



# Softball WA – 2020 Strategy

June 2016 (Revised May 2017)

# Foreword

The Softball Western Australia (SWA) Board, with great faith, has endorsed this strategic plan to guide the future direction of Softball state-wide until the year 2020.

This plan sets some ambitious goals for the organisation and outlines the main strategies in order to achieve these. At the conclusion of the strategic plan, it is intended that SWA will be in a position to be one of the leaders in all facets of Softball across Australia.

The plan has been written with extensive consultation and collaboration with stakeholders at all levels of the game. The SWA Board would like to acknowledge the contribution of these people in assisting the direction moving forward.

After reading this strategic plan, you will understand SWA's key focus areas for the next four years and the strategic initiatives that will underpin trying to meet the objectives and goals required for Softball in Western Australia to be the best in the country.

## Who are we?

Softball WA is the peak organisation representing Softball in Western Australia. Its main role is to grow the game of softball and provide opportunities for participation at all levels of the game. With assistance of the national association, Softball Australia, Softball WA's primary responsibilities include:

- Promote and advance the sport of softball in Western Australia;
- Provide leadership and assistance to associations and clubs with direction, governance and management of softball;
- Provide opportunities for players to progress along the playing pathway, including management of the WA State Teams;
- Train and build capacity of coaches, umpires and statisticians and support them along the pathway for local, state, national and international representation;
- Represent the sport in the public forum;
- Manage and operate the Mirrabooka International Softball Stadium.

**Between now and 2020 our:**

**Mission: To grow the game of softball and provide opportunities for all.**

**Vision: To create a united softball community throughout the state.**

# State of the game

Recently, Softball WA has undergone a lot of change after enduring financially challenging times in the previous 24 months leading into the development of this plan. Significant investment from the Department of Sport and Recreation and a review of the operations of the organisation was undertaken in 2014/15 that has confidently steered the organisation in the right direction. A result of the review process was a re-structure focusing on member services and participation and development. The results of the re-structure are slowly coming to fruition with a focus toward developing our participants and building capacity within coaches and administrators with activities such as coach the coach sessions, winter development academies and the online registration system.

Softball WA is at an interesting point of its lifecycle, given the recent challenging times, the future opportunities with the products available and the possible re-introduction into the Olympics boosting the profile of our sport. There is a great deal of potential to grow our sport, service our membership better (in-conjunction with Softball Australia) and unite softball state-wide to afford the wider community opportunities to play this fantastic game.

As such, Softball WA has identified five key focus areas to direct its attention over the next four years. The following pages outline the targets and the related strategies to achieve these that we believe will grow the sport and assist achieve the vision of uniting the softball community.

## **Softball WA's Major Challenges:**

- **The likelihood of reduced financial support from government.**
- **Softball competing against other sport and emerging recreational pursuits.**
- **Overall cost on participants.**
- **An ageing state facility and its future undetermined.**
- **Adequately servicing our regional affiliates.**

# Key Focus Area 1: Communication

**Key Objective:** Implement a strategy to effectively listen to, communicate with and engage at all levels of the Softball WA membership and stakeholders.

2020 Targets	Strategies		
	July 2016 – June 2017	July 2017 – June 2019	>July 2019
<p><i>1.1 An informative and user friendly website and social media footprint.</i></p> <p><i>1.2 To visit each affiliated regional association once per calendar year.</i></p> <p><i>1.3 Implement a coordinated system and approach in communicating and engaging with members.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish complete database of members.</li> <li>• Develop an effective strategy for communication between Softball WA and the clubs associations and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Establish an annual member satisfaction survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the current website content and adjust/renew as necessary.</li> <li>• Implement actions within the Communications Strategy.</li> <li>• Identify and take advantage of any marketing opportunities that present themselves.</li> <li>• Using information from the Member Satisfaction Survey, re-visit and implement relevant actions to address issues.</li> <li>• Seek external funding to visit each affiliated regional association once per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to implement actions within the Communications Strategy.</li> <li>• Continue to identify and take advantage of any marketing opportunities that present themselves.</li> <li>• Continue to use information from the Member Satisfaction Survey, re-visit and implement relevant actions to address issues.</li> </ul>

