



School of Human Sciences

## **SportWest's True Sport Program: Delivery, Activities, & Impact**

### **1: OVERALL TRUE SPORT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT**

MARCH 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

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## ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY

This report was prepared by health promotion researchers based at The University of Western Australia (UWA). We wish to begin this document with an acknowledgement that we are extremely fortunate to live and do our work on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar—the land of the Whadjuk people of the proud Noongar nation. We are also mindful that UWA’s campus is situated on sacred and beautiful land—Goordandalup (Crawley Bay), between the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River), Boorloo (Perth), and Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park). Whenever we walk our campus, and whenever we travel out across our breathtaking State, we are grateful for the reminder of the truly special Country upon which we live, play, and do our work.

We pay our deepest respects, and offer our thanks, to Noongar Elders past and present. We value their wisdom, generosity, and guidance in shaping the work that UWA and all health promoters do to connect and improve the lives of Western Australians. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and First Nations Peoples.



*Artist: Dr Richard Barry Walley OAM*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an independent evaluation of SportWest's True Sport Program, examining its delivery, reach, and outcomes across Western Australia's sporting sector. Drawing on sector-wide data, including survey responses from Member Organisations and Advisory Group members, and in-depth interviews with SSA representatives, the evaluation provides insight into how True Sport is supporting cultural change, strengthening organisational capability, and improving knowledge and confidence regarding key issues in community sport. The findings highlight strong adoption of True Sport resources and training, emerging shifts in knowledge and practice across SSAs, and opportunities to continue implementation at the club level and strengthen long-term sustainability.

Key findings include:

- True Sport has achieved substantial sector-wide reach, with 64 SSAs engaged in 2025, collectively representing over 1 million sport participants, members, and volunteers. Engagement spans all WA regions, with 58% metropolitan and 42% regional participation.
- Delivery of education and support has expanded significantly, with 109 workshops and webinars delivered in 2025—a 172% increase from 2024.
- Sector perceptions of True Sport are highly positive. Among Member Organisations, 100% agreed that True Sport improved their confidence to address key issues in sport, and 97% agreed that True Sport is of value and beneficial for the WA sport sector.
- Stakeholders consistently value the quality, accessibility, and breadth of True Sport resources, noting that the coordinated, whole-of-sector approach has improved clarity, consistency, and confidence in addressing key issues such as mental health, safeguarding, and sideline behaviour.
- Connections across the sector have strengthened, with 91% of Member Organisation respondents agreeing that True Sport strengthened connections between their organisation and others (including SportWest). Advisory Group and SportWest staff unanimously agreed that True Sport enhanced sector connections.
- Reach into the broader sporting community is emerging, with 70% of Member Organisation respondents agreeing True Sport has effectively reached clubs, volunteers, and participants—highlighting strong progress as well as the need for continued club-level penetration.
- Policy and process change is occurring, with 50% of Member Organisation respondents reporting their organisation has already updated or developed policies as a result of True

Sport, and a further 24% expecting to do so. Among Advisory Group/SportWest respondents, 33% reported policy change and 50% reported organisational process reforms.

- Adoption challenges exist for smaller or volunteer-run SSAs, who report limited staffing and capacity as barriers to implementing True Sport resources and training. Interviewees emphasised the need, where possible, for phased implementation and simplified toolkits.
- Sustainability remains a key focus, with stakeholders endorsing the importance of continued funding and dedicated staffing. The existing buy-in from SSAs is a positive sign toward sustained integration of True Sport resources in the sector.
- Collectively, the data indicate that True Sport is an exemplar model for supporting, educating, and resourcing SSAs and their beneficiaries—the program is being delivered with strong fidelity and reach, and outcomes (particularly at SSA-level) are noteworthy. There now exists a robust evidence base upon which to recognise and celebrate (within and beyond WA) the achievements of True Sport, and to inform opportunities to further grow the reach and impact of the program.

## BACKGROUND

SportWest is the peak industry body for sport in Western Australia. SportWest exists to promote, strengthen, and advocate for the sports community of Western Australia (WA)—representing more than 130 member organisations and over 5,000 sporting clubs involved in the conduct, administration, promotion, and development of sport and related activities. The organisation works closely with the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (DCITS), and other relevant government agencies. SportWest’s advocacy and support activities include regular communications to members, access to advisory networks, industry relevant projects and key events, and the SportWest Awards. With particular relevance for this evaluation report, SportWest is also leading a host of initiatives designed to future-proof an increasingly complex sporting sector.

There are increased expectations and stressors being placed on sporting volunteers, and those involved in sport provision (e.g., volunteers, state sporting associations) are increasingly being faced with complex and sensitive issues, such as managing child safeguarding and addressing mental health crises / support. These challenges are also occurring against a backdrop of complex regulatory frameworks for community sport delivery, and a pressure and reliance on community sport (and sport clubs and organisations) to ‘solve’ cross-cutting societal issues (e.g., youth development, delinquency, mental illness). The sporting community, therefore, requires consistent messaging and effective resources, training, and ongoing support in order to navigate these challenges.

SportWest’s wide-ranging True Sport Program is designed to provide a comprehensive suite of supports and resources to address these challenges facing the WA sporting community—focused on enhancing sporting experiences, encouraging involvement in community sport, providing safe and engaging sport opportunities, and building the capacity of WA’s sporting sector and organisations. True Sport initiatives are wide-ranging in their focus, and are built to be responsive to sport, club, and community needs. Established True Sport initiatives include a framework for mental health and wellbeing support in WA sporting organisations, a package of resources to support pro-social sideline behaviours, and guidelines and practical materials to support child safeguarding in WA sport. In late 2025, a fourth Initiative—Respectful Relationships—was rolled out in partnership with Starick, a Western Australian family violence charity. This Initiative includes a suite of resources and training to support clubs and organisations foster an environment that is safe, respectful, and inclusive for the whole community. With DCITS funding for True Sport currently to mid-2027, SportWest aims to embed these existing initiatives across WA State Sporting Associations, grow the impact evidence for these Initiatives, and introduce new complementary initiatives in response to community needs. The True

Sport initiatives vary in terms of their target populations, intended scope and reach, delivery methods, and resource requirements—they are, however, consistent in their focus on one or more of the following activities:

- Developing new resources, services, platforms, technology and tools, training, or other materials for the WA sport community
- Delivering training and other practical strategies to target groups within the WA sport community
- Promoting change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, improving reach and organisational capacity, and ensuring sustainability of initiatives, outcomes, and impact in the WA sport community
- Supporting connections between WA sport organisations and other community services, and the provision of ongoing and bespoke support for members of the WA sport community

#### **TRUE SPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVE**

This Initiative, formally launched in October 2023, involves the development and delivery of a suite of resources to support the implementation of SportWest’s [Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Sport Framework](#). The Framework was developed in partnership with Healthway, the WA Association for Mental Health, the Mental Health Commission, DCITS, and the WA Local Government Association. The Initiative focuses on providing SSA employees (and secondarily, clubs) with resources and training designed to support positive change in culture and environment, increased mental health literacy, closer links with local support services, and improved confidence and knowledge in responding to critical mental health incidents. Activities (e.g., education, resources, materials) delivered or made available as part of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Initiative include:

- **Online resource hub:** Various web-based resources, including (a) a Sport Administrator Toolkit consisting of online resources (e.g., posters, templates, tipsheets) for SSA staff, (b) a Club & Community Toolkit (e.g., posters, templates, tipsheets) for community sporting volunteers and club members, (c) a Critical Incident Toolkit comprising templates, guides, and tipsheets for sporting organisations to use in response to a critical incident, (d) a Community Mental Health Directory offering service provider information and links for the sporting community, and (e) other web resources including an eNewsletter and an online video library.
- **Online learning (eLearning):** An online training platform and series of modules designed to upskill sport administrators’, club members’ and volunteers’ mental health literacy, and their capacity to address incidents and promote mental health and wellbeing in sport.

- **Face-to-face workshops:** Full-day and half-day training options—depending on SSA size and capability for intensive training in mental health—focused on creating Mental Health Champions in SSAs. The workshops also further develop the skills taught in the eLearning modules.
- **Mental Health Champions Network:** Dedicated SSA employees who receive education and resources above, and who are responsible for championing, embedding, and promoting the mental health and wellbeing information within their SSA. SportWest also facilitates a Mental Health Champions Network to encourage support and information sharing across SSA member organisations.
- **Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programs:** Mental health and wellbeing counselling for SSA staff and community club volunteers who have experienced a critical incident or require wellbeing support. These assistance programs are delivered by Access Wellbeing Services in partnership with SportWest.

#### **TRUE SPORT CHILD SAFEGUARDING INITIATIVE**

Formally launched in October 2023, this Initiative consists of resources to assist SSAs in actioning the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Child Safeguarding resources were developed in consultation with eSafety, WA Police, Department of Communities, Working with Children Screening Unit, WA Local Government Association, VenuesWest, DCITS, Commissioner for Children and Young People, and a number of SSAs. The Initiative focuses on providing resources to SSA staff to develop their understanding of child safeguarding reporting responsibilities, develop an action plan to implement each of the National Principles, and guide SSAs through developing child safety codes of conduct. Activities (e.g., education, resources, materials) delivered or made available as part of the Child Safeguarding Initiative include:

- **Online resource hub:** Various web-based resources, including (a) fact sheets for each National Principle for Child Safe Organisations, (b) a self-assessment tool for SSAs to determine alignment with each National Principle, (c) action plan templates to support SSAs in implementing the National Principles, (d) a reporting flowchart of how and where to report suspicions of, or disclosures from, a child or young person who is at risk of harm, and (e) national and community resource links.
- **Workshops and forums:** Face-to-face workshops for SSA staff delivered in partnership with Sport Integrity Australia and the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport. These workshops are focused on a range of topics related to integrity and safeguarding in the sport sector.

