

Creating a Club

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Sport and recreation organisations are established for many reasons. Typically however, new organisations are formed as communities grow and additional suburbs are developed, or as a result of existing organisations expanding their operations. Organisations are created and people join them because organisations achieve much more than individuals can acting alone. In the sport and recreation industry for example, this may mean providing opportunities not provided directly by government (eg organising local sporting competitions). Organisations also meet many of the social needs within communities (eg through interaction both on and off the field). Furthermore, the establishment of formal affiliated sport and recreation clubs facilitates involvement in other types of activities (eg regional, state and national competitions).

The process of creating a new sport and recreation organisation is a complex one and needs to be carefully planned if the organisation is to succeed in the long term. Many sport and recreation organisations that seem to drift from one crisis to another may do so because insufficient attention was paid to understanding key pieces of community information and trends during the establishment phase. It is important to determine objectively whether the organisation is feasible before committing to its foundation.

The purpose of this module is to:

- emphasise the importance of planning during the foundation of sport and recreation organisations
- highlight the types and sources of critical information required for sport and recreation planning

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discuss the importance of creating awareness

outline a series of steps and issues critical to the success of creating a new sport and

recreation organisation

Planning – the key to long-term viability

Planning suggests that there need to be changes to the current situation – that there is some

desire to develop something new. Although the desire to change is important, it is not enough

to guarantee success. To plan effectively, there is a need to thoroughly understand the current

situation in order to know what change is required, why it is required, how change can be

achieved and when the process should be completed. To develop a new sport and recreation

organisation from scratch requires a systematic approach.

There are numerous benefits from using a thorough planning process rather than adopting an

ad hoc approach to decision making about new sport and recreation organisations. It has been

suggested that among other things, planning assists with achieving: \(^1 << \text{Marriott}, KL (1990)

Recreation Planning: A Guide for Local Government. Adelaide: South Australian Department

of Sport and Recreation.>>

social justice (eg through identifying where sport and recreation opportunities have been

poorly supplied)

efficiency (eg avoiding duplication of opportunities and facilities)

creating new lifestyle opportunities (eg through identifying community wants)

community ownership (eg by identifying and involving those with an interest and creating

awareness in others).

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These issues are often important considerations in many funding submissions and therefore it

is very useful to start incorporating them into the organisational culture as soon as possible.

Importantly, appropriate planning processes in the early stages of new sport and recreation

organisation development can act as the basis of the long-term viability of the organisation

itself as well as the overall community. Those people involved with the foundation process

should always be aware of the community development aspect of their role – the new

organisation will not be founded nor will it continue to operate in a vacuum. This also

suggests that the process of planning (especially the ways in which the community is involved

and develops a sense of ownership) is just as important as the final outcome.

While there are many approaches to organisational planning (see the *Club Planning* module),

in this particular context it is critical to initially establish the need for a new organisation. This

will involve a number of steps. The first is to understand the nature of the community in

which it is intended to establish the sport and recreation organisation.

Some example of situations in which sport and recreation organisations may need to be

founded

1. A teacher at a primary school in a new suburb has 20 enthusiastic netball players. There is

no netball club in the area so it seems like it would be a good idea to set up a sport and

recreation organisation.

2. There are 10 basketball players, a coach, a referee and they want to enter in a competition.

3. A rugby union club is getting too big, and is catering mainly for juniors. A number of

people have expressed an interest in setting up a club purely for grade players.

4. A person who loves bushwalking has just moved to a new area. There are no clubs in the

area and they want to do something about it.

Information needed to form a club

Although people may feel that they 'just know' a new sport and recreation organisation is

needed, or have a strong personal interest in developing a particular sport, this is not enough

to accurately gauge the extent of potential demand for the organisation or its likelihood of

survival. The process needs to be approached as if you were seeking to establish a small

business in the area. In other words, you need some basic 'research' to determine the likely

success of the venture. It is important to have factual data against which other types of

information (eg assumptions, opinions, input from the community) can be evaluated. The

information will also be invaluable when developing the organisation prospectus and seeking

funding assistance.

The founders of a proposed organisation might address the following types of questions:

- What are the sport and recreation activity patterns and interests of the local community?
- Are there emerging sport and recreation participation trends?
- What sport and recreation opportunities and facilities currently exist?
- How are sport and recreation facilities distributed is there likely to be a shortfall in the future?
- What is the demographic profile of the community (eg age, sex, occupation, income)?
- Is the demographic profile expected to change over time?
- What is the current population and expected growth rate?
- What are the means of transport and public transport systems?
- How far will most people need to travel to the new facility?
- What future plans does the local council have for the area?

