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### Response to Crawford Report – Rowing Australia

Rowing Australia welcomes the opportunity to discuss the recommendations of the Independent Sports Panel's report on the Australian sports system and to provide input to the response by the Australian Government. As advised in our letter of 4th December 2009 Rowing Australia also provided a formal submission to the Crawford Report from the Coalition of Australian Sports and Rowing Australia plus input consistent with this document to the Australian Olympic Committee's (AOC) study group for its consideration in forming the AOC response.

Rowing Australia notes the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council Communiqué discussing the Independent Sport Panel Report and welcomes the agreement by Ministers to establish a Government working party to comment on key areas of the "The Future of Sport in Australia" report to assess both issues to be addressed under the National Policy Framework and structural reform opportunities including the AIS and SIS/SAS. Rowing Australia eagerly awaits the outcome of the Ministerial Council meeting in early 2010 to finalise a joint position from the Commonwealth, State and Territories on the National Policy Framework and structural issues arising from the report.

While Rowing Australia believes that there is merit in a number of the Sports Panel's recommendations it is also our belief that a number of the recommendations are not in the best interests of the Australian sports system.

Rowing Australia has concentrated the focus of this response on a number of key issues, both positive and negative, that it considers central to the consideration of the Crawford Report and which should be given extensive contemplation by the Federal Government in preparing its response to the Report .

#### General Comments

- Rowing Australia believes that the balance of experience and knowledge within the composition of the Independent Sports Panel was weighted towards involvement in the professional sporting environment, primarily AFL. It is Rowing Australia's belief that this caused a deficiency in the Sports Panel's understanding of the non-professional, Olympic and Paralympic sporting environments and has resulted in an overly superficial series of recommendations in a number of areas.
- The Crawford Report failed to recognise the funding contributions made to sport by all levels of government. This includes the allocations made by State and Local governments to mass participation sports towards infrastructure development and recurrent maintenance costs..
- Rowing Australia believes that the general tone of the Crawford Report is unnecessarily divisive and has the unfortunate potential to create division between mass participation sports and the elite Olympic sports. Both of these sporting environments play a vital role in the Australian sporting community and Rowing Australia feels that any division of the two would be counterproductive and have a detrimental impact on the future of the Australian sports system.
- Rowing Australia believes that the Crawford Report has failed to address its original terms of reference, particularly in relation to ensuring Australia's **continued elite sporting success and**

**identifying appropriate and achievable alternative revenue models.** It is our belief that the Crawford Report instead recommends a course of action that will ultimately result in the reduction of Australia's elite sporting success and preserve the current inadequacy of revenue models available to the majority of sporting organisations.

- Rowing Australia believes that the Crawford Report has substantially misrepresented the relationship between the AOC and National Sporting Organisations (NSO's) and in particular the suggestion that the AOC obtains revenue that the NSO's would otherwise have received. In Rowing Australia's opinion the opposite is in fact true as the AOC provides NSO's with significant funding over the course of the quadrennium which is greater than the revenue that the NSO would otherwise be able to obtain through leveraging its Olympic participation.
- Rowing Australia believes that the definition of sport that was considered by the Independent Sports Panel and which included physical activity in a broad sense, created a fundamental flaw in the review process that resulted in a distortion of the Panel's consideration of key issues which required more focussed deliberation and recommendations. In Rowing Australia's opinion this overly broad definition has resulted in recommendations that will compromise the Australian sporting system.
- Due to the excessive length of time that the Independent Sports Panel took to release the Crawford Report, the sporting landscape has progressed on certain issues resulting in a number of recommendations becoming irrelevant.
- Rowing Australia strongly disagrees with the Crawford Report's assertion that elite sportspeople as role models have no effect on participation levels ('Defining Success in Sport' pp 62-3). Rowing Australia understands that there is little research to support the commonly-held belief that the success of elite sportspeople results in an increase in participation levels but conversely no research exists to substantiate the assertion of the Crawford Report that this success has no effect on participation levels. Rowing Australia believes that this conclusion of the report is incorrect and should be challenged.
- Rowing Australia does not support the underlying theme of the Crawford Report that suggests NSO's have been inappropriately focussed on elite performance and success to the detriment of grassroots participation.

