# Clearinghouse for Sport: collaboration and the changing landscape of sport information

**Abstract:**

INTRODUCTION
Many Australian sport information service providers have been under threat in recent years with increasing demands to demonstrate relevance and cost effectiveness. While some have closed, those remaining have enhanced their service capacity through the implementation of a successful new collaborative project. The Clearinghouse for Sport (Clearinghouse) is an information and knowledge sharing initiative led by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and delivered by the Australasian Sport Information Network (AUSPIN). It aims to identify, consolidate and present highly valued knowledge to various sport sector audiences via an online community platform.

METHODS
The Clearinghouse has been developed by partners including sports libraries, State departments of sport and recreation, State institutes and academies of sport, National sporting organisations and peak sporting bodies. The purpose is to collect and disseminate audience-appropriate information relevant to the Australian sport sector. Clients include sport practitioners (i.e., coaches, physical educators, scientists, administrators, volunteers, officials and athletes), Australian governments and the wider community. It provides current awareness alerts and services, video and document archives, access to databases, information searches and document delivery, the Catalogue of Australian Sport Sector Library Collections and sector-specific information portfolios.

RESULTS
Since commencing in July 2011 the project has gained 4,632 sport sector members. The most accessed resources include the Current Awareness Services, Research Databases and Library Catalogue. On average, there are 75,013 information transactions (i.e., page opens/views, electronic document and media downloads) performed per month and 3,732 people subscribed to receive a week-day digest of sports news.

CONCLUSIONS
A primary goal for the Clearinghouse is to bring together information and resources from across the sport sector and make them discoverable. The main outcomes include: 1) successfully providing library services in a changing research and information environment, 2) attracting and interacting with key decision makers and professionals across the Australian sporting sector, 3) providing the Australian community with high quality information on sport, physical activity, and active recreation. The Clearinghouse provides additional resources and opportunities for libraries to deliver services to clients, which are faster and remotely accessible. Continuing the tradition of Australia being innovative leaders in the sports sector, the Clearinghouse enables members to readily access and share current information which leads to the progressive development of resources and collaboration across the network. With the provision of services to a wide variety of client groups it has created a sustainable and inclusive model of information provision, and is on track to meet the goal of 5,000 sport sector members by June 2014.

RELEVANCE
The Clearinghouse is a powerful, flexible and reliable resource, enabling sport sector members to be better informed and to have relevant resources to work towards stronger outcomes for Australia. Australia has a proud history of excellence in sport and physical activity but without quality information and research this will not continue. Individual organisations struggle to provide the required depth of information but by building a network of libraries and other sport sector providers the Clearinghouse can, together we really are stronger.

**Paper:**

Sport is widely accepted to be an important contributor to Australian society and, as such, has direct and indirect consequences for a broad array of government and community objectives. However, like many other sectors, Australian sport information service providers have been under threat in recent years with increasing demands to demonstrate relevance and cost-effectiveness. At the same time there was a recognised need for library services, and in fact for more comprehensive information and knowledge management services, across the sector, whether there was access to an existing dedicated library service or not. To meet these needs the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the Australasian Sport Information Network (AUSPIN) conceived and developed the Clearinghouse for Sport (the Clearinghouse). The project has been led by the ASC, through the National Sport Information Centre (NSIC) and delivered by AUSPIN. The Clearinghouse has achieved its goal to identify, consolidate and present highly valued knowledge to various sport sector audiences via an online community platform. It has become a valued initiative, not just within the Australian sport sector, but more broadly by government, academia and the general public both in Australia and overseas—a value that aims to increase in the coming days, months and years as the initiative continues to develop. The Clearinghouse is also an interesting example of ways in which libraries can expand and provide services within a niche subject area, increasing not only the services available, but the number of clients that are able to access the service, which demonstrates both relevance and initiative in these challenging times.

One of the most frequently asked questions is 'What is a Clearinghouse'? The Phase One pilot report defined it as 'a central access point (online information portal and/or physical research library service) [that] serves the needs of users of a specific body of knowledge, and provides information in an audience-appropriate manner to facilitate and support the transfer and development of knowledge'.[1] The concept of clearinghouses was not new in government, and ones like 'Closing the Gap' were identified by stakeholders as good examples of possible approaches. However, none of the existing clearinghouses addressed such a large domain as 'sport'. Effective clearinghouses cannot be set up as simple information repositories or 'dumping grounds'. There is a need for contextualisation, indexing, classification and quality assurance of material in order to provide value. One of the goals for the clearinghouse concept was that it should be a major sectoral information management initiative, and not simply a technology undertaking. The Clearinghouse would harness technology to facilitate a cultural change with key players in the sport industry to enable optimal collaboration. It would also lead to recognition by the sport sector of the importance of information (and knowledge) as a valuable asset and source of competitive advantage. The Clearinghouse should implement information management leading practices to get the best value out of current and future information collections.

