



AIYD
Australia India
Youth Dialogue

Sport in the Australia-India Relationship

Taskforce report prepared by

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This report outlines key challenges and opportunities associated with international sporting exchange between India and Australia. In brief:

- International exchange lies outside the current “sharp” focus of *Australian* sport. Sporting exchange could be creatively incorporated into the “existing core business” not only of the Australian sports industry, but also other active spaces in the Australia-India relationship such as education, cultural diplomacy, peace and development and so on.
- International exchange has not received significant attention in *Indian* sport also. Too often, India’s attempts at incorporating best practices has been restricted to high performance sport, and has not percolated downwards to grassroots initiatives, whether in sport alone or through a confluence of sport and education or sport and cultural diplomacy. Many of the high profile “exchange” initiatives have failed due to an obstructionist bureaucracy, and have contributed to hindering the progress of India as a sporting nation.

The authors of this report believe strongly in the principle that positive, mutually beneficial outcomes can be gained from the international exchange of sporting expertise, systems, and products. In the case of India and Australia, there are significant opportunities for this type of exchange, in areas ranging from sporting governance and elite high performance systems, right through to the use of sport as a platform for preventative health, peace and development, social inclusion, cultural exchange and international diplomacy.

In addition, the authors are of the view that India and Australia, as regional partners with shared elements of institutional and cultural history, must together take ownership of the task of ensuring the maintenance of sporting integrity in the Indo-Pacific region in the 21st Century.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The authors of this report, having completed

- (1) a detailed analysis and review of publically available industry reports, government reports, and academic papers relating to trends in Australian, Indian, and international sport;
- (2) an extensive consultation with over 20 industry experts in both countries, (including the dissemination of a questionnaire concerning Australian and Indian sport); and
- (3) a review of datasets held by public and private organisations relating to Indian and Australian sport,

have identified both the *key challenges* that complicate the prospect of meaningful international sporting exchange in India and Australia, as well as the *opportunities* for action inspite of these challenges. These key challenges and opportunities have been outlined below by country.

CHALLENGES

Australia

Challenge: *International sporting exchange lies outside the core business of the key actors in the Australian sports industry.*

Following an overall decline in sporting results in the international arena since around the time of the 2008 Beijing Olympics¹, and a series of alarming revelations concerning the culture of elite and

¹ There is a tangible sentiment in the public realm that Australian sport has “passed its peak”, and is no longer the formidable international force that it used to be. For an analysis and summary of Australia’s sporting results in decline, see http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/509852/Australias_Winning_Edge.pdf pg.2-4



professional sports², the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and Australia’s various National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) are increasingly dedicated to a “sharp” national focus concerning primarily, the mutually reinforcing goals of (1) elite performance and (2) mass participation.³ This strategic focus on participation and elite success leaves little funding scope for the realisation of extensive and meaningful international exchange.

International sports exchange is perceived as a potential threat to Australia’s competitiveness on the world stage. In an incredibly competitive international sporting arena, and following what has been witnessed in recent years as a “brain drain” of Australian sporting expertise to other nations, sporting expertise is now closely guarded by government and NSOs as a point of difference between winning and losing.

“The brain drain for a Australian sport began many years ago, probably after the 2000 Olympics...(t)he difficulty with intellectual property with respect to individual sports is that it is seen as the comparative advantage over the opposition and as such is highly guarded.”

Greg Harris, Prominent Australian Sports Administrator, former board member of the now abandoned Sports Knowledge Australia (SKA).

India

Challenge: *India needs to demonstrate progress both in the sphere of high performance sport and grassroots sport. The sheer financial and human resources scale of this challenge need not lead to an exclusionary competition where focus on high performance sport leads to a neglect of grassroots sport.*

² The release of Australian Crime Commission’s report (ACC) “Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport” in February 2013 shocked the Australian sporting public, the media hailing the day of its release the “Blackest Day in Australian Sport”. The entire saga raises important questions regarding the integrity of sport in Australia, including key issues surrounding match fixing, organized crime, anti-doping, athlete welfare, and so on. In addition, various sporting teams and organisations have been dammed for their “toxic” state. The most notable example is the Australian Swimming Team, with the recent release of a number of reports concerning unsporting like behavior, bullying and substance abuse. Other sports integrity issues have also circulated the media, including the issue of sports gambling, captured most recently by the highly public personal feud between public sports betting promoter Tom Waterhouse and sports commentator Peter Fitzsimons fought in the media. ACC report can be viewed here: <http://www.crimecommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/organised-crime-and-drugs-in-sports-feb2013.pdf>

