



Matt Carroll AM – Chief Executive Officer Australian Olympic Committee

Address to the National Press Club, 27 March 2023

Good afternoon and thank you for attending.

May I start by acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today, as well as the 60 known Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Olympians who have represented our nation at an Olympic Games.

In doing so, may I also recognise Indigenous Olympians Patrick Johnson, Chair of the AOC's Indigenous Advisory Committee and Committee members Kyle Vander-Kuyp and Beki Smith with us today.

May I acknowledge the representatives from Olympic and Paralympic sports, from universities, government, the Shadow Minister for Sport, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, the Co-Chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements in Australia – Graham Perrett MP and Bert van Manen MP, Andrew Liveris AO, President of the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee, Catherine Clark CEO of Paralympics Australia, Ben Houston, President of Commonwealth Games Australia and importantly all the Olympians.

Just over four years ago, I spoke here at the National Press Club and unveiled a new direction for the Olympics in Australia.

A direction that has delivered significant progress on our role to provide athletes the opportunity to excel at the Olympic Games and to promote the values of Olympism and benefits of participation in sport to all Australians.

All in keeping with our vision, to inspire Australians through the spirit of Olympic sport.

Through this work, we are fulfilling our obligation as a National Olympic Committee to the Olympic Charter – *'To Build a Better World through Sport'*.

However, achieving our objectives in partnership with our Member Sports is getting harder.

Last week I attended, along with more than 500 hundred people of all ages and from all sectors of the community, the Brisbane 2032 Legacy Forum. Enthusiasm abounded. Hopes and dreams for our country were bounced around the room. Sadly, many may remain just dreams.

Why? Well four years ago, I also spoke about the chronic decline in strategic government investment in Australian sport and the opportunity to arrest that decline for the good of the nation.

I did say at the time that turning around the decline was a long game – but, we are now deep into the second half and sadly the score is going in the wrong way.

Our analysis, undertaken in conjunction with our Member Sports, shows that based on the Federal Government's forward estimates, there is a \$2 billion shortfall in direct investment in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports in the ten years leading to Brisbane 2032.

You heard right, two billion.

As the Australian Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games Australia stated in **Sport: Powering Australia's Future – 10+10**, our submission to the Federal Government's 2021 Intergenerational Report, successive national sports plans under successive national governments of different political persuasions, have done nothing to address the investment in sport to achieve the opportunities for the Australian community that they identified. The plans were without a means. At best, you could call them "aspirational plans".

Without investment, what governments in Australia want sport to achieve for the community is not going to happen and, in all honesty, and openness, unless this situation is rectified, Australia will be staring failure in the face at the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games because our home Teams will have been undermined by inaction.

Time starts now.

The AOC fully understands the pressures on the Federal budget to address the cost of living for many Australians. The AOC is not seeking any Federal Government funding for itself – we never do.

The solutions I will offer today are all about an investment in our sports and their athletes and the net return to Australia on that investment.

But first let's take a look at the score board. The Olympic Movement has not been idol, the AOC has and continues to invest in sport.

Starting with the Olympic Teams, through the hard work and dedication of our Member Sports and the skill and determination of their athletes, the AOC delivered an Australian Team to Tokyo 2020 that was record-breaking.

486 Australians competed, with female representation accounting for 54% of the Team, a record for Australia and a record 16 Indigenous Australians represented.

Australia placed sixth on the medal table. We equalled our best gold medal count with 17 gold. Add a further 7 silver and 22 bronze and it was our second-best medal count ever – a return on investment.

All came home Olympians, 99 with a medal – all an inspiration to Australian communities – a return on investment.

Six months later with the pandemic still on, this time with the outstanding preparation by our winter Member Sports and their athletes, we took an Australian Team of 43 athletes to Beijing 2022 – 22 women and 21 men, our third largest Winter Olympic Team ever. The Team secured Australia's greatest ever winter Olympic medal count with four medals – one gold, two silver and one bronze – a return on investment.

The combined investment by the AOC in both teams plus youth and regional games over the four years was \$35 million. Paid for by our commercial program with our sponsors, IOC grants, our Olympic Foundation and State Government donations of \$3m.