An early scoping report by Ernst and Young identified that the 'development of an information clearinghouse for sports can provide a sound platform to support the system leadership role'.[2] This leadership role can be seen as contributing to the generation of ideas, projects and innovation across the sector, being an advisor to government on sports policy and standards, and facilitating conversations with relevant stakeholders. The report concluded that there was a 'strong case for developing an information clearinghouse for the sport sector to enable the key system partners to "work together for Australian sport" and to support "joined-up government" in policy development and service delivery'.[3] Their study indicated the following:

- There is a strong demand from the stakeholder for a 'go-to' place for quality sport information and resources.
- There is an ongoing need to provide and support a high level of collaboration and connectivity across the sector.

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[1] Australian Sports Commission, Clearinghouse for sport pilot report—phase one 2011–12, November 2012, p. 9.

[2] Ernst & Young, 'The scoping of an information clearinghouse', draft report for the Australian Sports Commission, 26 March 2010, p. 1.

[3] Ernst & Young, p. 1.

- There are tangible and intangible benefits that can be delivered from the implementation of an information clearinghouse.
- The implementation scope can be clearly defined and managed.
- The implementation risks including technical risks can be managed.

Innovative and successful initiatives in government emerge from the rigorous study of evidence and the ability of policy makers to take full advantage of community expertise. The concept of 'joined-up government', and providing information and resources to support successful initiatives and policy, is central to the development of the Clearinghouse project.

The imagined leadership role needed to extend outside the sports system to ensure that sport was represented and included as part of whole-of-government considerations in areas such as health, education, indigenous affairs, youth, social inclusion, volunteers and not-for-profit (third) sector engagement.

The Clearinghouse was to:

- help inform and influence policy of government departments at various levels
- provide a coordination channel for information and strategic advice on whole-of-sport issues
- better coordinate policy development where sport is applied—especially health, education and social inclusion
- provide a platform for sport to endorse government policy around various outcomes being linked to sport
- ensure that sport is better aligned to support and inform government policies and programs.

To best achieve these goals, the Clearinghouse would need to strengthen relationships and collaboration across stakeholders and improve the use of resources within the sector. It would also promote better practice, including increasing the trend towards evidence-based policy development at all government levels; enhancing the value and insight from current data collection; introducing leading practices in information management to allow the sector to make better use of information and better document the tacit information that exists in the sport sector; identifying information gaps; and, quite simply, giving sport better access to information.

Based on the strength of the recommendations from various reports and strong sector engagement in July 2011, the Clearinghouse for Sport project was initiated. As mentioned previously, the Clearinghouse is a joint project of the ASC and AUSPIN. AUSPIN was established in 1999[4] and consists of sport and active recreation information providers and professionals based across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. AUSPIN members cooperate with each other by sharing expertise and resources, as well as promoting, developing, and facilitating access to sport information and knowledge resources within their respective states, territories, and national and international jurisdictions. Partners in this network include departments of sport and recreation, state institutes and academies of sport, national sporting organisations and peak sporting bodies.



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[4] Reynolds, Gavin, 'Using a shared governance structure to achieve alignment: Australian sport information network: a brief case study', ASC Leadership Forum, 26 October 2010. (PowerPoint presentation).

