



RE – DSA Members Forum held in Adelaide during the Australian Deaf Games

16 January 2016.

The following is a summary of the important points raised at the meeting:

- In attendance about 30 people from a cross section of SDSOs, NDSCs, individual athletes and visitors
- Noted was an open session where attendees are able to contribute to DSA's future and long term plans
- Feedback and discussions were about the new Membership Structure, how can the SDSO's be better supported, future Australian Deaf Games, funding and the development and increase in participation of juniors and youth athletes
- Streamlining of payment of fees – how can it be improved
- How do we maintain the interest of many of the competitors after the ADG has been completed
- Development of a database
- Pay individual SDSO membership fees over a 4 year period
- Communication is a key factor
- Increase junior participation (ADK and the new AD HP were explained)
- Need to work with corporate partners and parents so as a consistent message and information is provided
- Need to work with School Sports
- Develop Deaf Sport Camps for the Youth – could these be run in conjunction with the AD HP training camps
- Oral / Auslan (DSA supports all) – need to work on any issues (The new DSA sport APP was explained)
- Need to get into the indigenous communities (ADK was explained)
- Use positive case studies in all communications
- How can ACT work with cities in NSW that are close to the boarder - same with QLD working with northern NSW
- Future ADGs – need to lock in sport fees / sport scheduling
- Need to work with mainstream competitions

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ABRIDGED CAPTIONING REPORT OF THE MEMBERS FORUM with thanks to Ai Media for the provision of the full report.



**Deaf Sports Australian Member Forum, 16 January 2016
at 10:05AM -12:05PM**

PHIL HARPER:

Welcome everyone to the DSA Sports Forum. The aim is not for the DSA Board to be controlling this. This is an open session for you all to contribute into DSA's future and its long-term plan.

Last Saturday we conducted an Annual General Meeting so there was some discussion about where DSA is going forward with particularly membership structure and so on, membership fees.

There are a few things I would like to begin with. Some major pieces of work that DSA want to look at that was mentioned at the AGM is membership structure. We have got 17 different sports organisations, national deaf sports organisations, plus state deaf sports organisations such as DSRQ, DSRV, from the ACT, South Australia and so on.

The last two years we have been working very hard on relationship-building and collaboration in addition to systems to ensure that organisations can focus on their sports rather than other areas, including legal responsibilities such as incorporation that is required in terms of sending off your annual report every year to ensure that an incorporation status remains.

We then looked at insurance, constitutional matters, and we know that some sports have a weakness in their governance in terms of those sorts of issues. So we have tried to change things to make sure that systematically sports can continue and function that will address the agreement that they exist for instead of worrying about other issues - for example, reducing risk.

So we are seeing a lot less indecision and more members want DSA to look at and be responsible for governance issues etc. So that's one major issue.

Now, that piece of work will be completed by November. All national sports organisations will then be situated under DSA. It is not DSA looking after your sports. That is something that you are independently responsible for, such as DVA, DGA. All those sports are responsible for your sports but we will be responsible for all the other logistics and governance type issues.

Then we look at the state sporting bodies and we know that some are stronger than others. I think that's where we need to work with NSW at the moment very closely to address that. We need to see a proper entity established in NSW so hopefully we will work towards that, and that's a very positive outcome.

Other states require various levels of support. Sometimes you have the state group. Victorian sports are members of them. So we see a hierarchy. We want to see a clear hierarchy from national to local level.

So we need to work with you all to see how we can make a streamline structure for everyone and we know it is different for different sports and different places. For example, the ACT is very small, as is Tasmania. So to have a finicky hierarchy type of structure we would become obsolete in those sort of places because it is not effective. We need to make sure it is effective from the grassroots community and that's what our aim is to achieve.

SPEAKER:

Hi. I have met with a number of the state sporting clubs and they want to know why there are two different membership structures for DSA. Wouldn't it be better if there was one? So could you give me a clear explanation of how I can explain to the local sport clubs as to why the structure is how it is in terms of membership?

PHIL HARPER:

Are you talking about DSA and then the state sports association and then how that fits in with the local group?

SPEAKER:

I'm talking about national sports clubs who have state sport clubs. So they pay multiple memberships.

PHIL HARPER:

Actually, that is a very good question. Like we discussed before, some sports have a very straightforward membership structure because they just pay one membership but there are others who don't. They have got local clubs, state clubs and national teams. So that is a part of the piece of work that we will be undertaking this year and we are not there yet. But long-term we need to ensure, you are right, that there is some sort of streamline system to ensure that people aren't paying twice. Because some organisations are. They are paying twice, at a local level and then again at a national level. We would like to think that there is a one stop shop where you pay once and that should be sufficient, but we will be looking at that over the next year or two. Thank you for that contribution.

SPEAKER:

In terms of membership structure and payments, is it possible to pay DSA through state membership? That would mean paying DSA and DSA provide a contribution to the state body. Is that possible?

PHIL HARPER:

That was one of the ideas that was relayed back to us at the AGM, that you pay money to DSA and then DSA moves that money along to the state memberships. So that is a possible solution but that's really open to you guys with how you guys would feel is the best way to work this. If you think that it should be worked out nationally or locally and how that would work - say, for tennis, that's an easy one. You go national. You don't have any state. State teams with basketball and netball are different because you have to go through a state and then through national. So do you pay the fee to state and then to national and then the money comes back to the state?

Those are all possibilities but it is really between all of us. The ideas need to be gone through in-depth with A, B, C as options and work out what fits with your sport best.