All these questions should be examined before any concrete plans are further developed. Understanding the nature of the community, its likely future prospects and expected change patterns will prove useful when it comes to understanding how the new organisation can play a role in the community and its relationships with existing community infrastructures. Having a firm grasp of these issues will help the founders anticipate questions that may arise about the need for the new organisation and also help when talking to local government officials, bank staff, state sporting organisations and other prospective stakeholders (eg potential sponsors). The more the founders are fully prepared and briefed about the community context in which the organisation is expected to operate, the more likely it is that there will be cooperation rather than opposition to the concept. This early research phase may also identify where and why there may be potential opposition to the formation of the new organisation and allow contingency planning to occur. The information may also reveal certain groups that

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may have been overlooked in the past (eg ethnic groups, people with a disability) which may

be a fruitful source of future members.

It should be emphasised however that this information does not provide all the answers – it is

just one type of information that will be used in the establishment process. Direct community

input is also a high priority.

Information sources

It is important to realise that those responsible for trying to get the new sport and recreation

organisation 'off the ground' don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to finding the

necessary background or 'context' information. Most of it has probably already been

collected, analysed and summarised for a variety of other community development purposes.

There are a number of different agencies that have an information collection and analysis role

and some may provide the information needed for little or no cost.

These organisations include:

• the Australian Bureau of Statistics (eg census data, household expenditure survey)

• local councils (eg local population and recreation participation trends)

state government planning authorities

state departments of sport and recreation

• state government education departments

• national and state sport and recreation organisations (many have guides to help set up new

clubs).

It may be important to check the degree of consistency between the agencies particularly in respect of their forecasts for future growth as this is a notoriously inexact 'science'. The safest course is often to take the middle ground between the extremes.

Decision to proceed

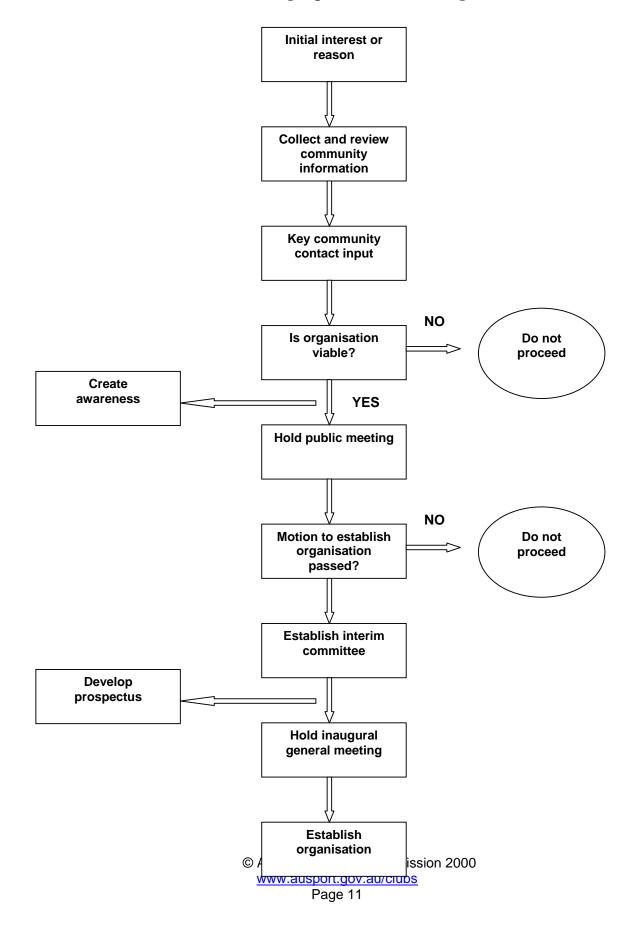
Once the broader community background information has been collected and analysed, it is time to relate it to the specific sport and recreation organisation you are considering and use it to make a decision on whether to proceed. At this point it is critical to discuss the concept with key community contacts (if this hasn't occurred already). These may include, for example, other sport and recreation organisations, state and regional sport associations, local government sport and recreation officers, sport development officers, other community groups and school principals. This step provides the 'on-the-ground' reality check to determine whether the hard data matches community views, priorities, expectations and attitudes. Where there is a reasonable degree of consistency, the path ahead is somewhat easier than if there are considerable discrepancies. This stage initiates the community involvement process that is critical to long-term success. Some organisations may also conduct a small survey of residents to gauge opinions about establishing a new sport and recreation organisation – this information can also act as a 'reality check'.

