

# Sport

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## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN SPORT ARTS AND SPORT

*The Australian Democrats recognise the significant role that sport plays in the Australian way of life and will continue to promote sporting activity at the individual and community level. Although excellence in sport is applauded, we call for a greater emphasis on higher participation rates at all levels and at all ages.*

### Our Action Plan

*“Although excellence in sport is applauded, we call for a greater emphasis on higher participation rates at all levels and at all ages.”*

**Senator Andrew Bartlett**  
Spokesperson on Sport

- support greater participation rates for adults and children
- support specific funding for access to sporting facilities for all social groups
- continue to support the Australian Institute of Sport and sport excellence
- establish an independent drug tribunal
- implement a national water safety program
- support women at all levels by lowering the barriers to participation

### The Issues

#### Greater participation rates

In 2001, 9 million Australians over the age of 18 were overweight or obese, with approximately 25% of our children overweight or obese. And latest estimates suggest that the true cost of obesity may now be as high as \$1.3 billion per year, and rising.<sup>1</sup> The National Heart Foundation last year also noted that less than half of all adult women are active enough to gain a health benefit.

We must do more to encourage adults and children to be physically active.

Opportunities to participate in sport should be provided to all Australians without discrimination. Non-competitive sport should be an emphasis in policy direction so that the social, physical and mental health benefits are shared by people who may be otherwise reluctant to participate.

Broadening the range of accessible sports is more likely to encourage a greater number of people to take part, together with the development of strategies to ensure that physical activity can be sustained through all stages and ages of life.

#### Funding

Specific funding is required to ensure that people in remote communities and people with disabilities are able to access sporting facilities, and are provided opportunities offered to other Australians to achieve sporting excellence.

In addition the Australian Democrats support:

- maintaining funding for elite sport; and,
- increased funding for participation in sport across all age groups.

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The Democrats acknowledge that sporting opportunities are often dependant on a family's financial situation and believe that all sports should be available at as low a cost as possible. Government subsidised sport should be explored for low socio-economic demographics.

The Australian Democrats support individuals who choose sport or sports education as a profession.

## **Sporting facilities**

The Democrats believe a greater use of existing community facilities such as school grounds should be encouraged. Commonwealth funding is required for the development of new sports facilities, particularly in areas of disadvantage. Long term planning of facilities in new suburbs and rural areas should be undertaken in partnership between local, state and federal governments.

The Democrats continue to support the Australian Institute of Sport and the State Institutes and Academies of Sport so that excellence in sport remains an Australian goal.

## **Drugs in sport**

The use of performance enhancing drugs in sport remains a significant issue.

The Democrats support drug free sporting competition and are concerned about the health of athletes as well as the messages being sent to aspiring athletes.

The Australian Democrats support the role and work of the Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) in the fight against drugs in sport and believe current funding for ASDA should be maintained. We call for the establishment of an independent drug tribunal to deal efficiently and fairly with allegations as they arise.

## **Water safety**

The Australian Democrats will continue to push for a comprehensive, mandatory national water safety program for all school aged children.

We also support water safety information for tourists visiting Australia. Given that we advertise internationally as an outdoors, active destination, and given the large number of drowning deaths of international visitors at our beaches, we have a responsibility to warn people of risks which Australians are often more attune to.

## **Women and sport**

The Australian Democrats recognise the barriers that women in sport and women's sport faces. We participated in the 2006 Senate committee inquiry into women and sport and fully support the committee's recommendations. Lower earnings, lack of career path, less prestige, child-raising commitments, minimal corporate sponsorship, lack of opportunities and access, as well as trivialised media coverage all contribute. Women are also under-represented in leadership roles in sport and in both social and elite coaching positions.

The Democrats support women in sport at all levels and advocate greater funding and focus on developing and promoting women's sport to lower the barriers.

1 Report of the National Obesity Taskforce, 2003.



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