SPEAKER:

I don't know how you guys feel but when you apply for funding the first question asked is "How many members do you have?" But you are doing the payment up here so we don't have any members because the members pay nationally. So it is a bit hard for us to give that number. If we are paying up here and then we are paying the states, how can we work out the members? How do we know how many members we have? It is a bit hard to answer that question. I don't know if you guys have felt that is a problem with what you guys have been through.

PHIL HARPER:

That was a good comment because it is very important for us, DSA, to build a database. Because for ourselves it is easier to communicate more with you and also Australian sports asking DSA "Are you doing very well? How many numbers are involved?" We are saying "We don't really know." From here we know by registrations but out there individual teams and individual sports, we are not to be sure. Some of them don't actually record members so it is really important for Sam, working with DSA, in his work in the database, to keep record of all of those members and how it is all linked together to membership fee and membership structure to make sure we have got all the numbers and understand the areas that everyone is involved in.

DONOVAN CRESDEE:

I'm Donovan Cresdee. I have been involved in DCS and state Board members. I think it is very important to give the information so that everyone can understand what is going on because I think the membership structure is actually very different from other states. DCA is not only focusing on sports and people involved. We actually focus on the community as well. So DCA, Deaf Community & Sports SA, meaning many deaf people are not actually involved in the sports but they still pay memberships to be involved in the DSA.

Also, recently the membership structure was not a one-year payment, it was a four-year payment. That just finished last year and many people paid for the next four years. So that is something to think about as well. Thank you.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you, Donovan. Yes, there are many different structures. Queensland is different from Victoria, different from Canberra as well. So yes, we do have to try and work it out together and make sure everyone is satisfied with the different systems by, yes, trying to keep those A, B, C and D options and work out what would be best going forward in the future.

I think a four-year membership structure is a bit rigid. We are hoping to have an open conversation in the next two years to really bring fourth these ideas.

SPEAKER:

Hello. We are Deaf Sports Australia Queensland. I have noticed that over the years where memberships are very small, say maybe for three years, then the Australian Deaf Games comes around and the membership goes up. So I was wondering why and thinking maybe we could change the system and do the membership every four years to keep the same number of members rather than having really small numbers of members for three years and then jumping up in one year and then going back to a small number. I don't know. Who knows? Just an idea.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you. That is a good point. That is a good point, I do agree. It is part of the discussion about how to keep people interested after the Australian Deaf Games has finished and they then go back to their states. They hear about the next Games and then that's when they actually get involved and only be a member for a short time. So we do have these big dips in membership and we do want to make it a bit more consistent and that's how you guys will help us solve that problem. So that's fantastic. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Being from Queensland, I just want to direct my question straight to Brianna. Have you ever sent me a membership reminder? Because I know the answer. The answer is no. Since the last AGM from the Deaf Games I have never received a membership reminder. I have always had to contact DSRQ to pay my membership.

I am not going to say what other states do or anything like that but I think some of the state bodies - we are talking about membership here - the state bodies can do what they like. DSA could actually go to the state bodies and say "Hey, membership is paid every year" but DSRQ, you could go to your members and say "Your membership is for two or three years" and that's how you pay it. It is the state bodies that can actually make that decision themselves.

So if you want to do that and make everyone pay for four years, that's your choice. I actually think that would be a great idea from the state body level. Because you are firming in your membership for four years.

How then DSA works down to the state body, that could be completely different. I guess what I'm saying is for the state bodies to worry about their own backyard, their own little area however they want to do it. It can be completely different and completely separate to how DSA works with the state bodies.

PHIL HARPER:

That is part of the discussion for the next two years. We are going to try and work out how best we can work together with the systems. Do we want the same systems? Do we want to change them? Do we want to allow for more wheelchair access sports? Do we want to work with more of an overseas model?

There are a lot of potential changes that we are trying to really work out how best we can work together, learning from other people's structures and working out the rules. So we really do need everyone's discussion points and everyone's ideas to make sure that we keep meeting with people in groups. Hopefully within two year's time we will have more of a comfortable system. There will always be adjustments with time.

DAVID BRADY:

Just carrying on from the membership, we have moved into an information technology age. Can you tell us about what are we going to do with the actually membership? Are we going to look at ways where somebody in the past pays a whole lump sum to Deaf Australia (inaudible) and then money goes to sports organisations etc but in it will automatically go to the sport with the membership. I

understand there was some talk about it but is it possible to talk about that now? I think it is probably interesting. Because last night everyone was on the phone. So maybe you could tell us a little bit about that. Maybe that could be delineated in terms of what we have and membership and things like that.

PHIL HARPER:

Garry, do you want to answer that? Did you want to make a comment?

GARRY WEST-BAIL:

I will make a comment. I think other than the current membership structure, what we have got is DSA, state bodies, national sport bodies. The completely other alternative to that would be that every individual pays a membership to DSA and then it feeds down. The only problem with that model would be what the membership dollar value would be. Call it \$100 a year. If that person does two sports, how much do you feed to each sport? If that person ticks nine sports, you are then diluting the amount of money that goes to each sport.

DAVID:

Do you pay for each sport?

SPEAKER:

So rather than having a flat fee, you build it up. If you want to do nine sports, \$20 a sport for the year, your membership is \$180. Somebody else might pick two. That sort of idea.

It is a completely different model, I guess, to what we have been working towards. I know DSA was sort of keen to get this current membership model done and signed off by November. Maybe once that is done then maybe the conversation starts again. "OK, is there another way to do this" and "Let's look at it for another four years" or something like that and maybe look at it in a different way. But you are right, it is another model we could look at. As you said, it builds the database easily. We have a list of every single member. We know what sport you want to do. They pay \$20 for sport and \$10 of that feeds back down to the national sporting body.