## **Chapter 1.1: Defining our National Sports Vision**

### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia does not subscribe to the central thesis of the Crawford Report – that “the Australian sporting system does not have a national sport policy or vision” (p5) nor a reliable system of measurement (Chapter 1.1). However, notwithstanding this Rowing Australia is supportive of the summary recommendations of Chapter 1.1, that the ASC and other government agencies should develop a costed National Sports Policy Framework including measurable objectives, financial and non-financial strategies and defined roles and responsibilities for the various levels of government and their agencies. Rowing Australia is further supportive of the position that this must be supported by the availability of robust data and that Australia must remain at the global forefront of the fight against doping in sport.

### **Additional Considerations**

- Rowing Australia believes that the direction for Australian sport is already clearly defined in the ASC's Strategic Plan but that this may require revision to accommodate the direction and recommendations of the Crawford Report, once accepted.
- Rowing Australia has restructured its organisation to achieve two different yet interwoven goals; developing the Australian rowing community, and achieving international success. Both of these goals have clearly identified visions, missions, values and objectives which align with those of the ASC.
- The National vision for sport needs to be shared and acted upon by all Government agencies and other stakeholders in order for it to be successful.

- With the demise of the Confederation of Australian Sports, the Australian sports industry has been left without a unified voice or vehicle for advocacy. While this has been recognised in many forums the mechanism for achieving an ongoing and credible representative body remains problematic.
- Currently, the success of sport is assessed on a sport-by-sport basis whereby the only reliable statistics for measurement are based on International success. Moreover, sports are often forced to depend upon crude and often unreliable participation figures as a means of analysis and measurement. Accordingly, Rowing Australia encourages the Federal Government to undertake a major piece of work to develop a series of holistic industry benchmarks which are robust and reliable and against which the success and growth of the sports industry can be measured.

## **Chapter 1.2: Reforming the Australian Sports Commission to Lead the Sports System**

### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia is supportive of the principle that the ASC should provide a single point of leadership to the Australian sports system, however it believes that the practical application and mechanism for achieving this requires careful consideration to ensure that such leadership and direction remains focussed and avoids any loss of intellectual property or creation of inefficiencies as a result of such a separation.
- Rowing Australia acknowledges and overall respects the current members of the ASC Board and also supports the principle that Directors on the ASC Board should be appointed based on skill.
- Rowing Australia believes that the Crawford Report has not recognised the changes in the performance of the ASC under its new and strengthened management

### **Rowing Australia Recommendation**

- To enable the ASC to effectively provide a single point of leadership to the Australia sports system Rowing Australia urges all levels of Government to recognise the leadership role of the ASC and act in accordance with the overarching strategy framework for sport as determined by the Australian Government.

## **Chapter 1.3: Merging our Institutes of Sport**

### **1. Separation of the Australian Institute of Sport from the Australian Sports Commission**

#### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia endorses the Crawford Report's recommendation (3.1) to remove the Australian Institute of Sport from the ASC.

#### **Additional Considerations**

- It is Rowing Australia's opinion that this separation will remove the AIS from the political overarching imperative that exists in the current structure.
- The proposed separation will enable the AIS to achieve independence from governmental bureaucratic and administrative inertia that can result in sub-optimal outcomes.
- In Rowing Australia's opinion it would be vital that the AIS receive guaranteed independent funding under any such separation to ensure that its outcomes and operations are not influenced by the competing priorities of the ASC.
- However, it has been suggested that that such an operational separation may be impractical. As such, Rowing Australia would support an alternative solution that maintains elements of the current structure but which allows the AIS greater autonomy and program independence.

## **2. Australian Institutes of Sport (AIsS)**

### Summary Position

- Rowing Australia supports the Crawford Report's recommendation (3.1) to merge the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and the various State and Territory Institutes and Academies of Sport (SIS/SAS) to form a national entity (Australian Institutes of Sport - AIsS), funded by the Australian Government. It has been Rowing Australia's experience that the current structure of the AIS and separate SIS/SAS is overly complex and unworkable.

