

CONSULTATIVE STRATEGIC REVIEW

Overview

The recently elected Australian Fencing Federation (AFF) Executive is currently designing a Strategic Plan for the next 4 years. In designing this Strategic Plan, the AFF Executive is seeking to undertake an open, extensive and phased consultative strategic review to canvass input for this Plan.

The first phase of this strategic review invites all State Associations to provide input by the end of August 2009 in the lead up to a national strategic planning forum to be held at Clubs Victoria in Melbourne on 12 & 13 September 2009. Recognised individuals are also able to provide individual input, as suggested below.

The second phase will take the outcomes of this first phase to draft a Strategic Plan for consideration and adoption by the AFF General Meeting to be held on 22 November 2009.

In undertaking this strategic review, the AFF Executive is seeking to:

- identify key stakeholders involved in shaping Fencing, understand their vision for Fencing in Australia, and to enable alignment of their vision with the AFF strategic plan;
- determine the most appropriate governance structure, organisation and management of the AFF, and the method of funding such, for the most effective development of Fencing in Australia;
- determine the key objectives and best related strategies for the advancement of Fencing in Australia and internationally, including high performance programs [management, training and selection], participant programs (e.g. schools programs, beginners classes, veterans), coaching programs and resources available to members.

Key questions to be addressed therefore are:

- What is the long term vision for Fencing in Australia?
- What are the goals for making progress towards that vision over the next 4 years? The methods/schemes//strategies for achieving those Goals and/or the Vision? How should these be prioritised?
- How will the AFF and State Associations interact to implement these methods and means?

To assist State Associations in providing input, the AFF Executive has prepared the attached Situational Analysis and also a suggested set of areas for consideration and related starter questions for this strategic review. Please refer to the attachments.

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Specific Details

Consultative Input

State Associations may either respond to this strategic review by providing a response on behalf of their Executive after their own discussions or they may choose to conduct a State meeting or forum to gather feedback for their response.

Registered fencers (i.e. those affiliated with an affiliated State Association) may choose to make individual input.

State Associations and individuals are requested to provide their response to the strategic review by 31 August.

The AFF will then host a national strategic planning forum at Clubs Victoria, in Melbourne, on 12 & 13 September 2009. State Associations are invited to send one delegate to this forum. Airfares for these delegates will be met through the AFF Airfare Subsidisation Scheme (as used for AFF General Meetings). The AFF will meet the accommodation costs for these delegates and meals for the forum.

The national strategic planning forum will be independently facilitated by a senior officer from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). The ASC has also been invited to make a presentation to this forum.

The forum will provide the opportunity to consider the input received from State Associations and individuals in the context of:

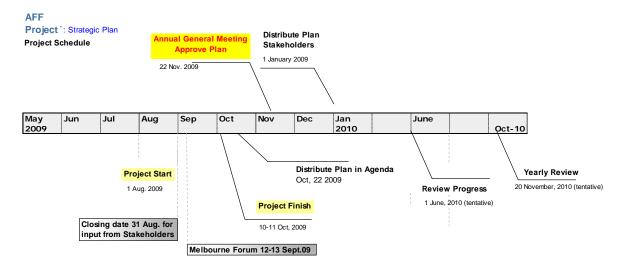
- advice from the ASC on what can be learned from other sports
- a structured strategic planning process that will include a **SWOT** analysis, e.g.

Strengths	Weaknesses
(Consider the Stakeholders; Governmental; Economic; Staff; Social/Cultural; and Technological environments within which A.F.F. operates and current schemes)	(Consider the Stakeholders; Governmental; Economic; Staff; Social/Cultural; and Technological environments within which A.F.F. operates and current schemes)
1.	1.
2.	2.
Opportunities	Threats
(Consider the Stakeholder; Governmental; Economic; Staff; Social/Cultural; and Technological environments within which A.F.F. operates and new schemes)	(Consider the Stakeholders; Governmental; Economic; Staff; Social/Cultural; and Technological environments within which A.F.F. operates)
1.	1.
2.	2.

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Timeframe

The following chart outlines the timeline for the strategic review.



The AFF requires any input by 31 August 2009. A draft Strategic Plan will then be finalised by the Executive by 10 October 2009, then distributed to all State Associations and presented for consideration and adoption at the AFF General Meeting on 22 November 2009.