You then still do get a problem with having national sports bodies and state sports bodies. Take basketball, for example. If you want to play basketball in Victoria you pay Deaf Basketball Victoria, who is a member of Deaf Sports Victoria. But then you also have to pay to Deaf Basketball Australia. So if we got \$20 or \$30 there, how much goes each way?

But you are right, it is a different model and it is definitely something to think about.

PHIL HARPER:

Just quickly, I think it is worthwhile commenting on the database and what work we are doing on that at the moment because it is also a critical part of problem-solving the numbers and communication.

Communication is really key. Membership information, up-coming sports, events, we really do need to get that information out there and we can communicate through the database knowing how many members we have and who is on there.

At the moment we are sending it to state groups and national groups. Please, please, spread this information. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. It doesn't get to everybody. So it is not really enough for us. We want to have a strong system, a strong database so then we know we can get out to everybody and make sure everybody has the same information.

Sam, did you want to briefly talk about that at all, about the database?

SAM:

Without having a database of who is interested in what sports, who is involved in what sports we really are just continuing on with what we are doing in the past 10 years. So that's why I have come on board to help DSA with building up a database, organising it and making sure that it is current.

GARRY WEST-BAIL:

In an ideal world you have a player in NSW who pays a fee to Deaf Netball NSW. Deaf Netball NSW pays a fee to Deaf Sports NSW and then all we get, Deaf Sports Australia, is the database of that particular person, the details - the name, address, etc. Full stop.

DSA won't necessarily, for a long time, I don't think, will be seeking any money from that individual down here. That money needs to stay with the sport within the state and the actual state Deaf Sporting Organisation.

The database, once in place, is used for analysis, particularly from the Australian Sports Commission point of view. They want to know is your database increasing. That is, is your participation increasing? Therefore, the money they invest into Deaf Sports Australia is getting returned.

From our point of view, it is how best to use that database. What is the age groups and the demographics? Are we increasing from 5-25 age groups, or more males than females are registered? We can use that database to plan programs.

So that's in an ideal world. Obviously, for example, golf is different. A person playing golf in Victoria actually registers with Deaf Golf Australia or some variations to the thing. Nothing is going to be perfect and nothing is going to fit the ideal world but we are heading towards a structure that hopefully people will understand. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Hello, hello. I have a little bit of concern about the number of deaf youth participation rate within the sports just in general. I feel as if the numbers of the deaf community are getting smaller and smaller. The older people are obviously retiring and they have injuries and they aren't able to continue. So really advertising and encouragement of the deaf youth to participate is key. That's my hope and my wish, that that will grow. Because it needs to create a smoother transition into the sports and it is very difficult to get the numbers of the deaf youth to participate.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you. I would have to agree. It is always a hard job. Recruitment is a challenging job.

Recently we set up the activity for deaf kids, ADK some three or four years ago. It should have been here as well. They knew through ADK there would be events. Irena wanted to discuss those ones

about the deaf. The same as Sam trying to encourage younger deaf people to be involved with the Games. Did you want to make a comment?

IRENA FARINACCI:

I'm the Deaf Sports Development Officer. To answer your question, we do have an Active Deaf Kids program and we visit schools or hard of hearing children who are involved within programs and we try and hook them in as well. Also, for example, in maybe like a smaller city like Canberra, there may be individual hard of hearing children mainstream and it is very challenging to find those children to be involved. Sometimes we will try and work our ways through supporting or visiting teachers to let those children know that they can come to a sports day and that's how we can grow some of the numbers.

With Deaf Sports Australia, we do have those programs. We have travelled in the past to Northern Queensland twice. I think the last time was two years ago. That was really successful because we were able to meet a lot of those integrated students and maybe their parents weren't even aware. So we have those discussions to hopefully be able to link them into Deaf Sports Queensland.

Like you said, it is very hard to find the youth. Obviously in previous days there was the Deaf Club and obviously deaf schools. Those are minimal now and hard of hearing people tend to be mainstreamed.

We have had a few success stories. We have one boy that we met in Adelaide and he played in the Deaf Games. He was Cameron. He came to the ADK program about three or four years ago and he brought his own tennis racquet and he was really keen and he was a very strong oral child. He was well-welcomed within the sports and they were able to link him in to Deaf Tennis Australia. He had both pathways. He was mainstreamed within the tennis but he also had role models like Glen Findell, who is the seventh in the world for the Australian Deaf Tennis.

I think that was really great. He had wonderful encouragement. He got silver in the tennis and he is 14. So there are a few success stories but we need your help and collaboration.

SAM:

Just talking about the topic about deaf youth in Australia, Deaf Sports Australia are currently working on drafting a high-performance plan and that's targeting young up-and-coming deaf athletes. The kind of draft that we have set out at the moment is we want to identify about 10 younger athletes ideally under the age of 25, early teens. We want to focus on developing them up through the sports. Obviously again coaching, interpreters, those kind of things.

Also, with youth, at the moment it is very, very hard to find deaf children in Australia who want to participate in sport. I am only 22. I didn't know about deaf sport until I was in about Year 9 or 10 in high school and that was through my deaf teacher and through different deaf organisations. So I can understand that very personally as well. I kind of wish that it was marketed a bit more, that we got more knowledge about deaf organisations a lot more.

