



## Needs Analysis and Strategic Plan

*PREPARED BY:*

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY



February 2005





## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Methodology .....	4
3. Key Findings .....	6
4. Strategic Action Plan.....	11
4.1 Strategy One: Needs Analysis .....	12
4.2 Strategy Two: Regional Coordination.....	13
4.3 Strategy Three: Developing Relationships .....	14
4.4 Strategy Four: Providing Targeted Training Opportunities .....	15
4.5 Strategy Five: Profile, Public Relations and Communication.....	16
4.6 Strategy Six: CARN Organisation and Management.....	17
Attachments.....	18
Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Club Survey.....	19
Appendix B: Survey Results and analysis .....	24



## 1. Introduction

The Centre Active Recreation Network (CARN) manages a range of programs targeting specific community sectors with the aim of enhancing their sport and recreation opportunities.

CARN works in partnership with local government and community groups to help find funding or information sources to suit specific active recreation and leisure requirements.

CARN has three primary roles:

- Managing the Regional Sports Assembly (RSA)
- Implementing an Access for All Abilities program (AAA)
- Implementing a Participation in Community Sports and Active Recreation program (PICSAR).

As the Regional Sports Assembly provider, CARN's role is:

- to strengthen the capacity of grassroots sport and recreation organisations to operate in a robust fashion and deliver quality opportunities for participation.
- to increase the quality and availability of information about local sport and recreation issues, infrastructure and opportunities.
- to enhance networks between grassroots sport and recreation organisations and other key stakeholders in the community to ensure that sport and recreation services address local community needs and issues.
- to increase opportunities for the activities of state-wide organisations to be delivered at the local level.

The CARN RSA region encompasses the five municipalities of Alpine Shire, Indigo Shire, Towong Shire, Rural City of Wangaratta and City of Wodonga.

In November 2004, The Regional Development Company was appointed to work with CARN and key local stakeholders (e.g. local government recreation officers) to determine the needs of sporting clubs in North-East Victoria and to develop a strategic plan for CARN which would enable it to best meet its role.

A very good survey response and the enthusiastic participation of the CARN Program Manager, CARN staff, and local government recreation officers in an action plan workshop (January 2005) form the basis of this Strategic Plan.



## 2. Methodology

The purpose of this report is to outline the key findings of a comprehensive sporting club survey (needs analysis) conducted in December 2004, and then to detail the Strategic Plan developed for CARN to respond to the needs analysis.

The agreed methodology had the following stages:

- Stage One** Letter and survey to all sporting clubs on the CARN database
- Stage Two** Follow-up phone calls to targeted clubs to achieve the sample size
- Stage Three** Collation of data and analysis of trends
- Stage Four** Review of survey results and Action Plan workshop
- Stage Five** Final Action Plan

### 2.1 Survey

The needs analysis was conducted by surveying 300 sporting organisations within the CARN RSA region. A response rate of 30% was achieved. The letter of introduction and survey are attached as Appendix A.

The questions were developed in conjunction with CARN management, taking into account known issues and concerns, based on sporting group feedback, and council-based research and planning.

The analysis was both qualitative and quantitative, examining rated responses, and key comments (Appendix B).

### 2.2 Research

The five municipalities of the CARN region have all completed recreation plans and strategies and the following table indicates their current status.



Table 2.1 Municipal recreation plans within CARN region and their status

Municipality	Plan	Status
Alpine Shire	Recreation strategy	Reviewed 2003
Indigo Shire	Recreation plan	Produced 1997
Towong Shire	Recreation plan	Produced 1997. New plan is being developed and is expected to commence in March 2005
Rural City of Wangaratta	Recreational needs study	Produced 1996. New recreation plan expected to be adopted in March 2005
Wodonga Rural City	Recreation plan	Produced 2000

These strategies were examined with a view to determining common needs and issues.

### 2.3 Stakeholders' Workshop

Following the collation of survey results, a stakeholders' workshop was conducted to review the results, and establish a coordinated strategic action plan.

Attendees included representatives of local government, each of the CARN Programs, and The Centre management. Apologies were received from the Department for Victorian Communities (Sport and Recreation), which maintains close contact with the program.

### 2.4 Strategic Plan Development

Using the output and agreed directions of the stakeholders' workshop, the Strategic Action Plan was developed. Further refinement of the plan will continue as actions are implemented.

### 3. Key Findings

#### 3.1 Research Findings

The research findings drawn from the local government sport and recreation plans indicated that sporting organisations across the region had many issues in common.

Thematically, the key issues related to:

- Membership and Volunteers
- Organisation and Management (Governance)
- Funding and Costs
- Training
- Public Relations.

#### 3.2 Organisation and Management

- A lack of strategic planning, sometimes the lack of understanding of the value of such planning, and/or how to go about developing the plans, and having resources (people, time and money) to undertake such planning
- Dealing with governance issues: dealing with increased regulation and reporting requirements; managing the organisation; operating as an effective committee; managing and employing staff (for some); identifying and managing risk (and related insurance issues).

#### 3.3 Membership and Volunteers

- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining members
- Difficulties in maintaining volunteer support base.

These issues appear to be affected by:

- Changing population with young people leaving and an increasing aged population
- Move from structured recreation activities (e.g. sports clubs) to individual unstructured activities (walking, cycling, individual gym).

#### 3.4 Funding and Costs

- Cost of facility use
- Increasing regulation costs (especially insurance)
- Difficulty in attracting and retaining sponsorship
- Difficulty in identifying and attracting grants.

### 3.5 Training

- Need for training in:
  - Governance
  - Grant writing
- Training required for officials
- Need for coaching clinics locally.

### 3.6 Public Relations

- Communicating to the wider public, especially via newer technologies (ICT and websites).

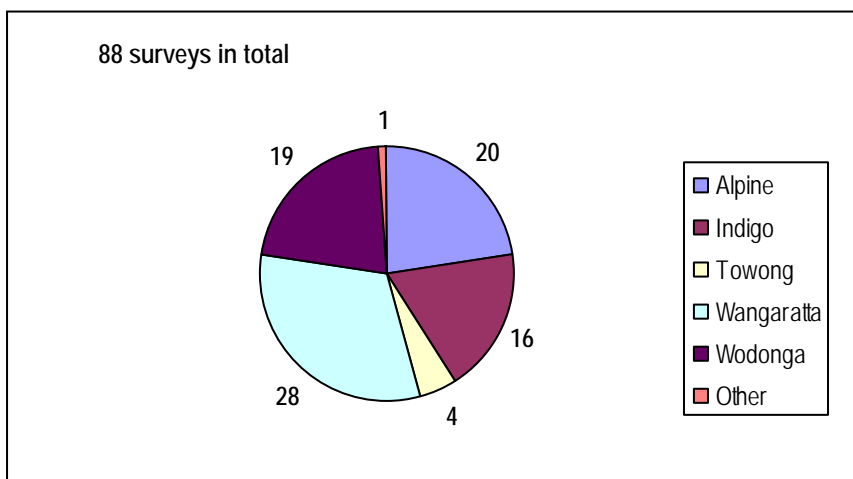
### 3.7 Survey Findings

The survey findings were more optimistic than the research findings, and can be grouped in the same theme areas.

Most (30%) clubs responding had 50–100 members, about 14% of clubs had more than 150 members, and about 15% had less than 25 members.

Responses were received from all shires (Figure 3.1).

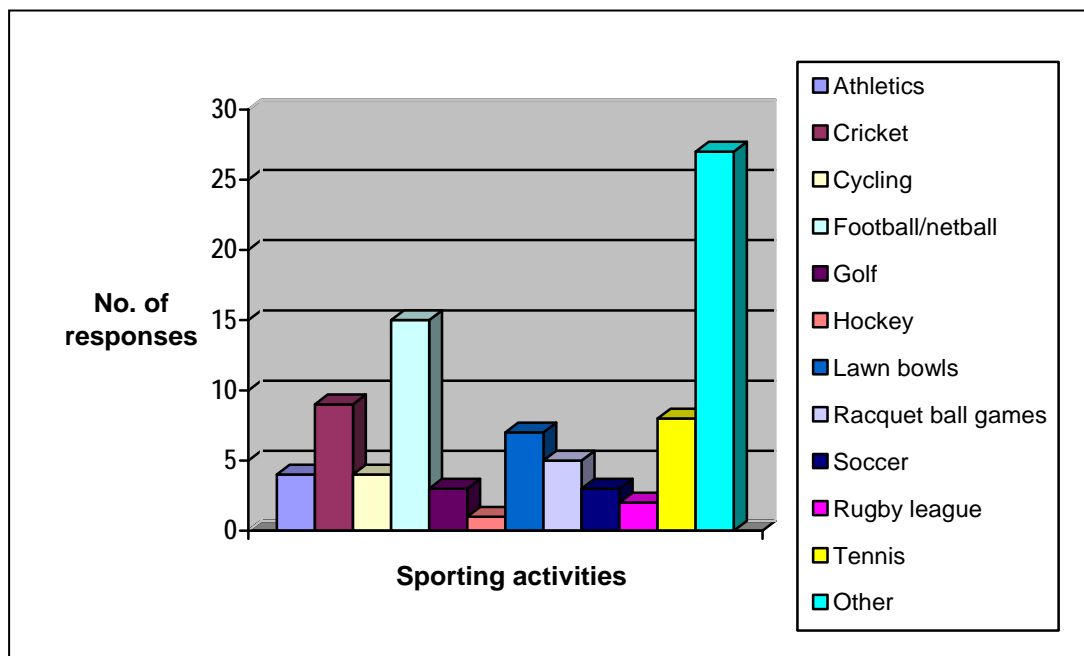
Figure 3.1 Number of survey responses by shire



The low number of responses for Towong Shire reflects a lack of postal addresses on the database and not a failure to respond. The “other” response is from “Special Olympics Victoria Inc. Ovens and Murray Region”, which covers the entire region.

The responses covered over 12 different sporting club types, as listed below.

Figure 3.2 Number of responses by club type



### 3.8 Membership and Volunteers

- Forty per cent (40%) of all clubs in the survey reported an increase in membership over the last five years. Twenty-five per cent (25%) of clubs reported a decrease in numbers, whilst approximately 34% maintained steady membership numbers.
- Larger clubs generally remained constant in membership or showed increased membership numbers.
- Smaller clubs, those with less than 25 members, experienced significant membership decreases. Over 40% of smaller clubs were in this category.
- Attracting new members was still seen as difficult, even for those clubs who indicate good membership growth.
- Clubs which found it less difficult to attract new members were those that had junior sports, a positive family atmosphere, and new or improved facilities.
- Over 50% of clubs believe the quality of their facilities has a strong positive impact on participation levels.
- Word of mouth was the most effective recruiting strategy.
- Over 60% of all clubs listed recruiting and retaining volunteers as a critical issue. This response was not affected by the size of the club.



### 3.9 Organisation and Management (Governance)

- The survey responses did not indicate governance as a significant issue. However, the written comments indicate that many clubs are unaware of the extent of their responsibilities.
- Increasing regulation was a significant issue for one-third (34%) of clubs. Clubs required to meet regulations considered them to be part of their normal everyday operations, although very time consuming. There was a high degree of understanding of this issue, and that it needs to be dealt with in some way.
- On average over half of the clubs do not have a business plan, with about 30% using business planning to some extent.
- The use of a business plan varied considerably with the size of the club. Forty per cent (40%) of clubs with less than 25 members used a business plan; 65% of clubs over 100 members used a business plan.
- The perceived level of support for clubs from State and regional sporting organisations was generally spread with a tendency to a perception of lack of support (42%) compared with support (30%).