### Additional Considerations

- In the opinion of Rowing Australia the ideal model for the amalgamation of the AIS and SIS/SAS is that each of the SIS/SAS would form a branch of the AIS to achieve a national model supported by Commonwealth funding.
- However, it has been suggested that achieving this ideal model would be unrealistic. As such, Rowing Australia would support a model wherein the SIS/SAS would retain a measure of their autonomy but would be responsible for delivering a national service that is consistent with the Commonwealth direction and for which they would receive Commonwealth funding.
- Rowing Australia has concerns about the effectiveness of another Memorandum of Understanding between the AIS and SIS/SAS and NSO's for delivery of national outcomes and is convinced that the most effective way to ensure such outcomes is to directly link the desired national outcome with National funding.
- Rowing Australia would strongly refute any management model for the AIsS that would involve a committee similar to the current National Elite Sports Council (NESC) running the daily training requirements of a national program. In our view, if the operations of each SIS/SAS continue to be determined by their respective States and Territory Governments, there must be an increase in the Commonwealth funding provided to the centres that is tied to stringent and nationally focused outcomes to ensure both accountability and Commonwealth ownership of the system.
- Rowing Australia also draws the Ministers attention to the disparity of funding Australia wide across the SIS / SAS programs and in many cases these funds are currently not sufficient to maintain leading elite programs.
- Rowing Australia would highlight the success of its own partnership model with the AIS called the National Rowing Centre of Excellence which has proven to be highly effective in maximising its limited resources for all Australian elite athletes. The NRCE also has developed a strong network across Australia that includes SIS / SAS and High Performance Clubs.

## **Chapter 1.4: Building the Capacity of Our National Sports Organisations**

### Summary Position

- Rowing Australia strongly endorses the Crawford Report's recommendation (4.1), that NSO's should have primary responsibility for development of their own high-performance programs and the implicit effect that this would have in strengthening the role of the NSO.

### Additional Considerations

- Rowing Australia notes that the Crawford Report observes that it is important for NSO's to increase the capacity to control their own futures, however the Report fails to address any of the suggestions provided in both the RA and Coalition of Olympic Sports (CAOS) submissions to the Independent Sports Panel which would enable sports to establish their own viable commercial models.
- In recognizing the importance of an NSO's capacity to control its own future, Rowing Australia believes that it is important to note that it is also important for State Governments to build the capacity of SSO's as they also play a vital role in delivery of a sports' National Plan.

- Rowing Australia believes that it is important to recognise that developing capacity does not simply relate to increased levels of funding but should encompass a holistic approach to developing capacity including higher levels of proficiency across governance, structures, and staffing.
- Rowing Australia welcomes the recommendation to increase the capacity of sports to control their own futures but cautions the Government against adopting a simple, 'one size fits all approach' to enabling such capacity building. It is important to recognise that each NSO has a different level of capability and that the approach to building the autonomy and capacity of a NSO should be tailored dependant upon that NSO's capacity and level of expertise and experience. .
- Rowing Australia cautions the Government against urging NSO's to conduct events in attempting to raise their profile outside of the Olympics without independent assessment and expertise, particularly relating to the financial viability of an event. In Rowing Australia's opinion if the Government is to encourage such an initiative to assist a sport in building their capacity they should also provide a mechanism to assist an NSO in determining the viability, both financial and otherwise, of a potential event.
- In Rowing Australia's opinion, the Crawford Report offers no viable solution for the Olympic Sports to develop an independent commercial model. Rowing Australia is disappointed about this and has provided further comment and recommendations in relation to this in its position on *Chapter 1.8: Sustaining the Funding Base for Sport* below.

## **Chapter 1.5: Putting Sport and Physical Activity Back Into Schools**

### Summary Position

- Rowing Australia strongly supports the recommendation to reintroduce sport and physical activity into education and encourages the Federal and State and Territory Governments to make sport in schools an ongoing priority and a stand alone key learning area in the national curriculum.

### Additional Considerations

- The Government should note however that this recommendation has been made and supported in numerous reviews with little progress or result due to the inability to engage with Federal and State education agencies that are ultimately responsible for delivering the outcome.
- Further enhancing the scepticism of the ultimate success of implementing this recommendation is the fact that the 2010 curriculum has already been approved and does not include an appropriate physical activity component.

### Rowing Australia Recommendation

- Rowing Australia urges the Government to ensure that the reintroduction of sport and physical activity into the national curriculum remains on the agenda as a priority issue and is implemented at the next possible opportunity.

## **Chapter 1.6: Building Community Sport with People and Places**

### Summary Position

- Rowing Australia is fully supportive of the principle of building community sport and in particular endorses the development of a strategic national facilities initiative that will underpin the sustainable future of Australian sport (6.3).

### Additional Considerations

- Rowing Australia strongly supports the Crawford Report's recommendations to provide facilities to better enable grassroots participation and believes that the recommended expenditure of \$1billion over 4 years to achieve this is a reasonable figure.

