



In July 2017, UniSport (then Australian University Sport) published the “*Case for Change*”, which explained the rationale behind the transition to the UniSport Nationals event format. Concurrent to this process was a rebranding of the organisation from Australian University Sport to UniSport Australia.



The Case for Change

**Transitioning from the Australian University Games
to a divisional, national championship model**

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The Case for Change

Transitioning from the Australian University Games to a divisional, national championship model...

Executive Summary

Australian University Sport Ltd (AUS) is the peak body for university sport in Australia and operates under a mandate from its 42 higher education institutional members, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), the International University Sports Federation (FISU), and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

AUS has prepared the following document for members and stakeholders for the purpose of providing an overview of the critical drivers that underpin the rationale for changing the event delivery of its current model, the Australian University Games (AUG). The AUG is a 25 year old, multisport event for students and is managed and delivered by AUS annually on behalf of its 42 member institutions.

The decision to introduce change to the AUG event delivery model stems from a number of drivers, including evidence from substantial research and extensive member consultation. Other influential factors include independent event risk audits and an in-depth analysis of the efficacy of risk mitigating attempts to date. Additionally, the paper discusses several external drivers as well as opportunities presented by the changing nature of the broader Australian sporting landscape.

These compelling pieces of work have supported the case for change, and transitioning to a higher quality, national championship sporting event in 2018. This view has strong support by a vast majority of AUS member universities, and key stakeholders including the ASC and national sporting organisations.

The "*National University Championship – Future Model*" (Jermyn & Knapp, 2017) is included in Appendix A, and it provides a detailed description of the recommended 2018 event model.

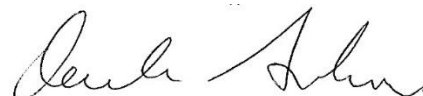
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Background

The AUG is Australia's oldest and largest multisport event staged annually. The AUG turns 25 years old in 2017. The AUG attracts anywhere from 6,000 to 9,000 student participants, coaches, officials and volunteers each year. The variation in overall participation is largely location dependent, with Perth or Adelaide attracting fewer numbers than the spiritual home of the AUG, the Gold Coast.

To many past and current participants, the AUG represents an iconic event experience and one of the most memorable of their higher education student life.

Considering the long history of the AUG's success, it is logical to ask the question, why change the event? On closer examination, not changing may pose a greater risk for the future of national multisport university events.

Cracks in the AUG model

Macquarie University and AUS Research Project

Based upon anecdotal observation and experience, a long-standing culture of binge drinking appears an entrenched tradition associated with the AUG. In 2009, Macquarie University (MQU) approached AUS proposing a research project partnership that would explore the attitudes and behaviours of participants in respect to alcohol use and abuse at the AUG. The proposal, agreed to by the AUS Board, examined the 2009 AUG (Gold Coast).

The MQU/AUS research findings provided the first quantifiable evidence indicating that indeed, the AUG had an entrenched culture of binge drinking. More than 80% of respondents indicated they drank regularly at the AUG, with an alarming number self-reporting high-range binge drinking levels (D. Anderson, 2009). The findings provided clear evidence that the incidence of binge drinking was unacceptably high, and no doubt was fuelling risky behaviour among AUG participants.

No more alcohol sponsorship at AUS events

The 2009 findings were the catalyst for the AUS Board's decision to ban all alcohol sponsorship and branding associated with AUS events. This decision caused a loss of approximately \$100K per annum in sponsorship revenue. AUS was the first national sporting organisation or peak-body in Australia to refuse alcohol sponsorship.

Another driver for the decision to turn away alcohol sponsorship was strategic. The AUS mission statement in its 2008 – 2012 strategic plan was: "building the environment for success and well-being through education and sport" (D. Knapp, 2008). This mission clearly misaligned with the promotion of alcohol sponsors to participants at AUS events.

Attempts to mitigate risks 2009 – 2016

In addition to eliminating alcohol sponsorship in 2009, AUS implemented several other strategies aimed at reducing high risk behaviours associated with binge drinking at events. A brief overview of these initiatives is included below.

Be the Influence (BTI) – "tackling binge drinking"

Established in 2012 in partnership with Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the BTI program is a student and university team managers (UTMs) leadership in sport education and training program whose major aims are to:

- Provide students with leadership skills in risky situations often associated with binge drinking
- Impart personal brand and emotional intelligence insights to student leaders
- Exploring high risk scenarios experienced at AUS events and appropriate leadership responses
- Developing confidence building assertiveness and communications skills

This program has proved to be popular, and since its inception, over 2,000 student leaders have participated in BTI workshops. Further, the program has been a catalyst in encouraging university members to create their own leadership in sport education and training programs.

Other mitigating initiatives implemented have included:

- Appointment of an AUS specialist staff team to supervise and oversee the AUG evening social program
- UTM delegation management training
- The provision of Red Frogs pastoral care support staff deployed nightly
- Alcohol free evening sponsorship activations
- Supervised team dinners
- Crisis response management professional development for members

What are the impacts of mitigation strategies to date?