### TRUE SPORT SIDELINE BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVE

Relaunched in March 2024, the Sideline Behaviour Initiative promotes the notion that everyone should feel safe and comfortable participating in sport. The Initiative, developed in consultation with Club Respect, DCITS, and select SSAs, focuses on promoting positive sportspersonship and respectful behaviour among sport participants (spectators, coaches, players). Activities (e.g., education, resources, materials) delivered or made available as part of the Child Safeguarding Initiative include:

- **Marketing campaign:** A promotional video and athlete endorsement to spread awareness of the SportWest’s message that there is no place for poor sideline behaviour in sport.
- **Online resource hub:** Various web-based resources, including (a) posters, templates, and graphics for SSAs and clubs to use to promote the campaign message, and (b) resources developed by Club Respect that outline action plans for each role (e.g., player, coach, parent) in sport.

### TRUE SPORT RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTURAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Additional initiatives have been developed or are currently in development. The Respectful Relationships Initiative, launched in September 2025, focuses on fostering safe and respectful sporting environments, specifically prioritising gender equality and preventing violence against women. This Initiative consists of e-learning modules, workshops, webinars, and resources developed and delivered in partnership with Starick. The Cultural Education Initiative has not yet launched. The development of this Initiative, which aims to foster welcoming, inclusive, and culturally aware and appropriate sporting environments, is being guided by the SportWest Cultural Navigation Advisory Group. Given that these initiatives have only recently launched (or are yet to launch) as part of the True Sport program, there has been insufficient opportunity to embed them into the WA sport sector. Consequently, detailed evaluation activity has not been carried out for the True Sport Respectful Relationships and Cultural Education initiatives—although, where relevant information on Respectful Relationships is available (e.g., delivery of workshops), we have included it in this report.

### PROJECT EVALUATION

SportWest is committed to ensuring that True Sport initiatives are developed and evaluated using consistent evaluation principles, objectives, and activities. True Sport is multi-faceted, ambitious, and a first-of-its-kind investment for Australian community sport. In order to determine the impact, feasibility, and sustainability of True Sport and all of its initiatives, there is a need for well-considered

and proactive evaluation planning and activity. Rigorous evaluation activity is responsible, among other things, for:

- Facilitating decision-making about investments, resource allocation, and priority initiatives
- Supporting growth in organisational capacity
- Enhancing accountability and funding potential
- Reporting against funders' requirements
- Articulating (“storytelling” about) project outcomes and reach for community and government stakeholders
- Providing a strong, evidence-based platform for demonstrating reach, community impact, and sustainability (Fynn et al., 2020; Kozica et al., 2014)

Without rigorous evaluation at key stages during a project, it is difficult to (a) document project delivery and process information, (b) understand implementation successes and challenges, (c) decide how and when to collect process and impact evidence, and (d) identify how and when to modify and/or scale-up an initiative or brand (Kozica et al., 2014; Schwarzman et al., 2020). Evaluation planning and activity for True Sport as a whole (referred to here as ‘the True Sport Program’ or ‘True Sport brand’) was driven by an evaluation framework designed specifically for the activities and intended outcomes of True Sport. This Framework was developed in consultation with SportWest. For the individual initiatives of True Sport (Mental Health & Wellbeing, Child Safeguarding, and Sideline Behaviour), the Healthway Evaluation Framework was used to guide evaluation planning and activity (see accompanying reports #2, 3, & 4).

#### THE TRUE SPORT BRAND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework (see below) is intended to guide evaluation planning and activity relating to the overarching True Sport brand. This Framework was deliberately designed to align, where possible, with the Healthway Evaluation Framework. The widespread use of the Healthway framework across sport and community organisations in WA, including specifically for evaluation of each of True Sport’s initiatives (see reports #2, 3, & 4 for relevant coverage), ensures relevant alignment between the True Sport brand, initiatives, and the wider sector. The True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework is illustrated below, followed by a description of each indicator.

Figure 1. True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, & BEHAVIOUR	ORGANISATIONAL	SUSTAINABILITY
Knowledge & attitudes	Reach & mission	Partnerships
Trust & support	Capacity	Policy
Sport participation	Volunteering	Structural change


The Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour Pillar of the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework captures any social, perceptual (e.g., trust, awareness), participatory, or sport experience outcomes resulting from work within the True Sport Brand. Assessment of the elements within this Pillar may be focused on organisational staff, club staff and volunteers, and/or sport participants. This Pillar of the Evaluation Framework includes three elements:

- Knowledge and attitudes: Awareness of and attitudes toward the True Sport brand, knowledge about the True Sport brand, and confidence in the True Sport brand
- Trust and support: Perceptions of trust and support regarding the True Sport brand (e.g., with respect to its role in supporting engagement, cooperation, and the sport experience)
- Sport participation: Changes in participation and quality of sport experiences arising from the True Sport brand

The Organisational Pillar of the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework focuses on the outcomes of the brand for SportWest, SSAs, and Clubs. Assessment of the elements within this Pillar provide insight into the impact of True Sport activities on organisational reach, mission, capacity, and people. This Pillar of the Evaluation Framework includes three elements:

- Reach and mission: The effectiveness of True Sport as a central resource and support platform for all sport statewide (including reach into priority populations, and contribution to advancing SportWest’s strategic plan and mission)
- Capacity: The short-, medium-, and longer-term changes to organisational capacity arising from True Sport (e.g., staffing, capacity for project delivery, evaluation)—including capacity within SportWest and other partner organisations
- Volunteering: The effectiveness of True Sport in improving volunteer capacity, participation, and satisfaction

The Sustainability Pillar of the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework focuses on the elements that support (or limit) the sustainability of the True Sport brand across WA sport. Assessment of the elements within this Pillar provide insight into the ways through which sustainability may be achieved and will help identify strategies to support (as well as barriers that may limit) sustainability. This Pillar of the Evaluation Framework includes the following three elements:

- Partnerships: The quality and nature of partnerships with external organisations that are necessary to support, fund, or sustain True Sport
  - Policy: Development, implementation, and sustainability of any (internal, SSA, or Club) policy change resulting directly or indirectly from True Sport
  - Structural change: Physical, structural, organisational, and any other changes that contribute to True Sport sustainability and objectives
- 

## EVALUATION SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

This evaluation report provides insight for SportWest and relevant stakeholders into the implementation and outcomes of the True Sport Program. A detailed measurement plan was developed focused on obtaining insight into True Sport's key activities and outcomes, and also (through surveys and qualitative interviews) to understand SSA members' experiences of True Sport and identify recommendations for ongoing implementation. Our specific objectives for this report were:

- To gather together all **reach and delivery** elements of the True Sport Program, including recommendations for future implementation.
- To understand, from all relevant stakeholders, the **outcomes** associated with the True Sport Program overall (*note: for clarity, we report on outcomes of each Initiative separately within reports #2, 3, & 4—in this report, we cover all True Sport activities and brand-level perceptions / outcomes*).

Please note that for this stage of evaluation, we have not collected data on the Respectful Relationships Initiative. The Respectful Relationships Initiative, developed in partnership with Starick, was launched in August 2025—more time is required to allow the Initiative to be fully embedded within SSAs before assessing these perceptions among SSA staff. We recommend doing so as part of the 2026 True Sport standard measurement set. However, where relevant information on Respectful Relationships has been collected by SportWest and is available (e.g., delivery of workshops), we have included it in this report.

## METHODS

In this section, we outline the methods used to collect data related to the evaluation of the True Sport Program as a whole. Additional data collection for initiative-by-initiative impact indicators are detailed in their respective reports. We provide an overview of key details below—for full survey packs and interview schedule, please contact a representative from the UWA evaluation team.

### REACH AND DELIVERY

Reach and delivery data were collected by SportWest as a matter of course throughout the implementation of the True Sport Program. In this report, data included the type and number of activities delivered and the number of organisations and participants directly engaged in the program—including interaction with online resources, and engagement in eLearning and workshops. These data were provided to UWA by SportWest and are reported as received.

Additional insight into the implementation of True Sport was gathered through qualitative interviews. Recruitment of appropriate (i.e., ‘information rich’) participants from SSAs was coordinated by the UWA team in collaboration with SportWest. Recruitment efforts were targeted at accessing a range of experiences, a range of roles within SSAs, and to achieve broad coverage of SSAs in terms of size, capacity, and level of engagement with the Initiative. The sample size for the qualitative interviews was determined based on a pragmatic approach given restrictions that impact data collection (e.g., time, time of year, access). Although all efforts were made to capture a diversity of experiences, we do not claim to have captured *all* experiences and perspectives when ceasing data collection. In this instance, interviews were conducted with nine participants, between November 2025 and February 2026. Interviews were conducted and recorded using the Microsoft Teams videoconferencing platform, and lasted an average of 27 minutes.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to provide interview participants with flexibility to discuss their experiences within the broad aims of this component of the work. Questions were formulated, discussed, and refined in consultation with SportWest / True Sport staff members. And, several prompts for additional detail or clarification were used to support all questions (Ritchie et al., 2013). The key questions in the interview designed to prompt discussion of the delivery and implementation of True Sport were:

- “In what ways has your organisation implemented or promoted True Sport initiatives?”
- “...What has made implementation easier?”