Just touching on that as well - I don't want to go into it too much but I have another job with Australian Hearing at the moment where I am helping them raise awareness about deaf children, Auslan, just raising awareness of the deaf community in Melbourne. Part of my job is I get to go out to different communities, organisations, workplaces, schools even and I get to give them all the

different pieces of information. Obviously the information leaflets I give out are about deaf sports in Australia.

I spoke recently at two schools in Melbourne and none of those kids really knew anything about deaf sports. So DSA, even though I have just come on board recently, I definitely want to be involved for a long time with DSA because sport is my passion. So we are definitely building the deaf youth in Australia in different sports.

PHIL HARPER:

We have a few hands going up. We have got three more for you. We have a couple of comments coming up. But what you were talking about with Australian Hearing, obviously they are one of the main sponsors for the Deaf Games and they have discussed with us that they want to continue to partnership with DSA and that support will be ongoing.

Australian Hearing will be working with the ages 0-26 who have hearing loss, like Sam was saying. That way we can promote the information and we can get it out to the communities as well with their work and their staff obviously will have information on the website.

Irena was saying as well about Active Deaf Kids. We need to be able to feel good to get it out there to the deaf community through Australian Hearing and I think that's excellent.

With that link we can actually promote it a lot more. I think I have - is it 22,000, Garry? Yes, 22,000 young deaf and hard of hearing on their database registry. So wow! That is a lot.

Like you were saying before, trying to promote the young people, you can see that's where the young people are. That's where the database is. All the states need to be able to get together to work together. So all of you as well, like Deaf Sports Queensland. Each of the states need to get out and promote and have a good positive partnership for the next time that there is a games in 2018 in Queensland or wherever the things need to occur.

That's a great aim. I think that is important.

SPEAKER:

I just want to respond to Sam's comment about Australian Hearing. I think we have to come back even further still to parents. Because it is the parents who are the guardians and who make the final decisions about their children and that comes back to the early intervention programs and then it comes back to medical practitioners.

When we are talking about DSA's role in this, yes, DSA is all about the signing deaf community but it is also about making sure the message gets out so that all children have access to that information from the very beginning. So we have to come back even further still to the embryonic stages.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you for that. I do agree. We don't start playing sport at the age of 18, we start a lot earlier. True. Fair call. Next comment.

SPEAKER:

I agree with the previous comment, that it is about the message that goes out. But some children will get that message but then not share it at home. Parents will find sometimes a leaflet in the child's backpack at home and they will say "What's this about?" So I think we do have to come back to not just parents but teachers. Because if the teachers are optimistic about things the parents will be, so will the kids.

It has a huge impact if the significant people in these children's life is pessimistic. For example with Touch Football, I was very optimistic. "Hey, guys, come and join the team. It doesn't matter if you don't sign." One guy said "I can't sign, I hate signing, I'm old" and I said "It's okay, you can join." My response could have been "Bad form for you for not liking sign language" but I didn't take that approach.

So I think it comes back to the parents, it comes back to teachers, it comes back to those significant people in these children's life. I think it is easier if we are talking about deaf adults with deaf children but we are talking about kids who are isolated whose parents have a deaf child and they are hearing all this information from all these different sources and they end up going on a particular path. So we need to enlighten them.

Like the previous comment made, it is about being optimistic but it is also about regardless of what someone's choice or language modality is, they are still deaf at the end of the day and we can provide sport opportunities for them.

Like, in the old days when a child was diagnosed as being deaf parents had a package and in that information package it said 'oral', 'signing' and possibly one other option. But where do professionals come in? I think we need to look at teachers and parents in terms of information.

Cameron:

Is DSA involved with the Active Kids program? Like, for example, in Queensland where you have children who are either attending a mainstream school or an integrated setting, are you more involved with a certain type of school or setting?

So you would work with the state body, for example, DSRQ, to do that, to run that program, right? Like, for example, is NSW going to happen as an entity? If things are going to happen in NSW, then what is going to happen in terms of numbers, in terms of looking at workshops? For example, Irena could come and present but it is one thing to talk about deaf clubs and deaf schools.

For example, Irena mentioned the importance of deaf clubs in the past but there is also a negative connotation for some people about deaf clubs, the alcohol involved and that sort of thing. Parents want to be involved in their own children's life. So I think we need to be looking at the broader fit of people in the community, not just about deaf clubs.

DARREN:

For people who don't know who I am, I suppose obviously I am not the deaf person in our family. It would be my daughter Jamie. I guess I want to follow on a little bit from what Cameron said with the schools being important. The first age that a deaf child can represent their state in a sport, through a school sport, believe it or not, is as young as 10. 10 years old. That's when Jamie got her start. As soon as she was 10 her school had her in their swimming carnivals, their athletics carnival, their cross-country carnival. From that we had an advisory visiting teacher who then knew the

process whereby the next step was her district carnival. And back in that day she could enter in a group of events called Athletes with Disabilities and that covered deaf, cerebral palsy, everybody. Everybody else was included in that category and then from Districts it is to Regionals, from Regionals to State and you get picked in your State team. So at 10 years old we could have deaf children actually representing their state at the national carnivals in athletics, cross-country and swimming.

Jamie did that from the age of 10 right through to the age of 17. She did swimming, cross-country and athletics up to the age of 12. So 10, 11 and 12. Then from 13 onwards she did her athletics and cross-country.

The number of other deaf competitors that she competed against over those years you would count on one hand. That's I think where we are missing the opportunity.

I understand with schools it is difficult because of privacy legislation. They can't always give you the information of whether they have deaf children or not. But we can go to our school state sporting bodies. So School Sport Victoria, School Sport ACT, School Sport Queensland. They are the ones we can go to.