### 3.10 Funding and Costs

- The sources of income and the areas in which expenditure was applied varied greatly.
- Income came from:
  - Membership fees
  - Raffles and firewood sales
  - Canteen
  - Bar sales
  - Administration fees
  - Social events
  - Sponsorship
  - Grants.
- About 40% of income, across all clubs, came from membership.
- Expenditure was concentrated on:
  - Facilities: maintenance and use
  - Insurance
  - Administration costs
  - Player payments
  - Sporting equipment



- Respondents generally found attracting sponsorship was difficult. Some clubs had never tried, and respondents from small towns believed that the size of their community restricted their ability to attract sponsors.
- Clubs which had been successful in attracting and maintaining sponsorship were commonly providing sporting opportunities for juniors, had good facilities and high profile or community presence.
- Interestingly, 72% of respondents have received a grant of some sort in the history of their club.
- Many respondents found applying for grants time consuming and difficult, with a low success rate.
- Fifteen per cent (15%) of clubs have never applied for funding.

### 3.11 How Can CARN Help?

Combining the results of both the survey and research, there appears to be a role for CARN in:

- Providing support for clubs to attract and retain members and volunteers
- Providing and facilitating training in
  - Business planning
  - Risk assessment and management
  - Committee development
  - Developing job descriptions for volunteers and staff
  - Grant applications
  - Identifying funding opportunities
  - Working with clubs and state sporting organisations to coordinate training of local officials and coach development programs.



## 4. Strategic Action Plan

In considering the role of CARN, the strategic directions it should take as an organisation, the role of the organisation as funded, and the identified needs of the sporting organisations were taken into account. A Strategic Action Plan was developed.

This plan fits together by linking the vision, the objectives, the programs of CARN, the strategies and the actions.

The **vision** for The Centre and CARN, previously developed, is *“Creating opportunities together”*.

The three primary **objectives** are to:

- strengthen the capacity of rural and regional communities to respond to sport and recreation issues, which impact at the grass roots level
- develop and support sport and recreation environments which are inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities
- facilitate increased opportunities for people to become physically active in sport and active recreation in their community.

The three **programs** hosted by CARN to address these objectives are:

- Managing the Regional Sports Assembly (RSA) for the North East
- Implementing an Access for All Abilities (AAA) program
- Implementing a Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation Program (PICSAR).

The strategic planning workshop considered these roles and the identified needs of the sporting clubs of the region (from the council recreation plans and from the needs analysis survey) and determined a number of actions which could be undertaken by CARN and others to meet the objectives. They are grouped into six **strategy** areas:

<b>Strategy One</b>	Responding to the <b>needs analysis</b>
<b>Strategy Two</b>	Providing <b>regional coordination</b>
<b>Strategy Three</b>	Developing <b>relationships</b> with external organisations
<b>Strategy Four</b>	Providing targeted <b>training</b> opportunities
<b>Strategy Five</b>	Building the CARN and RSA <b>profile</b>
<b>Strategy Six</b>	CARN <b>organisation</b> and management



## 4.1 Strategy One: Needs Analysis

**Goal:** To build on the momentum created by the needs analysis and provide timely feedback to respondents

Table 4.1 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
1.1 Further investigate and analyse the needs analysis responses	1.1.1 Assess qualitative responses	CARN staff	S
	1.1.2 Test the answers of this survey with Rural City of Wangaratta and other local government surveys	CARN staff and local government officers	S
	1.1.3 Examine qualitative information in conjunction with councils	CARN staff and local government officers	S
	1.1.4 Thankyou and feedback to clubs (CARN March newsletter)	CARN staff	S
1.2 Undertake follow-up activities to survey to target particular issues	1.2.1 Make personal contact with responding clubs to follow up on issues (e.g.. timing of training)	CARN staff and local government officers	S
	1.2.2 Target "struggling" clubs for survey follow up (may be non respondents who are known to LGA or CARN)	CARN staff and local government officers	S
	1.2.3 Follow up respondents with a list of target issues	CARN staff	S
1.3 Provide an ongoing update of survey responses and resulting actions	1.3.1 Consult with and finetune communication with local government and other regional sports assemblies regarding issues and clubs	CARN staff and local government officers	S-M

### Key

**When:** S < 2 months   S-M 4-6 months   M 6-9 months   O Ongoing



## 4.2 Strategy Two: Regional Coordination

**Goal:** Coordinate the programs of CARN and local government to maximise opportunities for sporting clubs

Table 4.2 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
2.1. Prioritise programming opportunities with other partners (e.g. local government)	2.1.1 Identify and coordinate opportunities into an annual program	CARN staff and local government officers	S
	2.1.2 Jointly promote the annual program through RSA and local government	CARN staff and local government officers	S-M
2.2 Provide pool of volunteers with specific skills to assist clubs (eg volunteer recruitment and retention, administration)	2.2.1 Identify and collate a list of skill requirements for clubs	CARN staff and local government officers	M
	2.2.2 Identify volunteers with specific skills for each required skill type	CARN staff and local government officers	M
	2.2.3 Facilitate matching of volunteers with club requirements	CARN staff and local government officers	M

### Key

**When:** S < 2 months   S-M 4-6 months   M 6-9 months   O Ongoing



### 4.3 Strategy Three: Developing Relationships

**Goal:** To improve communication with State sporting organisations in order to maximise opportunities for local sporting clubs and increase awareness of State issues affecting local clubs

Table 4.3 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
3.1 Build stronger links with State sporting organisations especially in regard to training	3.1.1 Inform State and regional sporting organisations of the results of the survey and invite discussion on any issues raised	CARN staff	S
	3.1.2 Identify training that already exists through State sporting associations	CARN staff	S-M M
	3.1.3 Partner with State organisations to encourage and coordinate local delivery of training	CARN staff	M
3.2 Work with local clubs and state sporting organisations to coordinate training of local officials and coach development programs	3.2.1 Identify and coordinate opportunities	CARN	M
	3.2.2 Publicise widely	CARN staff and local government officers	M-O
	3.2.3 Feed back success of such programs to other state organisations	CARN staff and local government officers	M-O
3.3 Build and support political "savvy" of local government recreation officers to increase profile, support and funding for sporting clubs and the implementation of recreation plans	3.2.1 Undertake regular forums to share and discuss experiences to gain an understanding of political situation within the region and within each local government area	CARN staff and local government officers	O

**Key**

**When:** S < 2 months    S-M 4-6 months    M 6-9 months    O Ongoing



#### 4.4 Strategy Four: Providing Targeted Training Opportunities

**Goals:** To provide opportunities and increase participation in training which is relevant to clubs; and encourage sporting clubs to adopt practices which contribute to their sustainability

Table 4.4 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
4.1 Provide and facilitate training for clubs in identified high-need topics, viz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Risk assessment and management</li> <li>• Committee development</li> <li>• Job descriptions for volunteers and staff</li> <li>• Grant applications</li> <li>• Funding opportunities</li> </ul>	4.1.2 Identify partners and possible providers for training	CARN with local government officers	S-M
	4.1.3 Develop training modules	CARN	M
	4.1.4 Identify pool of potential trainers	CARN with local government officers	M
	4.1.5 Target clubs and deliver training	CARN and trainers State organisations	M-O
	4.1.6 Coordinate annual calendar of training and publicise widely	CARN	M-O
	4.2 Investigate ways to increase participation in training	4.2.1 Investigate methods including compulsory and/or mutual obligation training requirements	CARN staff and local government officers
4.2.2 Investigate innovative means of delivering training and tailor training to club size		CARN staff	S-M
4.2.3 Target and combine training for like groups e.g. recreation reserve users		CARN staff	M
4.3 Consider training and the role of CARN in its delivery from the perspective of clubs (i.e. "What does the club get out of this?")	4.3.1 Through a consultative process include clubs in the process of developing training programs	CARN staff	S-O

**Key**

**When:** S < 2 months   S-M 4-6 months   M 6-9 months   O Ongoing



#### 4.5 Strategy Five: Profile, Public Relations and Communication

**Goal:** Raise the profile of CARN and RSA through positive actions and examples

Table 4.5 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
5.1 Use the results of the survey to highlight the practices of successful sporting clubs	5.1.1 Follow up with examples of "good" clubs, post survey	CARN	S
	5.1.2 Undertake media campaign about the positives of the survey	CARN staff	S-O
	5.1.3 Continue to regularly provide newsletter for all sporting clubs and interested associations	CARN	O
	5.1.4 Keep web presence relevant and up to date	CARN	O
5.2 Highlight and encourage a self-sustaining and supportive educative process for clubs, via increased awareness	5.2.1 Promote good examples of benefit of strategic planning for clubs	CARN staff	O
	5.2.2 Build up a library of good stories and good story tellers	CARN staff	O

**Key**

**When:** S < 2 months    S-M 4-6 months    M 6-9 months    O Ongoing



#### 4.6 Strategy Six: CARN Organisation and Management

**Goal:** To coordinate activities within CARN to ensure responsiveness to club needs

Table 4.6 Action Plan

Strategy	Action	Who	When
6.1 Coordinate activities within CARN to ensure responsiveness to club needs	6.1.1 Integrate the three CARN programs and accountabilities	CARN staff	S-M

**Key**

**When:** S < 2 months    S-M 4-6 months    M 6-9 months    O Ongoing



## Attachments

## Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Club Survey



### North East Sporting Organisations Survey - December 2004

Dear Sport and Recreation Club supporter

CARN – (The Centre Active Recreation Network) manages a range of programs with the aim of enhancing sport and recreation opportunities.

Through survey and consultation of sporting clubs, CARN seeks to determine how it can best meet its role to *“strengthen the capacity of grassroots sport and recreation organisations to operate in a robust fashion and deliver quality opportunities for participation.”* The aim of this project is to determine how CARN can facilitate improvement in the capacity of sporting organisations within the Alpine, Indigo, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga Local Government areas and to determine the priorities for action.

CARN have commissioned The Regional Development Company, from Chiltern, to conduct this survey and analysis. **We are also offering entry into one of 5 prize draws to win a \$100 Sports Equipment Voucher.** Details Below

The survey should take only a short time to complete and your prompt participation will add significantly to the accuracy of the survey. All information will remain strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. Additional copies of the survey can be downloaded from the CARN website [www.thecentre.vic.edu.au/carn](http://www.thecentre.vic.edu.au/carn) or by contacting Rob Carolane on telephone (03) 5721 0220.

Please return your completed survey in the free post envelope provided (no stamp required) by 5.00pm **Tuesday 21 December 2004.**

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey promptly. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact CARN Project Manager Rob Carolane on (03) 5721 0220 or via email on [rob.carolane@thecentre.vic.edu.au](mailto:rob.carolane@thecentre.vic.edu.au).

As an incentive to complete the survey promptly, and to thank you for your time and knowledge, there will be a prize draw from all club entries received by 5.00pm December 21<sup>st</sup> 2004. The prize is a \$100 voucher for sports equipment to one club from each local government area.

The successful club will be published in the Wangaratta Chronicle 14 January 2005 and Border Mail 15 January 2005 Public Notices.

**Thank you for your time and knowledge.**





**4. How much does the issue of achieving governance requirements impact on club operations?**

(Governance is the process of running a club in accordance with legislation and regulations e.g. Meeting procedures and record keeping)

Not at all 2 3 4 Very much  
 1    5

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**5. How easy is it for your club to attract new members?**

Very Easy 2 3 4 Very Difficult  
 1    5

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(You may need to consult with your treasurer for questions 6 and 7)

**6. Please indicate the approximate proportion of your clubs income that is provided by the following?**

Membership fees	%	Raffles	%	Providing a labour force	%
Canteen	%	Bar Sales	%	Admission fees	%
Social Events	%	Firewood	%	Sponsorship	%
Player Auctions	%	Grants	%	Don't know (tick box)	
Other (please specify)					%

**7. Please indicate the approximate proportion of your clubs expenses that are spent on the following?**

Insurance	%	Maintenance of facilities	%	Sporting equipment	%
Player payments	%	Facility Use	%	Don't know (tick box)	
Other (please specify)					%

**8. How easy is it for your club to attract sponsorship?**

Very Easy 2 3 4 Very Difficult  
 1    5

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Has your club previously been successful in applying for a grant? (circle one) Yes No**

If Yes, who was the grant from?