In brief, the Clearinghouse is an online collaborative knowledge and information-sharing initiative for the Australian sport sector. It offers knowledge base portfolios—effectively peer-reviewed research articles on relevant topics, business and competitive intelligence, current awareness services, video and document archives, the Catalogue of Australian Sport Sector Library Collections and access to databases, information services and document delivery. The purpose is to collect and disseminate audience-appropriate information relevant to the Australian sport sector. Clients include sport practitioners (that is, coaches, physical educators, scientists, administrators, volunteers, officials and athletes), Australian governments and the wider community.
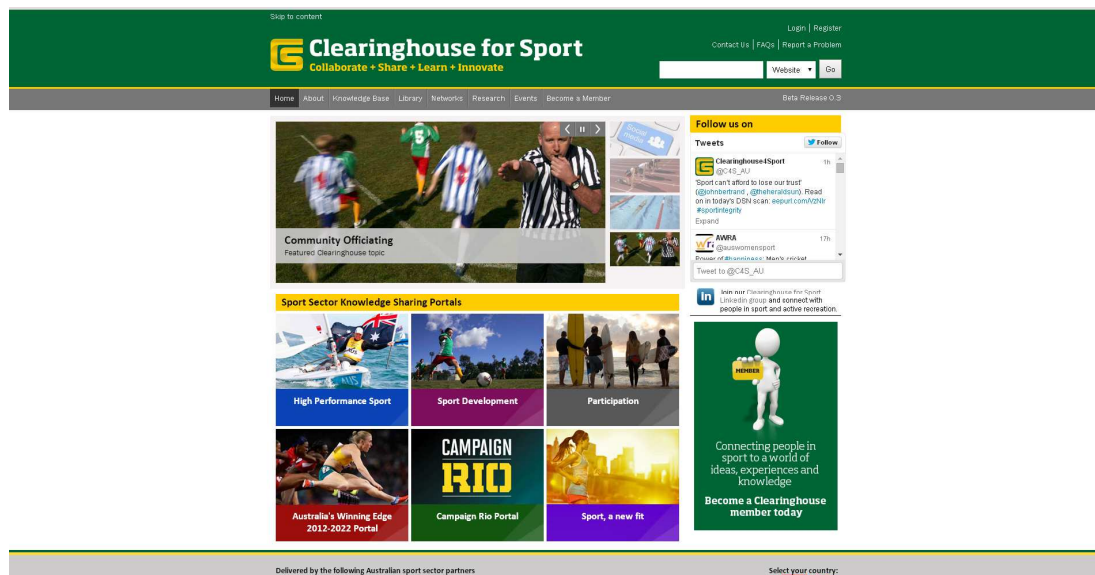


Since its inception the main outcomes for the Clearinghouse have included:

- successfully providing library services in a changing research and information environment
- attracting and interacting with key decision makers and professionals across the Australian sporting sector
- providing the Australian community with high-quality information on sport, physical activity, and active recreation. It needed to facilitate 'Know-how' (practical knowledge—best practice and/or training guides), 'Know-what' (factual knowledge—statistics, results, sports facts, dates), "Know-why" (scientific knowledge—research reports, scientific literature), 'Know-who' (network knowledge—expert directories, key contacts).[5]

To achieve these outcomes has required the following:

- identifying the information and resource needs of the sport sector, and the most effective delivery methods
- building the required networks and membership to ensure that the information is not only relevant but utilised by the sector
- fully developing the project resources so that it can become a sustainable, inclusive and stable platform for information and knowledge-sharing and facilitating collaboration.

This is not a process that can have a finite end date, but one that includes continuous and rigorous evaluation of each service, resource and partnership to ensure that goals can, and are, being met.

Through access to online databases, a union catalogue, reference and alerting services, the Clearinghouse provides library services to a broad range of clients across Australia, integrating traditional library staff and other professionals to provide a seamless service to all clients. This model also allows smaller libraries and information professionals to be backed up when

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[5] Reynolds, Gavin, 'Using a shared governance structure to achieve alignment: Australian sport information network: a brief case study', ASC Leadership Forum, 26 October 2010. (PowerPoint presentation).

