



Office
of Sport



REGIONAL SPORTS HUBS MODEL

DRAFT REPORT

August 2017

Prepared by Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd



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1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this document is to prepare a template for the planning, development and operation of regional sports hubs (RSH). The model is to be informed by relevant planning initiatives, industry trends, funding opportunities and feedback from state sporting organisations (SSOs).

1.1 OFFICE OF SPORT STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Two key initiatives provide a strong context for the approach to establishing regional sports hubs. They are the Office of Sport's Strategic Plan and the Modernising and Optimising Our Services project.

1.1.1 Strategic Plan

The Office of Sport's *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* outlines the agency's approach to service delivery. A summary of key points includes:

Vision

- › A vibrant and valued sport and active recreation sector that enhances the lives of the people of New South Wales

Value Proposition

- › Sport and active recreation will be more relevant and its potential contribution to public value recognised. By focusing on collaboration, connecting, influencing, partnering, removing duplication and addressing strategic gaps we will deliver improved outcomes and increased returns on government investment in the sector.

Links to the NSW Government's Making It Happen

- › Premier's Priorities
 - Building infrastructure
 - Creating jobs
 - Tackling childhood obesity
 - Improving education results
 - Protecting our kids
- › State Outcomes
 - Improved health
 - Productive people
 - Strong economy
 - Strong communities
 - Liveable and culturally vibrant cities and towns

Towards 2020, focus areas are:

- › Places and spaces
- › Sector Performance
- › Participation
- › High Performance Sport
- › Building our Capability

1.1.2 Modernising and Optimising Our Services Project

The Office of Sport is working with the sport and active recreation sector to design a new service delivery model for sport and active recreation services across NSW. The Modernising and Optimising Our Services (MOOS) Project is a place-based approach to planning, investment and delivery of sport and active recreation. This initiative is occurring concurrently with the Regional Sports Hubs project and includes the following key points:

Four major reform projects:

- › Sport and Recreation Centres
- › Regional Offices
- › High Performance Centres
- › High Performance Pathways

A more cohesive and holistic regional service delivery model by:

- › Connecting Office of Sport entities in each region
- › Leading and influencing the sport and active recreation sector in each region

Rationale

- › Increase participation
- › Create integrated performance pathways
- › Improve the capacity, capability and cohesion of the Office of Sport and the sport sector

Key outputs

- › A new regional sport delivery operating model
- › 10 specific regional sport delivery plans
- › Continuing discussion and collaboration between the partners

The proposed regional operating model seeks to connect a range of facilities, services and partners within a given region, brought together through regional sport and active recreation plan. A depiction of this model is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 - Regional Operating Model



One concept within this approach is the idea of identifying or creating regional sports hubs connected to a range of regional and local facilities. This structure identified in the MOOS project is presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Potential Regional Sports Plan Structure (from MOOS Project)