³ “Australia’s Winning Edge” is a 10 year high performance policy plan (2012-2022) designed to “sharpen” the governance and accountability of NSOs, and move Australian sport from world class to world best” Australian Sports Commission, 2012: http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/509852/Australias_Winning_Edge.pdf



India remains a developing nation, and large swathes of the population are still denied access to the basic essential facilities that are required to live healthy and productive lives. There are far more pressing challenges for the Indian state to address, such as access to education, eradication of poverty, access to healthcare, creation of employment opportunities, gender inequity and corruption. Consequently, despite the best efforts of successive governments, sport is more often than not accorded “low priority” status. Therefore, the authors of this report believe that while the Government can stay invested in sport, it has to gradually cede space to corporate as well as non-governmental agencies in driving different initiatives within India’s sporting landscape. We believe that the government has a key role in formulating India’s sporting policy, and in the creation and maintenance of sporting infrastructure. However, it would be in the best interests of Indian sport if (a) the government were to strike partnerships with and supplement the efforts of non-governmental agencies who have taken the lead in using sport as a “tool for development”; and (b) gradually disinvest from “high performance sport” and create an enabling economic environment for greater private investments therein, as also in the marketing of such “high performance sport”.

Challenge: *International sporting exchange is viewed through a very narrow lens, i.e., largely confined to India seeking international coaching expertise for Indian athletes.*

Traditionally, the focus in India – particularly in the sphere of Olympic sport – has been to seek international coaching expertise for the benefit of Indian athletes. However, as has been explained elsewhere in this report, sporting expertise is now closely guarded by governments and NSOs as a point of difference between winning and losing. Accordingly, the concept of “international sporting exchange” has to be expanded to include other areas in which countries can collaborate with each other, without necessarily having to transfer/neutralise the areas in which they have a “competitive advantage”. Sports administrators need to recognise that sporting exchange can also be facilitated in other areas such as development of sporting infrastructure, creation of leagues and ownership of equity in such leagues, marketing of sport and funding of corporate social responsibility initiatives that use sport as their base.



The Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP) India is one example that showcases international sporting exchange through a broader lens than how it has been viewed in India. ASOP India is a five-year Australian Government initiative implemented by the Australian Sports Commission that involves a commitment of AUD\$5 million until 2014. Drawing on Australia’s emphasis on excellence in sports, the programme aims to increase the capacity of stakeholders — government and non-government organisation partners and communities — to conduct high-quality grassroots sports programmes for disadvantaged community groups.⁴

The authors of this report are of the view that India and Australia could do with more partnerships such as ASOP India, not just on a government-to-government basis, but also in the for-profit corporate sector and the not-for-profit non-governmental sector.

OPPORTUNITIES

Australia

Given the sharp focus of the ASC and NSOs, opportunities for elite performance level exchange between Australia and India are limited. There are however many identifiable opportunities for sporting exchange via amateur sport, education (school and university sport) and diplomatic, peace and development channels. Australia and India need to seek creative ways of incorporating international exchange into the *existing core business* of Australian sport, and the broader Australia-India relationship.

Opportunity: *To use the existing core business of engagement of Australia’s Indian migrant community as a platform for transnational sporting exchange programs*

Existing Core Business:

⁴ See “ASOP India Sport for Development” at http://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/international/programs/india_programs



- (1) The **ASC's** mandate to maintain a broad and *diverse participation base*, particularly the engagement of Australia's "culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)" communities in sport participation.⁵
- (2) **NSOs'** need to maintain a broad *fan-base* to ensure commercial viability and sustainable participation levels. This imperative increasingly involves engaging CALD communities such as the Australian Indian community.
- (3) **Local Governments** need to engage CALD communities in basic processes of *citizenship*, and promote social cohesion.⁶

This existing core business of the ASC, NSOs and local government opens up a space in which sporting exchange between India and Australia could occur. The authors of this report recommend that key actors be aware of the potential transnational scope of CALD community engagement programs.

In the case of engaging Australia's Indian migrant community, for example, key actors should seek direct participation and consultation of Indian-based sporting organisations in order to foster an environment of information-sharing and exchange between India and Australia through such sports participation programs. Key actors should also ensure that all marketing and media strategies are sensitive to the ever-evolving transnational dimension of digital and social media landscapes, and not limited purely to the local target community. The 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup, hosted in Australia and New Zealand, could provide an incredible platform for exchange between Australia and India. Indeed, the engagement of Australia's Indian community will be fundamental for the event's overall commercial success.