Local Government	State Government	State Sporting Assoc.	VicHealth
Other (please specify)			



**10. How difficult was the process of applying for the grants?**

Very Easy 1 2 3 4 Very Difficult 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**11. To what extent is the issue of managing risks such as injury and litigation, a concern for your club?**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very significant 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**12. To what extent is the issue of ensuring officials are “adequately trained” a concern for your club?**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very significant 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**13. To what extent does your club use a business plan to guide its future?**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very Much 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**14. To what extent does your club include people with disabilities in club activities?**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very Well 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**15. To what extent does the quality of your facilities impact on participation levels at your club?**

Strong negative impact 1 2 3 4 Strong positive impact 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**16. To what extent does your club feel supported by your state or regional sporting organisation?**

Not at all 1 2 3 4 Very Well 5  
 Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Briefly, what are some highlights of your clubs operation that you are proud of?

---

---

---

Please feel free to add any other comments that may be of importance to you.

---

---

---

Thank you for your time in contributing to the survey. Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage paid envelope by **21 December 2004**. For further information, contact CARN Project Manager Rob Carolane on (03) 5721 0220 or via email on [rob.carolane@thecentre.vic.edu.au](mailto:rob.carolane@thecentre.vic.edu.au).

**To say thank you for your time and effort CARN has arranged a prize draw to win a \$100 voucher to purchase sporting equipment for one club from each Local Government Area. To be eligible for the draw you must return the survey in the reply paid envelope to The Centre Wangaratta by 5.00 pm 21 December 2004.**

Can we contact you to clarify any of your comments? (circle one)      **Yes**   **No**

**Contact details**

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name and Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (business hours) \_\_\_\_\_

CARN produces a bi monthly newsletter with news relevant to local clubs. Articles include Information on grants available, topical issues, profiles of interesting local volunteers and Local Government News.

Please provide us with an email address for your club so we can keep you up to date with the latest.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

We also invite contributions from your club at any time to publicise your major achievements, upcoming events or to thank your volunteers.

**Please Mail your survey to:**      **CARN Club Survey**  
**(No Stamp Required)**            **Reply Paid 4**  
   **Chiltern 3683**

**Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge**



## Appendix B: Survey Results and Analysis

Eighty-eight (88) surveys were returned by mail or completed by follow-up phone calls. Twenty (20) surveys were returned unanswered. The survey response is believed to give statistical rigour to the survey process and the 30% response rate represents an excellent return.

Responses were received from all shires (Figure 1). The low number of responses for Towong Shire reflects a lack of postal addresses on the database and not a failure to respond. The "other" response is from "Special Olympics Victoria Inc. Ovens and Murray Region", which covers the entire region.

Figure 1 Number of survey responses by shire

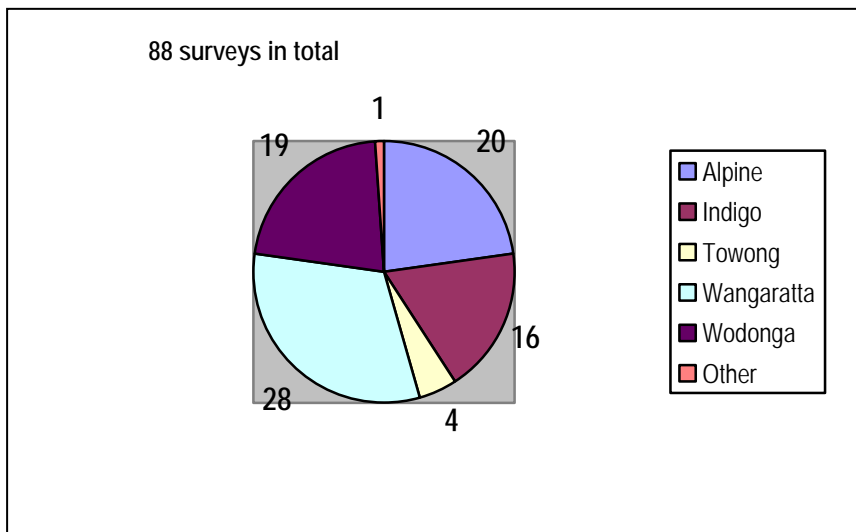
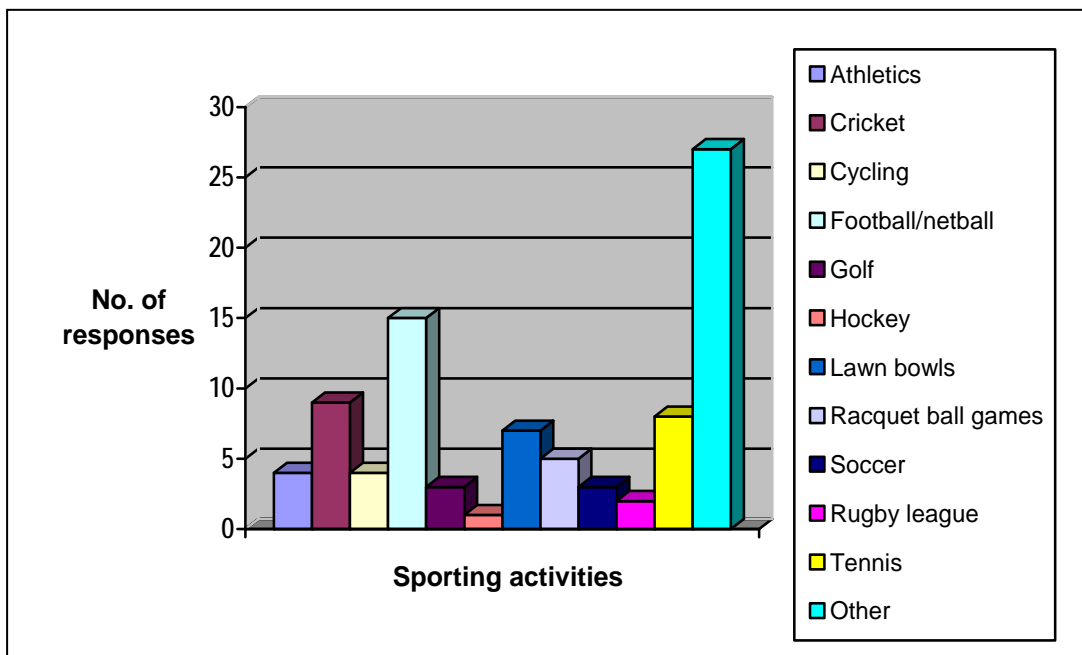


Figure 2 Number of responses by club type

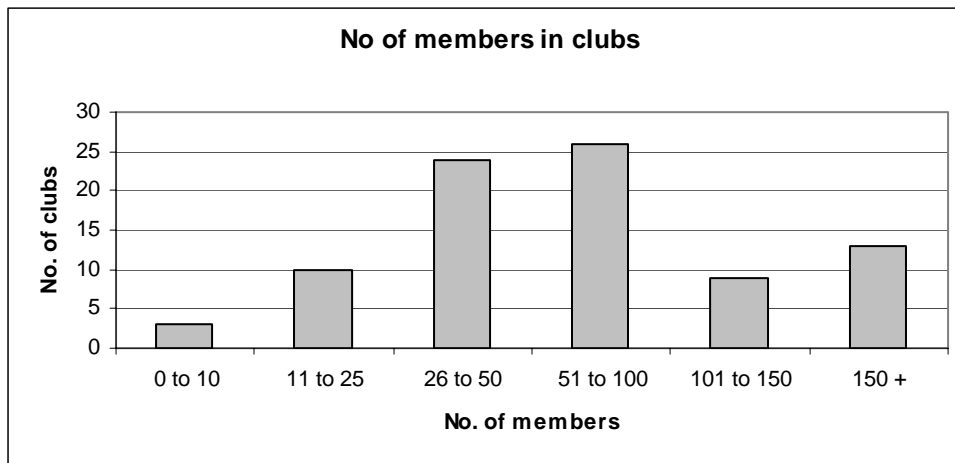




Clubs were asked to indicate the number of members within the club (Figure 3). Thirteen clubs/organisations indicated more than 150 members. These clubs were:

- Beechworth and District Hockey Club
- Jubilee Golf Club
- Mt Beauty Golf Club
- Tallangatta and District Football League
- Wangaratta and District Cricket Association
- Wangaratta and District Junior Football League
- Wangaratta Football and Netball Club
- Wangaratta Rovers Football Club (incorporating netball and cricket clubs)
- Wodonga Bowling Club
- Wodonga Diamonds Soccer Club
- Wodonga Midgets Football Association
- Wodonga Raiders Football and Sports Club
- Wodonga Sports and Leisure Centre—Mixed Netball

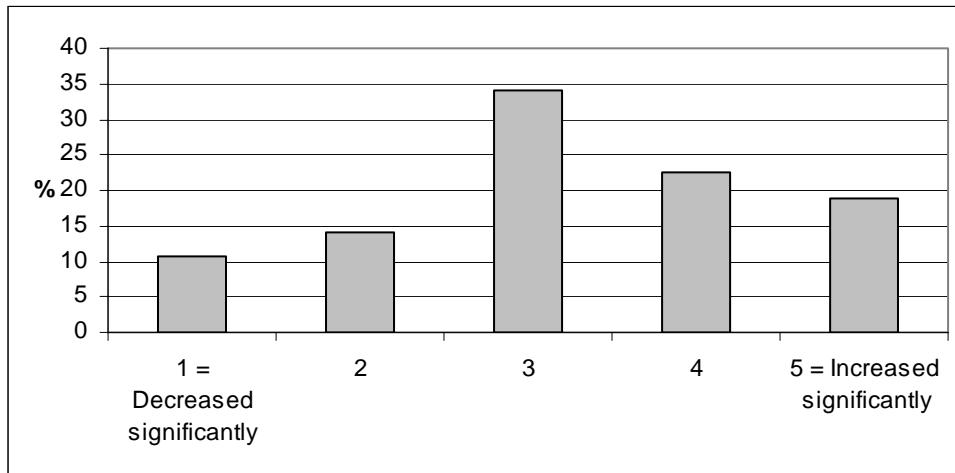
Figure 3 Number of members within clubs/sporting organisations





**QUESTION 1: Have the number of members in your club changed in the last 5 years?**

Figure 4 Change in membership numbers, for all respondents, over last 5 years



The responses indicate 25% of clubs experienced a decrease in members over the last five years (Figure 4) whilst approximately 34% maintained constant numbers. Encouragingly, 40% of clubs had an increase in membership.

What defines significant will depend on the club size. For example, a club with 150 members that loses 10 members is unlikely to consider the decrease as significant. However, a club with 25 members is likely to find a loss of 10 members as significant.