Four years ago, I unveiled our signature community program, Olympics Unleashed. Since that time, through our partnership with the State and Territory governments in Qld, NSW, SA, WA and ACT, 245 athletes have visited 2,128 schools and spoken to 283,000 students, telling their stories to the students about what they've learned during the twists and turns of their careers.

Olympics Unleashed has also supported Olympians and future Olympians with presentation training and payments which to date total \$750,000.

Another of our critical activations is Australian Olympic Change Maker, now in its 5th year, which recognises students who are demonstrating the Olympic spirit - friendship, sportsmanship and striving for excellence through leadership, challenging students to 'Be the Change'.

I am proud to report that to date 4,000 year 10, 11 and 12 students right across Australia from Thursday Island to Launceston, Perth to Deniliquin, are driving positive change in their schools and local communities.

In talking with the students each year, they give me great hope that the future of our country is in safe hands.

In February this year, we recognised the first Australian Olympic Pathway School in New South Wales. Possibly a world first.

Recognition builds pride in the students and families and shines a light on the schools for providing that vital pathway for aspiring Olympians. More schools to come.

In keeping with our commitment to practical support for Indigenous reconciliation through sport, and in partnership with Patty Mills' Indigenous Basketball Australia and Toyota Australia, we delivered a pilot program of scholarships for Indigenous coaches.

In celebrating the 60 Indigenous athletes known to have represented Australia at the Olympic Games, the Australian Olympic team uniform proudly features Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, a special cultural centre is now part of the Australian allotment in the Olympic Village and athlete centred "*Walk with Us*" forums are an annual occurrence.

In this way, the Australian Olympic Team proudly showcases our cultural heritage to the rest of the world.

Our investment in community engagement with our partners now totals \$12m over the four years to Paris 2024.

As we head towards 2032, the AOC is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Olympians, creating inspiring leaders for Indigenous communities.

In doing so, again in conjunction with our Member Sports, we aim to increase the number of medals won by our Indigenous Olympians, currently 15 – 11 women and 4 men.

At the centre of everything we do, are the Olympians - and athletes aiming to become Olympians.

The AOC is delivering programs focused on health and wellbeing, post competition careers and personal brand management, as well as supporting Member Sports in their athlete related services.

These support services and direct funding to athletes over the four years to Paris totals more than \$18 million.

On the international diplomacy front on behalf of the Australian Government in 2020/21 the AOC managed and delivered a comprehensive support project assisting the athletes of the National Olympic Committees of Oceania and the Oceania Paralympic Committee prepare for the Tokyo Games.

The success of the program was best summed up by the Secretary General of Tuvalu Olympic Committee from the world's smallest sovereign country.

"The biggest achievement of this support was making the impossible possible. Without this support we could not have made it to the Olympics."

While this project was a first of its kind partnership with the Australian Government through Department of Foreign Affairs, we consider that projects like this are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what the Olympic Movement can do for sport diplomacy outcomes in the Pacific.

And indeed, this is the theme adopted for the re-launch of the *Parliamentary Friends of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements in Australia* taking place this evening in Canberra. *'Brisbane 2032: A decade of Sport Diplomacy across the Pacific'*.

Staying with the international context, the tragic events in Afghanistan in 2021, saw the AOC, with diplomatic support from the Australian Government, evacuate athletes, sport officials and their families safely into Australia where they are continuing to contribute to sport.

Many of these people were in critical danger of being killed. Some had been tortured. Thirty-one people now call Australia home as a result of this endeavour, so when we talk about the power of sport to change lives – there can be no better example than this.

In December 2020, the AOC became a signatory to the United Nations' Sports for Climate Action Framework acknowledging the active role that sport can play in delivering sustainable operations for the benefit of the environment.

We have initiated our own Climate Action Plan, setting out AOC's commitment to a 30% reduction in its emissions by 2024, 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2040.

Our relationships with the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Institute of Sport and the State and Territory institutes and academies have never been stronger. We contribute to their strategic plans and support their submissions to governments throughout the country. I am a member of the Leadership Group for Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy.

The same with our colleagues at Paralympics Australia and Commonwealth Games Australia.

These activities I just outlined are a substantial investment by the AOC and our partners. We do them because, as we say to our young Change Markers – "be the change".