They probably know where the deaf children are and then they can go back down to the PE teachers, the advisory visiting teachers, et cetera, and they can go to those schools and say "Do you know what? Yes, you might be deaf. You might not be as good as these hearing people in the pool or on the track or that sort of thing but if you compete and your time is good enough you can go to the next District, you can go to the Regional, you can go to State and you can represent your State at 10 years old."

If we can get them at that stage, 10, 11 or 12 when they are in primary school, they are going to continue their sport into their high school and they may branch out into other sports.

The unfortunate thing is through the school sports system they are the only three sports where deaf athletes can be in a category that provides a pathway. But if you get the basics of those three sports it can lead to others.

Jamie now plays touch football. She played futsal the other day. She has played hockey through school. She has played basketball through the school. The other sports will come but it is getting those three basic sports right at primary school level. And the thrill of representing their state, that will just encourage them to keep going with sport.

I think the deaf state sport organisations are the ones who need to have the conversations with the school sport bodies. Because that's where we can start it. We can start it down here following on from the ADK, which does 6, 7, 8, 9, 10-year-olds. We can then follow on with this competitive sport, which then moves them along and introduces them to everything else.

I think that is maybe an area where we need to move our focus. Like for Queensland, we have had six deaf athletes go to the Athletics Australia National Championships. Unfortunately, for the other states over the years we have seen one or two and that's been it. So it is an area we need to target, I think. Thanks.

SPEAKER:

Hi, there. This is just an idea. Maybe Deaf Sports Australia could set up a Deaf Sports camp, a national Deaf Sports camp where everyone can come and meet, share information about the Deaf Games, everything. All the pathways, just share all that information, have various organisations come and talk about different topics. Can something like that come true? I don't know.

PHIL HARPER:

That's in fact not a pie in the sky. That is something that we are looking at. Our high performance program Sam is looking at but also Garry and I went to a workshop in Canberra and we held a meeting there. Because the Australian Institute of Sport is based there and there are centres of AIS at state level as well. We have been discussing or having the thought of a camp or something like that so we will make sure that we highlight that in the notes. Thank you.

DONOVAN CRESDEE:

Hi, I'd like to raise an issue. Now, the issue is about language and culture. I think there is a difference for the sports that are individual in nature but I'm seeing a difference in the team type of sports because of communication and mis-communication or lack of communication that does or does not happen within a team environment. Often people who can't sign don't feel involved or don't have the motivation to continue when they can't communicate with all their teammates.

I think DSA and specific sports should make sure that there is a cultural and language training or something like that that could be made available to those who can't communicate with their other deaf mates, deaf teammates, or if the team is primarily oral, that they are able to communicate with their deaf signing teammates. We are finding a lot of primarily oral deaf are less inclined to be involved because of the language issue.

In the past the Australian Deaf Games began with the carnival and it was heavily based with the deaf signing community but we are seeing a demographic change with the old community being involved now. We need to be cognisant of those issues.

SAM:

You are absolutely right. There is a big area that we need to address and that's definitely the language and communication. One way that we are looking to improve that is at these Games I have been filming all the different sports, all the different signs in Auslan and we are creating, in relationship with Conexu, a Deaf Sports app that we can then put onto the App Store and you can download it onto your phones and Android and you can give that to coaches.

So if you have a young kid who only signs Auslan, that coach can then download this app and it will have their specific sport and have all of the Auslan signs so then that coach can then learn how to sign Auslan in all the different sport specific signs relating to that sport. Not only that sport but the whole pretty much entirety of all the sports that are involved in the deaf community.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you, Sam. That actually makes me think of DSRQ. They made a great Auslan sports video resource years ago. I do think that is certainly part of the solution but what happens when you have

a mix of deaf and hard of hearing people or even hearing people and one oral person in a team? In a perfect world everyone has perfect communication between all.

SPEAKER:

There is an example from the football team in Great Britain in the UK. The second an oral person joined the team they would send them on a BSL training course because they couldn't afford the cost of having an interpreter working full-time with the soccer team. So instead of the cost of interpreting services, send them off to a BSL tuitional course. That was a really good idea.

But in terms of different sports, it is about the different sports and how they organised things. I think it is about the different sports and how they offer pathways up to a national level and that's where language and communication starts.

SPEAKER:

I want to move on a bit. We talked about membership and we talked about kids. I want to talk about high performance as well and how the high performance program can actually improve in a lot of areas. One of the things we are looking at in Touch Football is getting the Australian touch team play in the national competition. The reason why we want to do that is to show a top level sport or some part of a sport that there is deaf people who can play the sport at a high level or at a certain level and then publicity from that will go down to the other. So kids at 10 or 11 years old, teenagers or the hard of hearing person who has been playing that sport all their life in outback NSW say at first grade level, who has never heard of Deaf Sports, suddenly comes through the mainstream sport and says "Hang on a minute, there is a deaf team there" and then people come back. Their club mates will come back and say "Mate, there was a Deaf team here and they were brilliant but you are pretty good". So how do we get the information to them? It comes back to information.

The other thing with high performance, when I was in Melbourne in 2005 - I think Kim was a part of this - we played in the Australian team. The deaf people played in the Australian championships and overnight publicity for our sport and the deaf involvement was so good. We fund-raised over \$4,000 from the water polo community because they went "Wow! You guys are playing for Australia. You are going to the Deaflympics." Going to Melbourne, "How are you going?" Then they started looking at the kids.