unavailable due to leave or absence without delays to service. It enables smaller departments and organisations to access resources and services that would not normally be possible. In particular, access to databases has been negotiated to enable anyone working for a core sport sector organisation such as state and territory departments of sport and recreation, state institutes and academies of sport, Australian government departments, national and state sporting organisations and clubs to access resources that few of the individual organisations/departments would be able to afford independently. Moreover, experienced reference staff are available to help with locating resources through services including document delivery, research profiles and literature searches.
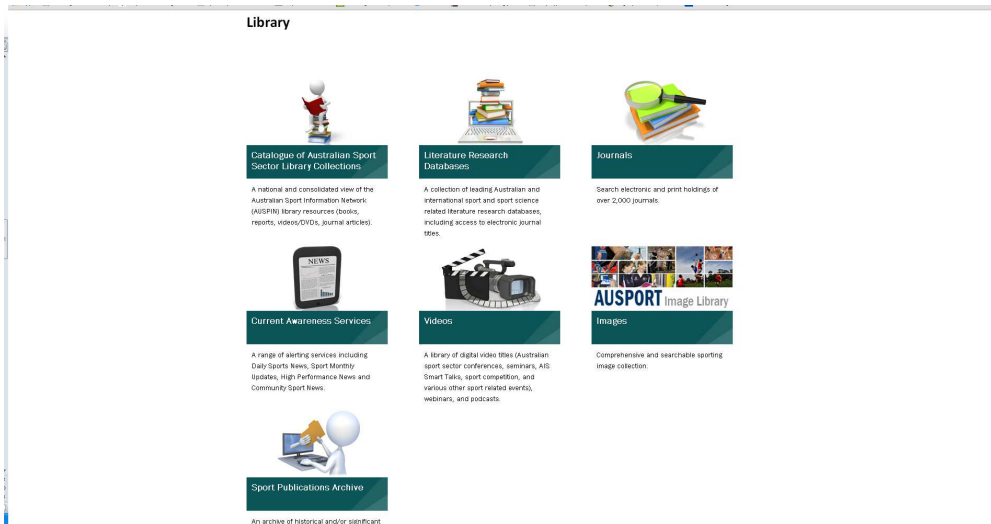


One of the identified gaps within the sport sector was the ability to search online for information relating to resources. A union catalogue, using the Libero Library Management System now provides the ability to do so. This catalogue is open to membership from any national, state or peak sporting body or department. The Catalogue of Australian Sport Sector Libraries (the Catalogue) has allowed sports libraries to make their records available online; many of these were previously undiscoverable. Furthermore, the Catalogue has also allowed national and peak sporting agencies—such as the Australian Paralympic Committee, Athletics Australia and Swimming Australia—to have the same privileges. As part of the process professional library staff have supported knowledge management across the sector by using library expertise to preserve and catalogue resources. They have assisted sporting organisations in developing an understanding of the need to preserve information and resources, and have provided the skills required to do so. In particular, digitising and preserving video recordings and documents enables access to current and future generations, as well as ensuring accurate cataloguing to enhance discoverability. The Catalogue is becoming a powerful tool for research within the sport sector by providing access to information on available resources, research and, where possible, immediate access to electronic resources such as reports, portfolios, articles and videos. As it is publically available, I have also noticed an increase in the number of times catalogue records have appeared in relevant Google searches; this indicates a good online presence.
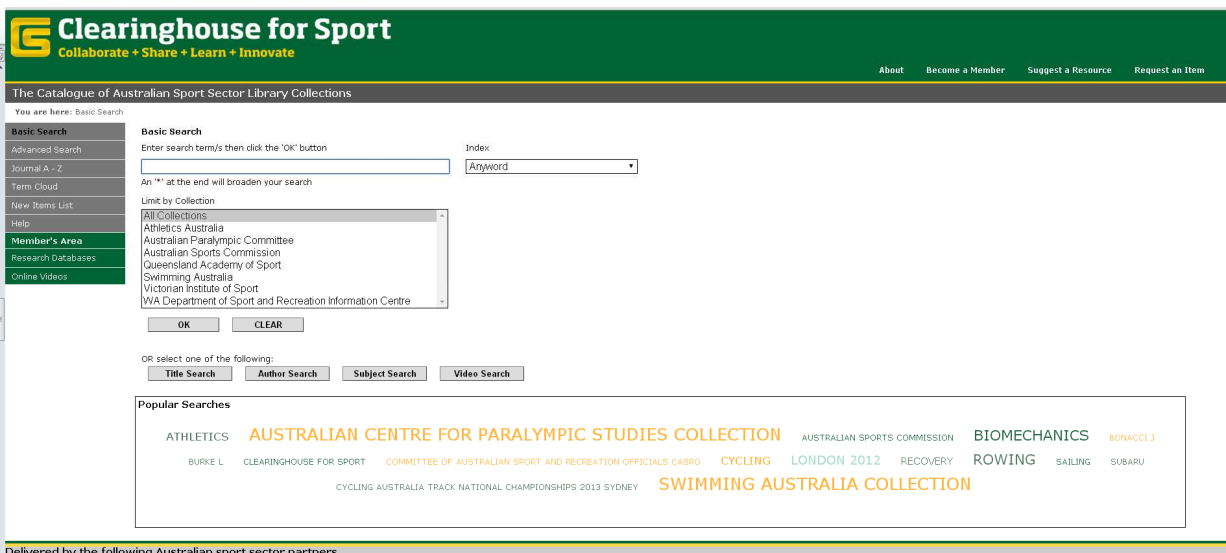
Some of the most popular and relevant services the Clearinghouse provides are the current awareness alerting services. The *Daily Sports News*, a weekday digest that is delivered via email is the most popular. Feedback on this service, to which there are approximately 5,000 subscribers, is that it provides a timely and relevant summary of current sports news, trends and research. The service is highly valued and not available through any other public or commercial product/service. Where possible all links are open source and do not require access to subscriptions or pay walls.
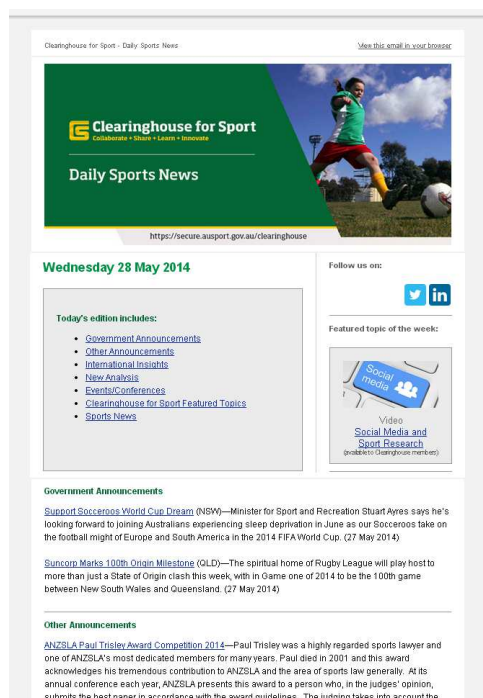


