
Club Development Roles & Responsibilities

Findings & Observations

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Introduction

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) engaged Purpose Driven Performance and Colin Brown Consulting to undertake an independent review of their learning and development and club support (Every Club) programs.

As a component of the review, this paper (Part Three) focusses on Key Objective Two of this project which was

“To consult with industry and local governments to clarify their views on the roles and responsibilities related to club development in WA and inform the DLGSC’s future policies.”

Historically the leadership and coordination for club development has stemmed from the DLGSC, but the launch of the Every Club program in 2018/19 signalled the end of that situation.

This was highlighted during the Strategic Funding Review which recommended that there be a review of *Every Club* and the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of club development support. This review has identified an opportunity for the industry itself to assume greater leadership in the provision of club development support.

This document has been informed by consultations with numerous individuals, groups and workshops (Appendix B) in the period held between January to March 2020, as per the consultation plan (Appendix C). Central to these consultations were two metropolitan workshops and a leadership forum that specifically targeted metropolitan LGAs, SSAs and other industry bodies. It is important to note that this *Roles and Responsibilities paper* sits within the context of an overarching industry learning and development strategy, and that a consistent framework for learning and development can and should be applied to the delivery of club development. In addition, This *paper* flows out of the *Club Development and the Every Club Program report* (Part Two) which provides additional background and context around the proposed model of club development support.

This paper presents possible options for the provision of club development within a model of support built around meeting the needs of the club as the end user. It is important to note that responsibility for club development cannot be assigned to any single stakeholder group, rather it requires a partnership approach from all stakeholders to work together and determine how they can collectively deliver the support required by clubs.

Findings/Observations

What became apparent through the life of the project was that as much as there was no one ‘model’ or approach to club development that fitted all communities, there clearly was no single allocation of role and/or responsibility for ‘industry’ or local government. What did emerge however was that the delivery of club development support and the DLGSC Every

Club program clearly fits within a broader learning and development framework focussed on meeting the needs of the end user (User Centred Approach) with a solutions focus (Figure 1 below). Support for clubs should be built around the framework with the Guiding Principle of a User Centred Approach supported by five 'enabling' pillars:

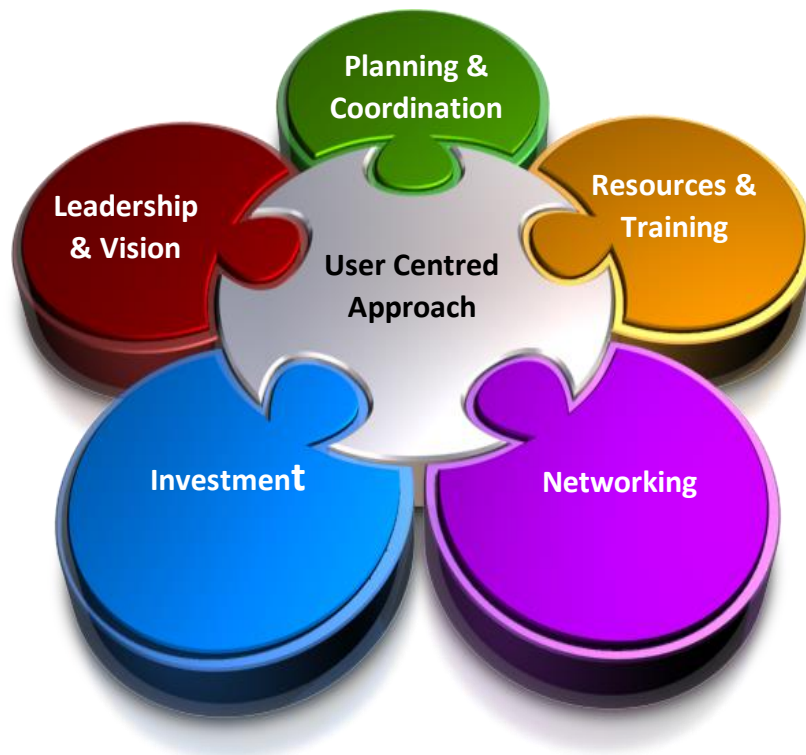
1. Leadership & Vision
2. Planning & Coordination
3. Networking
4. Resources & Training
5. Investment

The project methodology allowed for engagement with a variety of regional and metropolitan local governments of varying size as well as 'industry' in the form of clubs, regional and state associations and SportWest, the peak body for the sport industry in Western Australia. SportWest membership consists of 129 members including 85 SSA's and representatives of over 5,000 sporting clubs in WA. Parks and Leisure Australia, the peak industry body for professionals across the parks and leisure industry was also represented in the consultation. Whilst the Leederville Office of the DLGSC did not participate in the two metropolitan workshops or the leadership forum, the views of the regional offices were gathered through both face-to-face and teleconference consultations. Both direct and indirect feedback was obtained on the involvement of private sector providers of club development support and the role that they play within the sector.