Regional Sport Hub

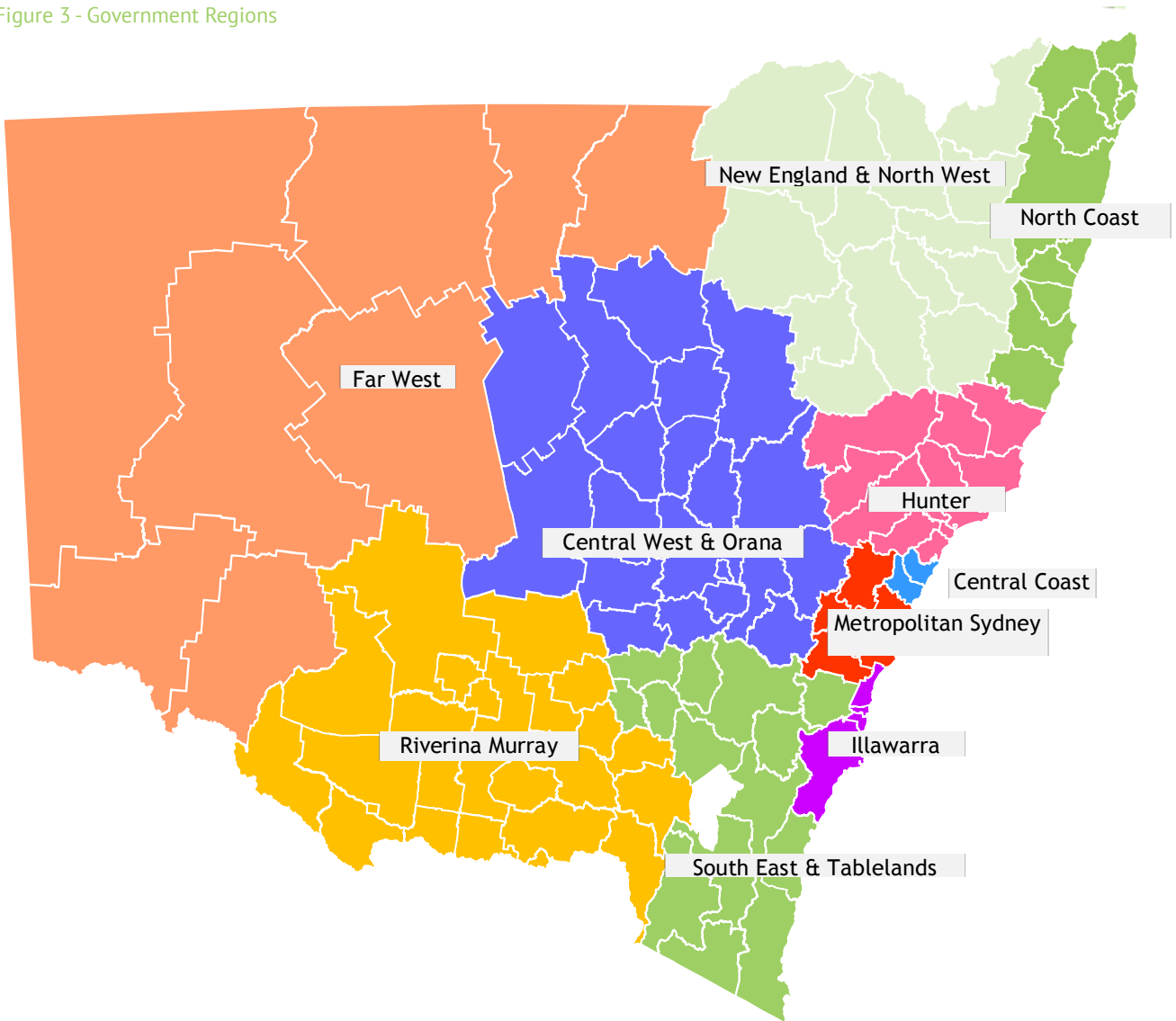
- Primary centre of co-located sport and active recreation facilities, sub-elite sport support services, sport administration offices
- Potential to incorporate both Centres of Excellence concept and community facilities
- Part of a regional network of hubs identified through Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans

Regionally Significant Sport Facility

- Scale-able multi-sport or regionally significant facility for a sport or multi sports
- Related to a Regional Sport Hub

Finally, the MOOS project outlines a proposed change in sport regions to adapt to the 10 'whole of government regions' adopted by the NSW State Government (shown in Figure 3 below).

Figure 3 - Government Regions



1.2 NSW REGIONAL GROWTH FUND

The NSW Government is investing an additional \$1.3 billion in regional infrastructure to support growing regional centres, activate local economies and improve services in communities, through the new Regional Growth Fund. The NSW Government's Regional Development Framework provides an overall vision for the Regional Growth Fund. The framework establishes a plan for regional development over the next 30 years that ensures every community across the state benefits from NSW's economic success.

The Regional Growth Fund will invest in projects that facilitate regional development through six funds. One of these is the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund. This fund will invest in new and existing venues to improve the participation and performance in sports at all levels.

The Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund will ensure that NSW has a network of spaces and places that enable quality sport and active recreation participation and performance at all levels. The fund objectives are to:

- › Increase the number and type of regional level sporting facilities
- › Improve the standard of existing regional level sporting facilities
- › Increase participation opportunities in sport
- › Provide infrastructure that enables economic growth and boost productivity

Priority for funding will be given to proposals which:

- › Provide an economic benefit such as increased tourism or the creation of jobs
- › Meet a demonstrable need in the community
- › Establish regional sports hubs
- › Enhance regionally significant sporting facilities
- › Can be used by more than one sporting code
- › Are aligned with the facility plans of state sporting organisations, regional sporting associations and local sporting clubs
- › Are identified in the office of sport's regional sport and active recreation plan
- › Are financially sustainable
- › Provide the highest net benefits
- › Increase participation opportunities in sport
- › Provide infrastructure that enables economic growth and boosts productivity



1.3 INDUSTRY TRENDS

Over time, the concept of developing 'sports hubs' and/or centres of excellence has gained recognition within the industry. These projects aim to integrate a range of facilities on one site to optimise efficiency and create business synergies.

The trend to create sporting 'hubs' goes beyond pure facility management and attempts to establish holistic models that provide greater value to their stakeholders. In addition to facility management, strands such as sports medicine, health, education, administration centres and training and athlete development are provided in order to create and capture greater value. Some of the characteristics include:

- › Hierarchy - Premier sport and recreation destination
- › Profile - High profile site close to CBD, main road connections, links to new development areas
- › Diversity - Range of sports and activities (indoor and outdoor)
- › Quality - High quality buildings, architectural treatment and spaces
- › Multi-Use - Community spaces integrated with sport multi-use fields, major event use
- › Accessibility/Connectivity - Easily accessible sites and good car parking, pedestrian and cycle connections

Although many of these facilities are aimed at state and national levels, similar principles can be used at a regional level to gain similar benefits. By way of example:

- › South Mackay Sports Precinct is a regional Sports Hub servicing central and far north Queensland. It incorporates high quality playing fields (AFL/cricket); a recently constructed rectangular stadium; 3-court indoor stadium; and regional outdoor netball courts. The complex has good air, road and rail access and is capable of hosting major spectator events as well as high volume championship events.
- › A recent master plan for Charlton Sports Precinct, Toowoomba positions this 43.9Ha complex to play a critical role in servicing local and regional sporting needs and attracting major sporting and cultural events that promote the social and economic well-being of the region. Capitalising on a new airport and second range crossing, it will create a regional sports hub at the western gateway to the shire that profoundly influences the future sporting endeavours of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs Region. The opportunity to cluster complementary facilities means that the site will support commercial investment and regional development to a greater degree than simply providing a sports precinct.

- › Within NSW, Tamworth Regional Council has adopted a concept to develop the Northern Inland Centre for Sporting Excellence and is commencing a development stage valued at \$17m (including \$4.5m state government funding and \$8.5m from the federal government).

Several SSOs have developed strategies which identify regional facilities as a key approach to providing access to quality facilities for participants and talented athletes and/or hosting major events. Recent examples of SSO strategic plans include cricket, gymnastics and basketball. In the case of Cricket NSW, 12 potential hub locations across regional NSW have been identified.



2 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

In order to 'test' the concept of RSHs, a workshop was held with SSOs to outline the project concept. SSOs provided feedback and input into the process to assist with developing the model further.

2.1 CONCEPT OVERVIEW

The aims and parameters developed by the Office of Sport included:

- › The Office of Sport is proposing a sustainable network of regional level sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of stakeholders and communities.
- › This includes regional sport hubs and/or regionally significant sport facilities.
- › The planning for sport hubs supports local Councils and the sport sector aligning their objectives and priorities for a common purpose and vision.
- › The planning also encourages stakeholders to identify priorities that focus on increasing participation, make a contribution to regional and economic growth, deliver sustainable assets that are well used and the design of 'facilities for all'.
- › A project is considered "regional" if it meets the following broad regional facility criteria:
 - Is a sport or recreation facility (either single purpose or community sporting hub) of regional level significance and meets the standards required to host major regional/state level competitions, events and/or training
 - It provides a range of participation outcomes (community, competitions, events and talent development)
 - It caters for a broad catchment across multiple local government boundaries
 - It delivers flexibility of use, high quality amenity, management and service levels.