⁵ The ASC's Pathway to Success Strategy (2011) (http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/368597/Australian_Sport_the_pathway_to_success.pdf), and Working Together for Australian Sport (2011) (http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/472738/ASC_Strategic_Plan_2011-12_to_2014-2015.pdf), released in 2011, outline an unprecedented \$195 million funding boost from the Australian Government designed to secure the mutually reinforcing goals of elite international success and broad-based participation in sport across all areas of Australian society. These documents have since been superseded by the 2012 release of "Australia's Winning Edge" (http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/509852/Australias_Winning_Edge.pdf).

⁶ See the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship's policy outline "Government Building Social Cohesion" at <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/government-approach/social-cohesion/>



Example 1 - Red Elephant Projects

The Red Elephant Projects (REP) is a “social enterprise with a vision of a culturally integrated and vibrant community – led by engaging sport, music and arts initiatives.” In terms of sport in particular, REP works together with local and state governments, and NSOs such as the AFL, Cricket Australia, and Football Federation Australia to produce community and fan-base engagement programs, particularly targeted at Australia’s CALD communities.⁷

Example 2 – Richmond Football Club & The Masala Football Club

The Masala Football Club is an initiative supported by the Australian Football League (AFL) Richmond Football Club as part of its fan engagement strategy. The Club aims to engage Indian migrant communities in Melbourne and further afield through participation in AFL.⁸

Opportunity: *To combine **sport** and **education** in the Australia-India relationship*

Existing Core Business:

1. All **Australian Schools** (primary and secondary education institutions) and **State Education Departments** are now, or are currently in the process of being subject to all key dimensions of the Australian National Curriculum (ANC), including most notably in this case the “cross-curricular priority” of “Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia”⁹ and the “general capability” of “Intercultural Understanding”.¹⁰
2. The need for **Australian tertiary education institutions** (universities and vocational training institutions) to participate in an increasingly global education market.
3. International sport exchange programmes could act as a key platform for the realisation of key dimensions of the ANC, in particular the “cross-curricular priority” of “Asia and

⁷ See www.redelephantprojects.com

⁸ See www.masalafc.com.au

⁹ See <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities/Asia-and-Australias-engagement-with-asia>

¹⁰ See <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Pdf/Overview>, pg.111-



Australia's Engagement with Asia"¹¹ and the "general capability" of "Intercultural Understanding".

Furthermore, given the strength of Australia's sporting brand on the world stage and in India in particular, sport could act as an effective medium for tertiary institutions to gain a foothold in India's vast education market. Furthermore, universities with developed sporting programmes can seek to establish exchange programmes with partner universities in India.¹²

Example: Deakin University Masters in Sports Management

Deakin University is one of Australia's first universities to actively move beyond student recruitment as the only form of international engagement. Deakin is the first international university to establish an office in India. More recently, Deakin University collaborated with the Confederation of Indian Industry and organised a Sport Management Capacity Building Workshop in Mumbai, acknowledging a potentially alarming skills shortage in the industry in India by 2022. The Deakin initiative is a powerful example of the meaningful knowledge exchange that can occur between the Australia-India sporting relationship via the existing core business of interested institutions.

Opportunity: *to utilise sport as a platform for **diplomacy and corporate social responsibility (CSR)** in the Australia-India relationship*

Existing Core Business:

1. The ongoing need for the Australian **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)** to strengthen diplomatic links with other nations, in particular those in the Indo-Pacific region such as India;
2. The need for **Australian private enterprises and non-government organizations (NGOs)** to establish positive presence in the Indo-Pacific region via dedicated CSR practices and

¹¹ See <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities/Asia-and-Australias-engagement-with-asia>

¹² See for example, the marketing of Monash University's Masters in Sports management to Indian students via its Indian Campus, ITTB Monash Research in Bombay: <http://www.iitbmonash.org/>



activities

Sport should be seen as a key medium in the core business of foreign affairs, cultural familiarization, and public diplomacy. Sport offers a highly visible space for cultural transfer and exchange. By the same token, the power of sport to act as a platform for the development of CSR needs to be recognised.