- “...What barriers or challenges have you encountered?”

Other interview questions were used to capture Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour, Organisational, and Sustainability outcomes (see below).

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

To assess relevant outcomes from the True Sport Program, two surveys were developed in consultation with SportWest. These surveys were delivered to (1) staff from SportWest Member Organisations (e.g., SSAs, peak bodies, other government and non-government organisations) and (2) members of the True Sport Advisory Group and SportWest staff. Participants were provided with a link to the online survey that corresponded to their stakeholder group. These surveys were developed to assess stakeholders’ perceptions about the effectiveness of the True Sport program as a whole—against key indicators from the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework (see page 11).

These questions were asked at a single point in time and following prior engagement with the Program. As such, questions in these surveys relating to Program outcomes were asked directly using ‘change-focused’ language to identify the contribution of the Program to those outcomes (e.g., “True Sport has improved my...”). After providing demographic information (e.g., gender, age, organisation and role, time in sector), participants in both surveys were asked to provide their perceptions of overall quality of the True Sport Program (e.g., perception about value to the sector, satisfaction with the program) and perceptions of True Sport’s effectiveness against individual (e.g., confidence in managing key issues in sport), organisational (e.g., organisation’s capacity to address key issues in sport), and sustainability (e.g., connections between organisations) outcomes. The Advisory Group / SportWest staff survey also contained items related to the impact of True Sport on SportWest’s health promotion capacity and the sustainability of True Sport including policy change, partnerships, and structural reforms. Survey responses were scored on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale, where higher scores represented more positive perceptions. Throughout the survey, opportunities to provide open-ended feedback on True Sport and its initiatives were provided.

In line with data collection for reach and delivery, we also included questions in our qualitative interviews that gathered stakeholders’ perceptions of the effectiveness of True Sport, and recommendations to improve (or maintain) effectiveness in the future. The key questions in the interview designed to prompt discussion of the effectiveness of True Sport were:

- “How would you describe the True Sport ‘brand’ and its value or purpose in WA sport?”

- “How has involvement with True Sport influenced your organisation’s policies, planning, or culture?”
- “Looking ahead, what elements of True Sport are most valuable to continue or expand?”
- “Overall, what has been the biggest impact of True Sport for your sport or for you personally?”

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative survey data analysis was conducted using SPSS v25. Basic descriptive statistics were generated to determine the prevalence of responses across all items. Survey responses were analysed to identify levels of agreement with individual items and to derive mean and standard deviation scores for all items and multi-item variables. We make inferences about delivery and impact on the basis of frequency and descriptive data. For open-ended survey questions, we present example responses and provide a brief summary of key themes.

Interview data analysis involved a rigorous thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2022). This analysis process involves a detailed method of constant comparison and note-taking. This process is well-established in the qualitative literature (see Braun & Clarke, 2023) and results in a set of coherent themes that are suitable for reporting purposes. These themes are mapped against the objectives of the interviews, and describe participants’ experiences during the delivery of True Sport, engagement with the various resources and activities within True Sport, practical outcomes within their organisation arising from the Initiative, and recommendations for ongoing delivery. We provide an overview of each theme, and we present several participant quotes to provide illustration of themes in participants’ own words. All names and any other identifiers have been changed to protect anonymity.

## SURVEY RESULTS

In this section, we present quantitative and open-ended survey data aligned with the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework. We present detailed analysis of the reach of True Sport’s resources and activities, and the effectiveness and quality of the True Sport Program as a whole—as reported by staff from SportWest’s Member Organisations, True Sport Advisory group members, and True Sport (SportWest) staff. Open-ended feedback offers key insights regarding policy and capacity changes, implementation considerations, and general feedback about the True Sport Program. Demographic information of the respondents to the Member Organisation survey and Advisory Group / SportWest staff survey are also presented. For detailed insight into Initiative-specific outcomes for the Mental Health & Wellbeing, Child Safeguarding, and Sideline Behaviour Initiatives, see *Evaluation Reports #2, 3, & 4*.

### REACH & DELIVERY

Below we detail the reach and delivery of activities delivered and resources provided within True Sport. The findings detail all activities and resources delivered across True Sport’s initiatives, and describe the number and type (where available) of participants who accessed or completed these elements. The data presented in this section were recorded by SportWest across the length of the project and provided to the external evaluation team (UWA). In 2025:

- 64 SSAs engaged in True Sport program and resources—collectively, these SSAs represent over 1 million sport participants, members, and volunteers.
- Across the various True Sport initiatives, 109 workshops and webinars were delivered—a 172% increase from 2024.
- True Sport was delivered across all WA regions, with 58% of participants in the Perth Metropolitan Area and 42% in Regional WA.
- Feasibility testing of the Mediation & Dispute Resolution Service was launched, with a Steering Group established to guide its scope and jurisdiction.
- The Cultural Navigation Advisory Group was established, as well as the appointment of a Cultural Navigation Lead. Cultural Immersion and eLearning pilot training has been delivered.
- SportWest’s True Sport team were represented in over 20 advocacy and working groups across child safety, mental health, and inclusion, ensuring visibility of the True Sport program in policy and advocacy discussions across the state.

- A survey of over 500 Western Australian parents was conducted in partnership with The University of Western Australia. The findings from this survey offer insight into parents' thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding their children's involvement in sport, and allow for the development of additional True Sport resources tailored to their needs.
- The Respectful Relationships Initiative was launched, with 15 SSAs already engaged.
- The Sideline Behaviour campaign and eToolkit were re-launched, with 92 sports sharing the campaign video to their community.
- Two new eLearning courses—"Mental Health & Wellbeing Club & Community Awareness" and "Respectful Relationships"—were launched.

### **ELEARNING AND WORKSHOPS**

Since launching in Sept 2023, eLearning courses have been started 194 times (81 completions; 42% completion rate). It is worth noting that these data include cases where an individual completed a course multiple times (for example, if they moved to a new role at a new sport) and where an organisation might have used one individual's login for multiple accesses to the course. Since the start of 2025, there have been 70 signups to the eLearning courses, with a lower completion rate (29%). This low completion rate appears to be, in part, due to some former participants restarting a course without completing it (for example, accessing portions only as a refresher). Since its introduction in July 2025, the Respectful Relationships eLearning course has had 19 signups—in the same time period, the Mental Health & Wellbeing Sport Administrator Awareness course has had 23 signups. More recently (November 2025), the Mental Health & Wellbeing Club & Community Awareness course was rolled out, with 10 signups to date. Not including the 30 participants who responded with 'other', 37 unique organisations were represented in engaging with the eLearning courses. Since February 2024, 87 workshops on Mental Health, Child Safeguarding, Sideline Behaviour and Respectful Relationships have been delivered to approximately 3151 participants.

### **ONLINE RESOURCE HUB**

Since its launch in October 2023 to February 2026, the landing page of the Online Resource Hub has been interacted with 15,222 times. In this time period, the event counts (i.e., 'interactions') for the landing pages of True Sport's initiatives were:

- Mental Health & Wellbeing: 6,315

- Child Safeguarding: 5,321
- Sideline Behaviour: 8,379

The Employee / Volunteer Assistance Program received more site visits than any other specific True Sport resource (i.e., outside of the home page, the initiative landing pages, and the events and about page), with 3,156 website interactions. Other data on resource usage were difficult to ascertain, due to many of the Online Resource Hub's materials being directly downloadable (and therefore not tracked once a user downloads a resource).

### **REACH AND DELIVERY: OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK**

Participants described their adoption of True Sport within their own organisations and indicated that awareness of True Sport has improved, highlighted the challenges with awareness and adoption within smaller SSAs, and recommended SportWest further develop practical templates and frameworks to support easy integration and implementation of True sport (particularly in under-resourced SSAs). Additionally, many participants suggested that increased staffing and resources would allow True Sport to increase its impact on the sport sector through additional education provision, greater reach, and more hands-on engagement. Some recommendations for specific additions or modifications to True Sport's offerings to improve reach and adoption were provided, including (a) phased implementation of initiatives, (b) greater focus on inclusion and disability, (c) simplified digital toolkits, (d) awareness-raising of initiatives at the club level, and (e) additional, targeted workshops for clubs.