A broad concept for a RSH was also provided:

- › A multi-sport facility, which may include a sport administration centre (e.g. Sports House) that supports participation at the community and pre-elite level.
- › The capacity to host national, state and regional championships. The location of regional sport hubs may complement already established regionally significant sport facilities; that is, venues that are listed as Tier 3 facilities under the NSW Stadia Strategy (2011). There are 27 such facilities in NSW, with 11 in regional NSW.
- › Could include broader community facilities such as aquatic and fitness facilities and other types of development such as a school or tertiary institution.

2.2 STATE SPORT ORGANISATIONS WORKSHOP

Key points from the workshop included:

- › General consensus with principles presented by the Office of Sport
- › Identified the value and importance of sports administration (sports house) facility
- › Need to determine common built component and green space for each Hub.
- › Identify common infrastructure to attract greatest no of participants.
- › Identify an 'anchor' sport in each location based on its competitive advantage and add other sports
- › Need to define and align sport impact on economic activity
- › Need a balance between participation and talent development
- › Seek alignment with universities where possible to access resources (e.g. allied health) and retain coaches and participants in the region
- › Need to consider sports academy alignment with regions and hubs
- › Queries were raised in relation to management of facilities, including:
 - What will the management model be?
 - How will access be managed/guaranteed
 - Need to look at a range of options
 - Need clear agreement/expectations for use and priorities of use

As a follow up to the workshop, SSO were asked to provide feedback on hub needs/ opportunities including:

- › Facilities and services
- › Event inventory
- › Essential support facilities
- › How can the hubs be 'activated'

3 REGIONAL SPORTS HUB MODEL

At the heart of the RSH model is the formal establishment of partnerships to deliver integrated and coordinated facilities and services. The following subsections outline a model for regional sports hub and in doing so addresses key points in relation to:

WHY | WHAT | WHO | WHERE | HOW

3.1 RATIONALE

As noted by a summary of research on Sport in Rural and Regional Australia compiled by the Clearinghouse for Sport;

- ▶ *“Sport has been found to contribute positively to community identity and sense of place. It promotes social interaction and community inclusion. Sport can bring regional communities together and plays an important role in providing opportunities for physical activity and improved health outcomes.”*
- ▶ *“Some regional centres have produced a disproportionately high number of Australia’s most successful elite athletes.”*

The rationale for developing a RSH reflects these points and includes:

- ▶ Linkages to the aims and objectives the Office of Sport’s Strategic Plan and MOOS project and other state government regional initiatives
- ▶ Providing access to quality facilities, coaching and training for regional communities and athletes
- ▶ The potential to provide far-reaching social and economic benefits including the potential to
 - ▶ increase interest in a region as an appealing place to live and work which ultimately will strengthen the sustainability of the region, through (for example)
 - Hosting events
 - Creating employment in facility construction and operation
 - Sustaining and creating employment through delivery of sport programs and administration
 - Increasing sport participation and health benefits
 - Increasing training and education opportunities
 - Retaining talented athletes (and their families)
 - Increasing the positive impact of sport on social capital
 - ▶ Enabling an integrated and coordinated approach to the delivery of sport and recreation, creating efficiencies in investment and avoiding duplication
 - ▶ An understanding that in regional areas high quality facilities and services need to be multi-use in order to be viable and sustainable
 - ▶ Opportunity for significant synergies to be gained through strategic alignment



3.2 OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section aims to outline objectives and principles to guide the development and operation of a RSH.