The other main alerting service is aimed more specifically at sophisticated information needs within the sector, the *Sport Monthly Updates*. These updates highlight the most recent academic articles from the SPORTDiscus database on over 70 selected topics of interest, along with recently released books, videos, reports and web resources. SPORTDiscus is a comprehensive research database of sport and sport science literature. Core clients have access to direct links to the database, including links to the full text article where available. Non-core clients (including general public and non-sport-related state or local governments) have access to the references, including abstracts, but not the links to the database. The *Sport Monthly Updates* have proved a valuable service for alerting clients to recent, reputable research in a variety of high-performance, participation, sport-specific and government policy subject areas, and has been increasing in usage, particularly in the past 12 months.



All alerting services can be sent either centrally or by specific state partners, allowing them to customise the product as required, and ensuring that feedback and requests generated by alerts

are sent to the relevant staff. Clearinghouse administrators can use the platform to deliver both secure and non-secure sport information services to members within and beyond their state and territory jurisdictions. As a result more Australian sport sector members can now access a quality range of online sport information services and research resources. Overall, the Clearinghouse averages over 100,000 transactions per month, including page opens/views, electronic document and media downloads. This is a significant indication of interest and need within the sector. As a comparison, in the 2008–09 financial year, the National Sport Information Centre (NSIC) facilitated approximately 20,000 transactions per month.

The Clearinghouse has always been driven by the idea of networking within the sport sector. While the key network is AUSPIN, additional networks have been built within the Clearinghouse for secure information sharing and more broadly through identifying experts to review Knowledge Base portfolios, engaging with social media through Twitter and LinkedIn and in actively encouraging membership by everyone with an interest in the sport and physical activity sector. State departments of sport and recreation and the ASC have been responsible for the majority of the membership growth, through working relationships with relevant state and national sporting bodies, and demonstrating the benefits of Clearinghouse membership for respective staff and organisations. Using these methods the Clearinghouse has enabled a more inclusive model of sport information to be promulgated, and through the various Clearinghouse administrative and network partners, actively advocates for increased information sharing within the sector.

In any subject area there is a requirement to identify common information needs, whether the questions asked are routine, essential to normal operations or simply topical. The *Knowledge Base*, which is at the core of the Clearinghouse, has identified many of these topics through the broad knowledge of the sport sector available to the partners and users. The aim is to proactively provide information to the sport sector on both high performance and general participation. The *Knowledge Base* actively seeks to anticipate what the sector needs and to ensure that the information is available when there is a query. Topics are not locked but are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current, relevant and that they continue to meet the needs of users. When anyone has a question, the *Knowledge Base* seeks to ensure that an answer can be found, quickly, concisely and with reference to where further information can be located. The question may come from any of the following: a club, sporting body (national, state or peak), government department (Commonwealth or state), media representative or member of the general public. The *Knowledge Base* satisfies clients' queries by providing what are effectively peer-reviewed research articles. Many of these topics, such as 'Sport Participation in Australia', 'Concussion in Sport', 'Women's Sport' or 'Social Media' are relevant to all levels of the sport sector and of particular interest with regard to policy and procedures. Providing explanatory information, case studies and links to relevant research supports clients to develop their own resources or information and also helps to eliminate duplication of effort; there is no need to 're-invent the wheel' if someone has already provided the blueprints.