But sport can do so much more. The AOC, our Member Sports and Olympians make up the Olympic Movement in Australia, and along with Paralympics Australia and Commonwealth Games Australia, we all want to put sport at the service of the Australian community, but to do so we need a strong and receptive partnership with the Federal Government.

As I mentioned earlier, in May 2021, in partnership with Commonwealth Games Australia, we produced the 10+10 Submission.

Notably, this was the first-time sport had ever prepared a submission for consideration by the Federal Government in its' formulation of an Intergenerational Report.

The 10+10 Submission advocates for the Sport Industry to be embraced by governments in Australia as an economic portfolio.

We do not want to be the portfolio of marginal seats and political photo opportunities. We do not enjoy being the portfolio of coloured spreadsheets or whiteboards mapping electorates.

As an industry sector, we are fiscal contributors to the nation's wellbeing through the critical role Sport plays in our collective health, addressing the nation's obesity crisis, chronic diseases, mental health, and personal development. All issues called out almost daily by government, media and industry as critical to the productivity of Australia's economy. Sport can deliver.

In addition, sport delivers economy building major events, tourism, hospitality, infrastructure, research, and something that is most important, sporting excellence, building national pride and international status.

The submission was well received by the then Government and the Opposition – with those roles now reversed following last year's Federal Election.

Later that year, Brisbane was elected as host of the 35th Olympiad by the International Olympic Committee and on 11 April 2022, Victoria was elected as host of the Commonwealth Games 2026.

So now the recommendations set out in the 10+10 Submission carry even greater weight in order to realise the unique opportunities presented by the decade-long green and gold runway and the 10 years after.

Brisbane 2032 is an accelerator of what should happen anyway, add Victoria 2026 and the other 30 or more international sporting events and we have turbo charged opportunity for Australian sport to deliver for the Australian economy and community.

So how do we make this happen.

For the AOC, this means a greater focus on a partnership with government and a new way of managing and delivering government investment in sport.

Framing our approach is the AOC's role and philosophy that we provide encouragement and support to all 44 of our member sports on the Olympic program.

With the proper resources and support, they are each capable of success. Success not measured by medals alone, but also in their ability to deliver on the outcomes I have already outlined.

This broad-based approach ensures that the potential for our sports to succeed is not cut off and that no individual athlete or team is denied the opportunity to achieve representation at the highest international level of competition.

Remembering Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports appeal to a wide demographic of our multicultural nation, gender balanced, many for decades and inclusive of all.

An example of what I'm speaking about is the experience of the Australian Men's Indoor Volleyball Team (the Volleyroos). Volleyball is one of the largest sports in the world; 221 nations, 800 million participants.

In 2019, the Volleyroos had qualified for and competed in the world Volleyball Nations League, ranked as high as 13th in the World and finished 2nd at the Asian Volleyball Championships, consistently defeating China, Korea, Iran and Japan during this period.

With limited Olympic places available the Volleyroos narrowly missed qualifying for Tokyo.

The consequences? The dollar starved AIS assessed the Volleyroos as having no Olympic medal potential going forward and cut their high-performance investment of \$1.4m to zero.

As a result the Volleyroos are now ranked 39th and have no prospect of qualifying for the Paris Olympics. The team faces a difficult rebuilding phase to prepare for 2032 when as the host NOC, we have guaranteed qualification for all sports.

Investment in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games Sports provides government with a highly structured national network of experienced and committed people, largely staffed by volunteers, that reaches all corners of the country. We have more than 13 million participants, more than 50% of the nation's population.

Such an investment will be far more productive and provide a bigger bang for the government buck than any bespoke specialised program or anti-obesity advertising campaign.

The investment needed will enable the sports to improve their capability and capacity to deliver on the outcomes being sought; not new one-off programs, which only stretch the stressed and lean administrations and the volunteers of the sports to breaking point.

If government properly recognise the role of sport, and by government I mean all three tiers: Local, State and Federal, committing resources and investment, the governments in this country will have their agendas significantly enhanced through sport.

Statement of Purpose

In the Federal context, to bring this partnership together, what is needed is a clear articulation of a national purpose of and for the sports industry which clearly states where sport sits in the Federal Government's national priorities.

A purpose that is accepted and bought into by all three tiers of government and the industry, which addresses the full spectrum of activity from grassroots to high performance, athletes and sport organisations.