**Sample of comments from respondents**

**Why membership has decreased**

*no one will take on volunteer positions to run the club and competitions*

*many people are not seeking and join clubs to play golf. Older people too old to play and age 30-50 aren't as involved due to their family and work pressures.*

*public liability insurance. Members wouldn't pay on top of memberships*

*not sure. This years membership is less than half of last year. Perhaps there are too many opportunities now available for the kids we target.*

*having trouble getting people interested and members getting older*

*extra country senior teams come into our comp. Players residing out of town joined those teams increased travelling has seen juniors take up other sports such as tennis.*

*slow increase in membership. Difficult to attract new members because of regulation (state and national)*



**Why membership has increased**

*beach volley ball and junior volley ball initiative*

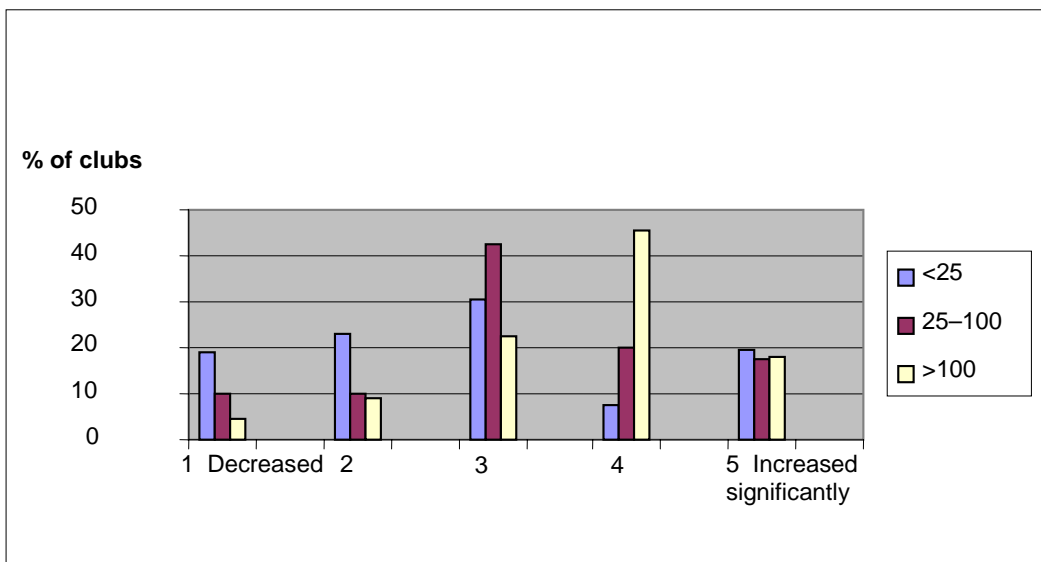
*new purpose built venue*

*supportive parents, teenage swimmers in our club encouraging younger swimmers to join*

*we have put an organized junior program in place and have had reasonable success on the field which have contributed to retention and growth.*

Figure 5 shows a comparison of changes in membership numbers based on club size (defined by the number of members). Forty per cent (40%) of smaller clubs, less than 25 members, experienced significant membership decrease whilst larger clubs generally remained constant or experienced membership increases.

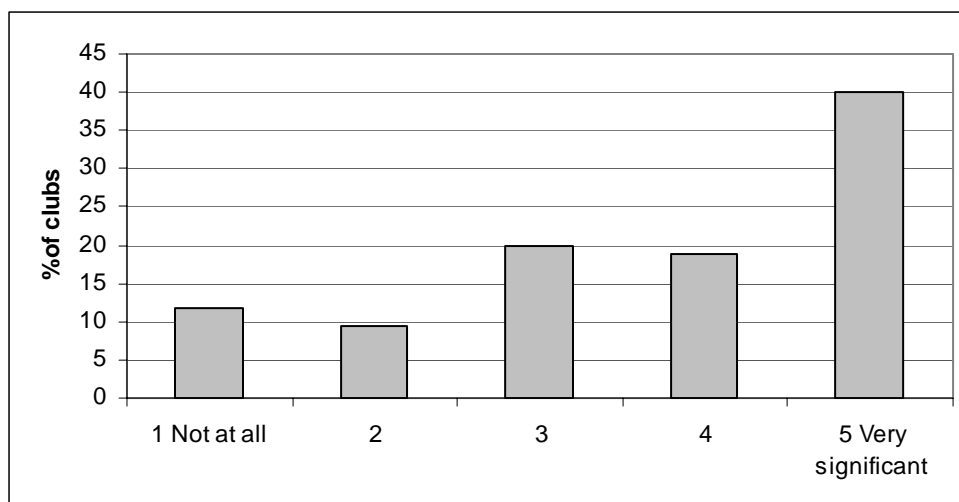
Figure 5 Comparison of change in membership numbers, by club size, over last 5 years



## QUESTION 2: To what extent is the issue of volunteer retention and recruiting an issue for your club?

Response figures (Figure 6) support anecdotal evidence of the difficulty of recruiting and retaining volunteers. Almost 60% of clubs listed the issue as significant. Only 20% of clubs did not find it a large issue for them.

Figure 6 Extent of issue of volunteer retention and recruiting for clubs



### Sample of comments from respondents

#### Reasons why volunteer recruiting and retention is an issue

*we have very few volunteers. No-one seems interested at all.*

*I think it gets harder to retain volunteers due to people living busier lifestyles.*

*we don't use volunteers. Parents will help at events*

*for the club to survive financially volunteers are paramount to this - create funds to enable club to stay above its expenditure.*

*parents now both working and children have multiple involvements in sports- football/ cricket netball etc. Cannot fit everything into time. Cost of being a volunteer and litigation risk factor*

*we always find it hard to find volunteers, and find it is always the same volunteers*

#### Reasons why volunteer recruiting and retention is not an issue

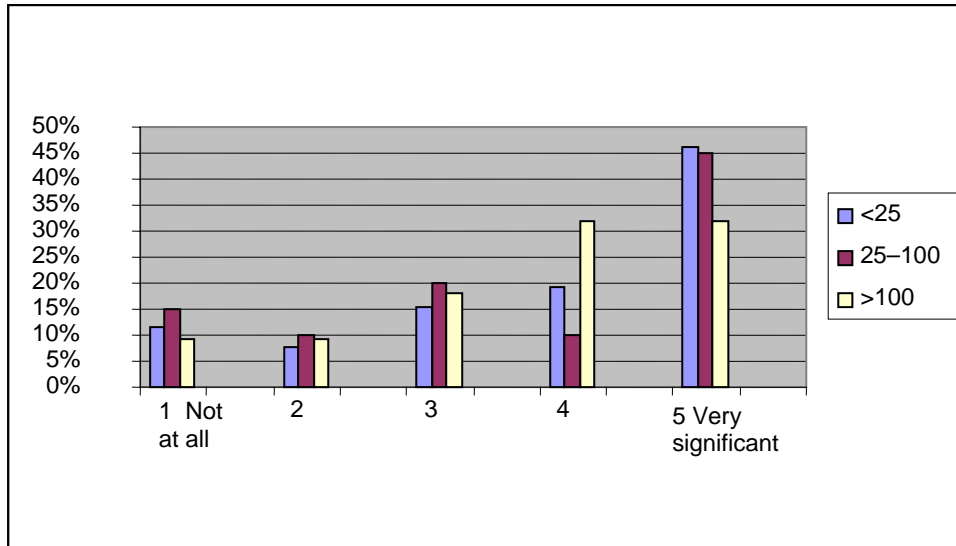
*parents usually stay; volunteers are not always a problem.*

*the committee seems to be much the same people but all positions were recently filled at our AGM. Training more coaches so we can offer a second night is a problem as we have been unsuccessful with grants so far. Hopefully one due in December will bring some luck. Recruiting participants is no problem. We have a waiting list for all three classes.*



A comparison of the issue, by club size, did not show significant differences (Figure 7). It would be expected the issue would be greater for smaller clubs as they have fewer members to call upon. However, there is no clear trend to indicate this.

Figure 7 Extent of issue of volunteer retention, by club size

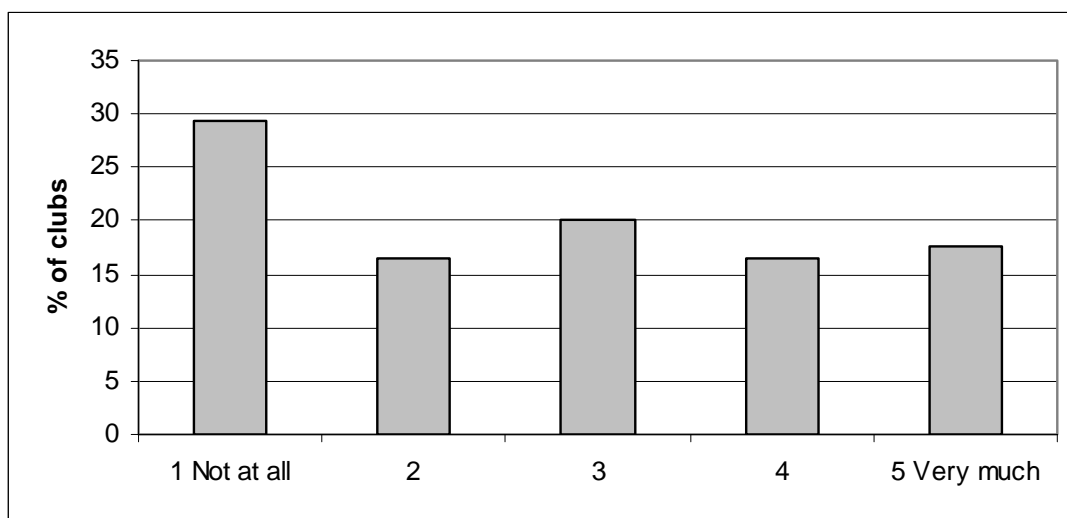


### QUESTION 3: Do increasing regulations such as safe food handling, responsible service of alcohol, police records checks etc, impact on club operations?

This as a significant issue for about 34% of clubs (Figure 8). It is worth noting that many clubs do not serve alcohol or food. Hence there was no requirement on the club to meet these standards. Most clubs required to meet the regulations commented upon a large impact but considered it as part of everyday operation.

However, changing legislation, including the need for police checks (Working with Children Policy), may increase the sensitivity of clubs to this issue.

Figure 8 Impact of increasing regulations on club operations



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Reasons why the impact is small or negligible

*no alcohol allowed—no food prepared on the premises. No reason for police checks.*

*we do not find any of these areas overly burdening perhaps the cost of police checks is a minor issue—it would be nice not to have to pay for them when we are trying to do the right thing by ensuring that we have appropriate persons looking after our juniors.*

*people are prepared to help without doing courses.*

*Most adult volunteers prepared to do whatever necessary to operate club*

*police checks—league matter. Canteen runs only fortnightly. Alcohol handled by local hotel.*

##### Reasons why the impact is large

*complying with new and existing road rules. Risk assessment for event management applications.*

*with few volunteers it does make things difficult as it is the same ones who have to deal with licensing etc.*



*police checks, interviews and screening procedures highly impacts on the amount of volunteers inducted into the club, as they see it as a hindrance, although they understand the reasons for such measures.*

*all people concerned in the catering side of things for the club have all completed the relevant courses inc. responsible serving of alcohol. Police checks are regularly completed.*

*volunteers have taken time from work or families to attend courses at monetary cost either them to the assoc. we are not always equipped legally to understand and fully put these protocols in place. Time is a very big issue; volunteers will only give up a finite amount of time. These protocols can be a huge obligation on committee members legally.*

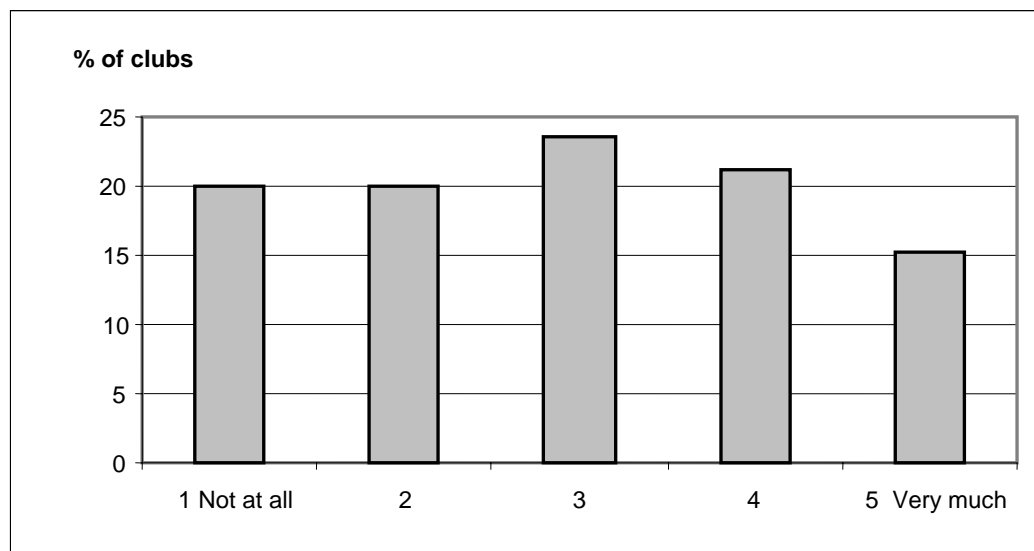
*as they have significantly increased the workload of the current volunteer secretary to such an extent that the current secretary spends 30-40 hours/ week on club matters*

*it has little impact on participating players but it has caused more work for the committee because of litigation*

#### QUESTION 4: How much does the issue of achieving governance requirements impact on club operations?

The responses did not reveal corporate governance as a significant issue. However, the written comments indicated that clubs may not be aware of their responsibilities.

