

Trends in Sport and Recreation

Participation patterns in sport and recreation-based activities are changing at the grass-roots and community level, despite continuing media coverage of traditional, competitive sports.

Australia's shifting demographics, increased use of technology, the shift away from organised, structured sports and the growth in eco-tourism have had a significant impact on the sport and recreation industry.

Understanding some of the trends in sport and recreation will help clubs and organisations provide meaningful and appropriate opportunities for participants.

Social change

The perception that we don't have time to commit to organised group activities as participants or volunteers, has contributed to a trend towards more individual pursuits in less structured activities.

'Pay and play' activities appear to be increasing in popularity. These attract the 'no strings attached' participant who wants to sample activities without having to make a long-term commitment. Quick and easily accessible activities that don't require substantial training suit this type of participant.

The sport and recreation industry relies heavily on volunteers. The push for higher quality services and programs has increased the burden on volunteers, with their roles becoming more complex and requiring greater expertise and training.

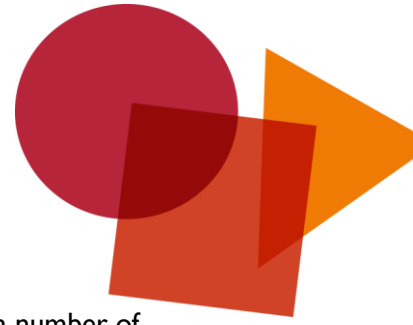
Organisations need to consider how to recruit and retain volunteers within an increasingly complex environment. They need to consider things such as providing ongoing training and support for volunteers. Clearly defined volunteer roles, well documented time requirements and a clearly articulated training and reward program may assist an organisation attract and retain volunteers.

Changing demographic composition

According to the 2018 AusPlay Survey (conducted by Sport Australia), approximately 60.7 per cent of Tasmanians over the age of 15 years participated in regular sport or physical activity (three or more times per week). Participation was highest among Tasmanians aged 18-24 years followed by a steep decline in participation in adults aged 24-34 years. A general trend then shows a slow increase with age until approximately 64 years when participation then begins to decline once again.

Tasmania has an ageing population caused by a decline in birth rates, an increase in longevity and the number of retirees choosing to relocate to Tasmania for lifestyle reasons. With life expectancy increasing for both men and

Current as at August 2019



women, older Tasmanians now represent the fastest growing market for sport and recreation providers.

Clubs and organisations that take the time to understand the needs of older Tasmanians will be able to develop targeted programs and services that meet the physical activity needs and wants of these clients.

Changes in employment and work patterns

Changing employment structures and working hours influence the timing of organised sport and recreation opportunities. Extended trading hours and an increasing number of part-time jobs have impacted on participation levels, with young people leaving organised activity to take up part-time employment.

With less people available to participate in after-school and weekend activities, organisations will have to be innovative in rostering practice and competition games to maximise participation opportunities.

Increasing accountability

As consumers have become more aware of their rights and demand higher quality services, sport and recreation providers have improved their management expertise and adopted risk-management strategies.

Risk management and the increasing cost of public liability insurance are areas of concern for the sport and recreation industry, particularly in relation to outdoor and adventure recreation activities.

Increasing diversity

Traditional sport and recreation providers not only compete against other physical activities, but also against a number of non-physical activities such as computer games and the internet. Added

to this is the emergence of a number of commercial sport and recreation activities such as indoor rock climbing.

Exposure to other cultures through increased immigration and international media coverage has seen new activities introduced to Tasmania. Sport and recreation providers are becoming more aware of the need to cater for a diverse and multi-cultural society, with activities such as bocce securing their place in the market.

Summary

Sport and recreation organisations are operating in a substantially different environment to that of a decade ago.

People's preferences for sport and recreation opportunities are changing in response to a range of external factors. Rather than limitations, these changes should be seen as opportunities for organisations to develop initiatives and programs based on an understanding of the current operating environment.

Successful organisations will understand these factors and strive to tailor their services to the wants and needs of identified target markets. This may mean that traditional sporting times such as Saturday morning competitions are complimented by mid-week and evening competitions. It may also mean that organisations may be able to focus on developing opportunities for older Tasmanians or those with a preference for less structured activity.