footage for the training sessions had been prohibitive. Hence, with the servicing support of the Skill Acquisition unit, the AIS Basketball program has been able to add this facet to its training. Finally, from a research perspective, we now have more detailed information to draw on when providing evidence-based advice to coaches in other team sports. In other words, a win-win situation for all!

Other research projects

Current, or recently completed, projects illustrating the diversity and multidisciplinary nature of applied skill acquisition research include:

- Identifying and counteracting the critical stressors governing skill decrement during tennis performance
- A multidisciplinary approach for examining batting expertise across the developmental spectrum
- Biomechanical and visual-perceptual considerations in the hockey flick from a goalkeeping perspective
- Improving the transfer from practice to the game: a multidisciplinary examination of rugby line-outs
- An examination of the efficacy of immersive (3D) visual simulations for the training of perceptual skill in netball
- Does practice make perfect? The role of practice repetition in skill learning
- The development of a video-based decision-making testing and training approach for basketball
- Developing anticipatory skill for cricket slips catching
- The development of a test of reactive agility for netball: a new methodology
- The effects of fatigue on decision-making and shooting skill performance in water polo players
- The kinematics of the soccer penalty kick: can they be used to improve the anticipatory performance of soccer goalkeepers? ■



Australian Greenhouse Office Chief Executive, Howard Bamsey, and Australian Sports Commission Chief Executive Officer, Mark Peters.

Australian Sports Commission takes on the Greenhouse Challenge

Striving for excellence applies not only to high performance sport. The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) drives continuous improvement in many facets of its business, including energy conservation.

The ASC has signed up to the Australian Government's Greenhouse Challenge, contributing to a national effort to tackle global warming by introducing strategies to reduce energy emissions.

Through the agreement, the ASC will improve its energy-efficient practices and manage, monitor and reduce energy emissions.

ASC CEO Mark Peters welcomed the opportunity to join the Greenhouse Challenge and demonstrate the Commission's commitment to the environment.

'We are delighted to take part in the Greenhouse Challenge by introducing strategies that will contribute to Australia's efforts in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions,' Mr Peters said.

'Our goal is to cut the emission of greenhouse gases by 490 tonnes a year. We will achieve this through a range of

strategies and we'll conduct an education campaign to inform staff and athletes about energy-efficient practices.'

Mr Peters said the ASC had an excellent track record for managing energy consumption over the past ten years.

Australian Greenhouse Office Chief Executive, Howard Bamsey, said the ASC had demonstrated an excellent history of energy management.

'Joining the Greenhouse Challenge program is further testimony to this,' Mr Bamsey said. 'In particular, the investment in a gas-fired cogeneration plant for pool and space heating, hot water supply and electricity consumption is very innovative.'

Ten agencies, representing more than half the energy consumption by the Australian Government last year, are now Challenge members.

Electricity powering Australian Institute of Sport buildings, plants and office equipment is a prime source of greenhouse-gas emissions such as carbon dioxide.

The ASC is committed to sourcing 10 per cent of its power needs from

'green energy' to reduce emissions as part of its electricity supply contract.

The ASC has also finetuned its air-conditioning and building management system. These measures equate to a reduction of 450 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year.

How the Australian Sports Commission will reduce greenhouse-gas emissions

- Power-saving settings for personal computers
- Finetuning air-conditioning
- Using energy-efficient lighting
- Minimising and recycling waste products such as paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, toner cartridges and oils
- Using economical four-cylinder cars, where possible
- reducing lawn areas (and therefore mowing) ■

Culinary *Survival Around the World*

A new AIS cookbook for athletes on the go internationally

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Department of Sports Nutrition is going global with its latest cookbook *Survival Around the World*, to be launched at the AIS in October.

Survival Around the World is a collaboration between Australian Sports Commission corporate sponsor Nestlé (which provides funding), and the AIS Department of Sports Nutrition, which contains no fewer than seven Jamie Olivers!

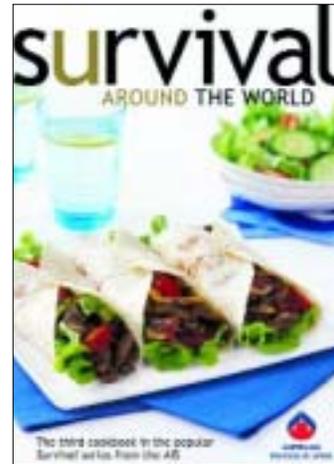
AIS Dietitian Michelle Minehan said the new cookbook was primarily an education tool to help ensure our athletes do not miss out in the dietary stakes when travelling overseas.

'*Survival Around the World* helps our athletes meet the challenge of living overseas,' Ms Minehan said. 'We provide advice on a range of issues such as food

safety and coping with cultural norms and language difficulties. Plus we have a collection of globally influenced recipes appropriate for anyone needing to prepare a tasty, nutritious meal when time, motivation and domestic skills are in short supply.'

'Many athletes come to the AIS straight from home where often everything was done for them ... cooking, washing, ironing, etc. They go straight into the AIS Dining Hall where again it's all laid out and so when the time comes to head overseas, they have no idea how to go about preparing a nutritious meal. *Survival Around the World* fills that void.'

Survival Around the World is the third in the series of AIS cookbooks and is available from all good bookstores (RRP \$24.95). Other books in the series are *Survival for the Fittest* and *Survival from the Fittest*.



The AIS Nutrition staff who penned *Survival Around the World* were Professor Louise Burke, Greg Cox, Clare Wood, Louise Bell, Ruth Crawford, Michelle Cort and Michelle Minehan.

For more information and recipes, visit the AIS Department of Sports Nutrition web site at www.ais.org.au/nutrition. ■

MARK THIS DATE!

OURSPORTING FUTURE

2-4 March 2005 Sydney Convention Centre

The Australian Sports Commission takes great pleasure in hosting its second Our Sporting Future forum from 2-4 March 2005.

The Australian Sports Commission encourages you to attend, learn and contribute to the ongoing success of Australian sport. Many delegates commented that the first Our Sporting Future, staged in March 2003, was 'the best sports industry conference [they had] been to in years'.



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Hosted by the
Australian Sports Commission

An exciting range of speakers from Australia and overseas will be in attendance to discuss ideas, trends and emerging issues in sport. Sessions will be relevant and interactive, including:

- keynote addresses
- plenary sessions
- workshops
- panel presentations and discussions
- concurrent streams.

To ensure you receive further information regarding the second Our Sporting Future forum, visit www.ausport.gov.au/events/osf2005/ and register your interest today.

Call for Abstracts closes on 30 July 2004. Visit the web site for more details.