*“Awareness of the True Sport program and its offerings has definitely grown. Most key State Sporting Associations (SSAs) are now familiar with the program and have engaged with it in some capacity. However, engagement becomes more challenging with smaller SSAs, particularly those run by volunteers or a single staff member. These organisations often have limited capacity, which can make it harder for them to actively participate in or implement True Sport initiatives.”*

*“Capacity within SSAs is a barrier to full adoption of True Sport initiatives.”*

*“Continued awareness raising of the resources. How do we know clubs / the sporting community are accessing the resources and how measurable is it? I would love to see more clubs / SSAs pledge.”*

*“A more structured or phased implementation of key initiatives would be beneficial, so that clubs and associations can adopt changes gradually without overwhelming staff and volunteers. Additionally, greater focus on people with disability is critical, given that approximately one in five Western Australians has a disability, resources, guidance, and programs should explicitly support inclusion and accessibility in sport.”*

*“For our purposes, a calendar of the opportunities and workshops [is desired]. We would love to engage more of our members (particularly regional members), and a greater lead time would help this.”*

## TRUE SPORT PROGRAM IMPACT & OUTCOMES

Below we present detailed analysis of the effectiveness and quality of the True Sport Program as a whole, as reported in surveys completed by staff members of State Sporting Associations (SSAs) and other Member Organisations. Findings detail the collective impact of all of the resources, activities, and education across all initiatives that form the True Sport Program. Responses to open-ended survey questions are also provided.

Survey data from the Member Organisation Survey were collected from 41 individuals representing 32 SSAs or 8 other SportWest Member Organisations (one participant did not specify). All participants had accessed at least one of the True Sport initiatives resources or activities. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of participants who responded to the Member Organisation survey. Data were collected from 12 individuals (50% female) in the Advisory Group / SportWest staff survey, 10 of whom were members of the True Sport Advisory Group and 2 of whom were SportWest staff employed in a role that involves management of the True Sport program. The mean age of these respondents was 41.80 years (SD = 10.13, range 27-60 years), with a mean time in the sport sector of 13.92 years (SD = 6.71, range 3-30 years).

Perceptions of the impact of the True Sport program were highly positive. Among Member Organisations, 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that True Sport improved their confidence to address key issues in sport, and 97% believed it was beneficial for sport organisations and the sector in WA. 82% felt True Sport had reached the appropriate people within their organisation, and 70% believed it had effectively reached the broader sporting community. Advisory Group and SportWest staff responses were similarly strong, with all (100%) respondents agreeing that True Sport improved sport experiences in WA, strengthened SSA support for clubs, enhanced connections between SportWest and SSAs, and made a meaningful contribution to the sector. However, consistent with findings across individual initiatives (see reports #2-4), perceptions of long-term sustainability without continued funding and external support were more cautious. A full description of these findings is available in Tables 2 and 3.

We also asked participants to indicate whether their organisation had made any policy or process changes as a result of engaging with True Sport. Out of 34 Member Organisation survey respondents, 17 (50%) indicated that their organisation had developed or updated policies related to key issues in the sport

sector, and a further 8 (24%) indicated 'not yet' but that future changes were realistically expected (7, or 21%, responded 'no', and 2, or 6%, were not sure). Out of 12 Advisory Group / SportWest survey respondents, 4 (33%) indicated that their organisation had developed or updated policies, and a further 2 (17%) responded not yet but that future changes are realistically expected; 4 (33%) responded 'no', 2 (17%) were not sure. Additionally, 6 (50%) respondents indicated that their organisation had made changes or reforms to their organisational processes, and a further 2 (17%) believed that although changes had not yet occurred, it could be reasonably expected; 2 (17%) indicated that there had been no organisational reforms, 2 (17%) were not sure.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents to the Member Organisation Survey.

<b>Age (years)</b>	
Mean (SD); range	44.94 (13.30); 22-73
<b>Gender</b>	<b>(n = 40)</b>
Male	13 (33%)
Female	26 (63%)
Prefer not to say	1 (3%)
<b>Role at SSA</b>	<b>(n = 41)</b>
Community and Club Development	8 (20%)
Executive (incl. Board, 'General Manager' roles)	16 (39%)
Participation, Diversity, and Inclusion	4 (10%)
Administration and Operations	4 (10%)
Other (e.g., volunteer, events, regional programs)	6 (15%)
Did not specify	3 (7%)
<b>Time employed in organisation (years)</b>	
Mean (SD); range	6.12 (6.71); 0.3–30
<b>Time in sport sector (years)</b>	
Mean (SD); range	12.90 (10.01); 0.3–40
<b>True Sport Initiatives aware of (note: participants could select more than one)</b>	
Mental Health & Wellbeing	37 (93%)
Child Safeguarding	39 (98%)
Sideline Behaviour	37 (93%)
Respectful Relationships	34 (85%)
<b>True Sport Initiatives engaged with (note: participants could select more than one)</b>	
Mental Health & Wellbeing	35 (88%)
Child Safeguarding	35 (88%)
Sideline Behaviour	28 (70%)
Respectful Relationships	24 (60%)

Note. Sample size varied as some participants opted not to answer some questions about themselves.

Table 2. Perceptions of True Sport—Member Organisation survey mean scores and percentages

Survey Question	Mean score (SD) ( <i>n</i> = 33)	Percentage “agree” or “strongly agree”
1. True Sport has improved my and my colleagues’ confidence to address key issues in the sport sector (e.g., mental health, safeguarding, sideline behaviour)	4.6 (0.5)	100%
2. True Sport has contributed to building our organisation’s capacity to manage key issues in the sport sector	4.3 (1.1)	82%
3. True Sport has strengthened connections between our organisation and others in the sport sector (including SportWest)	4.5 (0.9)^	91%
4. Overall, True Sport has reached and engaged the appropriate people in our organisation	4.3 (1.0)^	82%
5. True Sport has effectively reached our sporting community (our clubs, volunteers, and participants)	3.8 (1.2)	70%
6. Overall, I am satisfied with True Sport for sport in WA	4.5 (0.9)	88%
7. Overall, I believe True Sport is of value for the sport sector in WA	4.7 (0.8)^	97%
8. Overall, I believe True Sport is beneficial for sporting associations in WA	4.7 (0.8)^	97%

Note. ^ denotes *n* = 34. Mean score possible range from 1 to 5, where higher scores indicate more positive perceptions. SD = standard deviation (where larger scores indicate greater spread of responses). “Percentage” column indicates the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the survey question—often used as a good marker of overall positivity about the survey item. Questions 1-3 = ratings against organisational and sustainability objectives. Questions 4-8 = perceptions about reach, resource value and satisfaction with the Program.

Table 3. Perceptions of True Sport—Advisory Group / SportWest staff survey mean scores and percentages

Survey Question	Mean score (SD) (n = 12)	Percentage “agree” or “strongly agree”
1. True Sport has improved the capacity of State Sporting Organisations (SSAs) to address key issues in the sector (e.g., mental health, safeguarding, sideline behaviour)	4.7 (0.7)	92%
2. True Sport has improved our organisation's confidence to address key issues in the sector	4.7 (0.5)	100%
3. Overall, True Sport has been delivered as intended	4.5 (0.7)	92%
4. SportWest's intended targets (SSAs) have adopted and delivered True Sport initiatives as intended	4.3 (0.7)	92%
5. True Sport has effectively reached our sporting community beyond SSAs (clubs, volunteers, and participants)	4.1 (0.8)	92%
6. I think the True Sport initiative makes a strong contribution to sport in WA	5.0 (0)	100%
7. SSAs provide better support for their clubs and people because of True Sport	4.8 (0.5)	100%
8. True Sport has improved people's sport experiences in WA	4.7 (0.5)	100%
9. True Sport has strengthened connections between SportWest and SSAs	4.9 (0.3)	100%
10. It is possible for SportWest to deliver True Sport beyond the current funding period (beyond 2027)	3.5 (1.7)	58%
11. SportWest is able to deliver True Sport without significant SSA support	1.9 (0.9)	8%
12. I am confident that funding partner organisations will provide the support necessary to sustain True Sport in the medium-to-long-term	3.5 (0.9)	58%

Note. Mean score possible range from 1 to 5, where higher scores indicate more positive perceptions. SD = standard deviation (where larger scores indicate greater spread of responses). “Percentage” column indicates the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the survey question—often used as a good marker of overall positivity about the survey item. Questions 1 and 2 = ratings against organisational objectives. Questions 3 to 8 = perceptions about resource value, fidelity, and reach. Questions 9 to 12 = ratings against sustainability objectives.

We also asked Advisory Group members and SportWest staff to report the extent to which True Sport had impacted organisational outcomes, both within SportWest and within the respondents' organisations. All 12 participants believed True Sport had generated a moderate or large increase to the knowledge of their organisation's staff on the delivery of health promotion initiatives, and awareness within the sport sector of key issues covered in the True Sport program. Perceptions of change to SportWest's organisational capacity, partnerships, and policies were all positive (100% "moderate" or "large" increase), although there were more mixed perceptions of change to participant organisation's outcomes. Please note that the number of respondents to these items varied, and therefore these findings are to be interpreted cautiously given the smaller number of participants who responded to each item—a full description of findings is available in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Perceptions of Advisory Group / SportWest staff on impact of True Sport on SportWest's organisational capacity

Survey Question	Mean score (SD) (n = 6)	Percentage "moderate" or "large" increase
1. As a result of True Sport, please indicate the change to SportWest's capacity to deliver effective health promotion initiatives	5.0 (0)	100%
2. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to SportWest's commitment to promoting health in the community	5.0 (0)	100%
3. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to SportWest's health promotion partnerships and collaboration with external agencies	5.0 (0)	100%
4. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to SportWest's capacity to introduce health-related policies	4.6 (0.5)	100%

Note. Mean score possible range from 1 (a large decrease) to 5 (a large increase), where higher scores indicate more greater perceived change. SD = standard deviation (where larger scores indicate greater spread of responses).