The Australian Deaf Goannas play every year in the Under 20s mainstream. So every time they play they get good competition, they play a tournament and we get media publicity.

The other thing is, when we go to the Deaflympics we are so behind the eight ball in team experience, tournament experience because we are so isolated. If you go to Hungary and you are Irish, they have the advantage of going over to the UK and playing in that deaf experience but we have to create our own. And I think one of the ways is we have to start bringing national deaf teams into mainstream national competitions to improve our relationship with sports organisations. Because they will help at schools. Teachers to play the competition, that's another avenue. Coaches.

Swimming has a very high level participation sport. You learn with national swimming champions and every kid goes "I want to be like that." She would swim in the mainstream competition and then

she would swim in the Deaflympics. We got 50 or something. So I think we need to start thinking a bit more out of the box.

John:

Hi, I've been previously involved in volleyball over the last couple of years. I grew up as an old deaf kid who was not even interested in meeting deaf people, in using sign language or anything like that. I was not interested at all until I was 18 and a couple of friends were doing sign language and said they will do a sign language course in my social group and we went along with from.

Under Australian Hearing there are 22,000 children. They don't want to be having to learn sign language. People still to this day will be more focussed on their kids learning how to talk and having hearing friends and they will be more encouraging to have an influence maybe than having in their mind regressing back to using Auslan. No offence intended but that's how they think.

So when we are promoting Deaf Sports to these 22,000 children we need to let them know that there are old deaf people playing in deaf sports like myself knowing sign language but you can still go and play for your state and country.

You will get deaf kids and families reluctant to encourage them to join a deaf sport because they might not know sign language. So that's something to look into when promoting, using videos with Auslan sports people, with old deaf sports people.

I know it is a very sensitive thing but this is what I think the majority of these kids out there are like. Just putting it out there.

PHIL HARPER:

Thanks John. I think to make it clear, DSA is not supporting one way rather than another. We are supporting everyone. Everyone is welcome to be involved. It is a matter of communicating using Auslan, orally, speech. That is your decision, your choice, your most comfortable mode of communication. We just want you to get involved. It doesn't matter how you communicate.

We want to try and make communication access smoother. That's why we have the interpreters here for the varying levels of communication, for the varying comfortable modes of communication. That's the same at home, at schools. Everyone should have the opportunity to be able to communicate with each other.

SPEAKER:

I am starting to think about the Aboriginal community. There were a lot of deaf and hard of hearing people with a hearing loss. Who is working with them? We have got a lot of Anglo-Saxon deaf people involved. Where is the Aboriginal community represented? That's another group.

PHIL HARPER:

Irena might now talk about that. Do you think that will be a good opportunity to talk about your experience with ADK in the Northern Territory?

IRENA:

I went to the Northern Territory two years ago, first to Darwin. I was contacted through Deaf Northern Territory. There were a lot of deaf and hard of hearing who were Aboriginal, indigenous so we thought we would go and try them. Last year I went to Darwin again and also we went to Alice Springs this time, which was a very interesting experience. Some were hard to try and get into contact with because they wanted to follow their groups. I had to go and make negotiations with their Elders. I had to do the first visit. The second visit was bigger. Hopefully the coming visits now we will get bigger groups training for future athletics for people to be involved in the sports.

We know the Northern Territory at the moment has Deaf Sports Northern Territory but it is in the very early days and we are hoping that they will work with DSA in Queensland. I know Queensland have plenty of experience with the indigenous community. So hopefully this year and in the next few months we can all get together and talk about how to group that area.

SPEAKER:

I have had a few success stories with working with Aboriginal children through their Elders, especially if there is an Aboriginal representative in the sport to go out there and make that connection. That would be a bit easier to go and make that cultural connection with the Aboriginal Elders as well.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you. That's good. We will put that idea down. Thank you, great.

Chloe:

A different topic. My name is Chloe. I'm a representative of DeafACT. I'm here because I just wanted to inform you that the ACT is a very small community. Everyone knows that. Just wondering about the boarders for NSW. Because of the ACT and how it is so little, say for example the country areas, country NSW, like Queanbeyan, could they come and be involved in the ACT or do we have to ask them? Do we have to go through a system or could we just say that that is ACT and NSW are a group and NSW can join in with Sydney, Newcastle, that area. We look after the southern parts. Because how can we really work together for our future as a community?

We are trying to get players and athletes together. It is really difficult with such a small community. We are just wondering if we could sort of work together and maybe merge our areas and we can develop more of a stronger team.

PHIL HARPER:

I think it is a challenging discussion but it will be noted. Once Deaf Sports Australia is more well-established we can obviously have a discussion with NSW and ACT.

It is the same with Queensland. Because obviously Queensland is so huge. You have to go all that way to Townsville and Western Australia as well, having to get all the way up to Broome. It is something that is very challenging in other states.

I'm very supportive of making sure it is fair because obviously Brisbane and Gold Coast are so close together but everything else is so much further away. Whereas, like I was saying before, Europe, there is no space. And Australia there is masses of space between everyone. So there is a big challenge there.

Ashleigh:

Hi, I'm Ashleigh. My first Australian Deaf Games when I went and watched the swimming and the competition, that was amazing. I really had a passion for that and I wanted to be involved. It looked very professional with the scorers and the timers, the officials that were all there. It was amazing. I was extremely excited. Two or three years ago I was training or getting ready for the swimming competition and then with the Australian Deaf Games, there was no swimming and I was so disappointed.

That was here. Obviously there is no swimming competition in Adelaide. I had trained for so long because I had really looked forward to having that full-on competitive nature of competition and I was really disappointed that it actually wasn't in Adelaide.