3.2.1 Essential Principles

To guide the consideration of instigating and developing a regional sports hub, a set of principles have been developed. These are seen as being essential:

- Strategic alignment
 - A proposal for a regional sports hub should be aligned with local and regional plans and strategies; and support/implement the national, state and local government's strategic vision for the development of sport in the region
- Regional significance
 - Multiple State Sporting Organisations must formally recognise the facilities and services proposed as regionally significant to their sport
- Benefit realisation
 - A regional sports hub proposal must show how it can deliver a positive cost benefit outcome to potential partners and communities
- Local demand
 - Any proposed facilities or services should be driven primarily by local demands or needs as regular use will underpin the operational viability of any facility
- Local and regional support
 - The development and sustainable operation of a regional sports hub model will require strong support from the 'host LGA'(i.e. where the hub is to be located)
 - The proposal will need to be supported by local and regional sport partners and other regional authorities

For the purpose of this model, "Regional Significance" means a peak facility or service identified by an SSO within a region that can relate to one or more of the following aspects:

- Event infrastructure and capacity (capability to host country, state or other high level events)
- Administration, sport promotion and/or sport development
- Education/training and/or talent pathway

Any sport could be considered within a RSH if it justifies having higher level facilities for example due to high participation levels and demands, the regional nature of the sport or the level of provision in the region. A RSH could incorporate a wide and varied range of sports and other facilities and services depending on the size of the land available and the demands.

3.2.2 Objectives

The suggested objectives for a RSH are as follows:

- Address local and regional needs as identified in relevant plans
- Increase and optimise economic, sport, health and social benefits to the Region
- Optimise strategic partnerships with government, sports, health providers and other partners
- Integrate facilities and services to gain optimal efficiency and effectiveness

By way of expanding on these objectives, regional sports hubs should aim to:

- Deliver diverse facilities and activity opportunities that broaden community involvement in sport and recreation participation, and contributes to the health, wellbeing and sense of belonging within the community
- Draw facilities, sports and activities together to raise the profile and potential quality of the facilities and spaces
- Provide an opportunity to connect diverse facilities and spaces. This includes the potential to link sport, recreation, entertainment, education and community facilities to create an integrated precinct that is high profile, strategically promoted and well used
- Enable an integrated and coordinated approach to the delivery of sport and recreation to, amongst other things, avoid unnecessary duplication and create complimentary facilities within the network
- Enable the strategic and coordinated management of sport and recreation facilities and spaces
- Provide community access and the opportunity for children and young people to experience higher level facilities and progress through to higher grade participation.
- Benefit sport through improved facilities which will assist in increased members, economies of management and the potential for athletes to achieve higher standards of participation
- Support events and spectator based sport and recreation activities, which provide a social focus for the community and economic benefits for the region
- Integrate a range of facilities to optimise efficiency and create business synergies
- Promote the region and encourage a healthy community
- Create a destination in the wider context for the regional community
- Deliver benefits to a whole region
- Explore opportunities for innovation in facility and service delivery

3.3 STRUCTURE AND COMPONENTS

As noted above, at the heart of the RSH model is the formal establishment of partnerships to deliver integrated and coordinated facilities and services. The main focus then is to identify existing and or planned regionally significant assets (facilities and services) and connecting them with a central hub to create a network to produce increased efficiency and/or effectiveness for all partners and stakeholders and facilitate other business and community opportunities.

From a physical point of view, a regional sports hub is typically seen as a single precinct accommodating all desired components on one site. Whilst this is ideal, it is recognised that this is not always possible due to factors such as:

- › The availability of land/space
- › The establishment and location of existing facilities
- › The cost of developing large scale facilities

That is why it is suggested that a regional sports hub be envisaged as a network of facilities and services within a locality (regional centre). This will still involve identifying a 'main site' or a 'hub centre' incorporating 'core' facilities and services with ideally as many 'support' facilities and services provided from the same site. However, some of these may be provided off-site.