Historically it appears that there have been conflicting thoughts between local government and 'industry' regarding who should do what with clubs. Often the terms 'sport owns sport' and 'our clubs' are used to clarify 'ownership' of the clubs and therefore the responsibility for their development and support. However, when you drill down into the 'industry' there is huge variation in capacity, capability and reach and a similar situation for local governments. By mapping the location of each of the estimated 5,000 or so clubs within the state and linking them to the available support at local, regional and state level the 'web of support' would show:

- greater concentration at local and regional level the further from the metropolitan area;
- less connection to regional and state sport associations the further from the metropolitan area; and
- a handful of SSAs with a comprehensive and state-wide support network.

Figure 1: Framework of Learning and Development Support



An assessment of the potential roles for the key stakeholders delivering club development support was considered against the proposed club support model.

Leadership

A recurring theme raised during the consultation was that there was no longer a clear vision as to the purpose or objective of club development. In parallel with this observation was a view that there was a gap in the overall leadership for club development support.

Discussion in the workshops and leadership forums identified that while the DLGSC had historically provided leadership in club development and may continue to do so to some degree into the future, both LGA's and SSA's considered there was an opportunity for the industry itself to take on a greater role in setting the direction for club development. What this exactly looks like would need to be tested further with the sector.

One of the challenges in discussing leadership in this context is to differentiate between 'leadership' and 'lead agency'. All stakeholders can and should have a leadership role within

their sphere of influence, but there does need to be one agency or organisation that takes the lead role in creating the collective vision and direction, harnessing the collective energies of stakeholders and ensuring the collective outcomes are met. To be successful, club development support needs to be designed and delivered in partnership with the key stakeholders. It is the role of the lead agency/organisation to ensure this happens.

Assuming that appropriate (government) funding would be made available to the lead agency/organisation, a decision needs to be made as to whether the DLGSC resumes the position or it is outsourced to an industry body. Throughout the project the DLGSC have refrained from articulating their preferred position moving forward, citing that they have embarked on this project to get clarity from the industry on that issue. While that position appears to have merit, it is difficult to form a view when the major stakeholder who has historically undertaken that role, is silent.

In assessing the potential for an industry body to assume the lead role for the state-wide delivery of club development, SportWest was seen by both SSA's and LGA's as an organisation potentially capable of undertaking this role. SportWest represents 129 members involved in the conduct, administration, promotion and development of sport and related activities in Western Australia. These members in turn represent over 5,000 community clubs across the state. Undertaking a significant role in the leadership and coordination of club support would sit within their strategic focus, as evidenced by their role in the creation and implementation of Top Club/Top Plan and their significant role in Child Safeguarding within the sector. While they do not have an extensive direct reach outside the metropolitan area, the network offered by their members would offset that to a degree. If resourced appropriately, SportWest is an option to undertake the lead role in and coordination of state-wide club support.

Before a final decision on this position is made the DLGSC need to clarify their thoughts and position regarding the role they would like to play moving forward. There is a degree of urgency in assigning and resourcing this role as it is fundamental to achieving any improvements to the system.

Planning & Coordination

Throughout the consultation respondents noted the absence of an overarching plan for state-wide club development support developed with input and engagement from key stakeholders. The development of a state-wide plan is something that all stakeholders should be engaged in, to provide guidance for improved coordination and planning of club support.

There is a strong appetite from the industry to play a stronger role in leading the development of a state-wide strategy. This could be driven by industry and supported by SportWest, or DLGSC with input from the industry, local government and other key stakeholders, depending on which agency/organisation assumes the lead role in state-wide club development.

The state-wide club development strategy will provide an appropriate framework for the development of club support plans at a local and regional level with input from stakeholders involved in delivering support.

While discussion in the workshops and leadership forum identified some functions such as facility support and sport development more logically align with either the LGA or SSA, there is a broad range of other support functions that cannot be assigned to one particular supporting stakeholder. This is in part due to the:

- a) the specific needs and circumstances of the particular club; and
- b) the capability and strategic focus of the LGA or SSA.

This is why a coordinated approach between all stakeholders providing club support is required to develop plans that identify the priority needs of the club and how this can best be supported.

What has become undeniable is that an effective club support strategy and any accompanying programs must have an end user focus, local solutions, regional coordination and state-wide leadership and coordination.

Across the metropolitan area, feedback through the consultation considered either DLGSC, or the industry with leadership from SportWest as the logical options to support the coordination of planning at a local level.

In assessing which entity is best placed to provide the regional coordination and leadership function the authors believe this should be undertaken by the regional offices of the DLGSC. Their capability, reach and strategic focus are demonstrated as they:

- have a specific focus on the communities of the region in which they are located;
- link the two major stakeholder support groups in local government and sport/recreation; and
- provide a state-wide coverage/network.

Resources & Training

While feedback throughout the consultation identified strong awareness of the Every Club Hub at an SSA and LGA level, the extent to which these stakeholders accessed and used the available resources was significantly lower. Awareness at a club level of the hub was not as strong with most clubs engaged in the consultation process not aware of its existence. Despite this mixed response to the use and awareness of the hub, there was a strong desire from all stakeholders for a centralised hub of resources to be maintained and made available to the industry. It was also noted that many SSA's, some LGA's and private providers also develop and make available resources for clubs. While this does create potential duplication and confusion for clubs, it was acknowledged that the design of a centralised hub should be in partnership, particularly with SSA's to complement their sport specific resources.