To do this, a clear Statement of Purpose needs to be agreed by all parties to enable a meaningful context within which governments prioritise sport and how policy and investment decisions are made.

The Statement of Purpose should be used as the reference for which all proposed policies are tested by what is really quite a simple question. Is the policy, initiative, or program going to deliver against the Purpose? Yes or no.

As the great rowing saying goes – does it make the boat go faster? – If not, don't do it.

The AOC proposes that the Statement of Purpose encompass the following critical elements:

- The independence and autonomy of sports organisations - in this sense, the Olympic Movement speaks about “responsible autonomy”.
- Commitment to a diversity of sports, reflecting the multicultural nation we are and the new world we are engaging in, particularly our Asian neighbours who participate in many sports which are less traditional in Australia – such as table tennis.
- Commitment to sport as a great enabler for people with a disability.
- Commitment to sport in the School Curriculum creating – a vibrant school sport system that provides children with positive and diverse sporting experiences, teaching them about the benefits of sport that can lead to lifelong sporting pursuits, enhanced academic success, as well as opportunities for talented and determined children to achieve in their chosen sport.
- Recognition of the positive impact of whole-of-life sport for active lifestyles, reducing disease and other negative impacts of a sedentary lifestyle, as well as the positive impact that sport has on social cohesion and mental wellbeing across the community.
- Recognition that sporting performances and the ability of sport to harness a sense of national pride can unify the country; acknowledging that individual sportspeople provide inspiration to the community across countless areas of endeavour, not sport alone.

For example, Paralympic athletes provide tremendous motivation and hope to the many Australians living with disabilities. Indigenous athletes change the lives of kids in communities – our sports are here to help in closing the gap and through our diversity, we literally have a sport for everyone.

- And finally, recognition that sporting organisations understand their sport business best and are well placed to develop, implement and deliver the outcomes being sought: the achievement of national objectives of benefit to the community especially in education and health.

By making this Statement of Purpose, both the sporting organisations and the Government make a commitment, like our athletes do, to their clear and stated goals.

Investment Model

With a clear Statement of Purpose, a new Investment Model can be developed.

The current sport funding model managed by the Australian Sports Commission has been in varied, but similar, forms for more than 40 years.

The model is based on what funds are available rather than what is optimal, hence it creates winners and losers, all vying for funding from an ever-decreasing pool of dollars.

An example of this winners and losers model relates to the Australian women’s hockey team – the Hockeyroos. In December 2021, the AIS cut the funding of the Hockeyroos (who were ranked 4th in the world at the time) by a 7-figure sum.

The AIS’s advised reason for this decision was a determination that the Hockeyroos were not a medal chance at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Notably, the Hockeyroos in 2022 won bronze at the Women’s World Cup and a silver medal at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and are currently ranked number 3 in the world.

A team that inspires young girls defunded, but millions of dollars were found for change room grants for commercial sporting codes. Not saying change rooms are not important but seriously, priorities?

The same situation has occurred with participation investment. Just when obesity, particularly in children, is becoming an ever-increasing inconvenient truth afflicting Australian society, the Australian Sports Commission has had to scrape around for dollars to provide financial support to sports participation programs. Sure, the Sporting Schools program runs on but it's a band aid at best.

So to state again, on the current forward estimates, direct investment is likely to be only \$0.7B, leaving a \$2 billion-dollar shortfall in the Federal Government's investment in the Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports through to 2032.

This shortfall consists of half a billion dollars for participation and \$1.5B for pathways and performance.

Therefore, the investment required from the Federal Government, based on the work and analysis we have undertaken with our Member Sports, through to FY2032 is \$2.7B in partnership with the \$3.2B investment the Sports will be making directly from their own means.

On an annualised basis, this is \$200M per year, over 10 years to 2032.

The AOC and our Member Sports acknowledge that receiving Government investment requires accountability, so we propose a new Sport Investment Model to reframe the sports as true partners with the Federal Government. A model that will:

- ensure a holistic coordinated view of sport that yields measurable, objective return on investment. Improve transparency, accountability and establish a disciplined approach to the partnership between Government and a sport;
- acknowledge that Sports, like any business, are an integrated operation, accepting the direct link between participation and high performance. To manage their business, our sports need to keep both parts in the same envelope as each part benefits from, and indeed is largely dependent upon, the existence of the other;

The virtuous circle – Participation, Pathways and Performance.