It may be that there are alternatives to forming a new sport and recreation organisation (even though the objective data may indicate it is likely to be viable). Can another organisation expand its operations to include the expected functions of the new organisation? It is important to avoid the situation where if 'too many similar organisations compete with each other for membership, active participation, finance, publicity and community support, then the

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result may turn out to be a series of weak and ineffective bodies rather than one strong and influential body'. ²<< Renton, NE (1991) *Guide for Voluntary Associations*. Sydney: The Law Book Company, p 1.>>>

Flowchart for creating a sport and recreation organisation



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Once this stage has been completed it is time to make a decision on whether establishing the

new organisation appears to be a viable prospect.

The summary checklist below will help you determine whether to proceed further.

Does this type of sport and recreation organisation already exist in the area?

Is it active?

Does it cater for its members?

• Is it likely there is room (eg playing fields) in the area or sufficient demand for another

sport and recreation organisation?

Can this interest be sustained or will the new organisation just be catering for a short-term

need?

• What is the potential for funding/financial viability?

Will the new sport and recreation organisation be able to share existing

facilities/equipment or need to provide new ones? At what cost?

Where will funds come from?

Will there be sufficient volunteers to help with establishing the new organisation?

If, after completing the checklist, it appears that there is sufficient demand and necessary

resources within the community, then the sport and recreation organisation establishment

process can proceed to the next stage. This involves holding an initial public meeting, forming

an interim committee and conducting the inaugural general meeting. The success of this stage

depends on gaining sufficient community involvement.

Creating awareness and involvement

The need to develop awareness about the first public meeting provides the catalyst for initiating the marketing of the new organisation. Because the way the new organisation first presents itself to the community may subsequently influence how the community perceives it, it is critical to adopt a marketing approach to the process (see the *Marketing and Promoting Sport and Recreation* module). Such a view also reinforces the need for the early research phase, as it is important to have an organised and prepared image. The founders also need to be very clear about the purpose of the organisation and the main short-term and long-term goals.

Fostering a wide cross-section of community involvement is vital for the long-term viability of the organisation. It seems that 'consultations can help "galvanise" a community and give it a sense of direction and purpose'. S
*Marriott, KL (1990) Recreation Planning: A Guide for Local Government. Adelaide: South Australian Department of Sport and Recreation, p
61.>>> Because citizens are gradually demanding that they have more say in the future of their communities, it is important to meet these expectations. It is also dangerous to assume that everyone will equally support every new community initiative. However, rather than being threatened by such a prospect, the founders should realise that widespread community involvement means that the planning outcomes are more likely to accurately represent community views. Involvement can also mean more of a sense of ownership and although some may never become members, they may still be 'silent supporters' of the organisation and what it represents to the community.

Initial public meeting

Firstly, a formal meeting of all those interested in being a part of a new sport and recreation organisation, whether simply as players or perhaps as officials (eg committee member, fundraiser, coach) must be organised. Before announcing the meeting you need to decide what day, time and place appear to be optimal to get as many people as possible to attend. It is critical that the meeting is widely advertised in a number of different ways using a variety of sources. These may include the local papers and ethnic press outlets (using both media releases and paid advertisements), community service announcements on radio and TV, the Internet, community centres, schools, supermarket bulletin boards, signs and letter drops. Some people (eg sport association and local government representatives, politicians, high profile guest speakers) may be personally invited to attend.

Given that this is the first meeting and there may be a wide cross-section of interests and views represented, it is important that the meeting is well structured to ensure that that an outcome is achieved (see the *Conducting Meetings* module). The following is a suggested meeting procedure:

- Welcome and explain briefly the reason for the meeting.
- Record names, addresses, telephone numbers and any special interests and skills of people attending and those who may have been unable to attend but have indicated an interest.
- Summarise the key findings and issues arising from the research and initial community contact phase present a recommendation about the establishment of the sport and recreation organisation (this may be in the form of a previously prepared formal motion see the *Conducting Meetings* module).
- Guest speakers.

- General discussion and opportunity for questions. (A temporary secretary should take notes.)
- Re-evaluate whether to form a sport and recreation organisation.
- Vote on whether to form a sport and recreation organisation.
- Elect an interim committee (Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer) to coordinate further development of the sport and recreation organisation structure.
- Determine a timeline for the establishment process (eg general meeting two months from now).