## Key Focus Area 2: Facilities

**Key Objective:** Establish a network of well managed and maintained facilities for softball throughout the state.

2020 Targets	Strategies		
	July 2016 – June 2017	July 2017 – June 2019	>July 2019
<p>2.1 A state-wide database of all facilities where softball is played – current and future.</p> <p>2.2 An Asset Management Plan outlining the true costs to maintain the Mirrabooka International Softball Stadium.</p> <p>2.3 A state-wide facilities plan covering all levels of softball competition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Asset Management Plan that outlines the operational and capital costs to maintain Mirrabooka International Softball Stadium and a strategy to resource them.</li> <li>Establish a state-wide database of all facilities where softball is played.</li> <li>Provide support, guidance and direction to clubs and associations with their facility management / maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm the arrangement between Softball WA and the City of Stirling regarding the future of the Mirrabooka facility.</li> <li>Improve relationships and cooperation through regular contact with facility managers where softball is currently played, as well as those facilities that could service the softball community in the future.</li> <li>Continue to provide support, guidance and direction to clubs and associations with their facility management / maintenance.</li> <li>Develop a business case to seek external funding to create a state-wide facilities plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with 5 separate local governments to ensure that when new facilities are being planned, requirements for softball (e.g. lighting and markings) are considered.</li> <li>Develop a state-wide facilities plan that outlines the various needs to ensure softball can be played socially and competitively.</li> <li>Continue to provide support, guidance and direction to clubs and associations with their facility management / maintenance.</li> </ul>

## Key Focus Area 3: Participation and Development

**Key Objective:** Increased and improved participation in all areas of the sport and ensure all new and existing players, coaches, officials are provided opportunities to develop along their relevant pathway.

2020 Targets	Strategies		
	July 2016 – June 2017	July 2017 – June 2019	>July 2019
<p>Increase the:</p> <p>3.1 Number of members from 3,200 to 5,000.</p> <p>3.2 Percentage of junior members from 16% to 30%.</p> <p>3.3 Number of accredited coaches and officials by 100%.</p> <p>3.4 Number of affiliated members in country regions from 24% to 30%.</p> <p>3.5 Number of people across the state participating in 'participation program's' to 7,500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and implement Participation and Development Plan(s) that outline strategies for participation growth and development of players, coaches and officials.</li> <li>• Develop a calendar of events offering increasingly more activity through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weekend tournaments.</li> <li>○ Inter club or association pennants.</li> <li>○ Specialty events for CaLD, juniors, vets and corporate recreation/social players.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage clubs and associations to leverage upon the following available programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sporting Schools.</li> <li>○ Softball Batter-up.</li> <li>○ Social 7's.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Investigate the establishment of a coaches and officials committee as part of a Board Governance Review.</li> <li>• Encourage Softball WA clubs and associations to work closer with Tee-ball Clubs and Associations in close proximity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to implement Participation and Development(s) Plan.</li> <li>• Continue to review and develop the calendar of events</li> <li>• Continue to encourage clubs and associations to leverage upon available programs.</li> <li>• Act on the results of the investigation to establish a Coaches and Officials Committee.</li> <li>• Establish an agreement with each regional association which clearly outlines the level of funding and or support that Softball WA will provide in the training of their coaches, managers and umpires to a stage as well as other sport, club and facility development needs.</li> <li>• Increase the focus on schools, particularly those that are located nearby to a facility as well as those private schools that are currently involved in softball.</li> <li>• Actively partner with affiliated associations and clubs to deliver Social 7's and Softball Batter-up Programs to the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with the clubs and associations, develop greater understanding of potential markets for the sport and a strategy to access them.</li> <li>• Develop a funding model that will allow Softball WA to re-invest back into grass roots activities that will increase participation.</li> <li>• Leverage off Softball being re-introduced back into the Olympics.</li> </ul>

## Key Focus Area 4: Talent Development

**Key Objective:** Enhance Softball WA's current Talent Development programs by creating external partnerships and providing quality training and competition opportunities for high achieving participants.