Responses

Input to this strategic review, including responses to the attached suggested areas for consideration and starter questions should be forwarded by 31 August to: executive@fencing.org

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Suggested Areas for AFF Strategic Review

The AFF Executive has identified the following areas for consideration in the strategic review and invites input on at least these areas.

Specific starter questions have been identified to assist consideration of the various issues associated with each area.

1. Organizational Structure and Development

Issues for consideration in this area include the appropriateness of the current AFF structure, composition of an AFF Board, management arrangements, commissions, relations with other bodies, and development of the internal organization itself.

Specific Questions:

Organisational: Do you have any comments regarding the structure of the AFF and any possible ideas regarding changes to improve the AFF?

Roles: what roles are needed in the AFF for the AFF to implement and achieve its vision and strategic objectives?

General: Do you have any additional comments or ideas related to organisational structure and development of the AFF itself?

2. Communication and Marketing

Issues here include how the AFF communicates with stakeholders (fencers, clubs, State Associations, volunteers) and how the AFF markets and promotes Fencing to the public.

Specific Questions:

Communication: Do you have any comments or ideas regarding how the AFF should best communicate with its members and stakeholders? (e.g. website, email blasts, information at AFF competitions, and response to enquiries) *Marketing*: What do you think the AFF's role should be in marketing fencing? *General*: Do you have any additional comments or ideas related to communication and marketing, including alternatives?

3. Athlete Pathways

Athlete pathways should be available to all fencers, from a beginner and schools level to adult social and adult competitive level. This includes the AFF's role relating to the development and opportunities available to fencers, such as training, tours, international representation, camps, state squads, national squads, high performance programs and selection/ranking policies.

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Specific Questions:

Programs (National): Please provide feedback on how you want national programs to operate, including relationship with state and international programs. *Policies:* Please provide feedback on how policies should affect athletes, including selection and ranking.

Pathways: What other pathways would you like the AFF to provide to fencers?

4. Coaching & Officials Pathways

Coaching and official pathways should be available to all interested persons. This includes the AFF's role relating to the development and opportunities available to coaches and officials, such as coaching clinics, coaching opportunities, referee courses and high-level volunteer opportunities.

Specific Questions:

Programs (National): Please provide feedback on how you want national programs to operate, including relationship with state and international programs. *Policies:* Please provide feedback on how policies should affect athletes, including selection and ranking.

Pathways: What other pathways would you like the AFF to provide to fencers?

5. Sport Development

This includes the AFF's role, independently and in conjunction with State Associations in developing the access to and infrastructure available for fencing in Australia. This will include the general aspects of the sport covered by other areas (such as marketing, athlete pathways, coaches and officials pathways) but will also include training venues, clubs, school programs, regional development, equipment and other aspects requirement for sport development.

Specific Questions:

General: Please provide feedback on what areas you believe the AFF can concentrate on to develop Fencing. Please prioritise these areas on importance. States: What initiatives have you undertaken to develop Fencing? What assistance do you want from the AFF?

6. Asset Growth & Management

This area includes the sourcing and management of funding, and the purchase and maintenance of assets, including fencing equipment, training venues and government or private funding.

Specific Questions:

General: What role do you see for the AFF in obtaining and maintaining assets or funding and assisting State associations? Please provide feedback on how you see the AFF's role in the management of assets?

Funding: What role do you see for the AFF in obtaining funding, private and public?

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7. Good Governance

This area includes governance policies to ensure AFF's responsibilities are given proper consideration in a fair and timely manner. This area includes how the AFF is compliant with good practice in all legal, ethical and financial responsibilities. Consideration of these matters should reflect on the current AFF Constitution.

Specific Questions:

General: Please provide any feedback with how fencing is currently governed in Australia?

Policies: Do you have any comments regarding the current policies/rules of the AFF and what AFF policies need creation, amendment or deletion to improve the AFF?

Values: What are the set of Values that you believe drive Fencing (those beliefs that as a group, we should hold very strongly and not compromise)?

The AFF Executive thanks you for your input/comments.

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Situational Analysis for AFF Strategic Review

The following provides background information structured to assist consideration of the issues under the various areas identified for the current strategic review.