**Knowledge Base**

The Clearinghouse for Sport, Knowledge Base, provides members with a repository of information portfolios covering key topics and issues relevant to the Australian sport sector. The information presented here will be continually scrutinised and assessed by Clearinghouse members and subject area experts. This process should help ensure that the Knowledge Base and its associated information resources remain current, accurate, and fit for purpose.

**High Performance Sport Portal**

- Athlete Pathways and Development
  - Athlete Pathways
  - Resource Repository
  - Talent Identification
- Competition and Results
  - Australian World Champions (1993 to present)
  - Commonwealth Games
  - Campaign Rio Portal
  - Competitions Calendar
  - Olympic Games
  - Paralympic Games
  - Selection Policies and Procedures
- Daily Training Environment
  - Biomechanics
  - European Training Centre
  - Performance Analysis
  - Performance Psychology
  - Performance Recovery
  - Physical Therapies
  - Physiology
  - Skill Acquisition
  - Sports Medicine
  - Sports Nutrition
  - Strength and Conditioning
  - AIS Best Practice Handbook
- Performance Coaching and Leadership
  - AIS Centre for Performance Coaching and Leadership
  - Performance Coaching and Leadership Information Hub

**Sport Development Portal**

- Sport Integrity
  - Alcohol Sponsorship and Advertising in Sport
  - Behaviour Guidelines
  - Child Protection
  - Drugs in Sport
  - Ethics
  - Harassment and Discrimination
  - Match-Fixing and Illegal Sports Betting
  - Member Protection
  - Play by the Rules
  - Sexuality and Gender Perspectives on Sports Ethics
  - Tobacco Sponsorship and Advertising in sport
- Sport Systems, Structures and Pathways
  - Athlete Pathways
  - Competition Framework
  - International Sports Systems
  - Australian Sports and Sports Organisations
  - Structure of Australian Sport
- Sport and Government Policy Objectives
  - Australian Sport Policy
  - Childhood Obesity
  - Crime Reduction
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Groups
  - Indigenous Australians and Sport
  - International Sport for Development
  - Not-for-profit (NFP) Sector

**Participation Portal**

- Community Engagement
  - Community Coaching
  - Community Officiating
  - Engaging Parents
  - Junior Sport Framework
  - Market Segmentation
  - Physical Activity Guidelines
  - Play by the Rules
  - Social Inclusion
  - Volunteers in Sport
- Community Participation
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Groups
  - Indigenous Australians and Sport
  - Persons with Disability
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Physical Activity and Recreation
  - Sport Participation in Australia
  - Volunteers in Sport
  - Water Safety
  - Women's Sport
- Funding
  - Participation Grants & Funding
- Program and Product Development
  - Active After-school Communities (AASC)
  - Aussie Sports
  - Modified Sports
- Sport Injuries and Medical Conditions
  - Concussion and Head Trauma
  - Exercise and Heat Illness

One of the more recently identified gaps within the sport sector knowledge and information structure has been for business intelligence and the basic information required to know how individual sports are structured, organised, funded, supported and any significant documents, policies and case studies that demonstrate this. Developing strategies and evaluating the success of policies and planning is hampered when one cannot effectively compare the same information about multiple organisations or time periods. Effectively, sports and government bodies were often attempting to 'compare apples with oranges' rather than 'apples with apples'. The *Australian Sports Organisations* profiles are an attempt to redress this gap. Using a mixture of open source and proprietary information, this area of the Clearinghouse allows, for the first time, a clear, concise and consistent way to compare sports, measure effectiveness and increase the opportunity for sharing successful actions to strengthen the whole sector. There are some restrictions on access to resources that could potentially provide a competitive advantage to other organisations, either Australian or International, commercial or not-for-profit. Clearinghouse researchers have developed information for each of the ASC's recognised National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and National Sporting Organisations for people with a Disability (NSODs)—a total of 94 organisations. Information includes competition results, participation rates, high-performance programs and research activities. Examples of publications covered are annual reports, strategic plans, financial reports, case studies, organisation and performance reviews, investment agreements and other significant documents.