“Whilst pure sports sponsorship is often a hard-nosed marketing and business decision, any CSR intervention is based more on how a business can improve the living conditions and relationship with communities in which it operates. As an effective CSR medium, sport can build values that any socially responsible business strives for. These include qualities like team work, fair play, involving employees and suppliers, as well as building good community relations.” **Rekha Dey, Australian Sports Outreach Programme Coordinator, India**

Opportunity: *Using sport as a medium for peace and development efforts.*

Existing Core Business:

1. Australia’s responsibility as a peaceful, developed nation to encourage sustainable and peaceful development throughout the world in general, and in the Indo-Pacific region in particular.

Sport can facilitate transfer of best practice, ethics and integrity, including values of race and gender equality. Sport can also be utilised as an engagement strategy to help achieve development priorities in local communities. Sport offers a space in which to promote leadership, healthy lifestyles, community cohesion, inclusion of people with disabilities and HIV-related behaviour change.

Example: Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP).

ASOP is a programme funded and administered by the ASC in association with AusAID. Via grant allocation, the programme supports small, community-based sports development organisations in India, the Pacific, Southern Africa and the Caribbean. Key goals of the programme are to encourage more children to regularly participate in sport, use sport programmes to achieve community health



and well-being outcomes, and improve quality of life for people with disabilities through increased participation in sport.¹³

India

Opportunity: *Sport as a platform for **diplomacy and corporate social responsibility (CSR)** in the Australia-India relationship*

As explained earlier, the ASOP India programme showcases the value of using sport as a platform for strengthening diplomatic relations between Australia and India, while simultaneously allowing organisations to build strong corporate social responsibility programmes that give back as much, if not more to the communities that help popularise sport in the first place.

Case Study: Partnership between Football Federation of Australia (FFA) and All India Football Federation (AIFF) to support AIFF’s Grassroots Programme

On 30 October 2013, the Football Federation of Australia (FFA) signed an agreement with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) under the aegis of ASOP India to support AIFF’s Grassroots Programme.¹⁴ The agreement includes financial, administrative and technical support from FFA in the form of capacity building within the State Associations currently involved in the Grassroots Programme, Grassroots Courses and Grassroots Festivals, among many such activities. A significant aspect of this partnership will be the design and implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Policy within the Grassroots Programme. It is the first time that such a policy is being designed and implemented on a pan-India basis among all sports in India.

As Michael Brown, the CEO of the AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015 says “*Australia is serious about helping to spread football’s reach and technical expertise throughout Asia, particularly through youth*

¹³ For more, see

http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/394117/2011_202428_D_SP_32559_Australian_Sports_Outreach_Program_fact_sheet_LR_5.PDF

¹⁴ See “*Football Federation of Australia signs agreement with AIFF*” at <http://www.the-aiff.com/news-center-details.htm?id=5317>



programs. The fact that we are hosting the next Asian Cup encourages us to redouble our efforts in this regard.” He adds: “Our stated goals at the 2015 Asian Cup include celebrating Asia’s rich football culture, and leaving an enduring legacy. Playing a part in developing India’s grass roots programme is very much in keeping with those goals.”

This partnership should serve as a cue for other National Sports Federations (NSFs) in India to adopt an “open door” policy that would incentivize their counterparts in Australia to play a role in shaping grassroots sports in India, by sharing their technical expertise and by helping those sports to grow their player base through the development of strong youth programs. The success of the FFA-AIFF partnership may well determine whether other Australian NSOs would want to use ASOP India as a vehicle for strengthening diplomatic relations and instituting corporate social responsibility initiatives with their Indian counterparts.

Opportunity: *To combine **sport** and **education** in the Australia-India relationship*

Existing Core Business:

1. This is a classic case where there is an almost perfect balance between demand and supply. With Australian tertiary education institutions looking to participate in an increasingly global education market, they would be interested in knowing that a recent study¹⁵ conducted by the National Skills Development Corporation of India (NSDC) has identified a “skill gap” in various segments of India’s sports sector; estimated the manpower requirements for India’s sports sector until 2022, and identified other supply constraints plaguing the Indian sports sector (including but not limited to the poor attention paid in diverse areas such as child nutrition, physical fitness, psychology, non-integration of sport with the mainstream educational system in India and lack of optimum playing or training facilities, amongst other areas). Based on this skill gap analysis, the NSDC has framed a number of recommendations, prominent amongst them being that of the need for government and private sectors to work

¹⁵ See “Skill Gap Study for Sports (2012-17, 2017-22)” at <http://www.nsdcindia.org/pdf/sports.pdf>.



together to:

- (a) Bring about an attitudinal change towards sports in India;
- (b) Include sports within the mainstream education system;
- (c) Enable “focused skilling” and “skill transferability” across sports; and
- (d) Establish elite sporting institutions.