1. Organizational Structure and Development

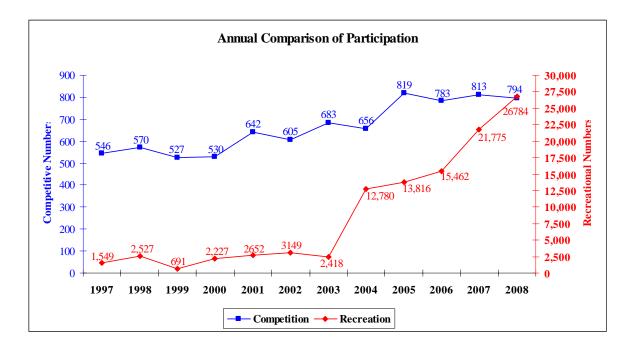
The current AFF Constitution provides for an AFF Executive (President and 5 Directors) to manage the affairs of the AFF in between general meetings of the members. The voting members of the AFF are its Executive and the delegate of each affiliated State Association. The AFF Executive is elected for a four year term (based on the Olympic Quadrennial) and vote on all matters at general meetings except for elections of the AFF Executive.

Over the past decade all States Associations, except Tasmania and Northern Territory, have been active members of the AFF.

The AFF currently has contracts with specific individuals for the (part-time) provision of the following services:

- administrative officer to support the AFF Executive with basic routine administration and website operation
- financial officer to support the AFF Executive with basic financial management (book-keeping, accounts management, reporting and tax compliance)
- national coaching director to assist the AFF Executive and Coaching Development Commission with its coaching development and administrative activities (e.g. planning and management of coaching programs, updating of coaching courses, management of coaching accreditation, liaison with the ASC).

The following graphs illustrate the growth in Fencing over the past decade.

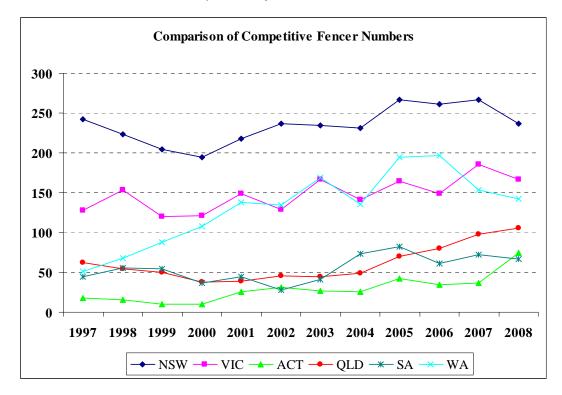


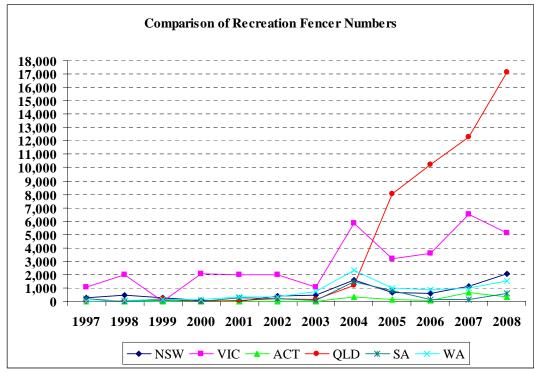
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The data identifies the two major groups of fencers:

- competitive fencers –junior & senior fencers actively competing at state & national level competitions and for which annual capitation is paid to the AFF
- recreational fencers those who are exposed to the sport in various activities (e.g. school and community based activities, club beginner programs, etc) and for whom no capitation is paid to the AFF.

The following graphs provide a comparison of the competitive and recreational fencers for each State, as reported by the State Associations.





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2. Communication and Marketing

Over the past decade the AFF has moved to a complete electronic means of communication with its members using its email facility associated with the <<ausfencing.org>> domain name which it owns.

The AFF has two official websites – one specifically for information and results associated with its national tournaments (www.ausfencingevents.org) and one as its official website (www.ausfencing.org).

Circulars to State Associations are emailed to the designated President, Secretary & Treasurer for each association, with information concurrently posted to the official AFF website.

The AFF uses the following as its main means of communicating:

- requesting State Associations to forward information to their fencing community, either directly or through notices on their websites
- RSS feeds to those who have subscribed to the AFF website updates
- email circulars to affiliated and accredited coaches by the National Coaching Director.

In past years the AFF has prepared and provided generic Fencing brochures for use by State Associations in their promotional activities.