**Australian Sports and Sports Organisations**

**Prepared by:** Greg Blood, Australian Institute of Sport Emeritus Researcher
**Last updated:** May 2014

Please refer to the Clearinghouse for Sport Disclaimer page for more information on this content.

**Introduction**

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has a long-established definition and criteria for recognising which activities are defined as sports and which sporting bodies are recognised by the ASC as National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and National Sporting Organisations for people with a Disability (NSOD).

The ASC defines 'Sport' as: 'A human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill which, by its nature and organisation, is competitive and is generally accepted as being a sport'.

More information regarding ASC recognition and eligibility can be found on the ASC website.

**Recognised National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and National Sporting Organisations for people with a Disability (NSOD)**

Information includes: annual reports, results, high performance programs, major documents and research activities.

| NSO and NSOD | Sport | Recognition Status | Funding Status | Winning Edge Status | Participation Priority Sport | Mandatory Governance Requirements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Archery Australia | Archery | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Athletics Australia | Athletics | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Australian Football League | Australian Rules | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Australian Sport and Recreation Association for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (AUSRAPID) | AUSRAPID | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Badminton Australia | Badminton | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Australian Baseball Federation Inc | Baseball | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Basketball Australia | Basketball | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Australian Baton Twirling Association | Baton Twirling | ✓ | | | | |
| Australian Biathlon Association Inc | Biathlon | ✓ | | | | |
| Australian Billiards and Snooker Council | Billiards and Snooker | ✓ | | | | |
| Blind Sport Australia | Blind Sports | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

In progress is a similar project aimed at developing competitive intelligence on international countries, particularly those that Australia competes closely with in Olympic and Paralympic sports. The *International Sports Systems* profiles provide information resources and contacts for high-performance organisations in major sporting nations.

**International Sports Systems**

The portfolio of information covering this topic is scheduled for production. Please see production and release details below.

**To be prepared by:** Gavin Reynolds, Director, NSIC/Clearinghouse, Australian Sports Commission
**Scheduled draft release:** June 2014

Please refer to the Clearinghouse for Sport Knowledge Base Plan for more information concerning the development of this content.
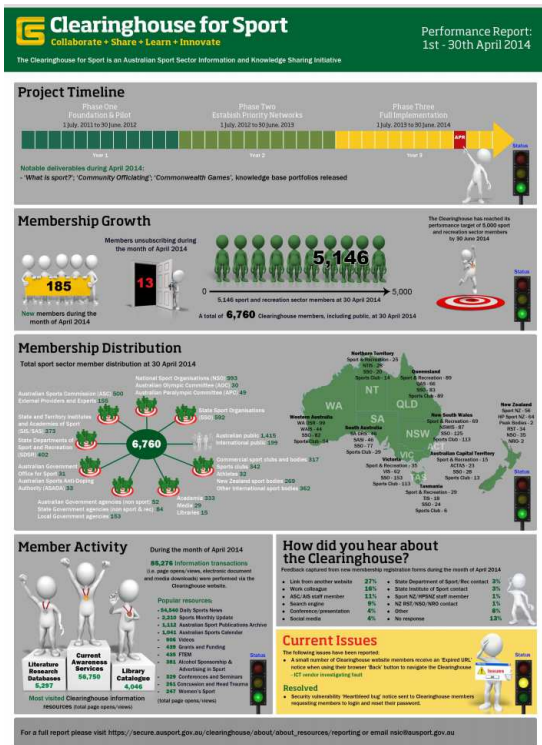
**Introduction**

Information resources and contacts for high performance organisation in major sporting nations.

| Country | Olympic Summer Games 2012 Rank | Paralympic Summer Games 2012 Rank | Olympic Winter Games 2014 Rank | Paralympic Winter Games 2014 Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 22 | 7 | – | – |
| Canada | 36 | 20 | 3 | 3 |
| China | 2 | 1 | 12 | – |
| France | 7 | 16 | 10 | 5 |
| Germany | 6 | 8 | 6 | 2 |
| Italy | 8 | 13 | 22 | – |
| Japan | 11 | 24 | 17 | 7 |
| Netherlands | 13 | 10 | 5 | =14 |
| New Zealand | 15 | 21 | – | =16 |
| Russia | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| South Korea | 5 | 12 | 13 | – |
| Spain | 21 | 17 | – | 13 |
| United Kingdom | 3 | 3 | 19 | 10 |
| United States of America | 1 | 6 | 4 | 8 |