Figure 9 Impact of club operation on achieving corporate governance



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Reasons why achieving corporate governance is not an issue

*we have always run according to regulations*

*where possible we follow Rule 1 "there are no rules"*

*having regular meetings and keeping accurate records allows us to plan future expenses of our club.*

*just to keep records and running smoothly*

*we are lucky we have professional people in our club that assist or hold portfolio's.*

*we have found we now need a separate person to perform player registration. To keep up with the chasing of players to pay and inform them of their entitlements etc.*

##### Reasons why achieving corporate governance is an issue

*too much work (paper work)*

*all these clubs have volunteers taking administration jobs and if the workload becomes too involved with legislation requirements and record keeping then people will be less likely to commit to admin roles. Help is often offered in training but it means a much bigger time commitment.*

*as we are a small club the administration of it falls up on a few dedicated parents, therefore it is time consuming to keep up and implement changes.*



An analysis of those clubs using a business plan compared with achieving corporate governance (Table 1) did not reveal any trends. The use of a business plan did not indicate any increase in the ability to achieve corporate governance.

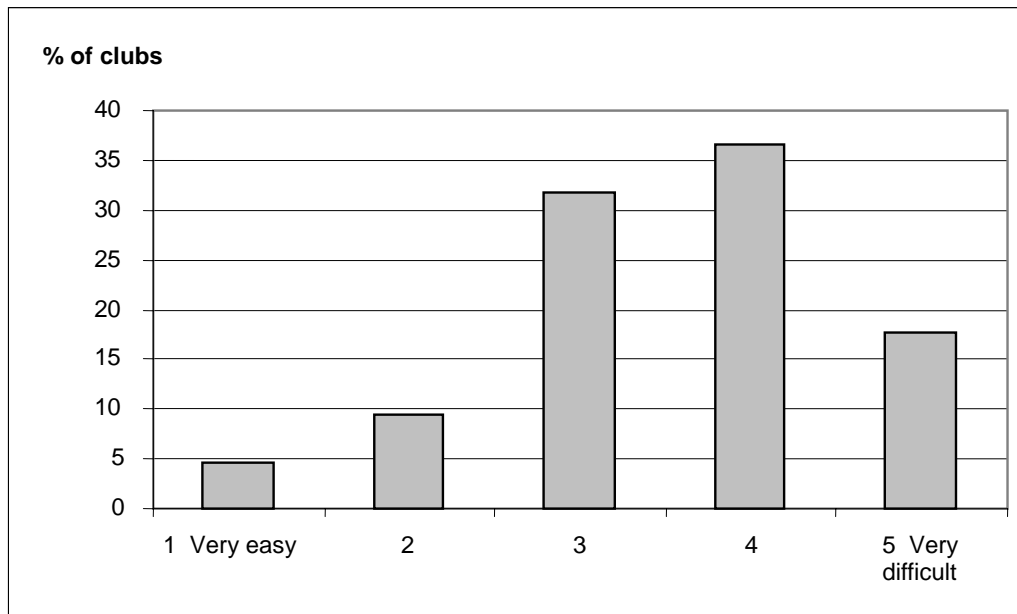
Table 1 Comparison of the use of business planning and the impact of achieving corporate governance

		How much does the issue of achieving governance requirements impact on club operations?				
		1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much
To what extent does the club use a business plan to guide its future?	1 Not at all	38.3%	17.0%	14.9%	10.6%	19.2%
	2	0.0%	28.6%	28.6%	14.2%	28.6%
	3	30.8%	15.4%	15.4%	0.0%	38.4%
	4	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%
	5 Very much	27.3%	0.0%	36.3%	18.2%	18.2%

## QUESTION 5: How easy is it for your club to attract new members?

From the responses there was a strong trend indicating that attracting new members is difficult (Figure 10). However, from comments, new members are more easily attracted to junior sports with good family atmospheres, new or improved facilities and/ or by word of mouth.

Figure 10 Ease of attracting new members to clubs



### Sample of comments from respondents

#### Reasons why attracting new members is difficult

*competition from other sporting clubs.*

*there are only so many people in this small community we can ask*

*other clubs poach players*

*competition to attract new players, especially at A grade level is high. We have made a concerted effort to attract good junior players that we hope to keep as they progress into the senior ranks.*

*new members tend to come to our club if they know existing players. The working environment now days doesn't encourage people to play and commit to cricket.*

*being two small towns away from the larger towns it's hard to get new members because the larger towns seem to get them first. Plus with the price of fuel people will not travel.*

#### Reasons why attracting new members is not difficult

*word of mouth from existing members attracts new members.*

*gymnastics is extremely popular. Our two head coaches are very popular we have a waiting list. Kids wait around six months to join.*



*we have it a bit easier than some as we have a clear human resource management portfolio that has assisted us cultivate friendly family orientated club ethos.*

*most of our members are juniors so with soccer becoming more popular we find it easy.*



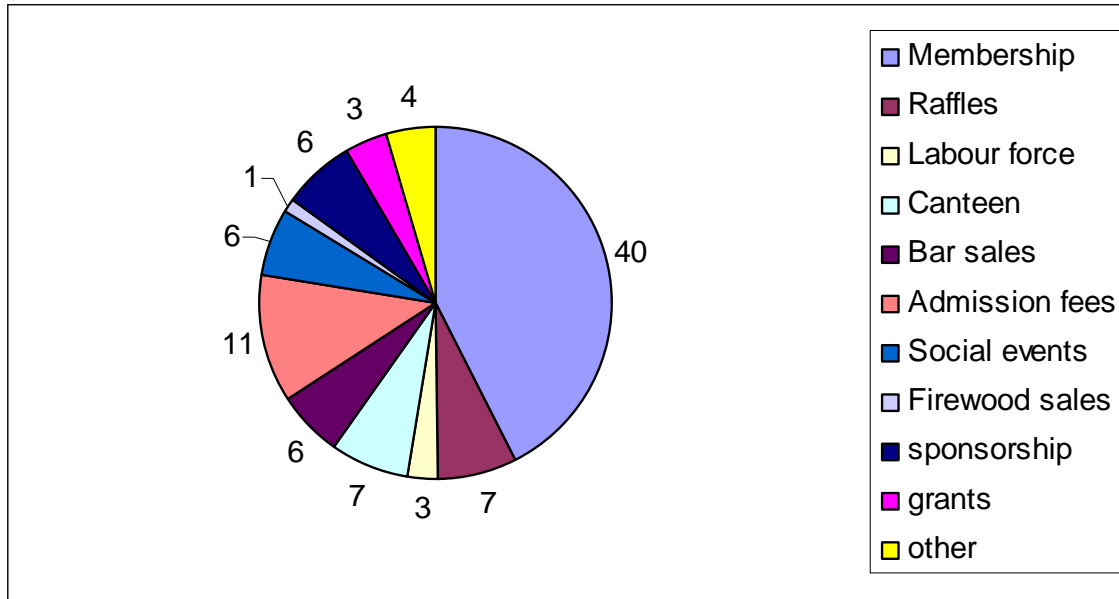
**QUESTION 6** Please indicate the approximate proportion of your clubs income that is provided by the following?

Sources of income varied greatly and there were no clear trends. Sources and key findings are as follows.

Table 2 Summary of income sources

Source of income	Proportion of income, %	% of clubs
Membership fees	<10	33.0
	11 – 25	14.7
	26 – 50	18.2
	51 – 70	11.4
	71 – 100	22.7
Raffles	<10	85.2
	11 – 25	9.1
	26 – 70	5.7
Labour force	<5	93.2
	6 – 90	6.8
Canteen	<1	75.0
	2 – 10	11.4
	11 – 25	5.6
	26 – 30	2.3
Bar sales	<1	73.9
	2 – 25	17.0
Admission fees	<5	71.6
	6 – 50	18.2
	51 – 70	9.1
Social events	<2	55.7
	3 – 10	27.3
	11 – 35	15.9
Firewood sales	<1	95.5
	2 - 10	2.2
Sponsorship	<1	51.1
	2 – 10	31.9
	11 – 40	14.7
Grants	<1	80.7
	2 – 10	11.3
	11 – 40	6.9
Donations	<1	96.6
	2 – 15	2.3
Catering	<30	98.9
Other sources	<1	78.4
	2 – 10	10.2
	11 - 25	9.1

Figure 11 Summary of sources of club income





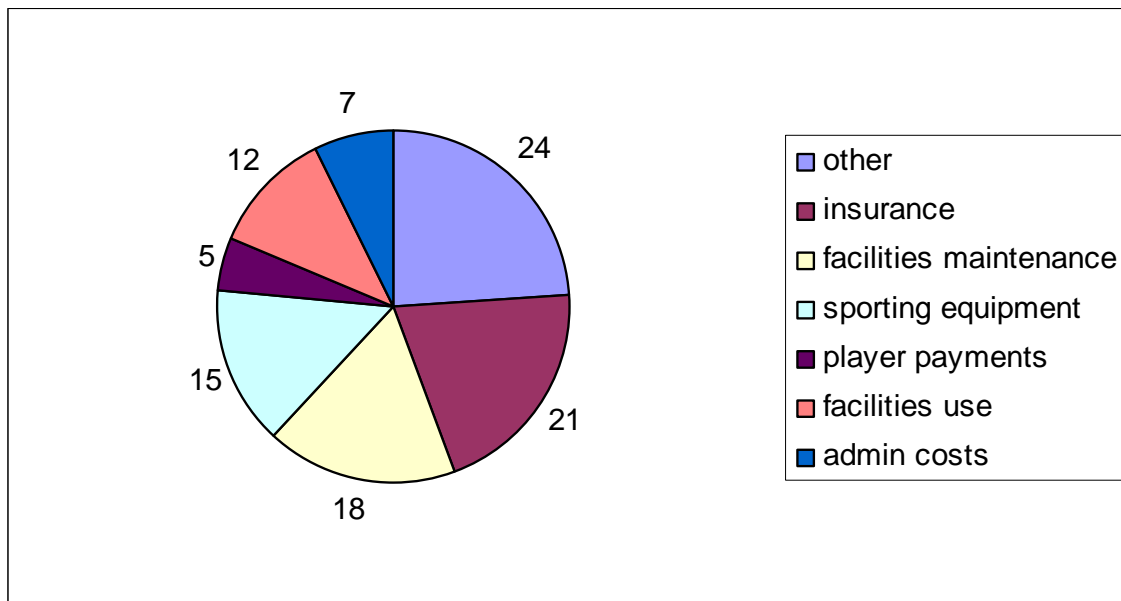
**QUESTION 7: Please indicate the approximate proportion of your clubs expenses that are spent on the following?**

Sources of expense varied greatly and there were no clear trends. Sources and key findings are below.