These are the broader areas wherein different participants in Australia’s mature sports sector could seize the opportunities available to the mutual benefit of Australia and India.

The NSDC Report has made tangible recommendations on what could be done to bring about the required attitudinal change towards sports in India. First, it spells out the need for a strong **advocacy programme** which educates large swathes of India’s population about the benefits of playing sport on a regular basis. Secondly, the NSDC Report also identifies the need for the development of appropriate **educational programmes and certificate courses** which integrate sports within India’s mainstream educational system. Lastly, the NSDC Report also identifies the need for India to develop world-class infrastructure for sportsperson development and for formal training in skills for coaches, masseurs, physios, nutritionists, trainers, sports psychologists, etc.

With ASOP India already playing a seminal role in the grassroots development of Indian sport, the scope and extent of participation by various Australian organisations (both for-profit and not-for-profit) can be widened progressively to cover each of the areas of “skill gap” that has been identified by the NSDC.

ACTION PLAN AND CONCLUSION

Below, we have outlined a potential action plan that could be utilised by different stakeholders in the Australia-India ecosystem (e.g. governmental agencies, NGOs, NSFs, industry bodies and research organisations in the allied fields of sport, healthcare, education and medicine) to move ahead tangibly vis-à-vis the opportunities identified above.



Sl.No.	Action Item	Potential Next Step(s)	Timeline for Review
1.	Engagement of Australia's CALD communities in sport participation	Utilise marquee sporting events such as the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup and the Asian Cup to reach out to CALD communities through arranged on-ground and social media engagement programs. Identify marquee Australian and Indian sporting legends and facilitate engagement with Indian immigrant communities in Australia.	The ICC World Cup ends on 29 March 2015. A study can be conducted in the aftermath of the event to determine whether CALD community participation increased in the time during and after the World Cup. The results of the study could be published before or during the 2016 Australia India Youth Dialogue (AIYD) Conference.
2.	Conduct of International sporting exchange programmes by Australian universities in collaboration with partner institutions in India	Deakin University has already collaborated with the Confederation of Indian Industry and organised a Sport Management Capacity Building Workshop in Mumbai. Further, the NSDC Report has identified the need for development of appropriate educational programmes and certificate courses which integrate sports within India's mainstream educational system. There could be an opportunity for Australian universities to partner with Indian universities and design such programmes/courses.	To be reviewed on an annual basis.
3.	Utilisation of sport as a tool to promote corporate social responsibility, diplomacy, peace and development	The ASOP India programme needs to be closely monitored for the results that it achieves through its various initiatives in India. Based on the outcomes generated by partnerships such as the FFA-AIFF partnership, there may well be a case for expanding the purview of the ASOP India	To be reviewed every 2-3 years



programme to other sporting bodies,
provided there is an element of reciprocity
that is in-built

The examples and case studies included in this report are indicative of the directions in which Australia and India need evolve their sporting relationship. From the Australian side, the “sharp focus” of the sports industry means that it is crucial to seek opportunities for sport-related exchange activity within the “core business” of existing viable institutions such as education (both secondary and tertiary), diplomacy, and the private sector (especially CSR). Sport could be utilised as a medium for economic, political, and cultural exchange.

In conclusion, Australia and India must think beyond national borders in order to envisage the future of sport in the Indo-Pacific region in the 21st Century. The growing geopolitical significance of the region (in no small measure being powered by the economies of China, India, Japan, South Korea and Australia) will drive its demand for the consumption of global sport, and of the region’s sport in other parts of the world. Nations such as Australia and India must recognise the scope and potential of this transnational sporting landscape,¹⁶ and work proactively in the areas outlined above to ensure that sporting excellence, integrity, and mutually beneficial outcomes become part of the “core business” of the Australia-India relationship.

¹⁶ Stuart Murray refers to the international sporting landscape as a “sportscape”, a self-sustainable and self-regulating sphere of commercial and cultural activity that exists beyond national borders. See Murray, S. 2013 ‘Moving Beyond the Ping Pong Table: Sports Diplomacy in the Modern Diplomatic Environment’ *Publica Diplomacy*, Winter edition, pg.13.



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ABOUT THE AIYD

The Australia India Youth Dialogue (AIYD) is a formal dialogue between the youth of Australia and India. AIYD provides a sustainable platform for young leaders of the two countries to foster a strong partnership between each other. You can find out more by visiting www.aiyd.org.