Delivered by the following Australian sport sector partners                    Select your country:

Apart from proprietary and licensed material (such as databases, some videos and ASC-specific resources), anyone can access the Clearinghouse. This general accessibility means that the project provides services to the broader sport sector including clubs, athletes, local government and the general public. It has increased the impact and relevance of all partners involved in the project, and works to improve knowledge sharing within the sector. The success of the project in reaching a broad range of the community is evidenced by the membership breakdown. While the majority of members are from the strategically targeted key sport and recreation categories such as national, state or peak sporting bodies, state departments of sport and recreation, state institutes and academies of sport, other federal non-sport government agencies and the ASC, about one quarter of members are either Australian or international public, non-sport government agencies at the state and local level, commercial or non-commercial sporting clubs, athletes or international sporting bodies.  Referrals are one of the primary reported methods of finding out about the Clearinghouse, either from other websites or work colleagues. The Clearinghouse was never envisioned to compete with the primary corporate websites of partner organisations, but to service key organisations and individuals with more sophisticated information needs. The original membership target was to reach 5,000 sport sector members by June 2014. This target was surpassed in April 2014, the actual total membership on that date being 6,760, of which 5,146 were identified as being part of the core sport sector audience targeted by the Clearinghouse concept. In the future the Clearinghouse administrators hope to increase that number to over 10,000 by including even more key sector members and interested individuals.



As mentioned in the introduction, sport libraries and information services have been under increasing pressure not only to provide services within an often-shrinking resource environment, but to demonstrate relevance and effectiveness. The development of a one-page visual report format, or infographic, has been extremely successful in helping to do this. All partners have been able to use the report without any difficulty to demonstrate progress towards project goals and achievements. The report can be customised to specific regions/departments as required. The monthly Clearinghouse progress reports are made publically available through the *About* page on the website in PDF format, which additionally makes them very simple to share within internal and external networks and has led to a better understanding of the project across the country. The performance reports provide a valuable resource for demonstrating the popularity and increasing breadth of services provided by all partners.

While the majority of this paper is obviously focused on the changing landscape of sport information in Australia, it is relevant to consider whether there are any ways in which other niche libraries and/or sectors with specific information needs can embrace the Clearinghouse model. The obvious answer would be yes. Although every specialist area will have different needs, the overall

indications for the future are that information services will need to work hard to provide services and resources to their client base with reduced budgets and staffing levels. Working effectively with partners outside specific library-based institutions allows the integration of broader perspectives on individual sectors or industries and leads to a better understanding of what the sector, and therefore clients, really need. Using online delivery models is now an established technique, and working with various organisations often leads not only to better overall staff support for services, but also an opportunity to rapidly build membership, resources and networks. Individual organisations are increasingly struggling to provide the resources and information that their clients/members need, but a broad network of providers can help to grow, develop and deliver stronger services for all.

Since its inception in July 2011 the Clearinghouse has become a powerful, flexible and reliable resource, enabling sport sector members to be better informed and to have relevant resources to work towards stronger outcomes. Australia has a proud history of excellence in sport and physical activity, but without quality information and research this will not continue. The Clearinghouse has definitely demonstrated that it is possible to revolutionise the information landscape of a sector while strengthening the individual organisations that participate in the project. It has contributed to their ability to demonstrate increasing service and resource delivery and to prove their relevance and effectiveness to organisational and broader sector goals. Individual libraries and departments often struggle to provide the required depth of information; however, by building a network of sport sector providers, the Clearinghouse can—together we really are stronger.

Word Count: 3,634

Resources:

Australian Sports Commission, *Single point of truth (SPOT): an information clearinghouse concept for Australian sport*, National Sport Information Centre, Canberra, 2010.

Australian Sports Commission, *Clearinghouse for Sport: pilot report—phase one 2011–12*, Canberra, 2012.

Ernst & Young, 'The scoping of an information clearinghouse', a draft report for the Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 2010.

Reynolds, Gavin, 'Using a shared governance structure to achieve alignment: Australian sport information network: a brief case study', ASC Leadership Forum, 26 October 2010. (PowerPoint presentation).