



MEDIA RELEASE

COMPS ACT have created a SCOREBOARD on Election 2020

During 2020, COMPS ACT has been advocating for the reform and improvement of community sport and recreation in the ACT. Our advocacy has been on four main priorities:

1. Sustaining community sport beyond the pandemic
2. Finding a more sustainable model for sport and recreation infrastructure investment
3. Valuing local community sport and recreation
4. Establishing a representative body for the sport and recreation sector.

COMPS ACT has developed a 'SCOREBOARD' document to compare the election commitments of major parties in the 2020 Election in the ACT towards community sport and recreation in the ACT.

James Allsopp, the Chair of COMPS ACT said " We have chosen to publish a 'SCOREBOARD' to highlight the issues that COMPS ACT believes are currently at play in order to chart a strategic way forward to progress the interests of the community sport and recreation sector in the ACT".

Allsopp added, "COMPS ACT considers these issues to be front and centre to bring about positive reform to the community sport and recreation sector. Fundamentally, these issues need to be addressed as both strategic and operational perspectives".

COMPS ACT notes that prior to meetings with political parties, the Liberal Party had released its sport and recreation-specific "Find Your Game" plan in November 2019 and the Greens had a sport and recreation policy included in their "Building a Better Normal" Election Platform of June 2020. The Labor Party has committed, should it be re-elected, to revitalising the Active2020 Plan that has been in place since 2011.

"COMPS ACT wants to acknowledge that the major parties were all prepared to meet, discuss and consider these issues," Allsopp stated "we believe as a consequence of our advocacy that the political process is better attuned to responding to the needs of community sport and recreation. COMPS ACT considers that good processes lead to good outcomes, this objective has underpinned taking our position on seeking improvement for community sport and recreation".

It is important to note the ratings contained in the SCOREBOARD correlate with the four priorities that COMPS outlined in our position paper, i.e. COMPS ACT believes that:

- a) the ACT needs long term aims and aspirations that can be fulfilled for the benefit of community engagement and well-being and avoid the lure of a short-term approach, and
- b) these issues should be imperatives for the party/parties elected to govern the ACT following the 2020 election.

The SCOREBOARD has been developed following discussions with the major parties, i.e. the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, and the Greens Party, and follow-up research of their plans, policies, and/or media releases. These discussions were incredibly valuable and can be a springboard for our ongoing relationship with each of these parties.

Allsopp concluded, "When we look at the tremendous commitment of each of the parties to sporting infrastructure, there is a real case for reaching bi-partisanship on this issue."

One of the minor parties, the Belco Party, independently sought out COMPS ACT as did an independent candidate, Fiona Carrick from the electorate of Molonglo. COMPS ACT notes that it did not discuss these issues with the Canberra Progressives Party, however, there was some correlation in their election aspirations for better planning processes and in valuing community cohesion.

COMPS ACT holds the view that the ACT should have in place long term aims and aspirations that can be fulfilled for the benefit of community engagement and well-being and avoid the lure of short termism. These issues should be imperatives for the party/parties elected to govern the ACT following the 2020 election.

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SCOREBOARD

PRIORITIES \ PARTY	Sustaining community sport beyond the pandemic	Finding a more sustainable model for sport and recreation infrastructure	Valuing local community sport and recreation	Establishing a representative body for sport and recreation sector
Labor	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Not committed to COMPS' position
Liberal	Not committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Not committed to COMPS' position
Greens	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position

Key:

Committed to COMPS' position	Committed to COMPS' position
Partially committed to COMPS' position	Partially committed to COMPS' position
Not committed to COMPS' position	Not committed to COMPS' position

COMMENTARY

PRIORITY 1: Sustaining community sport beyond the pandemic

This is the only immediate and short-term issue included among COMPS' four priorities, owing to the pandemic having a significant impact on sporting associations and community clubs and participants.

The ACT Government's support package provided in May-June 2020, carrying over until first quarter of 2021, has been greatly appreciated and responded to an unexpected and urgent need in the community sport and recreation sector. The Labor Party and the Greens Party, as members of the incumbent government, were well placed to highlight their commitment and support. As the incumbent Opposition, the Liberal Party indicated they need to fully understand the budget position before they offer immediate budgetary support or relief to the sector – nonetheless they understand the imperative.

Briefly, this impact covers:

- financial pressures for sporting associations and community clubs and sporting participants due to reduced revenue, e.g. licensed club support, international and national competition events, sponsorship monies, fundraising opportunities
- fall in participation numbers due to shortened seasons, uncertainty of household income and variability of social gathering restrictions
- the need to alleviate the burden upon primarily a volunteer workforce.

In the discussions with the major parties:

- Labor and Liberal indicated that they would work closely with key stakeholders and consider their needs, should they be successful
- The Greens believed that there is a need, as laid out by COMPS ACT, and would seek to address it in the next Assembly

The Belco Party indicated their support for this priority.

Conclusion:

Sustaining community sport beyond the pandemic is very much a HOT issue for sporting associations and community clubs.