Table 5. Perceptions of Advisory Group / SportWest staff on impact of True Sport on participant organisation's capacity

Survey Question	Mean score (SD) (n = 6)	Percentage "moderate" or "large" increase
1. As a result of True Sport, please indicate the change to your organisation's capacity to deliver effective health promotion initiatives	4.2 (0.8)	83%
2. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to your organisation's commitment to promoting health in the community	4.3 (0.8)	83%
3. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to your organisation's health promotion partnerships and collaboration with external agencies	3.7 (1.0)	33%
4. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to organisation's capacity to introduce health-related policies	4.0 (0.9)	67%
5. Through True Sport, please indicate the change to the knowledge of your organisation's staff regarding the delivery of health promotion initiatives	4.7 (0.5) <sup>^</sup>	100%
6. Please indicate the change in awareness within the sport sector on key True Sport issues (mental health and wellbeing, child safeguarding, sideline behaviour)	4.9 (0.3) <sup>^</sup>	100%

Note. <sup>^</sup> denotes n = 12. Mean score possible range from 1 (a large decrease) to 5 (a large increase), where higher scores indicate more greater change. SD = standard deviation (where larger scores indicate greater spread of responses).

## OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

Participants were also asked to describe any organisational policy changes as a result of True Sport, the most valuable contribution of True Sport, recommendations for improvements or changes, and any additional details on the outcomes of True Sport not covered in the other questions. A summary of these findings, with example quotes from participants, is presented below.

### *CHANGES TO ORGANISATION POLICIES AND STRUCTURE*

Across Member Organisation and Advisory Group responses, True Sport was associated with policy development and strengthened organisational structures, particularly in relation to Mental Health & Wellbeing and Child Safeguarding. Many Member Organisation staff reported developing or updating formal documentation—including mental health policies, critical incident communication plans, and safeguarding frameworks—alongside broader embedding of True Sport principles within organisational practices. A small number also indicated the creation of new roles to oversee Mental Health & Wellbeing or Child Safeguarding/integrity. Advisory Group feedback similarly noted policy changes and the introduction of additional roles, although limited detail was provided.

*“We now have a mental health champion within our office and used the Communication template for our office and our clubs.”*

*“Updated our Critical Incident Communication Plan and our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.”*

*“Since adopting True Sport, we’ve updated our codes of conduct, inclusion policy and community standards to align with its principles.”*

### *CONTRIBUTION TO SPORT IN WA*

Participants consistently identified the practicality, accessibility, and quality of True Sport’s resources as its most valuable contribution to the sport sector in WA. The program was described as a centralised and trusted source of support on complex issues, offering readily available online resources, toolkits, workshops, campaigns, ad hoc guidance, and VAP/EAP support. Importantly, all of the Initiatives were referenced by at least one respondent as the “most valuable” component, reinforcing the strength of True Sport’s multi-modal delivery approach. Beyond individual resources, True Sport was seen to

foster a more unified and collaborative sector, providing SSAs with a common language, shared values, and stronger networks to collectively address key issues in WA sport.

*“...attending the True Sport events has allowed us to network, validate our processes and approaches, and strengthen our confidence in key topics. The Mental Health First Aid workshop was particularly impactful for me personally and will now be incorporated as a mandatory component of our staff professional development program.”*

*“It has provided guidance, clarity and direction for sports that possibly did not have the support of a national body or dedicated resources to attribute to some of the areas and topics that True Sport has addressed.”*

*“Sector wide resources, workshops and support. We simply wouldn’t have the Human Resources or expertise to develop ourselves.”*

*“The clear, shared framework for values-driven sport. True Sport gives WA clubs a common language and practical tools for integrity, safety, and inclusion, making it easier to set expectations, build positive culture, and align policies across the system.”*

*“Easily accessible resources to sporting clubs - previously communications would only go to the club president or selected contacts whereas now information and campaigns like sideline behaviour are seen by parents, coaches etc.”*

#### **ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK**

Additional comments from Member Organisation and Advisory Group / SportWest staff respondents reinforced the extremely positive perceptions of True Sport’s impact, leadership, and sector contribution. Member Organisation staff frequently used this section to commend the quality, accessibility, and readiness of the resources across all initiatives, describing the program as significantly increasing organisational capacity and providing sport-specific content that is practical and easy to use. Advisory Group members similarly characterised True Sport as having a substantial and profound impact on WA sport, particularly through consistent messaging, high-quality resources, and initiatives on complex issues in the sport sector. True Sport was seen to promote safer, fairer, and more inclusive environments while strengthening governance and uniting the sector around shared

values, although some noted that cultural change takes time and that club-level impact is currently difficult to measure. Sustainability was consistently linked to continued government funding, stable resourcing, and strong alignment between funders, SportWest, and SSAs. While the current suite of initiatives was viewed as manageable within existing staffing, expansion would require additional resourcing to maintain quality and support. Suggestions to strengthen long-term sustainability included embedding True Sport within governance, funding, and accreditation frameworks, alongside continued sector education and leadership support. Overall, comments were largely complimentary, with a shared desire to see the program continue, grow, and further raise awareness across WA sport. Example quotes from participants are presented below.

*“The range of resources provided by the SportWest True Sport programs are truly exceptional... I have never seen a package that has been this well developed and ready to be sent to club level without additional enhancement. This applies to all of the True Sport initiatives including Sideline Behaviour, Child Safeguarding, and Respectful Relationships.”*

*“The True Sport program is a true testament to what we have [been] needing in the sport and rec industry for a long time. It provides sport related content which isn't scary to use and it's easily understandable.”*

*“True sport is a great resource for sport in WA, and has significantly increased the capacity of organisations to fulfill the role of community sport.”*

*“Changing culture takes time. True Sport has made significant inroads in the past 2 years to positively influence the WA sport sector. It is uniting organisations and communities around shared values - and the impacts of this work may not be truly measurable until later phases.”*

*“The SportWest/True Sport team deserves serious credit for their leadership and commitment in championing positive culture across WA sport.”*

*“Funding is critical for the ongoing sustainability for True Sport under the SportWest banner. SSAs do not have the ability to develop whole of sector initiatives and resources.”*

## INTERVIEW RESULTS

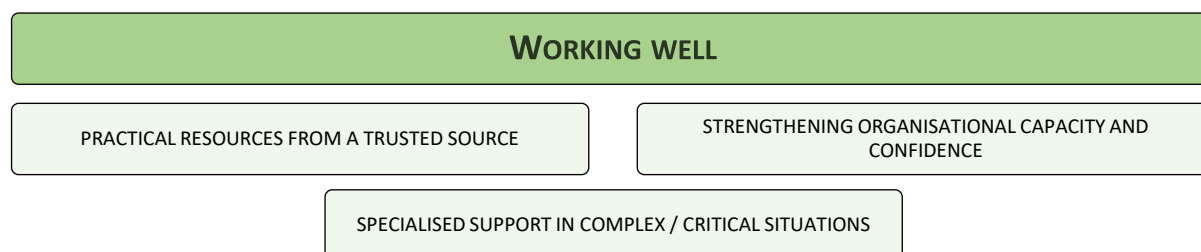
Our interviews provided insight into the experiences of True Sport among SportWest's Member Organisations' staff. We created 8 overarching themes to capture the meaning provided by participants, and split these themes into 3 categories.

- We grouped 3 themes together under a "*Working well*" category—themes in this category provide insight into the various elements that participants felt were working effectively and had supported positive experiences and outcomes with the Initiatives.
- We grouped 3 themes together under a "*Factors influencing engagement*" category—themes in this category provide insight into features of True Sport (and of SSAs) that had impacted engagement and implementation.
- We grouped the remaining 2 themes together under a "*Recommendations*" category—themes in this category provide strategies to support the ongoing implementation of True Sport throughout community sport in WA.

Below, we outline these themes. We provide a broad overview of the key issues described in each theme, and each time offer example quotations from participants to illustrate our findings. Before doing so, we note that thematic analyses of this kind are not designed to capture *all* of the comments provided by participants. Thematic analyses are designed to synthesise key (i.e., most coherent and commonly identified) elements that are discussed and/or implied across participants (Byrne, 2022). That being the case, we did not seek to integrate (what we considered to be) idiosyncratic perspectives that were not shared or reinforced by others in any meaningful or consistent way (Byrne, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2019). It is also worth noting that not every interviewee had engaged with every True Sport Initiative; however, perspectives on each Initiative were represented across the nine participants.

## CATEGORY 1: WORKING WELL

A visual overview of the themes within this category is presented below. Participants described four broad themes that captured their many positive feelings about, or experiences with, the True Sport Program.



### *PRACTICAL RESOURCES FROM A TRUSTED SOURCE*

True Sport was consistently described as a credible and practical suite of resources. Participants emphasised that the Program’s resources are not only policy-facing, but are actively used in day-to-day governance, safeguarding, and wellbeing work. Several SSA staff described attaching flowcharts to emails, distributing tip sheets to clubs, embedding resources into staff meetings, and referring clubs or staff to mental health resources and the volunteer/employee assistance programs. This practical application underscores that True Sport is usable and relevant for the challenges facing sport in WA.