As noted in the Findings in Part Two of this report, resources work best when they are complemented with access to a support person / advisor who can assist in the development of solutions which address specific issues facing clubs. These support personnel need to be familiar with and understand the resources that are available and therefore engaged in the development and design of the hub. Options for the 'ownership' of the hub are similar to the

model outlined above under Leadership and Planning – from continuing to be led by DLGSC with increased engagement and input from the industry and LGA's, through to a more formal ownership and coordination role led by the industry. The sourcing of a resource hub from third party / private providers was not seen as the preferred option by stakeholders due to both cost and lack of ownership over the design of resources.

Education and training via workshops, seminars and webinars will work best when they are coordinated as part of a local and regional planning process to meet the needs of local clubs. Who is responsible for delivery will vary depend on the specific needs at the local level. Feedback identified a preference for SSA's and LGA's in the metropolitan area to work in partnership in agreeing to the best format to deliver local club support, rather than through centrally coordinated workshops.

In regional areas, feedback indicated a stronger preference for the regional DLGSC office to take on a greater role in supporting education and training options in conjunction with SSA's / RSA's and LGA's to meet the needs of local clubs.

Networking

Networking was identified throughout the consultation period as highly valued and an area where significant improvement to the delivery of club support can be attained.

Networking should be articulated and planned for across the following priority areas:

- a) Local level planning and coordination amongst SSA's and LGA's to support clubs.
- b) Club to club networking opportunities.

It was evident during the consultation process that several regional areas have established well developed networks which bring together the different stakeholders to provide club support. In these examples the regional DLGSC office played a coordination role in bringing the different stakeholders together to share information and communicate local level plans for the delivery of club development support.

Metropolitan areas should adopt a model which brings together LGA's and SSA's with a focus on geographically coordinated local planning. Part of this coordination should also incorporate opportunities for club to club networking – either from the same sport or across sports. While on a relatively small scale, the consultation process presented clubs with the opportunity to network with their peers and was very positively received.

Investment

As expected, funding was a high priority for all stakeholders in terms of their capacity to deliver club development support. There was an appreciation that alternative models and ways of working are required as the likelihood of funding being available to place club development staff across all SSA's and LGA's was considered unlikely.

Investment into club development support in Western Australia comes from the following three primary sources – DLGSC, LGA's and SSA's. Funding from DLGSC in to the current Every Club program is approximately 11% of the total project costs in metropolitan areas and 22% of total project costs in regional areas. The balance of the total project cost is met by the funding recipient delivering a significant multiplier effect for every dollar invested by the State Government. This relates only to Every Club program funding and does not include additional investment made by LGA's and SSA's outside of the Every Club program. Continued investment from the State Government into club development support is seen as critical by stakeholders and necessary to leverage investment from LGA's and SSA's.

While some local governments previously funded under the Club Development Officer Scheme lamented the change to Every Club, particularly where there was a reduction in funding, the additional flexibility in being able to provide locally tailored solutions under Every Club was recognised. There was overwhelming support from stakeholders for further flexibility towards the use of funding, including towards engaging a human resource where this was determined to be the most appropriate means to deliver the desired outcome to local clubs. Extending funding to a broader range of SSA's should also be considered, where it is agreed to be the optimal way in which to deliver support to local clubs. This would also require a co-investment from the SSA to leverage the overall support made available.

It is worth noting that despite the changes in funding under the Every Club model, local governments are continuing to support club development, possibly because clubs are recognised as an important and integral part of the community.

The additional challenges faced by regional Western Australia in comparison to the metropolitan area is undeniable. Access to and availability of resources (particularly human) is less and the delivery challenges greater within the regions. Smaller regional LGA's noted limited capacity to engage a dedicated club development resource without direct funding support. These LGA's that operate without funding either did not have anyone dedicated to club development or incorporated the role within a broader community development focus. Any club support strategy will require specific investment in regional WA if the resource and delivery challenges are to be overcome.

Several LGA's indicated they were increasing investment into the professional development of club support personnel, noting the benefits of more skilled and capable staff being able to better support the needs of clubs and reducing the reliance of sourcing external expertise. This approach should be adopted more broadly with a capable club development workforce providing long term benefits directly to both clubs and the sector by way of a highly skilled workforce who will progress through the industry in the future.

Local Governments, State Associations and the DLGSC acknowledge they have a significant role in providing funding for club development support and the focus of their support is clear; either geographic (LGAs), activity (SSAs) or state-wide (DLGSC). The clear challenge is to ensure the investments complement each other, creating greater impact and can leverage additional investment from other sources.

Summary

In summary, while the regional offices of the DLGSC are clearly best placed to provide the appropriate leadership and coordination for club support in their particular region, the organisation best placed to provide the metropolitan and state-wide leadership for any club support strategy is not as clear. What was evident through the consultation phase of this review, is a strong desire for the industry to take a greater role in the delivery of club development support. Further investigation would be required to clarify which organisation is best placed. This would require further understanding of the appetite from relevant organisations to assume this role, the deliverables of the role, the relationship between different parties, and the resources required.