The main hub centre should preferably include core facilities as follows:

- › State standard sport specific facilities for multiple sports (determined by demonstrated demand/ conditions/ opportunities) which are or are proposed to be regionally significant, consisting of:
 - Indoor multi-purpose facility
 - and/ or
 - Outdoor multi-purpose sport facility (preferably all weather)
- › Indoor support facilities
 - Meeting spaces
 - Sports administration spaces

In principle, facilities should be available for use by all sports partners with multi-purpose design that does not compromise the primary users or the functionality of facilities.

Support facilities that could be connected to the core facilities include:

- › Health and fitness facilities/ services
 - General health and fitness
 - Sports science
 - Other allied health services
- › Education and training facilities/services
- › Aquatic facilities
- › Additional administration for all sport and other partners

Figure 4 - Regional Sports Hub Model



In addition to sport specific and support facilities, a range of other facilities and services would or could be connected to a sports hub. These can further increase the business/ financial opportunities associated with the hub and improve sustainability and economic and social impacts. These include:

- ▶ Commercial services
 - Catering
 - Retail
 - Accommodation and hospitality
 - Medical
- ▶ Community facilities and services
 - Performing arts
 - Child care
 - Entertainment
 - Leisure/recreation
 - Education
 - Tourism/visitor

Naturally, the more facilities that can be provided on one site, the better with regard to leveraging efficiencies and opportunities. However, the provision of facilities and services alone is not adequate, they need to be 'activated' by strategy, business planning and management. As noted, the RSH concept seeks to provide a holistic approach to optimise the benefits of the facilities and grasp apparent opportunities, this is made possible by sound business strategy and planning.

That is, each sector plays a role in supporting and/or servicing another. Likewise, strategic links between various elements can be seen and taken advantage of to deliver greater economic, social and health outcomes. This also means that the development of individual

facilities, programs or initiatives within the framework can be linked back to a larger strategic agenda. This must go beyond simple 'letters of support' and must demonstrate how each partner is able to add value to the model and receive value in return.

From an SSO perspective, this would include committing 'content' to the model whilst receiving benefit through the use of facilities and services. For example, this could include any combination of the following:

Potential SSO content

- ▶ Junior athlete development pathway
- ▶ Senior athlete training and coaching
- ▶ Administration staff/office
- ▶ Management and delivery of sport development programs
- ▶ Coach education and training
- ▶ Hosting general education and training programs
- ▶ Hosting of peak sporting events
- ▶ Hosting of meetings, incentives, conferences and other events

Potential SSO access

- ▶ Use of RSH partner facilities
 - Sport specific
 - Support facilities
- ▶ Use of RSH service partners
 - Health/fitness
 - Accommodation
 - Catering
 - Conference/event coordination



Details of the partnerships would be based on the level of value exchanged and the type of management model used for facilities. A single hub could involve a variety of management models to reflect the diversity and independence of facilities and it could include some shared management approaches. However, it is important to discuss and agree on 'in principle' management and access arrangements early on in the planning process to ensure all parties are aware of expected priority rights and project commitments.