A recurring theme was that True Sport reduces duplication of effort. Participants repeatedly referenced the value of not having to spend a significant amount of time developing new resources, particularly in smaller organisations with limited staff capacity. Having access to ready-made templates and structured guidance allowed SSAs to respond efficiently and confidently to emerging issues. Additionally, the WA-specific focus of materials was viewed as a major strength. Some participants noted that legislation, referral pathways, and terminology being directly relevant to WA removed the need to interpret broader guidance (e.g., from national bodies). This was particularly important for child safeguarding. All participants were extremely positive about the quality and usefulness of the True Sport resources—several examples of quotes aligned with this theme are presented below.

*“So with the mental health and resources. So quite a few when we help our associations and clubs with compliance or when just individuals contact us quite often, there’s an element of mental struggle, I suppose, or something like that. And so being able to have like a one page resource that you can go to or you can refer someone and go in there and go ‘have a look at what it is that you are looking for’... So in terms of the mental health, their resources section has been really, really helpful to us. So that we don’t have to go and spend three or five hours or however long to go and find those resources, we can just refer them or we can just take a page and send that to people.”*

*“True Sport has a really great one page resource on the reporting flow chart. And so that is something that we quite often attach to our emails as well to go ‘if you are unsure about anything, have a look at this’, it is really done really well [and] succinctly.”*

*“The good thing about True Sport is because it's WA-specific, so the legislation and the things that they refer to in their documents, it's all WA, where it's obviously with [our sport] it is a little bit more, you've got to go and find your own information when it comes to state levels. So you know it's been good for that.”*

*“I think it's avoided like duplication... particularly with mental health, there's a lot of resources out there, but I suppose True Sport have created ones that I suppose we don't have to create our own. So that's been really beneficial as well just to provide a direct link and reduce, I suppose the time and energy that takes to ensure they are best practice and yeah, we just literally provide them to clubs.”*

*“...what [SportWest] are doing is incredible because I can really see that fusion... the resources were credible, they were practical, and they were exactly what I wanted to see being rolled out in community sport.”*

*“I... used the mental health critical incident resources. We hadn't implemented anything yet, but as soon as we needed it, I went through and used all the resources and guidance. It was a tangible example of how practical and useful the resources are.”*

#### *STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND CONFIDENCE*

Engagement with True Sport has contributed to a noticeable increase in organisational capability across multiple SSAs. Participants described staff becoming more confident in navigating safeguarding, integrity, and wellbeing issues, and more proactive in raising concerns or seeking guidance. Workshops and webinars were repeatedly highlighted as catalysts for this shift, with staff returning to their organisations and sharing new knowledge, prompting internal discussions, policy development, and improved practices. In several cases, True Sport engagement led to structural changes such as the creation of working groups, standing agenda items, and more consistent internal processes.

A distinctive feature of True Sport's impact was the way it fostered cross-sport collaboration and shared learning. Participants described creating informal networks with peers from other sports and exchanging and adapting ideas. These interactions broadened staff perspectives, normalised conversations about safeguarding and wellbeing, and helped sports learn from larger or 'more experienced' sports. This 'cross-pollination' strengthened confidence and contributed to a more cohesive sector-wide understanding of best practice. Exemplar participant quotes capturing the impact of True Sport on SSAs are presented below.

*“Going to the sessions and then bringing back that knowledge and sharing that within the organization, so, like capacity building, like you go there, get up skilled and then it's like the train-a-trainer model, you go and share that. So we've actually ran sessions within [our sport] around these similar topics and then yeah created some of our I guess policies and that that we oversee clubs and sports.”*

*"I think culture [has shifted] for sure. I know that a lot of the times at the conference, [our sport] has probably the most staff members there... I do also know with obviously all the webinars that happen during the year, a lot of our staff do get on board with that. And then a lot of the SportWest sessions in person again. So I think it is changing the culture here."*

*"Again, we're being able to, I guess, give the correct information to our stakeholders, which are our community clubs, you know, even our [league] clubs, even, you know, up to every level and within staff. So I think it is definitely beneficial."*

*"We set up, based on the initiative, we set up a mental health working group at [our sport] and yeah, as I said, we put it on a standing item at the staff meeting. And we would do like monthly things, but it started off good. I mean, we made everyone do the mental health e-learning to start with, which we started off with that. And then we gradually just increased what we were, what we were doing."*

*"Personally, and I know other people that have been to through sport events, we've sort of had a little network that's come from that to the organization and then we've brainstormed ideas around how we can improve what we do, implemented that."*

### *SPECIALISED SUPPORT IN COMPLEX / CRITICAL SITUATIONS*

Although less frequently mentioned compared to the above two themes, several participants described the Employee and Volunteer Assistance Programs, mediation services, and critical incident resources as among the most tangible and high-impact elements of True Sport. These services were viewed as particularly supportive during more complex situations. In these situations, SSAs were able to rely on external mediation or counselling support, as opposed to trying to figure out solutions 'alone'. In some cases, participants indicated that these services directly contributed to positive outcomes, like volunteer / staff retention. More broadly, the reassurance of knowing that structured, specialised support exists should SSA staff ever need it was viewed as a positive. This suggests that True Sport's resources plays both a reactive and preventative role, not only for complex situations or incident response, but also for SSA planning and policies. The quotations below provide some example illustrations of this theme.

*"...we've just come back from a [national] meeting in Victoria, where [the national body] and all the other [SSAs] were meeting together. SportWest was actually brought up by one of the presenters and they'd actually looked at this programme and talked about the fact that in WA they have this and it's like, 'yeah, and it's freaking awesome'... Even our national body didn't have an EAP service."*

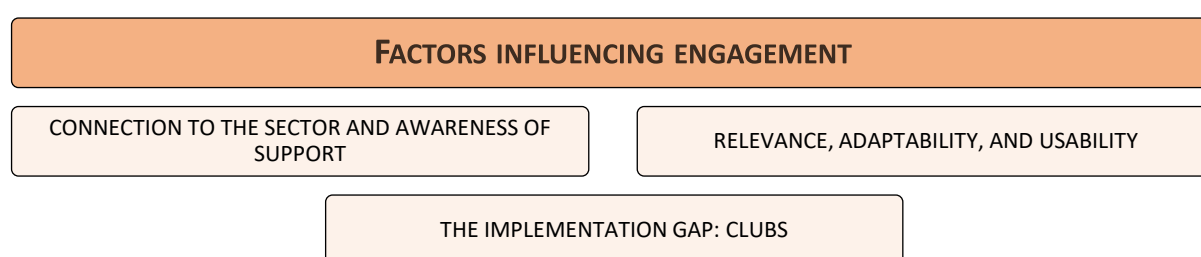
*"We haven't lost people after some of the situations that they've been in... the EAP service has probably – and the VAP – has kept people within our system. I definitely think it's been beneficial"*

*"...a lady with [a disability] approached me. She's in a wheelchair and she wanted to start [participating] from the wheelchair. So part of my my job role is to say, well, this meets the specifications by the national body... So we got her set up and it was great. So she goes back to her club and she wants to [participate] and they won't let her. They don't want [to make the adjustments required]... They're not interested that it meets the national requirements, etcetera, etcetera. So she goes down to the [club] and there were a few issues and we [were] basically brought in and like at that point, I did refer her to the mental health resources. And so the long and short of it is that she was finally accepted to play at this club and she's loving it and she wants more people to be coming down there in the wheelchairs, but without the resources and pointing the club in that direction, they may not have approved her playing."*

*“And then the other one will be the volunteer EAP that they've introduced as well... definitely some of our members have accessed that as well. So that's been, I suppose, a role that we've played in the past is linking clubs into that support and still do, but I think True Sport really helps that process and offer that to volunteers who need it, whether it's, you know, a challenge they're going through post death or suicide at the club, that's been a really great resource that they've offered as well. So I think what they've created super relevant and been beneficial for state sports, but also clubs and volunteers.”*

## CATEGORY 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING ENGAGEMENT

A visual overview of the three themes within this category is presented below. Participants described three broad factors that have affected engagement with, and implementation of, True Sport at the SSA and club level.



### CONNECTION TO THE SECTOR AND AWARENESS OF SUPPORT

Participants consistently described SportWest and True Sport staff as approachable, responsive, and collaborative. Having identifiable contacts, timely follow-up and opportunities for direct discussion reduced hesitation in seeking clarification and increased confidence in using resources appropriately. And, SSA staff felt comfortable reaching out when needed—making the connection between SportWest and SSAs a meaningful enabler of engagement. Workshops and in-person sessions were also described as facilitating relationship-building across the sector. These interactions shift True Sport from being perceived as a static resource platform to being understood as a partnership-based support mechanism.

At the same time, several participants suggested that clearer visibility of upcoming initiatives would further strengthen integration. Being able to anticipate training / education schedules or new resource releases would support SSAs in their efforts to embed True Sport activities within strategic and operational planning cycles. More broadly, simply *knowing* what is available for SSAs supports their engagement—priority should be placed on ensuring that awareness is sector-wide. Examples of feedback within this theme are presented below.