PHIL HARPER:

It is the same with some of the other sports. The numbers were quite small and, therefore, the problem is with the expense of actually running the event, we are not actually having enough competitors involved.

Many of the swimming competitors went to the World Championships so the challenge was actually at the wrong time and, therefore, they had to pay their world championship money to be involved in that competition.

With the swimming, we did sort of try and promote it out there and with the people who were interested in being involved recently in Melbourne in 2012, in Geelong, there were a lot of problems as well with some of the athletes because the National Championship was conflicting. It actually merged then. So there wasn't so much of an issue at the same time.

I think with small sports like swimming, the next Games we are trying to make sure that perhaps we will try and mix it in with the mainstream competition that may be happening at the same time.

SPEAKER:

At the national level, which previously I went to championships in Perth, they had medals. The Asian Pacific Basketball, that was amazing because it was good to see those medals awarded and the promotion of it. But I'm unaware of the support that DSA actually gave to the Asian Pacific event.

With those teams, I know there were so many men who wanted to be involved and so they had the men's team but the women's team was not able to get up and running and I wonder if you were involved and what financial support was actually given.

PHIL HARPER:

To quickly respond to that, after the games we were actually looking at Games development for the future and talking with DBA for the international and national competition levels. We are also looking at, with the Deaflympics, having the government support to come on board. With the women's it is obviously a very important competition. Women's basketball has had a lot of challenges in the past, so that is actually going to be discussed with DBA as well.

SPEAKER:

Just a quick comment. It is in relation to swimming and specifically what Ashleigh said about role models. That's where the role of media takes prominence.

In the ACT there was an article in the newspaper in Canberra I think a few days ago. In fact, it was mentioned on radio. A friend of mine texted me to say "Hey, there is information about the Australian Deaf Games on the radio that is being promoted." So obviously that's happening. So it is important I think at a local level that people get in touch with the media about people with medals, on the podium or doing well, that that sort of success is shared with the media because that's important. Because that enhances that whole role modelling effect. I think it is important that we all embrace that.

DARREN:

I guess it is just a comment on sports like the swimming and the basketball that didn't happen here at the ADG. I think the more we become successful at an international level, ie our swimming team went to the World Championships, our basketball team went to the Asian Pacific Deaf Games, while our best athletes are now getting to that level, which is fantastic, it is a double-edged sword. The more we get successful at that level, the more athletes we have going overseas representing Australia it is then going to probably impact on competitions here at the Australian Deaf Games. Because as we have all heard, we are not funded. Those people who go overseas are paying their own way. So to have to go overseas, in the case of the Asian Pacific Deaf Games with the basketballers to Taiwan in October, to then have the money to then be able to come to Adelaide for a week, take another week off work and that sort of thing to come here to participate in the Australian Deaf Games, that's going to have an impact.

So any years that these international competitions are happening where our athletes are actually on the international stage, which is fantastic because ideally that's what we are aiming for, but whenever that happens it will impact on competitions here.

Tennis is another example. Tennis went to Nottingham in the UK in August it. So again they all went there. Three of our top tennis players were not then able to be here.

So it is a double-edged sword. That recognition and success at international and national level is going to impact then on participation levels of the ADG.

I think it is something we have got to allow for, I suppose, in those years where they are going to clash.

SPEAKER:

Quickly. We previously talked about national issues. I think it is also linked to people who don't want to come here, like top players and all that kind of stuff. But I think the trouble is like how close the events are to each other but that we have to pay to come here just like all the other Australian Deaf Games. We see that international events are more exciting compared to doing it nationally but I am excited here because this is my first Games. I'm really excited. I'm coming back again. Of course I will. But I also see the international stage is quite big. It is like a big theatre of people.

At the same time, I have a question for you. Do you think Australia will be able to increase the support in the future so we have less pressure on people? This is for people with low socio-economic background.

PHIL HARPER:

Thank you. That was a brilliant question. That is certainly work in progress about how we can look at government funding and resources to ensure that there is participation at local, national and international events. It is too hard to respond now but we will certainly note that. I think as a Board we can address that but we need to look at governmental purse strings at the national and state level.

We also know that anyone who bids for the Australian Deaf Games needs to have financial backing. For example, Adelaide, when it bid for the Australian Deaf Games it had \$100,000 backing from the South Australian government. So that's something that we need to look at at a national and also international level. We need to seek further funding to ensure that the impact is reduced on the athletes.

DAVID BRADY:

I am going to focus on the Australian Deaf Games. I think these Games are OK, in my professional experience. It has been frustrating from a sports convener's point of view. We have been meeting. The schedule is all over the place. Needs more control.

I understand the sports want to run the programs but it is the Australian Deaf Games and I'm hearing people want to come to these Games and play multiple sports because they want to make the most out of the \$1,000 they have spent this week.

We had futsal and basketball originally was going to be five nights and they over-lapped a lot of sports. Just looking at futsal, great futsal competition. I think both teams had cricketers, touch players, eight ball players, even golfers because they wanted to play multiple sport because we love our sports, we are multiple sports people.

We used to be elite athletes. Somebody said we are getting too old for this. I think it is important that the 2018 sports needs a separate schedule. It can't be we are going to have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for netball and cricket will have Monday, Tuesday at the same time. It just doesn't work that way. You have to think about experience.

If you are having a basketball competition, I think you can get it over with in two nights. You can have a short modified. Touch Football actually aimed to have it over two nights and then Touch Football Australia wanted it on on Tuesday. But we had it over in probably one day. We can hold it on one day.