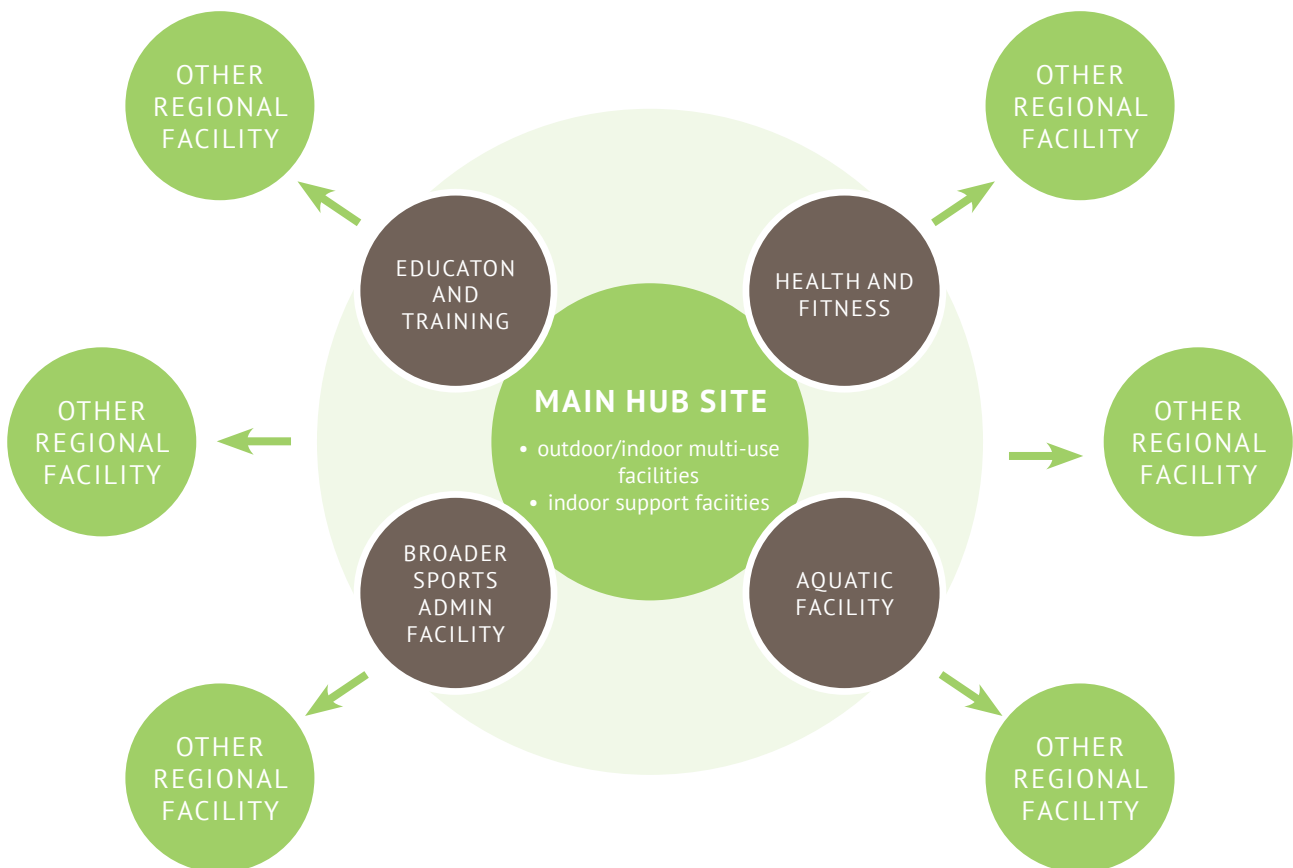
Other features of a central hub should include:

- Accessible by public transport, motor vehicle, on foot and by bicycle. Car parking should be abundant, depending on the serviceability of public transport.
- Some central hub facilities may have a greater spectator focus and therefore require a greater focus on car parking and public transport access.

- Opportunity for additional community use through active recreation opportunities. This may include active transport linkages to town centres, destination for fitness activities, use of meeting rooms/spaces by community groups etc.

As indicated by the structure developed through the MOOS project, a hub would also be connected to a range of regionally significant sport facilities that may be located throughout a given region or incorporated into future facility plans. That is, they are connected through hub and node/ satellite model. To be connected to the Sports Hub model, these facilities and/ or services should have regional or state significance for a state or national sporting organisation. A basic model is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Regional Hub and Node Model



3.4 DISTRIBUTION AND NETWORK

The 10 regions of NSW identified in Figure 3, would provide the initial framework for considering the distribution of regional sports hubs. However, the location of hubs should be based on:

- › Alignment with government investment strategies in regional NSW
 - Consistency with criteria and economic development priorities
- › Demographics and catchments
 - Significant population base within the primary catchment of a hub
 - Regional demographic trends
- › Regional and state sport
 - Participation trends
 - Structure
 - Strategy
- › Accessibility
 - Road
 - Rail
 - Air
 - Geography and regional centre network/structure

This may mean that there is more than one hub within a given region to form a regional network or that a hub in one region may provide a level of service to part of another region. Direction on this aspect is likely to be offered by the Sport and Active Recreation Plan for each region.