More recently, at the May 2009 Annual General Meeting, the AFF decided to:

- prepare a functional specification brief for a common national Fencing portal that will enable clubs and State Associations to manage their membership and communications
- establish a specific working party, ideally with a representative from each State, to advise and develop the functional specification brief
- engage with SportingPulse to seek the delivery of the specified national Fencing portal
- request Adam Reynolds to act as project manager for the delivery of the national Fencing portal, working to the advice of the working party.

3. Athlete Pathways

The AFF's support for the development of athletes includes the following activities in partnership with State Associations:

- a national competition circuit comprising 4 open veteran national tournaments, and age-specific (Junior (U20), Cadet (U17) and U15) Championships and also a Secondary School Championships;
- national weapon specific training camps.

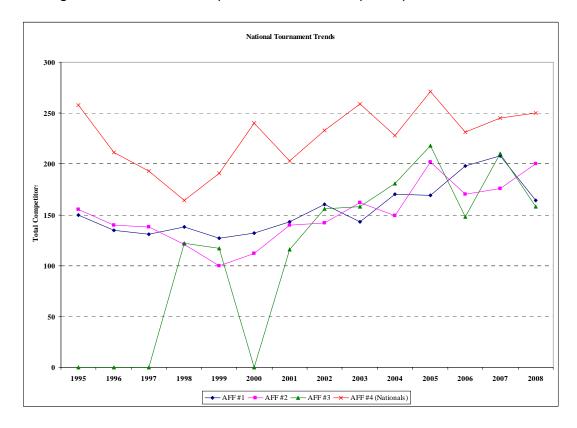
In addition, the AFF provides the opportunity for international representation at regional and international competitions and Championships.

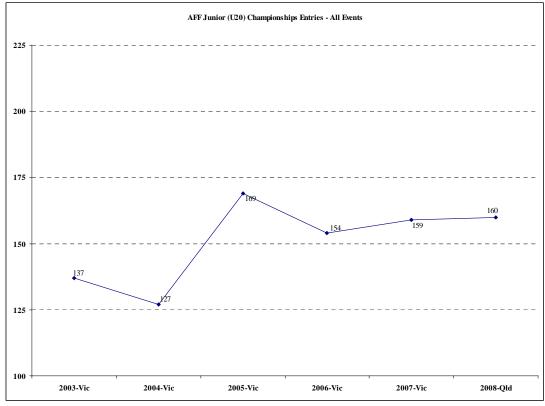
In recent years, the AFF has played an active part in the re-vitalisation of the Oceania Championships and access to significant competitions in the Asian Zone.

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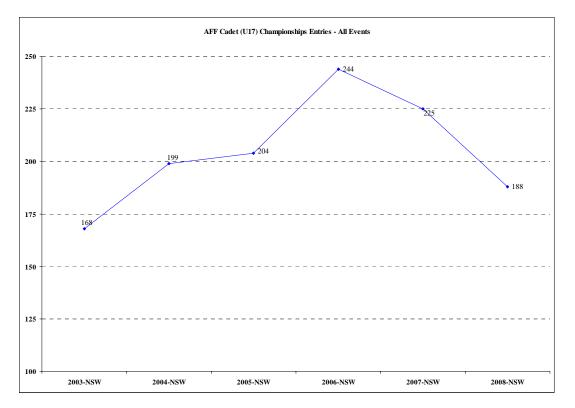
More recently the AFF has adopted and promulgated its *Cadet & Junior Development Guidelines* together with a commitment to establish a series of weapon specific international training and competition tours.

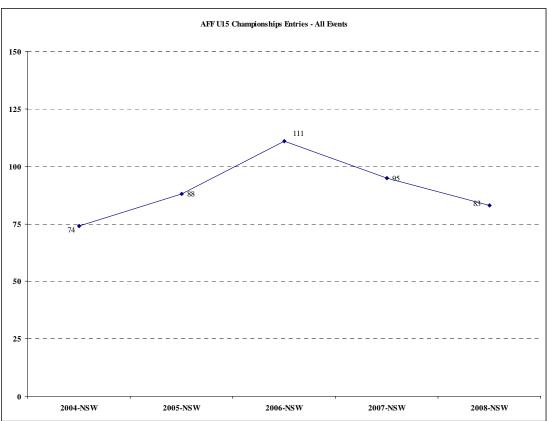
Following are the national competition tournament participation trends:



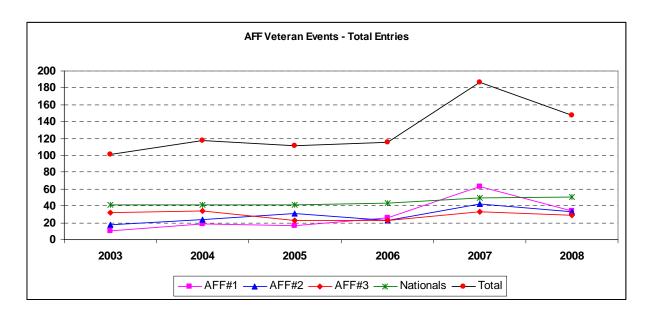


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The above data, when put alongside the levels of participation, suggests that the AFF has not significantly grown its athlete participation base in the past decade.

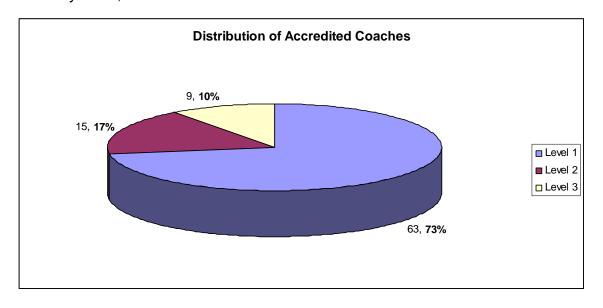
Against this background, Australian fencers have still managed to achieve significant international performances – refer appendix of international results.

4. Coaching & Officials Pathways

The following provides a recent historical account of the growth in accredited coaches.

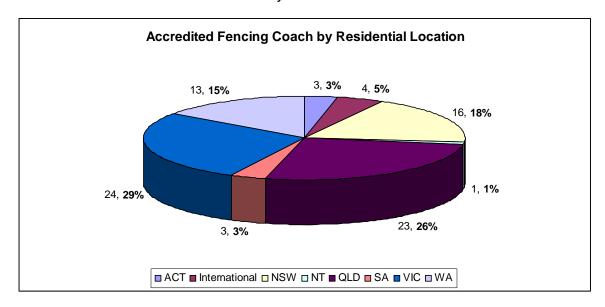
Year	Number accredited coaches	Annual Growth	Growth since 2005
2005	60		
2006	75	+25%	+25%
2007	88	+17%	+47%
2008	83	-6%	+38%
2009 (July)	87	+5%	+45%

As at July 2009, the distribution of accredited coaches is:



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The distribution of these coaches by their residential locations is:



The accreditation of coaches requires satisfactory completion of both general and sports specific studies and formal assessment against competency requirements for each of the three recognised levels under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS).

The formal assessment and recommendation for Level 1 is undertaken by the officer designated by each State Association in consultation with the National Coaching Director. Formal assessment for accreditation at Level 2 & 3 is on the basis of assessment by peers, co-ordinated through the National Coaching Director.

Over the past decade, the AFF has hosted every two years an international level coaching course with the funding assistance of the Oceania National Olympic Committee (ONOC) Solidarity Program and technical expertise of the FIE designated coaches.

Further international coaching development opportunities can be expected with the new FIE emphasis on opportunities for Zones to participate in annual international coaching development programs.

The AFF has recently had approved by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), under their National Officiating Accreditation Scheme (NOAS), a Club Refereeing Course and a State Refereeing Course. These competency based courses provide opportunities for States to administer training and assessment of referees.

Australia currently has 12 active referees recognised and accredited by the Federation Internationale d'Esrime. Under the FIE's policy to provide international refereeing courses annually in all Zones and opportunities for referees from all Zones to referee at international tournaments, real possibilities exist for referees to progress along a developmental pathway that includes international representation.

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5. Sport Development

In recent years the AFF has applied limited resources to the securing a basic stock of equipment to improve the quality of the Fencing experience by fencers at national tournaments and presentation of events to the public. It has been greatly supported in these efforts by the dedication and commitment of J.G. Fencing to hold and supply complementary stocks of equipment which it makes available for hire by the AFF and State Associations.

The AFF's contribution to Sports Development has been largely through it's High Performance Program.

In 2005, an independent review of the AFF High Performance Program by the ASC High Performance Advisory Panel, identified that the AFF "...had made significant inroads in developing a high performance culture for the sport of Fencing".