- Rowing Australia believes that, in order for the strategic national facilities initiative to be successful the funding and facilities must be coordinated and implemented independently and allocated according to the strategic priorities across all sports.
- Rowing Australia is strongly supportive of the development and ongoing funding for a national volunteer program to attract and retain volunteers to sport through education, accreditation and recognition. Rowing Australia agrees that such a program should be targeted at attracting older Australians to volunteerism in the first instance.
- Rowing Australia is supportive of the principle of encouraging athletes to contribute to the sporting community, however the challenge in successfully implementing this initiative is engaging the athletes and inspiring them to want to contribute rather than forcing them to do so.

## **Chapter 1.7: Ensuring Australia's Sports System is Open to All**

### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia endorses the principle of ensuring that Australia's sports system is open to all and encourages the development of strategies to assist in the provision of inclusive sport for all Australians.
- Rowing Australia believes that it is impractical to implement recommendation 7.2, that the Australian Government should implement pilot programs in identified geographic areas which contain many or most of the nine identified social inclusion issues.

### **Additional Considerations**

- Rowing Australia believes that the current funding and structure for the provision of inclusive sport is superficial and caused by establishing isolated grants based programs that aren't integrated with the National vision for sport.
- Rowing Australia believes that the current approach of providing small grants to address individual social inclusion issues is an inefficient mechanism and results both in duplication and a solution which does not address the cultural issues of inclusive sport.
- Instead of implementing recommendation 7.2, Rowing Australia believes that a broader inclusive sport agenda focused on key cultural issues would be more successful and could be included in the National Sports Framework.

### **Rowing Australia Recommendation**

- Rowing Australia recommends that a national program be developed that addresses the 3 key areas of inclusive sport being discrimination, social justice and lifestyle rather than focus individual strategies and funding allowances to address inclusive sport for individual minority groups. Rowing Australia feels that its recommended approach will address the broader cultural issues of inclusive sport and help to ensure that Australia's sporting system is open to all.

## **Chapter 1.8: Sustaining the Funding Base for Sport**

### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia strongly supports the Crawford Report's recommendation (8.1) to maintain sport funding at current levels and to consider supplementing this funding on the basis of agreed targets for both high performance and participation.
- Rowing Australia has set its Elite objectives for the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games which are a three Olympic gold medals and one Paralympic gold medal. However to achieve those objectives there is a funding short fall over the three years of \$1.87 million which relates entirely to Direct Athlete Support. Rowing Australia's athletes funding support are currently below minimum standards for full time athletes.

- Rowing Australia is disappointed to note that, while the Crawford Report observes that it is important for NSO's to increase their capacity in order to control their own futures, the Report fails to offer any viable solutions to enable NSO's to develop an external commercial model despite the suggestions provided in both the original RA and Coalition of Olympic Sports (CAOS) submissions to the Independent Sports Panel.

#### Additional Considerations

- Rowing Australia believes that it is vital that the Government's response to the Crawford Report respects both elite performance and participation sport and that both need to be funded appropriately to ensure the ongoing success and health of the entire Australian sporting system.
- In Rowing Australia's opinion the two arms of the sports system; grassroots participation and elite success are unavoidably intertwined and any such separation would not only be counterproductive but would have a substantially detrimental effect on the entire Australian sports system.
- In the opinion of Rowing Australia it is vital that the Government renew all Federal non-recurrent funding and terminating grants to enable the entire Australian sports system to support both grassroots participation and elite sporting outcomes.
- Rowing Australia believes that current funding levels are the absolute minimum of support required and that achieving success will require substantially more funding. Rowing Australia believes that all sports need to be allocation funding in line with their and priorities.
- Rowing Australia believes that the Crawford Report's representation of funding provided to each sporting entity is inaccurate and fails to acknowledge the level of government funding provided from all levels of government including those provided indirectly to sports for specific undertakings such as facility infrastructure
- Rowing Australia believes that it is vital that Government funding cycles are extended to beyond the current funding horizons to enable NSO's to develop consistent and reliable longer term funding plans with timelines extended out to at least 8 years.
- Rowing Australia strongly acknowledges and supports the Australian Olympic Committee's High Performance Plan for future success as the authoritative analysis on this topic. It is our opinion that this is a robust, considered and well supported document that should be acknowledged and adopted.
- Rowing Australia believes that the adoption of the AOC's Gold Medal Plan in 1993 and the subsequent success of this program substantiates the importance of accepting the current AOC High Performance Plan.
- Further, the Senate Standing Committee on Environment Communications and the Arts, tabled May 2009, on the reporting of sport news and the emergence of digital media, had this recommendation, "*The committee urges the government to take into account the opportunities and challenges presented by digital media to **sports organisations' current and future revenue prospects and options, and recommends that the current Crawford review of sports pay particular attention to the capacity of sports to invest in digital innovation.***". However the Crawford Report fails to address this – "the panel believes that at this time there is not a demonstrated need for Government intervention. It is appropriate sporting organisations to deal with the various media outlet to attain mutually beneficial arrangements." The Olympic Sports and the mass participation sports will need assistance to build independent revenue from government funding models (for at least part of their revenue).