- facilitate investment in Sports through a four-year cycle based on a business plan that encompasses the whole of their business. These business plans will provide specific details of activities and initiatives, revenue sources and growth plans, along with measures of performance and success;
- ensure a co-ordinated engagement with other Federal Government departments and agencies to maximise the nation's return on investment in sport and unlock value through partnerships. For example, with the Office for Women, Regional Development, Education, Health, Infrastructure, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Indigenous Australians and Early Childhood Education and Youth; and
- create alignment in the roles of Government agencies – specifically the Australian Sports Commission, Sport Integrity Australia and National Sports Tribunal to deliver value through specific services and research for sport, particularly where those services are best undertaken centrally to maximise investment and prevent duplication.

AIS

The many medal winning performances enjoyed by Australian sport over the decades have been due to the revolutionary focus on sport science, medicine and technology delivered through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS).

Through the AIS, we once led the world in this space and the world came to us to learn.

To return the AIS back to its' global position, the AOC calls for increased investment in the AIS so it is home to the best and brightest in the sports science, medicine, technology and data disciplines.

Like any industry sport requires knowledge to stay at the cutting edge with innovation underpinning successful performance. Advances in technology and knowledge in human performance, support not only elite sport but also enhance investment in participation, ensuring the fruits of performance investment propagate growth in participation.

I am talking about a whole of sport focus, in a dynamic, collegial environment - where special research projects can be developed with universities and other institutions and brought to fruition, beyond the provision of routine support to athlete performance programs.

The green and gold runway is not just a series of sporting events. The runway includes the opportunity for targeting and fast-tracking research, and exposing new technologies during the Games that can facilitate subsequent broader community and commercial applications.

The AIS should be the CSIRO of the sport industry, backed up by the network of State and Territory Sport Institutes and Academies, with universities providing research support.

Collectively they should be harnessed as a sport industry research and development engine room, not dissimilar from how the Cooperative Research Centres have driven innovation, change and investment in other industries for decades.

Knowledge is the great enabler.

Department of Sport

Now to tie all of this together.

In order to deliver the benefits that sport can bring to Australia as set out in 10+10, we need a change.

While it's not for me to tell the Prime Minister and his Ministers how to structure the machinery of government – mind you, in my role I get lots of advice just about every day on what AOC and sports should or should not be doing, so let's dive in any way!

The significant change the AOC calls **for is for sport at the Federal level to be elevated to its own dedicated department**. Just as sport has been at the State and Territory level for decades.

Sport is too important to be part of an omnibus or alphabet collection of other portfolios and not as the forgotten poor cousin hidden way in the Department of Health.

In this structure, all existing agencies Sports Commission, Integrity Australia, and National Sports Tribunal would be incorporated and continue as part of, a new 'Department of Sport' so that these agencies can provide their centralised services and research, secure in their own core funding. The standalone Department would:

- clearly reflect the importance to the nation of the Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth Games and major events runway to 2032 and the ongoing legacy into the decades after;
- establish a direct line of reporting to the Prime Minister's Office;
- position the Minister for Sport as a member of Cabinet reflecting the significant contribution sport makes to the economy, health and social wellbeing of the nation; and
- most importantly, ensure alignment of Government policy and activities to optimise sports contribution to the nation from a whole-of-Government perspective including Health, Education, Regional Development, Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Trade, Infrastructure, and Indigenous Australians as well as Early Childhood Education and Youth.

A dedicated Department for Sport would ensure the core aspects of the investment mechanism are addressed and achieved by:

- enabling objective examination of proposed investments in sport – not just write cheques for whoever shouts the loudest for a new stadium or centre of excellence to various ministers across government and back benchers in marginal seats;
- coordinating other Federal Government departments and agencies and State and Territory Governments in relation to major sporting events and ensuring the benefits from hosting major sporting events are maximised;
- informing and recommending to the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) and Cabinet as to the investment model and its implementation;
- assessing holistic investment in the national sporting organisations, through a four-year funding cycle and release of funds based on a formal business plan that meets the requirements of the investment strategies of our individual sports;
- co-ordinating with its counterparts at the State and Territory level to align policy and investment; and
- ensuring final responsibility for investment decisions rests with the Minister for Sport and ERC.