Table 3 Summary of expense sources

Source of expense	Proportion of expenses, %	% of clubs
Insurance	<1	18.2
	2 – 10	29.5
	11 – 20	19.3
	21 – 50	21.6
	51 – 80	9.1
Facility maintenance	<1	35.2
	2 – 10	26.2
	11 – 50	29.5
	51 – 85	8.0
Sporting equipment	<2	34.1
	3 – 10	25.0
	11 – 50	35.2
	51 – 70	4.6
Player payments	<2	81.2
	3 – 25	10.2
	26 – 50	6.9
Facility use	<1	42.0
	2 – 10	26.2
	11 – 20	17.0
	21 – 50	12.5
Coaching	<10	96.6
	11 – 20	1.1
Purchase of trophies, etc	<1	96.6
	2 – 10	1.1
Travel expenses	<1	98.8
	2 – 30	1.2
Administration costs	<5	73.9
	6 – 20	12.5
	21 – 50	9.1
	51 – 80	3.4
Newsletters	<1	98.9
Utilities	<1	94.3
	2 – 15	4.6
Social functions	<1	94.3
	2 – 10	3.4
Other sources	<10	93.2
	11 - 30	3.4

Figure 12 Summary of sources of club expenses

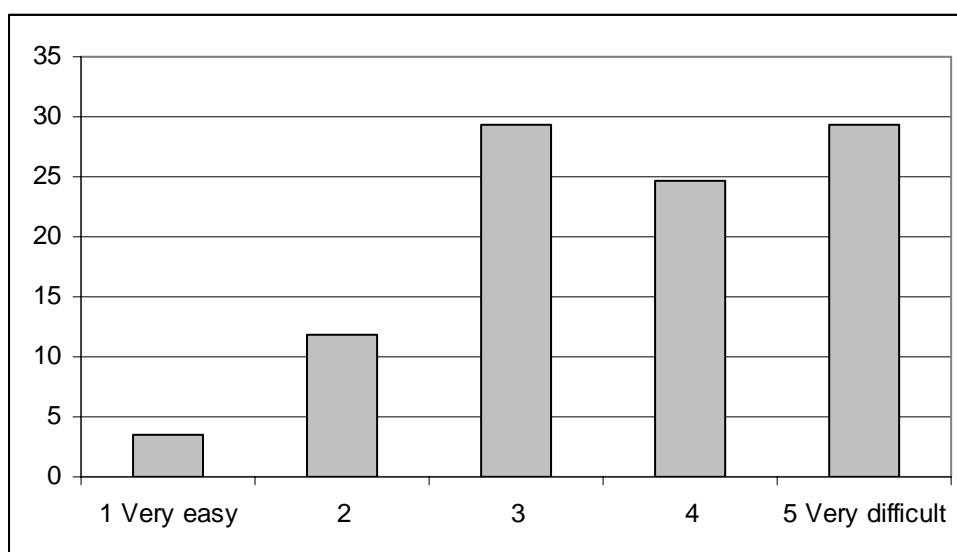




## QUESTION 8: How easy is it for your club to attract sponsorship?

There was a strong trend that respondents found attracting sponsorship a difficult task (Figure 13). Some clubs had never tried whilst many clubs in small towns believed that the size of the town restricted their ability to attract sponsorship. Clubs that indicated in their comments that they had been successful with sponsorship were commonly providing sporting opportunities for juniors or had good facilities and a high profile/community presence; for example, major football clubs.

Figure 13 Ease of attracting club sponsorship



### Sample of comments from respondents

#### Reasons why attracting sponsorship is difficult

*haven't tried*

*small town - competing with other clubs and sports*

*being in a rural area, there are very few businesses to support us.*

*this is a competitive area for sponsorship dollars and businesses without contacts though clubs are difficult to convince of benefits*

*we can not offer much for the sponsorship dollar*

*have tried for many years although can't find anyone*

#### Reasons why attracting sponsorship is easy

*recently sent letters to surrounding businesses to sponsor purchases of tumbling trampoline \$2150 donated.*

*easy but we have no need at this stage*



*we are limited in what we have to offer but are fortunate enough to have a very good level of support from approx 10-12 local businesses.*

*as an AFL dominated state very few are prepared to sponsor a newer sport. However, as our sponsorship protocols and portfolio are nearing completion our task may become easier.*



### QUESTION 9: Has your club previously been successful in applying for a grant?

Despite anecdotal evidence of the difficulty of receiving grants, over 72% of respondents had received a grant (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Level of club success in receiving a grant

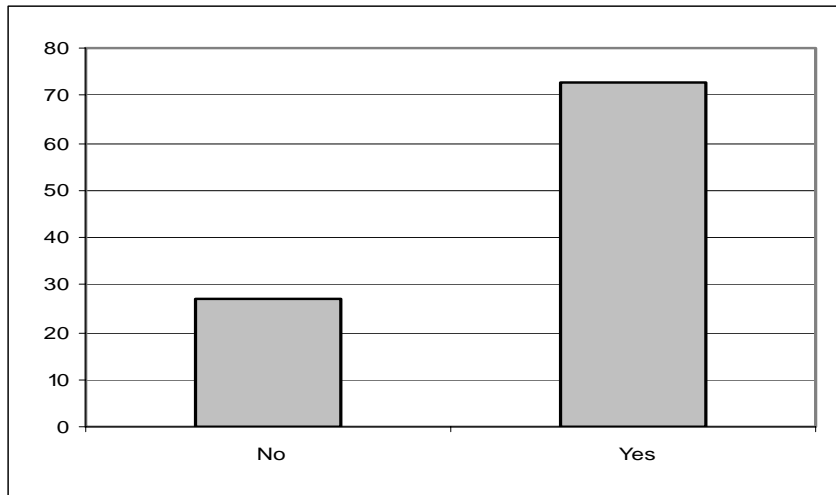
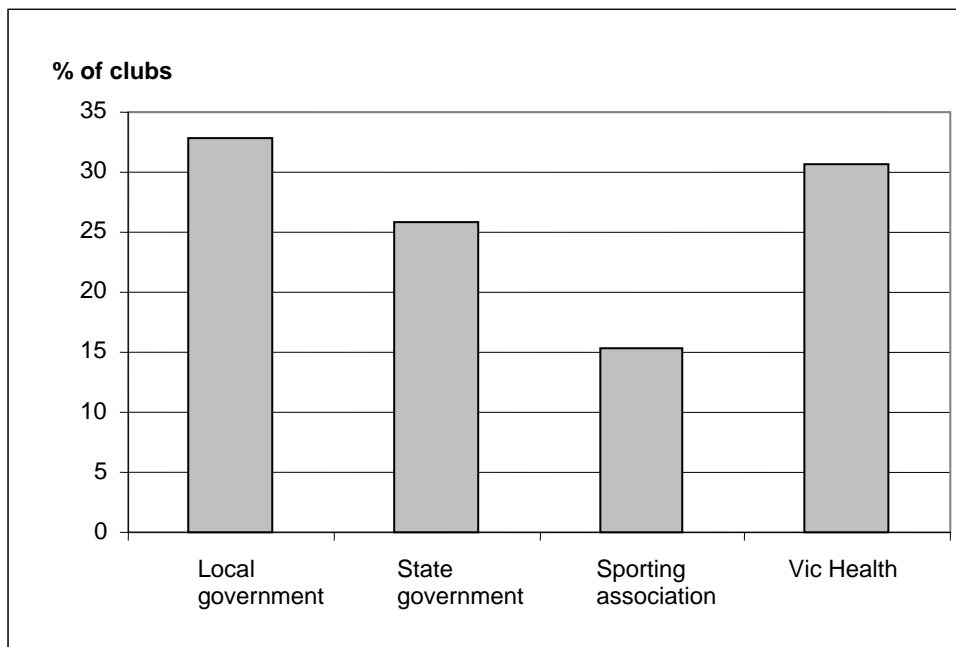


Figure 15 Sources of grants received

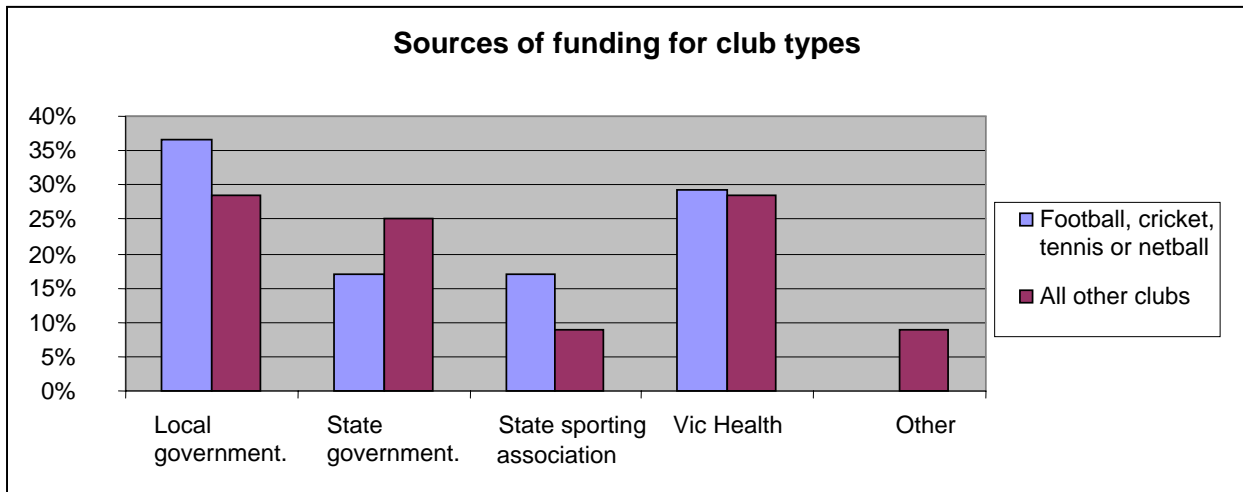


For further analysis, CARN categorised sporting clubs/organisations into two groups. Group 1 consisted of football, netball, and cricket and/or tennis clubs. Group 2 contained all other clubs. A comparison was undertaken to determine if clubs in Group 1 were receiving significantly more funding opportunities than Group 2.



Figure 16 shows the sources of funding for each group. Where clubs have received funding from more than one source, each funding source was considered as a separate allocation. Respondents were not asked to list the value of the grants. Therefore the total value of funding is unknown. The comparisons do not indicate a preference for funding to Group 1 clubs.