COMPS ACT wants to work with the elected government to support the interests and needs of community sport and recreation in the ACT.



PRIORITY 2: Finding a more sustainable model for sport and recreation infrastructure

In response to what COMPS ACT has been seeking on this issue, the Greens Party has been most attentive to this priority. This includes having a shared understanding for good governance underpinning the development and maintenance of community assets and the community having access to worthy facilities as well as committing to sustainability of assets in a changing climate. The Labor Party will review the effectiveness of existing grants and use the future investment infrastructure fund for optimising use of existing sporting grounds, targeting improved lighting and amenities and water usage. The Liberal Party have committed to developing a long-term sports infrastructure plan, supplemented by a sporting precinct asset plan, also responding to the changing environment.

In reviewing announcements, the major parties have committed to spending on sport and recreation infrastructure projects, with some examples shown in the following table:

EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENT TO SPORTING FACILITIES

Party	Proposed Spending
Liberal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> planned initiatives for use of water, ground hire and access, lighting of grounds, clubhouse storage, affordability introducing an innovation hub for sport indoor multi-sport facility for Calwell, Tuggeranong indoor multi-sports complex for Gungahlin upgrade of Phillip Oval facilities
Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrades and repairs to Netball Courts at Lyneham, Arawang new half-pipe at the Belconnen skate park new Gungahlin Tennis Centre Continued work on Throsby Home of Football major upgrade at Woden Valley (Phillip) Enclosed oval better lighting at ovals/playing fields of Watson, Mawson, Hawker
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive review of sporting and recreational assets developing a long-term facilities management plan for indoor and outdoor facilities sporting groups accessing the Community Facilities and Clubs Environmental upgrade multi-purpose indoor sports centre at the Woden Town Centre Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan as a leading multi-sport facility in Australia new competition standard Half Pipe, and a Skatepark in Dickson improving waterway use for recreational activities

In promoting active lifestyle within the community, all major parties are committing to upgrading various paths, cycleways, playgrounds, and community exercise equipment.

Conclusion:

COMPS ACT is pleased that all major parties consider that spending public monies on community sport and recreation facilities is a key component to their election platforms.

The fundamental issue is the requirement for a methodical approach and framework for planning, implementing and renewing sporting and recreational facilities in the ACT. COMPS ACT believes that government should not solely bear the load of planning for community facilities: the sector is well placed to provide frank and fearless, strategic advice and expert guidance.





PRIORITY 3: Valuing local community sport and recreation

This was the most aspirational issue that COMPS ACT presented in its position paper.

In reviewing the policies, announcements and statements articulated for this ACT election, it is our understanding of the election platforms that each political party is seeking to support to community initiatives in their own way. The only explicit commitment to COMPS' position has been the Greens Party in their offer to review and streamline existing grants that support the administration of community sport and recreation. The Liberal Party through its "Find Your Game" has articulated a wide range of aspirations for engaging with, and improving the interests of, the community sport and recreation sector – albeit in a different manner to COMPS' proposal, but their intention is apparent. The Labor Party intends to review the current sport and recreation grants to ensure appropriate support is provided and acknowledges the benefits of hosting both elite level and community-based sport and recreation events in the ACT to complement local competitions.

It should be noted that all parties acknowledged that the cost of participation is an ongoing issue for community sport and recreation participants. Associated to this issue:

- the Liberal Party (and the Belco Party) have committed to a family rebate scheme for active children
- the Labor Party is proposing a future equity education grants program for a similar purpose
- the Greens have used a social inclusion policy for proposing a review of tax and concession arrangements as well as broader health and social support measures.

Conclusion:

It has been encouraging that each party is attuned to valuing local sport and recreation in the ACT.

At the heart of this issue though, is the building of human and social capital, and improving the quality of community sport and recreation.

This is why COMPS ACT has strongly indicated it is prepared to invest in working with the elected government about developing an aspirational ethos for improving the quality of local sport and recreation in the ACT. This aspiration goes beyond, but is complementary to, the built-form and economic development outcomes.

While this issue is a slow-burner, it does not make it any less important to address.

PRIORITY 4: Establishing a representative body for sport and recreation sector

In response to COMPS ACT request for seed funding to re-establish a peak body for sport and recreation in the ACT, the Greens Party has been at the forefront of any response. A commitment to government seed funding and review of funding arrangements, and in having COMPS ACT take the lead on providing broader leadership indicated full support for this priority.

The Labor Party indicated that they would consider the issue and the proposed solutions should they be elected to govern, and if so will continue to consult with specific entities.

The Liberal Party indicated that seed funding would certainly seem reasonable, dependant on the organisation's objectives and plans for longer term financial self-sufficiency.

It is worth noting that the Belco Party provided in-principle support to COMPS ACT's position.

Conclusion:

The bottom-line should be, that government should strive to have a high functioning and well-connected community sector that has a willing and committed leader.

The provision for seed funding for a representative body would help reinforce the ACT jurisdiction as the national leader in active and healthy living.

The flow-on benefits to the connectedness and governing of the community sport and recreation sector could be immeasurable, if handled correctly.