I want the sports to comply with the schedules they are giving. If there are too many teams then they need to expand. But the Australian Deaf Games need to say "OK, we are going to have these sports at this time." It can be both ways. It was the most frustrating thing for me and it was so annoying trying to compromise. Ensure people can play other sports and have fun if that's what we want to do.

PHIL HARPER:

Valid points. I have heard those same sentiments echoed from others. We will certainly note that. But right now we are trying to hopefully illicit that information from the survey and that will assist the Board in understanding how successful the Games were and what needs further work.

In previous Games did you know they were held over a two-week period? So that was easier to schedule. People competed in five or six different sports but then people said they had to take time off work, two weeks was too long in duration so over time the longevity of the Games was reduced.

So in light of that, that makes scheduling a lot more difficult to arrange but we do need to look at the possibilities for people's experience when they attend the Australian Deaf Games.

SPEAKER: I have a question about the deaf youth program through the Australian Deaf Games. It seems to me the focus has been all about adults but at night-time what do the kids do? They just sit at home watching TV. Do they just go to bed at 9 o'clock? Like what's available for them? I think the social program has been overwhelmingly bias for the adults but there has been nothing for the kids. Nothing. We need entertainment for the kids. It needs to be factored in.

SPEAKER:

Concerning the Australian Deaf Games, I think there are two categories. There is international competition and there is local state and national competition. When we looked at the cricket you saw community spirit. We want to replicate that again. Because once you get selected for the national team, that's an international and very elite sort of competition. But when we are looking at the grassroots community members, when we are looking at local competition that's where you have atmosphere. That's where you have community. We need to replicate that for other sports like we saw in cricket yesterday.

PHIL HARPER:

Fair enough. I think it comes back to the national sports. A lot of national sports conduct their national championships at the Australian Deaf Games because it provides that way of competing for national representation but not all sports have an international pathway.

For example, basketball, the team would be getting ready for selection for the 2017 Deaflympics but they haven't used the ADG as that national championship environment. So that's where it comes back to different sports. It comes back to what sort of pathway is available to them but thank you for that comment.

KATHRYN O'BRIEN:

I'm very aware of the time and I know that we want to move through this as quickly as possible but all of the comments we spoke about today, I actually want to follow up on the comment about whether the basketball team wasn't represented here in the ADG and overseas.

DSA want to really raise the profile of women in sports and we are trying to go out and contact states and organisations to go home now and encourage your women to go and see what sports that they might be interested in and what things that they could be leaders in creating programs. Because we can actually get funding for women's leadership mentor programs and we really do want you guys to be going home to look at the women in your own community, in your own sports and think of them as future leaders.

Bring them back to be participants in the sports program and we can work with them for leadership and mentoring about how to be a leader within their team, within their sport and actually increase women's participation. Because that's really what sports is really important for, mental health, for self-esteem and we have seen that it helps a lot in young women.

I know Chloe is involved heavily in that but I do want to see more. Because really the Australian Sports Commission want to say more about it as well. It is part of our governance process to see the ratio of women increase compared to the ratio of men.

So please, keep that in mind when you go home and think about the women within your sports and communities, not just signing women but also oral, hard of hearing, encourage them and contact us to say that we would like to learn more skills in leadership and in sports. So just keep that in mind. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

I just wanted to talk about the John Lovett Cup. I was wondering about the smaller states and territories, for example the ACT, Northern Territory. We haven't had a Cup for God knows how long because Victoria/NSW have the biggest states and they always have more chance of getting the points and winning it. So I was wondering if there was like another little trophy for the smaller states that we can incorporate.

For example, university, Games, they have the big University Cup that gets awarded to the universities with more players and teams but then they also have a smaller cup for the smaller universities. So then we can recognise people for participation.

PHIL HARPER:

That's fantastic. Noted. Numbers for Tasmania, ACT, could they be numbers in Victoria. Yes, that is a fantastic point.

GARRY WEST-BAIL:

To finish off, some of the points we were asked about, funding for the Deaflympics or Asian Pacific Deaf Games, the federal governments will give funding to the highest level event and that's the Deaflympics. So in 2017 we will get funding from the State and Federal government to support teams to go away to the Deaflympics. We approached the states for the Asia Pacific Deaf Games and they said it wasn't the highest level event.

We have worked with an organisation called the Llewellyn Communications. They are doing a wonderful job for us in the media space. Started from a small level base. We are now getting a lot more communication, more exposure, certainly local papers around Australia. It is doing some good stuff.

About Australian Hearing, it will have more promotional material about Deaf Sports Australia or Deaf Sports in Australia.

Looking at the statistics, out of those 22,000 young people we do know, for example, in the Melbourne metropolitan area there are 3,000 boys and girls in that area. The same number in Sydney.

So at least we are able to talk to governments and various other philanthropic people to use that data.

So it is reasoning and maturing the data and hopefully it will be beneficial for us as we move forward. Thank you.

PHIL HARPER:

I think it might be time to close because time is ticking on but I really do appreciate you guys coming and your involvement and the fantastic information you have provided. I want to keep in mind this is always going to be a partnership. We are working with all of you and we want to share as much as we can throughout the website, throughout the national and the state groups. What we have discussed here, go out and have those discussions out there in the community.

Before we close, I just wanted to say thank you to the GOC for organising this, thank you to the interpreters, thank you to the captioner and also thank you to John Hoopmann for organising the data projector screen. Thank you so much. And also for the AGM on Saturday, last-minute. Thank you, thank you.