The interim committee

The interim committee should have a wider community representation than the immediate founders. Members should also have some knowledge about issues such as meeting procedures, public relations and marketing. The interim committee must carry out the following tasks before the inaugural general meeting:

- Develop a constitution or charter to cover the aims, objectives and rules under which the sport and recreation organisation will operate. It will be difficult for any organisation to run smoothly without this statement of unified purpose, which also protects members and officers.
- Begin developing the organisation prospectus (eg to present to possible stakeholders) it
 is critical to be organised and to begin long-term planning immediately.
- Develop a draft budget and indicate possible sources of funding.
- Develop a database of prospective members.
- Determine the most effective means of attracting new members.
- Establish links with other sport and recreation organisations, schools or community groups (eg invite them to be represented at meetings).

• Finalise a date for the first general meeting of the new organisation.

• Investigate incorporation for the organisation (see the Legal Issues and Risk Management

module).

Developing the prospectus

A prospectus outlines the purpose of the organisation and the target audiences. This can be a

useful marketing document whether it is to potential members, sponsors or the media. A

prospectus may also outline the rights and obligations of the organisation's members.

Some questions that might be asked in writing a prospectus include:

• Section 1 Why/for whom does the sport and recreation organisation exist?

• Section 2 What activities and services will the organisation provide?

• Section 3 How will the organisation be structured?

• Section 4 How will the organisation be financed?

Answering each of the questions will give a broad outline of the sport and recreation

organisation. To further develop the prospectus, other information can be added under each of

the sections, including:

Section 1 – Introduction and rationale

• A brief background and rationale for the need for the organisation (based on earlier

research).

• Types of membership planned — (eg individual/family/group/associate/school).

• The future direction of the organisation.

Section 2 – Activities and services

- What services will the sport and recreation organisation provide and what will be the cost of these services to participants?
- What are the benefits of being a member?
- What participation opportunities are there, including social/competitive/noncompetitive?
- What skill development opportunities are there? How can they be accessed?
- How wide-ranging are the activities? Do they cater for children, older adults, people with disabilities? How do they cater for each of the groups?
- What resources are available? Does the organisation have any access to books, videos, kits or pamphlets? What equipment/facilities exist?
- What education/training opportunities exist and in what format?
- What support services (such as child minding) are available?
- What social events/opportunities does the organisation offer?
- Outline risk management procedures.

Section 3 - Organisational structures and processes

- How/when is the committee elected?
- Who is on the committee? What roles do they fulfil?
- What is the overall organisational structure? a diagram may help.
- What support roles are there? technical officials/administrators/backup eg supportdrivers and canteen workers.
- How to volunteer.
- What support is provided to volunteers? eg training, reimbursement of expenses, incentives and recognition.

 What linkages exist with other associations, including local government/state organisation of the activity/regional associations/other sport and recreation organisations/community groups/schools.

• What communication systems/channels exist?

• Is there a newsletter?

 Are there codes of practice or codes of behaviour for participants, parents of participants, officials?

Section 4 - Finances

 How the organisation operates financially, eg membership subscriptions, fees for service.

• Where funds/grants are expected to obtained.

• What sponsorship does the organisation have and/or plan to seek?

• How are sponsors acknowledged?

• What assets (including facilities) does the organisation have?

Writing a prospectus takes time, but will provide the new organisation with a valuable tool for its further development.

Inaugural general meeting

At least two weeks prior to the intended date, the interim committee should circulate to potential members the proposed constitution or charter, and notice of when this first general meeting will be held. Again there needs to be an attempt to use a wide variety of sources and types of media to promote awareness.

Suggested meeting procedure:

- welcome, roll call and apologies
- distribute sign-up and contact details sheet
- description of interim committee's activities since the initial meeting
- discussion of proposed constitution and any suggested amendments
- vote on adoption of constitution
- discuss structure of new committee
- elect officers
- discuss the various tasks needing to be completed before the next meeting
- set membership fees for the first year
- any general business
- date of the next meeting.

Establishing links and relationships

Once a decision has been made to form a new sport and recreation organisation, it is also important to determine whether the organisation should affiliate with a larger parent body.

There are many advantages to affiliating with a state/national body. Depending on the nature of the proposed organisation 's future plans, affiliation should be investigated and subsequently discussed at a meeting. Some advantages of affiliation include:

- giving members the opportunity to participate at state and national levels
- providing pathways for advancement in coaching, administration and officiating
- cost savings for the organisation in the area of insurance
- access to knowledge, skills and experience passed on by the more senior body.