#### Rowing Australia Recommendation

- Rowing Australia recognises that grassroots participation and elite performance are intertwined and strongly advocates that the funding of these two arms of the Australian sporting system be appropriately funded to achieve their individual needs and to encourage and strengthen the connection between the two arms.

- Rowing Australia recommends that the AOC High Performance Plan be adopted to address the current shortfall in the direct financial support available to elite athletes, many of whom currently live below the poverty line in terms of financial sporting assistance. Rowing Australia believes that this issue is of vital importance in ensuring Australia's continued elite sporting success.
- Rowing Australia urges that the suggestions to address the challenges of creating a sustainable Commercial Revenue Model for NSO's be reconsidered, particularly the recommendations that:
  - Media coverage be increased, ideally through the ABC at no cost to the sports, forming part of the ABC's Charter Obligations.
  - The digital opportunity identified in the Senate Inquiry is significant for the Olympic sports both as a mass communication mechanism and to develop independent revenue opportunities. However, the NSO's such as RA cannot 'mutually' negotiate with media organisations. The ASC should for all of the Olympic Sports undertake a detailed study of digital media to deliver an independent revenue opportunity as highlighted.
  - The concept of a National Sports Lottery or share of revenue from existing lotteries be implemented
  - Various tax concessions be implemented, including tax deductibility for sports sponsorship and participation, tax grants for employing elite athletes, tax deductions for membership of sporting clubs, removing GST on grants from Government agencies to NSO's and exempting NSO's from payroll tax.

## **Key Issues Inadequately Addressed by the Crawford Report**

### **1. Education, Protection and Retention of Key Personnel and Intellectual Property**

#### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia encourages the Federal Government to include in its response to the Crawford Report a focus on the importance of educating and developing coaches, officials and administrators to ensure the ongoing success of the Australian sporting system.
- Rowing Australia is disappointed that the Crawford Report has not sufficiently addressed the loss of both key personnel and intellectual property that was identified as a priority by both the RA and CAOS submissions to the Independent Sports Panel.

#### **Additional Considerations**

- The retention of 'front line' personnel such as key coaching staff as well as support personnel such as those involved in Sports Science and Medicine is of vital importance to Australia's continued elite sporting success.

#### **Rowing Australia Recommendation**

- Rowing Australia urges that both the education and development and the protection and retention of key personnel and intellectual property be reconsidered and addressed by the Government's response.

### **2. Talent Identification and Development**

#### **Summary Position**

- Rowing Australia is disappointed that the Crawford Report has not sufficiently addressed the issue of talent identification and development and urges the Government to develop a framework that links talent identification and development to existing club networks as well as enabling such a framework to access the broader sports network.

### **3. Athlete Welfare**

#### Summary Position

- Rowing Australia is disappointed that the Crawford Report has not adequately addressed athlete welfare, an issue that is vital for the ongoing success of the Australian sports system and in particular for the achievement of elite sporting success.

#### Additional Considerations

- The current shortfall in the Rowing Australia direct athlete support program encompassing the remainder of the quadrennium to the 2012 Olympic Games is \$1.87million.
- Rowing Australia believes that the ASC and AIS should continue to invest in Athlete Career Education programs and should broaden the academic and training aspects of athlete scholarships to ensure a viable future for athletes after their careers.

#### Rowing Australia Recommendation

- Rowing Australia urges the Government to introduce an athlete welfare initiative that would provide a level of funding that allows athletes to live above the poverty line and to pursue success for their country in non-professional and Olympic sports.

### **4. Disabled Groups including Paralympics**

#### Summary Position

- In Rowing Australia's position there is a lack of recognition of disabled groups generally, and Paralympic sport in particular, throughout the Crawford Report.

#### Rowing Australia Recommendation

- Rowing Australia recommends that the Government retain a focus on disabled and Paralympic sports in preparing its response to the Crawford Report.