2020 Targets	Strategies		
	July 2016 – June 2017	July 2017 – June 2019	>July 2019
<p>4.1 Top 3 finish (at all levels) at national champs by 2020.</p> <p>4.2 Increase the number of regional athletes involved in performance squads and state teams.</p> <p>4.3 A culture of excellence and fair play amongst players and officials to ensure that selection in a state team is a result of hard work and excellent performances.</p> <p>4.4 Increase the number of Coaches, Umpires and Statisticians from WA who have been involved in softball at the National level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate a comprehensive Talent Development pathway for players, coaches and officials that links through to the national HP program.</li> <li>Undertake a review of the current TD activities and develop a TD Action Plan that will develop players and coaches.</li> <li>Continue to collaborate with Edith Cowan University to add value to on and off-field training and development requirements of players and coaches.</li> <li>Establish a Winter Development Academy Programs in both north and south of the Perth Metropolitan area.</li> <li>Improve the quality of coaches at all levels by introducing a suite of coach the coaches programs annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish off-season squad programs for U/15, U/17, U/19 and seniors with a minimum of 20 players in each.</li> <li>Implement TD Action Plan.</li> <li>Establish a pool of talent development coaches to develop the sub elite and elite players with the support of Softball WA.</li> <li>Review the competition structures that support talent development pathways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the TD Action Plan.</li> <li>Continue to support the pool of talent development coaches in their role to develop the sub elite and elite players.</li> <li>Implement the relevant recommendations from the review of the competition structures that support talent development pathways.</li> <li>Develop a strategy where affiliated associations facilitate an Academy Program with the support of Softball WA.</li> </ul>

## Key Focus Area 5: Softball Sustainability

**Key Objective:** Improve the organisational capacity across all of the sport and develop existing and new partnerships to ensure softball is sustainable into the future and can deliver on its plan.

2020 Targets	Strategies		
	July 2016 – June 2017	July 2017 – June 2019	>July 2019
<p>5.1 Increase revenue through sponsorship by 200%.</p> <p>5.2 Develop closer and more positive working relationships with clubs / associations throughout WA.</p> <p>5.3 Implement appropriate levels of governance throughout the sport.</p> <p>5.4 Establish cash reserves to cover for appropriate level of operational expenses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Workforce Development Plan for both the paid and unpaid (volunteer) sections of the softball workforce.</li> <li>Develop guidelines / checklists / procedures for major management functions such as financial planning / event planning etc.</li> <li>Undertake an external Governance Review to the Board of Softball WA.</li> <li>Appoint an Association Coordinator that will support, guide and assist clubs and associations develop their capacity and obtain external grant funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin implementation of the Workforce Development Plan for both the paid and unpaid (volunteer) sections of the softball workforce.</li> <li>Engage additional staff to allow the CEO to focus more on the management and development of the sport and less on the administration of the office.</li> <li>Implement the Action Plan developed from the recommendations of the Softball WA Board Governance Review.</li> <li>Develop and begin implementation of a strategic relationship strategy targeting government, stakeholders and sponsors.</li> <li>Continue to support clubs and associations through training and education in an annual club workshop that is focused on identified needs.</li> <li>Commence the development of a review of the Softball WA Financial Model.</li> <li>Purse affiliation of non-affiliated associations and clubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation of a Workforce Development Plan for both the paid and unpaid (volunteer) sections of the softball workforce.</li> <li>Establish a succession plan for the Board of Softball WA.</li> <li>Continue to implement a strategic relationship strategy targeting government, stakeholders and sponsors</li> </ul>