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The newly formed organisation may also wish to consider developing a relationship with a

larger multi-purpose sport and recreation organisation. While this may mean that the new

organisation may not stand alone, becoming a 'subsidiary' of a larger organisation can often

mean instant access to funding, prospective members/participants and facilities.

Legal issues

A number of potential legal hurdles need to be addressed in the early stages of forming a sport

and recreation organisation. While these issues are covered in more depth in the Legal Issues

and Risk Management module, attention needs to be drawn to some questions that must be

answered at this point. Depending on the answers and future plans, then the organisation may

assume a different legal framework with varying legal implications, identity and complexity.

Questions may include:

• Should the organisation become incorporated?

Does the organisation intend to own assets?

• Will the organisation employ paid staff?

• Will the organisation require insurance cover and if so, what types?

Membership

Members are the key to any sport and recreation organisation. Successful organisations are

those with committed and involved members. Members should be more than a list of names

and addresses. It is the responsibility of officers to get to know other members personally as

each member may have a skill or interest that could benefit the organisation. For example, a

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builder may supervise the construction of a new deck for the clubhouse, a lawyer might look after conveyancing work, a journalist may be able to write press releases.

In the initial stages the sport and recreation organisation can adopt one of two approaches to membership: to have as many members as possible or restrict membership numbers.⁴<< Renton, NE (1991) *Guide for Voluntary Associations*. Sydney: The Law Book Company.>>

Advantages of a large membership base	lower running costs per member
	greater ability to raise funds
	more feasible to provide specialised
	services
	the organisation may achieve greater
	influence
	a wider range of different talents
	more volunteers for committee work
	influential community members are more
	likely to help the organisation
	expansion into other areas of activity will
	be easier
Advantages of a small membership base	the total administrative workload will be
	lighter
	camaraderie among members is likely to
	be greater
	factionalism may be less of a problem
	• the organisation's ability to speak with a
	consistent message will be enhanced

The basis for membership

Sport and recreation organisations may have closed memberships, ie by election or open by payment of subscription. Closed membership is usually for organisations with limited facilities (eg golf clubs). Open membership is used where the intent to participate is all that is

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required (eg bushwalking clubs). In this case a membership is gained with payment of

subscription.

Different levels of membership will be devised to suit the sport and recreation organisation.

For example, a netball club may provide for junior and senior members, a drama group might

cater for performing and non-performing members.

Membership fees (subscriptions) will be calculated according to the budgeted expenditure,

taking into account rent, hiring facilities and equipment, and fees to national bodies.

Subscriptions should match the level of participation. For example, tennis organisations

usually offer senior, junior and family rates. All members should be aware of what they get

for their membership fees and how these fees will be used by the organisation. The

qualification for membership will depend on the type of sport and recreation organisation.

Application for membership

Application forms are the best method for potential members to apply to join the organisation.

Application forms should include a statement that, if accepted, the applicant will abide by the

rules and serve the sport and recreation organisation to the best of their ability. The applicant

should receive a copy of the rules/guidelines of the organisation with the membership form.

The application form should include:

name

address and contact details (work, private, and mobile telephone numbers and email

address)

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occupation

• date of birth

• advice of membership fee/entry fee payable

types of membership

• interest in assisting in sport and recreation organisation operations

• skills/assets that can be brought to the sport and recreation organisation.

Additional information included in a membership 'kit' may include:

• a set of organisation rules

a list of office-holders and contact numbers.

On receiving the application, it should be checked carefully. If it is correct, details should be recorded on the database and submitted to the next committee meeting. If the form is incorrect or incomplete, it should be returned to the applicant for completion. After processing, the President should write to welcome new members.

In more formal sport and recreation organisations, applicant names may have to be put forward by a member and their nomination seconded. Some sport and recreation organisations have a waiting list and members should be made aware of how long they may have to wait before seeking nomination.

Rights and obligations of members

Joining an organisation involves give and take on the part of the member and the organisation.

Both parties have rights and obligations and normally these are established in the constitution and rules of the organisation. Some organisations have also developed 'codes of behaviour'

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for players, parents, coaches, administrators and officials. These are usually a series of key principles on which individuals can base their involvement. ⁵<< Australian Sports

Commission (1999) Aussie Sports, Codes of Behaviour. Canberra: The Commission.

Members generally have the right to:

- use and enjoy the organisation's facilities
- participate in all sport and recreation organisation activities
- attend all meetings
- hold office
- vote at the organisation's general meetings.