Research replicating the 2009 study was undertaken by Griffith University during the 2016 AUG (Perth). The findings from the 2016 study provided clear evidence that the levels of binge drinking at the AUG had not decreased in spite of mitigation efforts. More than 81% of survey respondents drank regularly during the event, while 52% self-reported binge drinking (S. Rundle-Thiele, 2016).

On a positive note, the number of member reports of alcohol-fuelled incidents, as well as police reports have decreased over the past five years (Inspector B. Day, Gold Coast Major Events Group, Gold Coast Police, personal communication, 28 September 2013). So perhaps participants are taking better care of one another in binge drinking situations, but they are not drinking less.

AUS, in consultation with members have also identified other factors that have influenced some behavioural improvement, including:

- Members' management standards for team delegations are of a higher standard
- Many members have increased staff to student ratios, providing a better team approach to managing and supervising team delegations
- More members are handling their own disciplinary matters, and have linked disciplinary action and procedures with their university's policies
- Members have improved team selection criteria, participant disciplinary agreements and crisis management procedures. According to Team Monash Director Martin Doulton, "managing travelling groups representing the university, whether they be sporting teams or academic tours, engages several departments and levels of the Monash hierarchy and this reflects elevated risk management concerns and treatment." (AUS National Conference presentation, 16 May 2016)
- Members are organising more alternative activities to the social program

Members and AUS are working more collaboratively than ever in terms of both understanding the risks associated with the AUG, and sharing the responsibility for developing risk mitigating event and team management strategies. The willingness to share responsibility for risks associated with binge drinking at the AUG provides a powerful platform for change.

However, in spite of turning away alcohol sponsorship, best efforts to implement risk mitigation strategies, better collaboration and shared responsibility with members, as evidenced by replica research completed in 2016, attitudes and behaviour have not significantly altered at the AUG since 2009. The culture of binge drinking at the AUG remains stubbornly embedded.

Drivers of disruptive change

Strategy 2020

In 2015, AUS facilitated seven workshops in order to consult as widely as possible with members, staff and the Board to gain input into the development of Strategy 2020 (AUS strategic plan 2016 – 2020). Through this process, AUS was able to collect an abundance of valuable input into the content of Strategy 2020. The process also elevated the level of AUS and member consultation, communication and mutual understanding.

Significantly, a common theme raised in all seven planning workshops was a concern about the dissonance between the desired brand of AUS, and the image of its flagship event, the AUG. The over-riding vision of Strategy 2020 is, "*healthy, active, engaged and well-rounded university students*" (Anderson, Knapp and Richardson, 2017). Neither AUS nor members could lay claim to attainment of this vision considering the high incidence of binge drinking and prevalence of risky behaviours continuing to occur at the AUG.

The Hunting Ground

The Hunting Ground, an award-winning documentary, released in the United States in February 2015, was described as "*a documentary shocker about rape on college campuses and is a must*

watch work of crime activism" (M. Dargis, 2015). The film made its way to Australia later that year. One of the feature stories in the documentary revolved around student-athletes getting away with alleged sexual assault and rape, and cover-ups on campus allowing alleged perpetrators to get off without conviction.

Between November 2015 and March 2016 The Hunting Ground Australia Project (THGAP) commenced with a series of campus screenings of the documentary (57 in total). The primary aim of THGAP was "to use the documentary as a tool to engage the entire Australian university sector, and the broader community, in a collaborative, comprehensive and unified campaign around the incidence of, and responses to, sexual violence on Australian university campuses" (www.thehuntinggroundaustralia.com.au/about-thg-australia/).

The impact of THGAP sent risk management shock waves throughout the university sector. In the same year that THGAP was rolling out, an alleged case of sexual assault linked to the 2015 AUG made its way to Gold Coast Police. The alleged incident occurred in the early hours of Saturday morning following the conclusion of the AUG. The alleged victim was a young female student-athlete and an AUG participant; the alleged perpetrator was a non-student, volunteer coach.

The timing of this alleged incident, combined with the impact of the THGAP had the effect of dramatically highlighting risks associated with university sporting events in Australia, and the need for team delegations to ensure they have in place effective crisis, incident management and response procedures. It was also another reminder of the growing need for culture change at AUS events.

A more risk averse and accountable university sector – university sport included

When serious incidents do occur at the AUG, they usually involve binge drinking; a syndrome shared in the scenarios presented in *The Hunting Ground* documentary. As previously stated, although from 2013 to the present there were fewer reported alcohol related incidents during the AUG, they continued to occur, albeit less frequently.

Furthermore, in 2015 and 2016, several serious sport related accidents occurred directly impacting university members. The most severe incidents resulted in accidental death, life-long disability and/or serious injury. Some of these incidents have ended up in court involving long and costly legal disputes.

These incidents have added momentum to the need for change and improved risk management practice involving university sporting activities.

Campus Sport Delivery Agents and governance structures

Sport delivery governance structures on member campuses have undergone substantial change over the past few years. Few campus-based, Sport Delivery Agents remain independent associations, or separate entities to the university as the majority once were. Most are now either university departments, or controlled entities operating as a Company Limited by Guarantee with university representatives appointed to the board of directors (AUS Survey, 2015).