3.5 STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

No two RSH's are likely to be the same and therefore the partnerships and stakeholders involved will vary from hub to hub. Key partners are likely to be those identified in the MOOS project's Regional Operating Model (Figure 1). That is:

- › Sport and Active Recreation Organisations
- › Local government
- › Office of Sport
- › Regional Academies of Sport
- › State and Commonwealth Government
- › Other sector partners

Further, the role each partner plays is also likely differ based on several variables. Nevertheless, given the structure of sport and the proposed MOOS project operating model, a typical relationship model for the development and operation of a RSH is suggested in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Typical Partner and Stakeholder Model



In this model:

- › Local government is viewed as the 'driver' of a RSH. That's because, in the main, they are likely to be the lead provider and manager of built assets in a RSH. In most cases this will involve the 'host' LGA as the key driver with support from other regional LGAs.
- › State and regional sporting organisations (e.g. SSO's and regional academies) will play a central role in contributing to strategy, planning and prioritisation as well as committing content to the model.
- › The Office of Sport plays a vital coordinating and facilitating role in planning the development and operation of RSHs as well as promoting and prioritising facilities for funding.
- › 'Other stakeholders and partners' could cover a myriad of sectors including:
 - Health
 - Health and fitness
 - Allied health services
 - Education
 - Universities
 - Government and non-government schools
 - Commercial
 - Catering
 - Retail
 - Hospitality and accommodation
 - Other government agencies

As noted above, this model will vary from hub to hub. For instance, an education institute (e.g. university) may be a key 'driving' partner through the provision of facilities and services as part of a hub.

3.6 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The planning process for RSHs will be guided by the proposed Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans. Amongst other things, these plans should identify an approach to the provision of hubs (number, location etc.) and a high-level review of options (i.e. existing or planned locations) within each region. These are informed by input from LGAs and SSOs in regard to sport demand and strategic direction.

Based on the typical partner and stakeholder model outlined above, the planning for a specific hub is likely to be driven by local government with key input and support from other partners including direction, advice and facilitation from the Office of Sport. However, as noted in Section 3.2.1, some prerequisites are required to initiate and drive the planning of a hub. Assuming these are met, then an appropriate planning process would need to be developed and implemented to incorporate the objectives in Section 3.2.2.

This process should build on a region's existing or potential needs, competitive advantages and opportunities. A RSH is a chance to 'connect the dots' between what exists, what is needed and potential opportunities. An outline for the planning approach is shown below.



- ▶ Background
 - Objectives/Vision
 - About the Region
 - Demographic Review
 - Regional sport participation
 - Regional health data
- ▶ Current Situation
 - Current Stakeholders and Partners
 - Existing regional assets
 - Infrastructure
 - Service
 - Events
 - Strategic Planning Links/Alignment
- ▶ Future Demand Assessment
 - LGA and community demand/support
 - SSOs
 - Other stakeholders
- ▶ Needs Analysis
 - Strengths
 - Gaps (weaknesses)
 - Opportunities
 - Connections
 - Options
 - Potential location(s)
- ▶ Development Plan
 - Design Concept
 - Cost Plan
 - Benefits
 - Funding Strategy
- ▶ Management Plan
 - Operating model
 - Partner roles
 - Management
 - In principle agreements/commitments
 - Business/Financial Model
 - Sustainability

This plan is likely to start at a preliminary or 'high level' and be refined over several iterations with a final version being a formal business case required for funding applications.

3.7 TIMING OF REGIONAL SPORTS HUBS

It is expected that the initial identification of Regional Sports Hubs will be consistent with state government priorities for regional growth centres and State Sporting organisation priorities, and be informed by

the implementation of the planning process outlined at 3.6 above. Subsequent Regional Sports Hubs (2018 and beyond) would also be informed by the findings of the MOOS project (refer section 1.1.2).