Membership however carries reciprocal obligations that include:

- observing the rules and codes of behaviour
- agreeing to protect and look after the sport and recreation organisation's assets
- respecting the rights of fellow members
- paying annual fees or subscriptions by the due date
- paying any additional levies according to the organisation's rules.

Note: Members are not normally liable for debts incurred by incorporated sport and recreation organisations (see the *Legal Issues and Risk Management* module).

Example			
	Appl	ication for membershi	p form
Name: —			
Address:			
Tel:	(h)	(b)	(mob)
Email:			
Occupation:			
Date of birth	ı: 		
I wish to app	oly for mem	nbership (senior, junior,	associate, honorary)
Skills that I	can contribute to the o	rganisati on:	
I am willing	to help the club in the	following roles:	
I am availab	le on: (days)	at (hours)—	
Medical hist	ory relevant to the clu	b:	
I have read t	he enclosed rules of th	ne club and I agree to ab	oide by these rules and will serve the
club to the b	est of my ability.		
Signed		Date	

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Termination of membership

Membership usually ceases following death, resignation or non-payment of subscriptions. A member may be asked to step down - or removed from membership - as a result of bankruptcy or insolvency and/or breaches of the organisation's rules. Situations where termination of membership may occur should be outlined in the constitution. In cases of removal, the committee must act responsibly and within the bounds of natural justice. Natural justice requires that the organisation act only within its rules, that the member is made aware of the nature of the accusation and has the right to defend themselves against any charge. Therefore, a member who has their membership terminated incorrectly (eg for reasons outside the boundaries of the constitution), or without being given the right to defend themselves, may challenge the decision on legal grounds.

Register of members

Incorporated sport and recreation organisations are legally required to keep a register of members. This must include names, addresses and occupations of members and the date each member joined the organisation. Other information could include: date of birth, honours and appointments, offices held in the sport and recreation organisation, date of cessation of membership, skills and interests.

Summary

Preparation and planning are the keys to long-term viability of sport and recreation organisations. This is especially the case when a new organisation is formed. The more information that is used in the early development phase, the more likely it is that the new

organisation will reflect community needs and meet community expectations. This module has emphasised the importance of using a variety of types and sources of information required for sport and recreation planning. Furthermore, the module has outlined the role of creating awareness about forming a new organisation across a broad spectrum of the community and summarised a series of steps and issues critical to the success of creating a new sport and recreation organisation.

Further information

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Glossary

Codes of behaviour. Some sport and recreation organisations have developed codes of behaviour for players, parents, coaches, administrators and officials. These are usually a series of key principles that spell out acceptable behaviour in a range of circumstances and on which individuals can base their involvement in the organisation.

Community participation. A planning technique which argues that involvement by the community in the planning and decision-making processes will make it more likely there will be a better outcome in terms of community acceptance and ownership.

Demographic trends. Changes over time in characteristics of the population (eg population size, age, income levels) which may influence the viability of a proposed club.

Inaugural general meeting. The first official meeting of the new club at which members vote on adoption of the constitution, discuss structure of new committee, elect officers and set membership fees.

Interim committee. The committee established subsequent to the initial public meeting whose role it is to complete the tasks (eg develop a prospectus) necessary to conduct a successful inaugural general meeting. The interim committee should have wide community representation and members should also have some knowledge about issues such as meeting procedures, public relations and marketing.

Natural justice. Natural justice in the context of membership termination requires that the organisation acts only within its rules; that the member knows the nature of the accusation; and has the right to defend themselves against any charge.

Prospectus. An organisational prospectus is usually developed by the interim committee. A prospectus outlines the purpose of the organisation and the target audiences. This can be a

useful marketing document whether it is to potential members, sponsors or the media. A prospectus may also outline the rights and obligations of the organisation's members.

Recreation participation trends. Changes over time in the recreation behaviour of the population (eg numbers and percentages participating in different activities) and which may influence the viability of a proposed club

Termination of membership. Membership usually ceases following death, resignation or non-payment of subscriptions. A member may also be asked to step down - or removed from membership - as a result of bankruptcy or insolvency and/or breaches of the organisation's rules. Situations where termination of membership may occur should be outlined in the constitution.

Endnotes

¹ Marriott, K. L. (1990). Recreation Planning: A Guide for Local Government. Adelaide: South Australian Department of Sport and Recreation

² Renton, N.E. (1991). Guide for voluntary associations. Sydney: The Law Book Company

³ Marriott (1990) op cit

⁴ Renton (1991) op cit

⁵ Australlian Sports Commission, Aussie Sports, Codes of Behaviour