It also identified 5 key challenges that needed to be addressed to enhance the potential for future international success of our athletes. These challenges were:

- development of a nationally driven and integrated approach to the provision of sports science and sports medicine (SSSM) services to AFF national team and developing athletes
- providing national leadership in the creation, education and development of an elite coaching network and an appropriate coach accountability framework
- enhancing program standards across the AFF High Performance Program to create a true high performance culture for the sport
- reinforcement of Epee as the targeted discipline of the AFF and the implications and opportunities for the disciplines of Foil and Sabre in respect to the total resources available to the AFF, including the enhanced integration of development programs and resources across all disciplines that support AFF elite athlete pathways
- identifying additional resources for the AFF High Performance Program.

A range of further specific recommendations were also identified to address each of these challenges. Many of these were reflected in the AFF's 2005-08 Strategic Plan as submitted to the ASC – but with no increased funding by the ASC.

With no increased funding to support the implementation of these recommendations, the AFF has increasingly adopted a "user pays" approach to the funding of its activities – including the funding of management support for Australian teams.

6. Asset Growth & Management

The AFF owns relatively few physical assets and relies on a few areas of funding with an increasing reliance on the self-generation of revenue to support its activities.

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From it's relative funding peak in the mid-1990s under the then Federal Government's Gold Medal Plan for the Sydney Olympic Games, funding from these sources has declined.

The following table illustrates this trend:

	1996-97	2001-02	2008
ASC	\$80,600	\$30,000	\$62,000
AOC	\$25,700	\$22,000	\$12,000
AFF – self generated	\$35,000	\$43,000	\$69,500

In 1996/97 the AFF generated its \$35,000 of revenue from two key sources - State affiliations and capitations (\$27,300) and entry fees from national tournaments (\$7,700). In 2008 the AFF generated its \$69,500 of revenue from the same two key sources - State affiliations and capitations (\$26,500) and entry fees from national tournaments (\$43,000).

This increased reliance on self-generation of resources has been drawn from only a relatively modest increase in the sports participation base – refer Item 1 above.

A key issue is therefore the long-term sustainability of this approach to AFF revenues.

The above funding analysis does not include the specific, project-based, funding that the AFF receives, such as the annual NSW Government funding for the Challenge Australia, the ONOC Solidarity funding for the biennial coaching course.

More recently the AFF has put considerable effort in working with the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), in the submission of its *National High Performance Plan for Olympic and Paralympic Sports*, to put forward an argument to the Federal Government for a re-consideration of the funding arrangements for Olympic Sports. In particular the argument that funding should take account of broader performance measures relevant to the development or performance status of sports, rather than funding based on medal performances.

The Federal Government has advised that it's response to the AOC's submission will be made in the context of both the Government own commissioned review of sport in Australia (the Crawford Review) and the framing of the 2010-11 Federal budget.

7. Good Governance

The AFF's current governance arrangement have been summarised in Item 1 above.

Largely to have the capacity to draw on an expanded volunteer base, but also to hopefully attract some critical expertise, the AFF established a series of standing Commissions over the past decade to plan and deliver a number of its proposed activities.

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The capacity of these Commissions to deliver on their assigned responsibilities has varied largely in direct proportion to the leadership and administrative support available to the Commission.

In recent years, the AFF has moved to develop a range of policies, including:

- regular review of its Selection Policy, with an associated Selection Appeals Policy
- an updated Disciplinary Policy
- new Anti-doping Policy, Privacy Policy, Member Protection Policy, Risk Management Policy.

In some cases these policies have been provided as templates for State Associations to work with.

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INTERNATIONAL RESULTS - FENCING - 2004-08

Top 4 Results

Year	Comp Type	Weapon	Location	Result	Fencer
2005	Junior World Cup	Epee	Cairo	3 rd	Dean Williams
2006	Junior World Cup	Epee	Goteburg	1st	Martin Camelleri
2006	Junior World Cup	Epee	Cairo	3 rd	Martin Camelleri
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Nantong	2nd	Amber Parkinson
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Bangkok	3rd	Amber Parkinson

Top 8 Results

Year	Comp Type	Weapon	Location	Result	Fencer
2005	Junior World Cup	Foil	Cairo	6 th	Dean Williams
2005	Junior World Cup	Foil	Madrid	3 rd	Joe Slowiaczek
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	7 th	Evelyn Halls
2006	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	2 nd	Seamus Robinson
2006	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	7 th	Ross Austen
2006	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	8 th	Martin Camilleri
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Caguas	6 th	Seamus Robinson
2008	Senior World Cup	Foil	Buenos Aires	8 th	Jo Halls