Most importantly for Sport, a dedicated Federal Department of Sport with its own dedicated Minister would enable the sport industry to have a centralised voice in Government.

The combination of the Statement of Purpose and a new investment model administered by a dedicated Department of Sport would head off situations such as:

- where Olympic and Paralympic sports struggle to send their athletes to international competitions, requiring parents of athletes to step in with financial support, while at the same time direct grants totalling in the hundreds of millions of dollars are made to the more 'commercially enhanced' sporting organisations for centres of excellence.
- where other government agencies/departments operate specific programs based on sport, but not necessarily with the strategic alignment to the goals of sport in Australia and in the case of sport diplomacy, to sport in other nations.

For an industry that brings a return of positive economic contributions to the country, with a total economic value to the national economy of approximately \$83 billion annually and a return to Australian communities of at least \$7 for every \$1 invested in sport, it is difficult to fathom why we don't have a Department of Sport already. It is clearly an opportunity gone missing – thus far.

Conclusion

Successive Federal Governments surveys show that regardless of an individual's level of interest or commitment to sport, the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games touch almost all Australians in one way or another.

Our diversity of sports is our great strength – there is literally an Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games sport for everyone.

Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports are played by males and females, in some sports for more than 100 years. Some sports attract more women than men and others have an equal gender balance. Most importantly at the Games, all are equal.

The sports are not just for young Australians – in some of our sports, the largest participant age group is the over-55s – never say never.

The election of Brisbane as host of the 35th Olympiad has gifted Australia a once in a generation opportunity. But simply successfully hosting the Brisbane Games is not going to deliver the community and economic benefits that can be achieved for the nation.

To do this we must have a unity of purpose that transcends politics, lobby groups and fixed thinking.

We must have a unity that transforms entrenched public policy approaches and processes, which have recycled systemic problems such as, the increasing rates of obesity and chronic diseases and declining levels of physical literacy over generations.

What the AOC is proposing is new thinking and new action. It is thinking that deliberately targets investment in a more active, healthier and productive population through the delivery mechanism of sport.

It is thinking that understands the legacy of an active and healthier society will not be achieved without the deliberate and planned coordination of the three key drivers: organised sport, health and education.

It is thinking that knows that the Brisbane Games will not be a success if the Australian Teams are not successful.

To ensure that the once in a generation opportunity of the runway to Brisbane 2032 and the ten years after are not missed nor squandered we are calling for;

- national Statement of Purpose for sport which clearly establishes where sport sits in the Federal Government's national priorities and recognised through a national sport strategy;
- new sport investment model with built in accountability mechanisms;
- stand-alone Department of Sport;
- boost in direct investment in sports to arrest the decline; and
- significant funding increase for the AIS to make it the CSIRO of sport.

And for the economic rationalists, remember, that every \$1 spent on sport, returns \$7 – that's not a bad investment.

In closing I simply note that the Olympic and Paralympic medals Australian athletes win are years in the making.

They are only possible because some Australians are prepared to dream, to pursue excellence, to leave nothing to chance and to put in the hard work and time to be successful.

For the rest of us, sport administrators, government ministers, officials, and other stakeholders in sport, we must be like our athletes.

We must pursue excellence, leave nothing to chance and recognise that achieving success takes hard work and commitment.

We have an opportunity to make a generational difference, by forging an entirely new partnership between government and the Sport industry. A partnership that will deliver for Australia well into the second half of this century and beyond.

So, we have done some of the thinking, we have proposed a game plan.

This 26th July marks a year to go to the Paris Olympic Games. The athletes and teams are in the preparation and qualification phase, with their sports trying to make ends meet as global inflation cuts deep into budgets.

The team size will be around the 450 mark and while expectations are positive, the challenge is tough, as results will come down to hundredths of a second or a well struck kick, pass or shot. The world is a competitive place.

After Paris, which in our time frame is next week, the winter Olympic team heads to Milan Cortina, and a home team assembles for the Commonwealth Games in Victoria in 2026. Followed by LA 2028 and then it's Brisbane's turn. Not really that far away.

There is one certainty in all of this, the Olympic flame will be lit in Brisbane on 23 July 2032 – whether we are ready or not!

Thank you.

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