Figure 16 Sources of funding for sporting groups

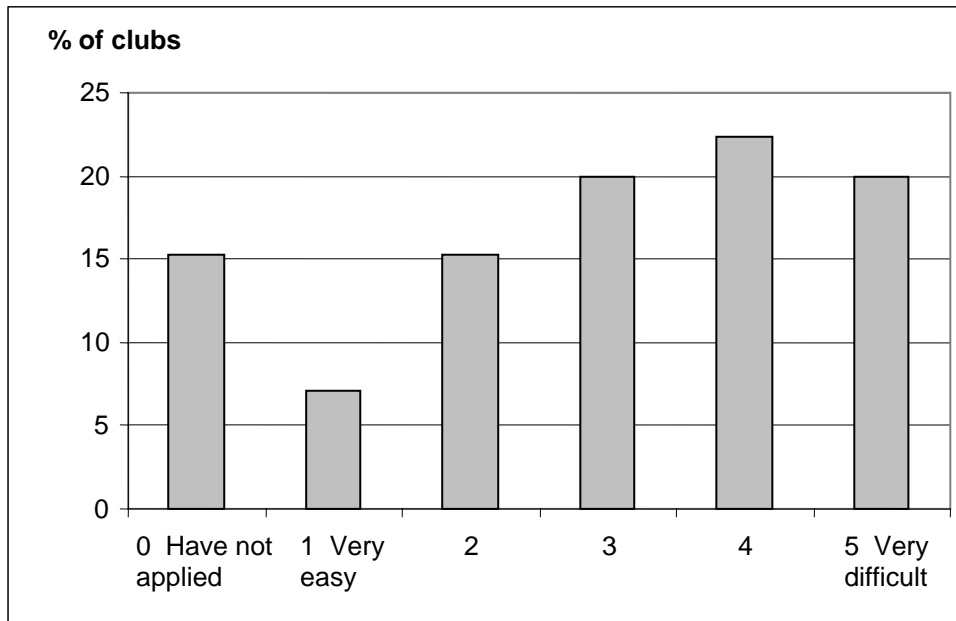




**QUESTION 10: How difficult was the process of applying for the grants?**

Survey responses indicate many clubs found difficulty in applying for grants (Figure 17). Comments indicated many found the process too difficult, time consuming and with a low success rate. There appears to be a contradiction with Question 9, with 72% of those applying, having been successful. Fifteen per cent (15%) of clubs have never applied for funding.

Figure 17 Ease of applying for a grant



**Sample of comments from respondents**

**Reasons why applying for a grant is difficult**

- a lot of information is required but not necessarily appropriate to rugby league.*
- grants are often given to the best written/presented application—not the most needed*
- information and time required in short time frame for submissions is substantial for volunteer organizations*
- there is a lot of work involved income grants and a lot repetition. All very time consuming and frustrating if unsuccessful.*
- I've never bothered to apply because they are so complex*
- there have been numerous attempts over the past few years with only a few being successful.*
- many questions seem ambiguous. Very limited opportunity to explain the reasons or aims of the proposals. Most importantly by the time our club receives them, we have very limited time to complete them.*
- a lot of time, no gain*

**Reasons why applying for a grant is not difficult**

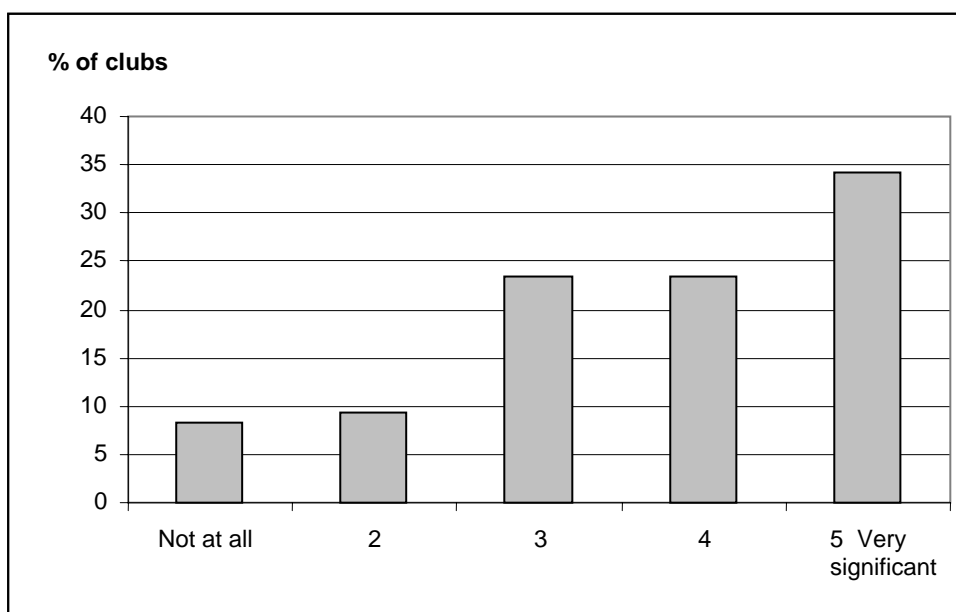
- some members are very good at this sought [sic] of thing*
- people making applications were skilled in application writing*



**QUESTION 11: To what extent is the issue of managing risks such as injury and litigation, a concern for your club?**

Many clubs—greater than 57%—found the issue of managing risk as significant (Figure 18). Club responses as indicated from comments show that many clubs are aware of it and have either proactively addressed it through policy and regular checks and / or through using the overarching policies and procedures of State sporting associations to guide their activities. Other clubs believe their insurance will cover them in the event of an incident or, as there hasn't been an incident, then it has not been a problem to date.

Figure 18 Extent of issue of managing risk



**Sample of comments from respondents**

**Why managing risk is significant**

*so far it has not been a problem*

*we are aware that it could happen but it hasn't yet*

*we don't have any current concerns—however litigation is always a concern*

*litigation risks. Discourage volunteer participation.*

*risk management must be intertwined with every aspect of the operation of our club. Everything we say, do or provide can make us liable if we are found to be negligent.*

**Why managing risk is not significant**

*the individual club function under fairly strict regulations most issues get dealt with to comply and users are quite aware of responsibilities.*



*we have relied on insurance policies to negate a component of the risk.  
we have adopted a safety policy and make regular checks on whether insurance is adequate.*

*insurance premiums are linked to risk management policies.*

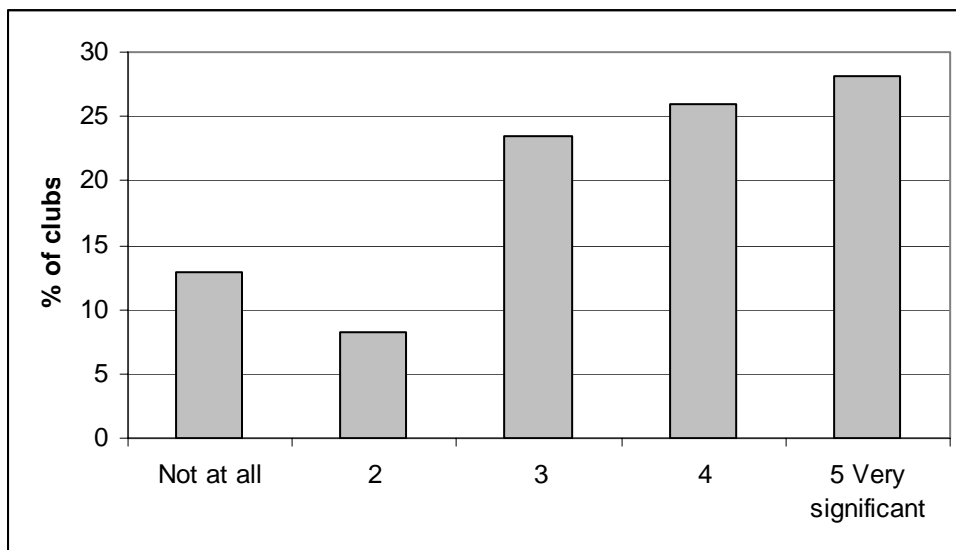
*Pony Club Association of Vic has strict guidelines for us to adhere to. We are always aware of possible risk factors or looking for any*



### QUESTION 12: To what extent is the issue of ensuring officials are adequately trained a concern for the club?

The issue of ensuring officials are adequately trained is significant for many clubs (Figure 19). Comments expressed the difficulty of not only finding officials, but also of training and retaining them. For some clubs it is necessary to have suitably qualified officials in order for the club to retain its association registration.

Figure 19 Extent of the issue of ensuring officials are adequately trained



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Why having adequately trained officials is a significant issue

*it's hard to find people with experience*

*we find it hard to keep officials for more than a year and also the money to send people to courses.*

*if we don't adhere to Australian coaching council requirements of further training etc we will be deregistered*

*our main area of concern is with finding suitable coaches for our junior teams that have the experience skills to assist them in their development.*

*too costly to train*

*we have volunteer training groups however once trained it is difficult to get them to assist at the right time.*

*club pays for umpire and coaching training*

*people are reluctant to commit time*

*I have been on committee for 20 years and have no training. Any help would be greatly appreciated*



*it is a major concern to us to have umpires and coaches who have had some training, however not enough people are willing to commit the time and effort.*

*no job description available for officials and little time to ensure that they have all appropriate knowledge to perform the job well.*

*is an issue we do not tackle well—mainly through an obvious system of who's next*

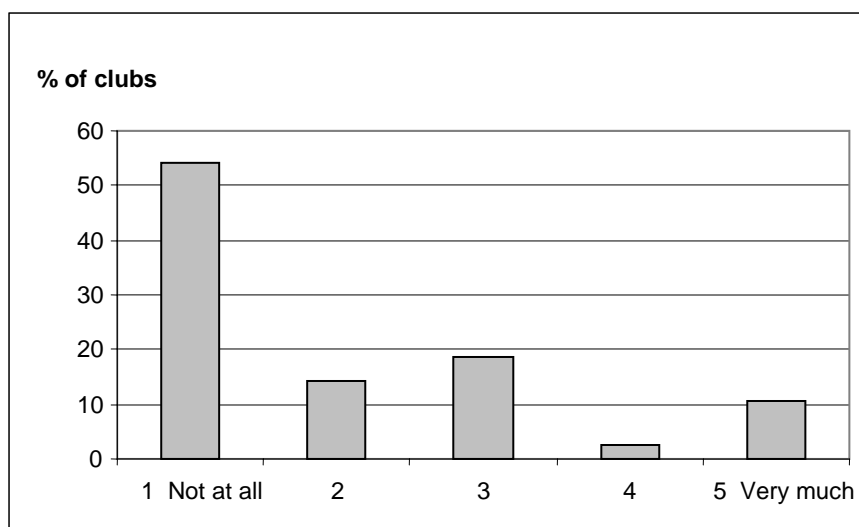
**Why having adequately trained officials is not a significant issue**

*Traffic control marshals have to be accredited. Very costly in the past however the Shire has been very helpful last year and has promised to do so this year*

### QUESTION 13: To what extent does the club use a business plan to guide its future?

Over half the clubs responding to the survey did not have a business plan (Figure 20) and a further 30% used business planning to a limited extent.