*“If there was any challenges, you know you can contact true sport or that team and they get back to you if you do need help. So I think having that behind it is, yeah, it's great... And I think like attending those,*

*you know the sessions with them there, you know, you get to network and you create a relationship with them.”*

*“...we've built additional relationships [as a result of True Sport]. So I think there's a lot of understanding from True Sport, SportWest ... I think we work quite closely with them. In terms of, they've been able to organise a few training courses just for [our sport] that have been made specific for our staff around safeguarding and their mental health resources and those kinds of things.”*

*“They have actually been amazing. You know, calling back, following up... I had phone calls where the staff would just ring and just check in with me. So, you know, it was really, really nice to have that kind of connection to Sports West.”*

*“Communication to stakeholders... we need to know what's coming. We need to know a plan as any sport, again, big or small, whichever department. The lack of future planning and vision is really, really hard. Whether it's workshops that are up and coming, whether it's initiatives that are coming out or whether it's social media campaigns that they're doing... Having that planning and the communications beforehand would so help all sports... then that could be part of everybody's operational planning.”*

*“It's more the visibility of [True Sport]. I think, again, making sure all sporting codes within WA, but also within your own [sport] know that they have access to these resources as well.”*

#### RELEVANCE, ADAPTABILITY, AND USABILITY

While the overall quality of resources was positively appraised, participants indicated that perceived relevance significantly influences uptake, particularly at club level. Even minor differences in terminology, imagery, or branding were described as affecting how resources are received. In some cases, it was reported that resources did not align with the participant’s sport. Where materials align closely with a sport’s language and identity, engagement with True Sport is easier. However, several participants described routinely adapting materials to align with their sport’s branding or terminology before dissemination. While this adaptability was seen as positive, it also requires additional SSA effort and capacity, and smaller organisations may be less able to undertake this tailoring.

Participants also reflected on the breadth of information available. While comprehensiveness was valued, navigating large volumes of content—particularly under time pressure—can be challenging. Volunteers or part-time administrators may struggle to identify the most relevant resource quickly. We present example quotes aligned with this theme below.

*“I think some of their resources can be maybe simplified a little bit, I think particularly around the child safeguarding and the national principles. I look at it and I can understand it and some of them are quite cumbersome, but I think if someone who's a volunteer and who has no knowledge of anything that might actually be quite overwhelming when they go, ‘oh my gosh, there's so many words and so much information. I don't know where to start’. How do you simplify that? I don't know because there is a lot of information that you do have to get out to people and I think that's probably one of the things that we struggle with as a state sporting organisation... when all these integrity things came out and child safeguarding it was massively overwhelming.”*

*“And if you want to make it a little bit more sports specific, then you need someone who's available, who can then bring in the different sports. And you go, ‘we've got this resource and we can co-brand it for [your sport]... that would be really good if you can stick on [our sport's] logo because then some people, they go ‘oh it is for [our sport], so yes, I have to listen to it because it's not just a random poster’. I think sometimes it's just simple, like, in [our sport] we talk about an umpire and in [another sport] you talk about a referee. And then if you have a thing that says referee, then people just switch off because it doesn't say umpire. So it's just those little fine and nuances, I suppose.”*

*“I think just sometimes because there is a lot of information on True Sport. Just trying to narrow it down. When I'm in a rush and trying to find something, I think – again going back to because they're catering for so many different sports – sometimes I go ‘oh, this isn't relevant’, and then I'll just get sidetracked and then I'll forget about it.”*

### **THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP: CLUBS**

A consistent challenge identified across interviews was the translation of SSA-level engagement into sustained club-level practice. Participants repeatedly described the structural realities of volunteer-run clubs, such as limited time, competing operational demands, and a focus on compliance over cultural embedding. Volunteer capacity constraints were a dominant discussion point. Participants described clubs prioritising competition delivery, administration, and immediate operational tasks, with safeguarding or wellbeing initiatives sometimes perceived as additional responsibilities rather than core obligations. Additionally, regional contexts introduced additional complexity. Merged competitions, declining volunteer pools, and broader community dynamics were described as influencing how initiatives are prioritised. Embedding True Sport within individual clubs and communities across WA remains a key challenge for SSAs. Example quotations from participants to illustrate this theme are provided below.

*“I think there could be more support on how to involve clubs. The hardest part though with clubs is everyone's a volunteer and they don't want to do more than they have to.”*

*“And we had the mental health champions... I was one of those and we let the clubs all know. But in my years of [being] a mental health champion, I never had one inquiry from a club, and we wanted to kind of bring that mental health champions into the clubs but there was just no way of getting that to work. Yeah, they just weren't interested 'cause, you know, it's extra work for them. So we picked and choose what we did with the club. So we did like the critical response plan and we put all of that out to the clubs so they were aware of what they had to do if there was an incident. But yeah, I think the overall I think it was a success in like using all of those. It's just you didn't get the buy in from everyone. I think just from a club's perspective, just because it is a volunteer role that they just only want to do what they have to do to make the club run.”*

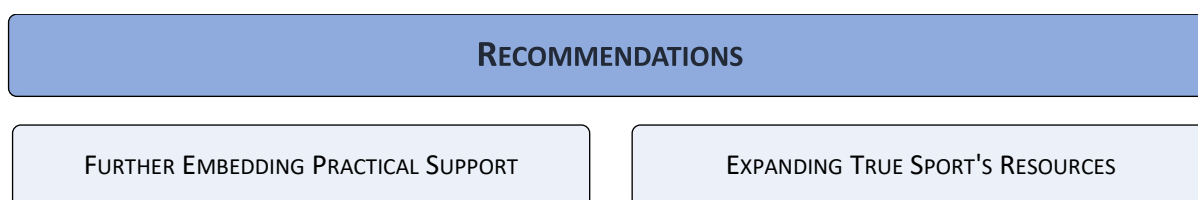
*“I actually think there's a bit of a challenge and actually, how do you actually get the message through in practical ways at a club level. We need our club people advocating for this... So yes, definitely educate, you know, the session was valuable to talk about risk and processes and stuff like that, but at the end of the day, it needs to get to the next level.”*

*“True Sport is not always viewable at that grass root level. They're very, very viewable at the state level and to probably a certain extent below that. But again, when it comes down to the clubs, the clubs have to be able to pass that information along, so that if I were to say there was a barrier anywhere, it's clubs passing along information. So if there's no barrier there, it's good. But if there is a barrier, your local*

*[club] player is not going to know who Sport West is. It's really up to the SSAs to push it and to give the information out and promote it, and then for the clubs to make sure that that goes to the players."*

### CATEGORY 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

A visual overview of the three themes within this category is presented below. Participants described two broad considerations that may inform the delivery of True Sport moving forward. We present these themes with the aim of offering industry-voiced considerations to maximise the reach and impact of True Sport.



#### *FURTHER EMBEDDING PRACTICAL SUPPORT*

Participants emphasised that the next phase of development would benefit from increased implementation support alongside existing resource provision. While SSA staff are familiar with the materials, clubs (and particularly those run by volunteers) often lack the time, confidence, or clarity to embed these resources into everyday practice. Participants described the benefits of clearer sequencing of actions, practical guidance on “what to do first” for clubs, and short, role-specific modules for committee members, presidents, coaches, and volunteers. They also expressed a desire for workshops that produce draft policies, action plans, or communication materials that clubs can immediately adopt. Finally, several participants also highlighted the importance of engaging boards and executive leaders, not just operational staff, to ensure that True Sport principles are embedded into governance, culture, and strategic planning. Example quotes aligning with this theme are presented below.

*“...if we could have just some little short, sharp sessions for committees and your role and sideline behaviour and inclusivity... at the moment, you know, you can grab something from here and grab something from there. If we could have something that would almost be like a little... ‘we start with this and then we’ll give them this’... a bit of a programme to roll them through.”*

*“Sometimes there’s a 2–3 hour workshop and they sort of talk through what mental health is... and ‘here’s your mental health activation plan, and here’s the template, and go away and do it.’ Whereas I think if we kind of reframe those workshops... that ‘this is mental health, this is the worksheet... but by the end of it, you’re going to walk out with a draft done and completed.’ That would be really valuable, especially to the smaller and medium sports because they just don’t have the capacity when the workshop’s over to then put those things in place.”*

*“Staff members attending don’t have potentially large influence within the state sports...Working directly with leaders of state sporting organisations like boards and executive members... that would be really beneficial. That will have a real impact on the flow-on effects around culture, leadership, well-being.”*

#### EXPANDING TRUE SPORT RESOURCES

Although participants perceived the current suite of resources and initiatives as exceptional, there were calls for the development of additional resources or tailoring of existing resources to specific populations. These include developmentally appropriate content for adolescents, gambling harm prevention, cultural safety and First Nations inclusion, regional-specific guidance, behavioural education for juniors in senior competitions, and sport-specific adaptations that more accurately reflect different sports. Expanding on these suggestions, some participants emphasised that it is difficult for SSAs to respond to rapidly changing community needs and societal trends / pressures (the normalisation of gambling), and stated that these require proactive education and guidance. Others highlighted the need for resources that support culturally safe environments, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. More detailed descriptions of these recommendations from participants are provided below.