Top 16 Results

Year	Comp Type	Weapon	Location	Result	Fencer
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	9 th	Amber Parkinson
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	12 th	Catherine Mackay
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	13 th	Rowena Newcombe
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	15 th	Penny Smith
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	16 th	Adele Haswell
2005	Senior World Cup	Foil	Bucharest	14 th	Jo Halls
2005	Junior World Cup	Epee	Luxemburg	16 th	Joe Slowiaczek
2007	Junior World Cup	Epee	Goteborg	16 th	Seri Wilson
2007	Senior World Cup	Foil	Buenos Aires	14 th	Jo Halls
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	12 th	Seamus Robinson
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	14 th	Ross Austen
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Buenos Aires	16 th	Seamus Robinson
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Nantong	10 th	Seamus Robinson
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Nantong	10 th	Frank Bartolillo
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Nantong	12 th	Evelyn Halls
2008	Senior World Cup	Epee	Prague	15 th	Amber Parkinson
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Bangkok	11 th	Frank Bartolillo
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Bangkok	13 th	Jo Halls
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Bangkok	13 th	Seamus Robinson

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Top 32 Results - Goal - 4

Year	Comp Type	Weapon	Location	Result	Fencer
2005	World Championships	Ерее	Liepzig	21 st	Evelyn Halls
2005	Senior World Cup	Sabre	Bangkok	26 th	Jess Brooks
2005	Senior World Cup	Foil	Vancouver	29 th	Ian Jackson
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	17 th	Genevieve Hartley
2005	Senior World Cup	Epee	Carolina	27 th	Richard Lewith
2005	Junior World Cup	Foil	Luxemburg	28 th	Joe Slowiaczek
2005	Junior World Cup	Foil	Madrid	29 th	Alex Carioti
2005	Junior World Cup	Foil	Luxemburg	31 st	Alex Carioti
2006	World Championships	Ерее	Torino	28 th	Evelyn Halls
2006	Junior World Champs	Ерее	Korea	25 th	Martin Camilleri
2006	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	29 th	Amber Parkinson
2006	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	31 st	Sarah Osvath
2006	Junior World Cup	Foil	Helsinki	24 th	Joe Slowiaczek
2006	Junior World Cup	Foil	Burgsteinfurt	22 nd	Dean Williams
2006	Junior World Cup	Foil	Cairo	21 st	Dean Williams
2006	Senior World Cup	Sabre	Koblenz	28 th	Emma Hynes
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Rome	24 th	Evelyn Halls
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Kish Island	20 th	Seamus Robinson
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Kish Island	22 nd	Ross Austen
2007	Junior World Cup	Epee	Montreal	31 ^{s†}	James Lewis
2007	Junior World Cup	Epee	Montreal	32 nd	Jacob Stone
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	12 th	Seamus Robinson
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	14 th	Ross Austen
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	25 th	Al Sutherland
2007	Senior World Cup	Epee	Sydney	30 th	Richard Lewith
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Nantong	26 th	Jo Halls
2007	Asian Zone Champs	Epee	Nantong	28 th	Ross Austen
2008	Olympics	Ерее	Beijing	19 th	Amber Parkinson
2008	Senior World Cup	Epee	Lisbon	20 th	Seamus Robinson
2008	Senior World Cup	Epee	Kish Island	20 th	Seamus Robinson
2008	Senior World Cup	Epee	Kish Island	26 th	Ross Austen
2008	Senior World Cup	Foil	Los Vegas	22 nd	Jo Halls
2008	Senior World Cup	Foil	Leipzig	27 th	Jo Halls
2008	Junior World Cup	Epee	Ponte du Sur	19 th	James Lewis
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Bangkok	23 rd	Jade Sarah
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Foil	Bangkok	24 th	Jenny Bonney-Millett
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Sabre	Bangkok	19 th	Min Yi Du
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Sabre	Bangkok	20 th	James Walsh
2008	Asian Zone Champs	Sabre	Bangkok	21 ^{s†}	Jess Brooks

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Junior	24%
Senior	76%
Male	56%
Female	44%
Epee	65%
Foil	28%
Sabre	5%

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