Figure 20 Extent of use of a business plan



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Reasons why clubs did not use a business plan

*not much as no-one has the time to sit down and work one out*

*we use parents input we have too big a turn over in club officials to have anything long term.*

*Just not appropriate at the moment.*

*we have an understanding of what we would like to do but nothing on paper.*

*continuing as is and have not investigated*

*guess we should*

*no need*

*it is not really applicable*

*regularly discuss our ambitions, plans and steps to achieve our future*

##### Reasons why clubs use a business plan

*both business and strategic business plan are being developed or are near completion. We can show our members where we are heading and why we are doing particular activities.*



*we have involved ourselves in some of the planning programs provided by the Wodonga council, without using an actual business plan*

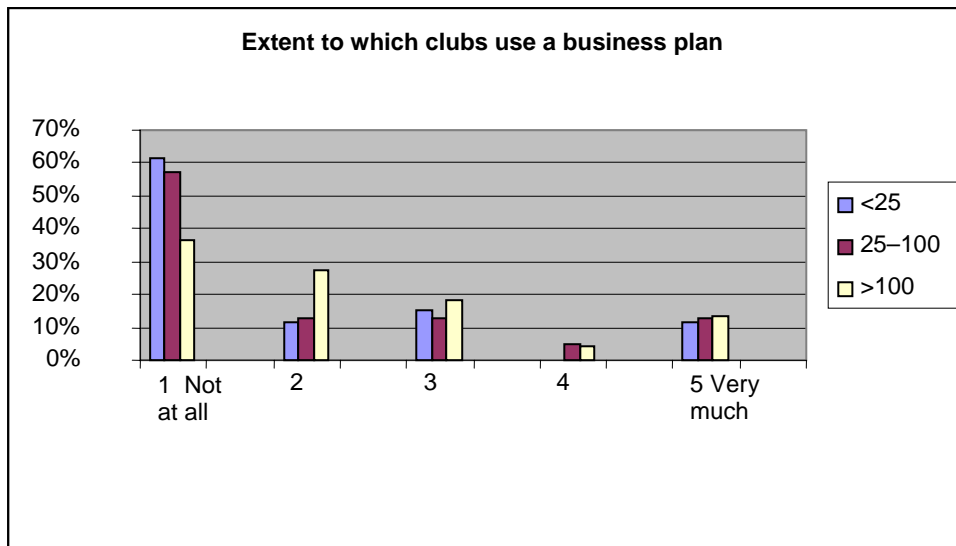
*we have just completed a business plan for 2005–2008 period—it will require a lot of discipline now for us to work from it and follow through*

*currently a priority. Our year plan is being undertaken at the moment. 5 year plan to be developed fully.*

*three members underwent a previous course with Wodonga City Council; it was a three year plan*

Further analysis was undertaken to determine if there was a relationship between club size and the use of a business plan. No strong trends emerged. However, 60% of small clubs (less than 25 members) did not use a business plan at all compared with approximately 35% of large clubs (over 100 members). The percentage of clubs using business planning was similar for all club sizes.

Figure 21 Use of a business plan by clubs of varying size

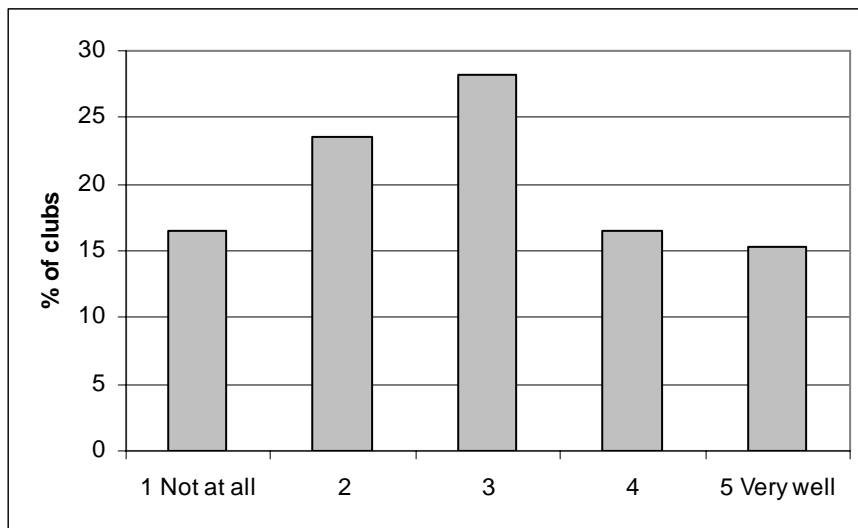




**QUESTION 14: To what extent does the club include people with disabilities in its club activities?**

There were no strong trends for the inclusion of disabled persons in club activities (Figure 22). Many clubs commented that they would welcome disabled persons but they had not been approached to date. Some clubs commented that participation in their sporting activities did not suit disabled persons; or other organisations, such as Riding for the Disabled Association, accommodated disabled persons for that particular activity.

Figure 22 Extent to which clubs include disabled in activities



**Sample of comments from respondents**

**Why clubs do not currently include people with disabilities in activities**

*have not been in this situation yet*

*no one has shown an interest as yet*

*they are always welcome but we have not had a lot of need*

*we currently have no disabled members, and have not been approached to include any disabled participants. I'm sure our coaches would try to accommodate someone with disabilities.*

*in my time at the club (three years) no one with a disability has approached us to join in our activities.*

**Why clubs currently include people with disabilities in activities**

*there are only a small number of people with disabilities involved*

*we have had disabled people manning the score board, attend training and functions. They have always been welcome.*

*some children with disabilities participate*

*we have had a couple of kids over the years that have minor disabilities. They fitted in very well.*



*our facilities—access and toilets are modified for people with disabilities—all people are welcome who embrace the values of the club.*

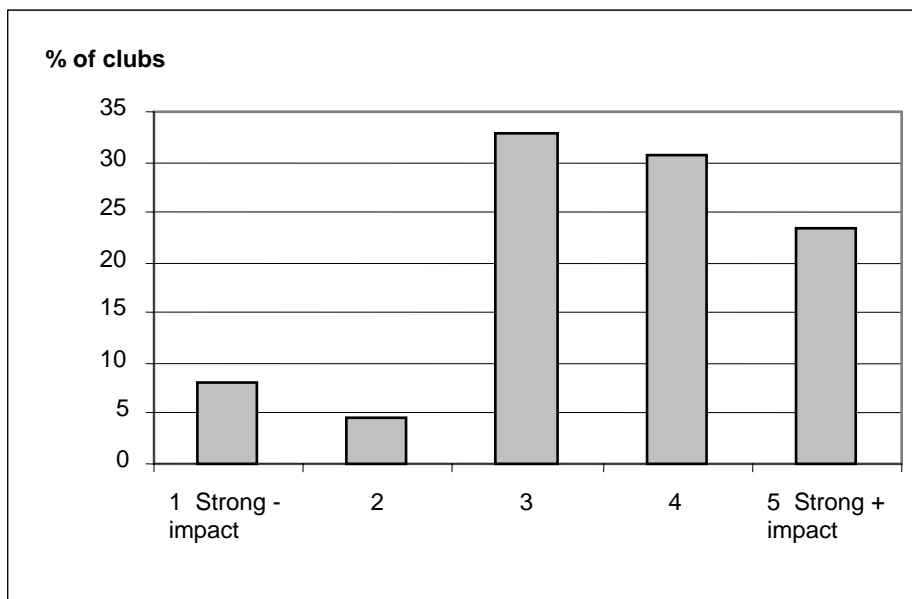
*sport should be accessible to all members of the community. Club is actively seeking ways to enable disabled access.*

*we have just received a \$30,000 government grant to ensure all members are trained in dealing with disabled persons and our claim to being an equal opportunity employer is justified.*

### QUESTION 15: To what extent does the quality of your facilities impact on participation levels at your club?

Over 50% of clubs believe the quality of their facilities has a strong positive impact on participation levels (Figure 23). Comments were polarised between those clubs lamenting their poor facilities and other clubs recognising the high quality of their facilities and acting as a magnet to attract participants, and the envy of visitors and competitors alike.

Figure 23 Impact of facilities on participation levels



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Reasons why facilities negatively impact on participation

*limited facilities—currently using secondary college grounds; no clubrooms*

*our facilities are very old and run down.*

*our facilities are 70 years old. We are in the process of getting new courts and clubrooms.*

*as a new sport, we are provided with sub standard facilities that increase our risk for litigation and also demands extra time, money and effort to protect both the club and its participants.*

*constant improvement is needed to keep up with OH&S standards*

*a huge amount of volunteers are required to keep the facilities up to standard.*

*toilet block is totally inadequate. Also the clubrooms are old and shabby, needing upgrading and brightening up—no heating or cooling.*

## Reasons why facilities positively impact on participation

*if the course is good people are happy to play. Club house facilities have little impact.*

*our clubrooms are being modified to accommodate a more social and disable friendly atmosphere.*

*very important to attracting members and recruiting player. Fortunately this is one area where the local council does provide good support and ground is often envied by visiting cricketers and footballers alike.*

*in our case it has a positive impact, because we have our training, playing and social facilities all together.*

*the club has above average facilities and is popular with visitors from other clubs*

*our facilities are very good, and one of the reasons we have high team entries*

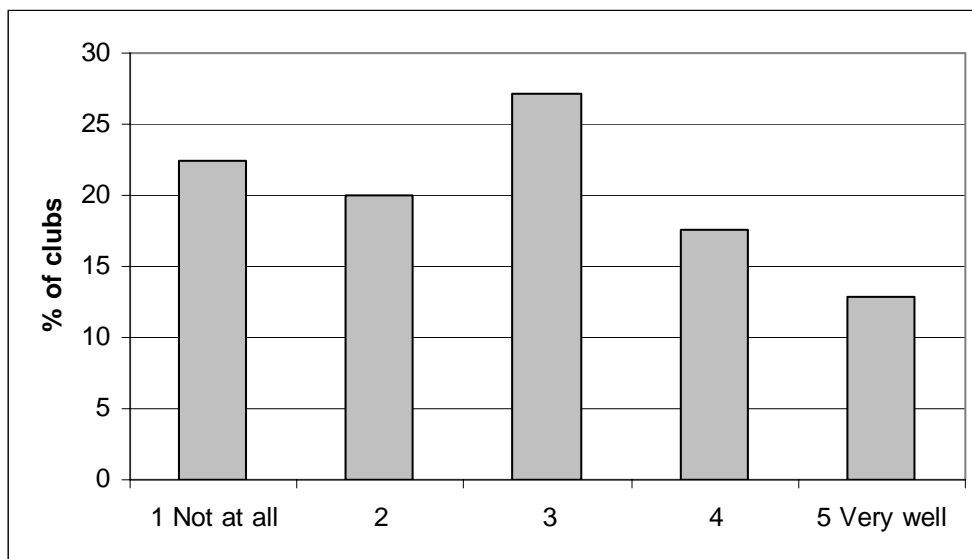
*our participation is at the maximum level so I wouldn't say our facilities impact on this. We currently use the school gymnasium and share each others equipment.*



### QUESTION 16: To what extent does your club feel supported by your state or regional sporting organisation?

The perceived level of support for clubs was generally spread across the five ratings with a slight tendency to a perception of a lack of support (Figure 24). Comments reflected the ratings with some clubs feeling totally unsupported whilst others commended organisations and individuals on their efforts.

Figure 24 Perceived level of support for clubs from state and regional sporting organisation



#### Sample of comments from respondents

##### Reasons for feeling strongly supported

*not as well as we would like but things are improving*

*our governing body is completely restructuring its operation and by the end of 2005, should operate better and therefore support its affiliated clubs better.*

*I think the support is there if we had enough time to actively access it.*

*local council is quiet [sic] helpful*

*they are personally active and we seek assistance if required. As with all sporting clubs it is a case of having time to utilize their help.*

*last year or so there has been a big increase.*

*All enquiries answered but suggestions not forthcoming and not necessarily positive*

*the state association is great. It is the Shire that is the stumbling block.*

*some assistance on some matters.*

*we regularly receive information, practical and financial support*



*I was extremely impressed with the help received from CARN on my last grant application and I am currently hoping to receive a successful letter.*

*very good support from council*

**Reasons for not feeling supported**

*our state association really has no idea about small country clubs*

*we get some support from other organizations but no support from state/federal or local government.*

*haven't received any correspondence from any state or regional organizations.*

*we are left to our self small town not enough kids for them to work with.*

*we have not had a visit from the state body in the 4 years we have been going.*

*do not appreciate and understand our objectives*

*Not at all by the regional sporting organisation. Unaware of their existence until this week.*

*infrequent contact*

*the state association doesn't want to have much to do with mixed competitions or comps that aren't affiliated*

*never received any information about sporting bodies in the area.*

Further analysis was undertaken to determine if support was stronger in some sport type groupings as compared with others. Clubs were grouped as follows. Group 1—football, cricket, tennis or netball and Group 2—all others. There were no clear trends between the two groups (Figure 25).

Figure 25 Extent to which sporting groups feel supported by state or regional sporting organisation