*“We were looking for little short courses for teenagers to do around respectful behaviours and bullying... there’s a lot of peer-on-peer abuse and peer-on-peer bullying that is happening in sport... and that is in that young adult teenager age group. If a club or association has had an instance where there’s been bullying... and they want to sanction either one teenager or a few of them, and the sanction is education-based... what does that look like? There’s very, very limited, if any kind of information that you can give to teenagers.”*

*“...gambling harm prevention... I think that’ll be one of the biggest areas in the future, given the normalisation and access that people have to gamble... similar to tobacco a number of years ago, alcohol forever. [I’d like advice on] How to navigate the space of gambling sponsorships... there’s a lot of money out there and opportunities for sports to lose sight of what their values are.”*

*“I’m hoping this will come out through the advisory committee on First Nations... whether that becomes a pillar would be amazing to see. It can grow from there... it doesn’t have to be just First Nations, it can be our multicultural communities as well. Having educational pieces around creating culturally safe environments or even how to celebrate something where some sporting codes wouldn’t know where to start.”*

*“If someone lives in Derby and they require mental health services... what does that look like for them? Is that reflected in the True Sport resources? I actually don’t know.”*

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

True Sport has established itself as a credible, practical, widely known, and effective platform across the WA sport sector. Across all data sources, stakeholders consistently described True Sport as a high-quality, high-value program that is nation leading, achieving many of its short-term objectives, and laying strong foundations for medium-term organisational and system-level change. The breadth of resources, the WA-specific framing, and the coordinated, cross-sport delivery model have enabled broad reach, strong adoption among SSAs, and meaningful improvements in knowledge, confidence, and organisational capacity. We provide summary conclusions below against each of the three pillars within the True Sport Brand Evaluation Framework.

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, & BEHAVIOUR:** True Sport has delivered strong improvements in knowledge, confidence, and attitudes across the sector. Survey respondents reported increased knowledge and confidence to address key issues in sport, improved awareness of support pathways, and greater ability to communicate about mental health, child safeguarding, and sideline behaviour. Participants also described True Sport as a trusted and reliable source of guidance. The strong evidence pointing toward these shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and trust are foundational to the organisational and sector-wide changes True Sport seeks to influence.

**ORGANISATIONAL:** Organisational outcomes were evident across SSAs and SportWest. SSAs reported strengthened internal governance, new or updated policies, the establishment of working groups, and increased capacity to support clubs and volunteers. SportWest's organisational capacity, partnerships, and health promotion capability were also perceived to have grown meaningfully through the program.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** True Sport is widely valued and perceived as essential for the sector, and SSAs are continuing to focus on implementation and sustainability at club level. Cross-sport learning emerged as a powerful mechanism for strengthening sector cohesion and normalising conversations about wellbeing and integrity. There were also many reports of meaningful and strengthened connections between SportWest and SSAs. The program's sustainability will depend on continued investment, strengthened partnerships, and embedding True Sport principles into governance, accreditation, and funding frameworks. Committed funding with a longer-term horizon would enable planning and strategy relating to further growth and reach of True Sport. The most persistent challenge relates to club-level implementation. While SSA engagement is strong, clubs face significant barriers including limited volunteer capacity, competing operational demands, and difficulty navigating large volumes of

information. Guided by these conclusions and by participants' responses across all data sources, we offer the following recommendations:

### **1. Consider opportunities and capacity to strengthen club-level implementation**

SportWest's mandate is to deliver True Sport to, and embed the Program within, its member SSAs. The evidence presented in this report indicates that this work is being achieved and is effective. SSAs, however, vary greatly in their capacity to 'cascade' this information and resources effectively to their member clubs—they (SSAs) consider this an important next step for True Sport to maximise its reach within the sporting community at large. We recognise the challenges inherent in addressing such a complex objective, and the scope / boundaries of SportWest's role. As a first step, though, there may be value in SportWest, with its funding and delivery partners, discussing club-level implementation appetite and initiatives—key issues here include an assessment of the capacity required, where accountability may reside (e.g., who is responsible for club-level work), and associated funding requirements.

### **2. Explore capacity for automated or semi-automated approaches to support implementation**

SSAs frequently adapt resources to match their sport's terminology or culture—we also observed requests for additional supports such as checklists, action plans, communications assets, and practical 'how to' materials. Interchangeable or customisable templates, co-branded materials, and efficient ways to produce plans and other materials, may increase relevance for SSAs, support implementation, and reduce duplication. Exploring AI-enabled support (e.g., bespoke 'agents' that could be used to develop these materials and/or revise template materials) may be effective in streamlining this process by helping SSAs and clubs generate tailored, sport-specific versions quickly and consistently.

### **3. Expand content into emerging priority areas identified by SSAs**

SportWest works well with its stakeholder network and is demonstrating a strong 'co-design' approach to the identification and development of candidate initiatives within the True Sport banner. We encourage continued work in this respect—with an emphasis in part on understanding emerging areas of need within the community and sector. For example, priority areas identified through interviews include adolescent behavioural challenges, gambling harm prevention, cultural safety, and region-specific guidance. Continued co-design with SSAs and Member Organisations will ensure new content reflects genuine sector needs and emerging pressures.

#### **4. Establish a consistent 'measurement set' and work toward flagship evaluation targets**

With a focus on being as resource-light as possible, we encourage SportWest to select the most effective items and methods to support annual 'pulse' surveys. Work to enable this recommendation is already underway in partnership with UWA. As the program continues, further evaluation activity may also help capture medium- and longer-term program outcomes such as sustained behavioural change, organisational policy development, or broader impacts across the sport sector (in particular, sport participation and experience outcomes, which take time to emerge but may realistically be expected from the strong platform True Sport has built). Standard measurement activity may also be supplemented by key / flagship evaluation objectives. For example, this may include consideration of return on investment-type indicators alongside reach and engagement metrics (e.g., mental health literacy, social connection, service awareness and use, sport participation and experience indicators, and implementation quality and reach). Integrating an assessment of sport experience (e.g., participation, wellbeing, retention) and feeding this into a return on investment analysis in future evaluation work would enable SportWest to translate True Sport's demonstrated social, mental health, awareness-related, and organisational outcomes into an economic value proposition—quantifying benefits relative to investment using a structured, evidence-based method. The current evaluation has already generated many of the indicators required for such modelling, including reach and participation, health literacy outcomes, and confidence. These existing measures, if paired with indicators of sport experience, would form a strong foundation for valuing (among other things) social and wellbeing gains, avoided costs, community participation, and social capital—articulating a compelling, investment-grade case to government or other funders.

#### **5. Share success stories and evidence**

There is now a robust foundation and compelling evidence base highlighting the reach and impact of True Sport—this platform should be used to celebrate the value created through (and reach of) the Program, to recognise the nation-leading work happening in WA, and for advocacy and awareness-raising purposes. Sharing case studies, impact snapshots, and examples of organisational capacity and operational change will help strengthen sector buy-in, support advocacy with funders, and reinforce the value of True Sport across SSAs, clubs, and government stakeholders.

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## OUR TEAM

### **Professor Ben Jackson** *BSc Hons, PhD*

At UWA, Ben is a research and teaching academic in the School of Human Sciences, and at The Kids Research Institute Australia he is the Head of the 'Wellbeing & Mental Health' Theme housing 250+ staff and research students. He created and leads the Psychology of Active, Healthy Living Group, has designed and provided quantitative and qualitative evaluation support for several local and national health promotion organisations, and provides or has provided advisory or reference committee input for organisations including Healthway, WA Mental Health Commission, Exercise and Sport Science Australia, the Australian Research Council, WA Department of Health, WA Department of Education, WA Department of Local Government, Sport, & Cultural Industries, National Health and Medical Research Council, and International Olympic Committee. Ben is a Deputy Editor for the highly-ranked international journal, *Stress & Health*, and serves on the editorial board for 4 other prestigious international journals. He has produced more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and has extensive experience developing and evaluating complex health promotion activities.

### **Professor Michael Rosenberg** *BAppSc, PGradDip, MPH, PhD*

Michael is the former Head of School of the School of Human Sciences and Director of the WA Health Promotion Evaluation Unit. Michael has over 20 years' experience in the area of health program evaluation and brings a blend of research and practical evaluation skills across a broad range of health areas. From 2002-2018, Michael was responsible for the management of the evaluation of all Healthway services. During this period, he oversaw the delivery of all evaluation services and co-authored over 50 technical reports, including sponsorship monitors, special field studies, priorities reviews, and reviews of the Healthway evaluation framework. Michael works closely with several peak bodies in public health and health promotion, and provides expert advisory group input for the World Health Organisation.

### **Dr Aaron Simpson** *BSc Hons, PhD*

Aaron is a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Human Sciences at The University of Western Australia and Honorary Research Associate in the Wellbeing & Mental Health Theme at The Kids Research Institute Australia. Aaron conducts his work as co-lead of the Psychology of Active, Healthy Living (PAHL) Group, and as part of the Mental Health and Exercise (MHEx) Group. His research spans health promotion, mental health and wellbeing, behavioural psychology, and physical activity, with a focus on strengthening practice through evidence—his work has been published in some of the world's leading scientific journals in his field. Aaron's PhD research program was conducted with a trauma-

informed approach, aimed at understanding and improving sport experiences for children in out-of-home (foster) care. He has played key roles in leading the development of the Healthway Measurement Toolkit, the evaluation of Basketball WA's Hoops for Health program, strategic planning for UWA and UWA Sport, the evaluation of SportWest's True Sport program, SportWest's "Best on Road" (Road Safety) Initiative, reporting for SportWest's statewide Parent Perspectives Survey, and several other health promotion initiatives and projects. Aaron is also recognised for his academic contribution through his role as a Section Editor for the leading international journal, *Stress & Health*.