This is a positive development for university sport, as governance structures on campus are now generally robust and better aligned with the university's strategic plan. This has the effect of lifting the profile and visibility of sport in the campus environment. With this elevated position however, comes greater accountability, and in most instances, involves engaging at a higher level of reporting in the university's management hierarchy. This in turn, increases the pressure for both AUS and members to provide a positive, quality student experience for participants: events that feature alarmingly high rates of binge drinking do not achieve this, thus another, compelling driver of change has emerged.

Increased focus on the quality of student experience in the higher education sector

Student satisfaction with the higher education experience is a key, contributing factor in respect to student retention, achievement and graduation rates (National Intramural-recreational Sports Association, 2004). Participation in sport and fitness activities significantly enhances the quality of student experience and graduate employability (Allen, Bullough, Cole, Shilbi & Wilson, 2013). Quality sport programs and modern facilities are essentials on today's campuses. Sport therefore, is taking on a more important role in campus life. Sport and fitness activities help create the "sticky campus", attracting more students to the campus hub daily (L. Brett, personal communication, 29 March 2017).

Activities, competitions and events must provide quality outcomes if sport is to remain a relevant and valued contributor to the student experience. Dr. Tim Smith stated this succinctly at a Southern Regional Strategy Forum when he said, "the core business of universities includes student recruitment, retention and graduate employability and sporting activities must align with and support these aims to remain relevant" (24 March, 2015).

Rio Olympics, elite student-athlete programs and the Australian sporting landscape

The AIS's Winning Edge program aims to breathe new life into Australia's Olympic medal tally and revitalize international performance. Key stakeholders including the AIS, AOC, and NSOs agree that Australia fell well short of its performance targets at the 2016 Rio Olympics, where Australia won just eight Gold Medals and finished 10th overall (www.olympics.com.au). Now viewed as a downward trend, the declining performance since the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, where Australia won 17 Gold Medals and finished 4th overall (De Bosscher, Bingham & De Knop, 2008), has Australia's top sport administrators behaving as if they are rattled. The recent spat between the AIS and AOC that played out publically through the media provided ample evidence of this.

As is often the case, in times of defeat and disputation, opportunities are born. There are three key factors driving a growing awareness that those opportunities may well be, in part, within the university sport sector. Those factors include:

- There is quantifiable evidence that university student-athletes win a significantly higher proportion of Olympic medals, than the larger, non-student-athlete cohort selected in Australian Olympic Teams (D. Knapp & S. James, 2012);
- Recent university sport sector census data indicates substantial growth of scholarship funding and value-in-kind service provision to elite student-athletes (University Sport Business Analysis, 2016); and

- The ASC has indicated that it wishes to grow its partnership with AUS in future (K. Palmer, personal communication, 16 April 2017).

Dual career education programs which support elite student-athletes striving for excellence in their sport while pursuing a degree (Wylleman, 2011) are a major growth area within Australia's higher education environment. The AIS and many NSOs actively support a dual career approach through personal excellence strategies. The AIS Elite Athlete Friendly University program (EAFU) plays a vital role in supporting dual career education aspirants through the provision of academic support services. The EAFU would not be a success without the enormous support it receives from universities nationwide. The chart below indicates the total investment by Go8 institutions in elite student-athlete support programs, including the EAFU, for 2016. Investment in campus based elite athlete programs has increased by nearly 30% since 2014. Many non-Go8 institutions are matching investment in elite athlete programs (and facilities), including University of Technology Sydney, Griffith University, Bond University, Deakin University, Australian Catholic University, University of Sunshine Coast and La Trobe University, to name but a few. (Sector wide investment totals beyond the Go8 network in elite programs were not available at the time of writing this paper).

5 (a) Student-athletes supported	6,777
5 (a.1) Dollar value of support to student-athletes	\$1,390,073
5 (a.2) In-kind value of support to student-athletes	\$1,286,397
5 (b) Student-athletes registered under EAFU scheme	823
Dollar value of support to EAFU athletes	\$514,734
5 (b.2) In-kind value of support to EAFU athletes	\$737,484

(Centre for Tourism and Leisure Management (CERM), University Sport Business Analysis, 2016)

Changing national sporting landscape

Another area experiencing rapid growth is high performance partnerships between NSOs or professional sporting codes and universities. Successful partnership models see sensible use of shared resources between the NSO and university while facilitating positive student experience outcomes such as work placement opportunities and networking that can significantly enhance graduate outcomes.

In today's national sporting landscape, a number of barriers hinder Australia's aims to improve international and Olympic Games performance. Most NSOs struggle to deliver quality, national competitions for under-23 athletes. This reduces the size of the talent pool in Australia, which is small compared with its main Olympic rivals. Additionally, a "bottle-neck" syndrome created by narrow elite athlete pathways forces early retirement of many sub-elite athletes, causing further reductions to the size and depth of Australia's talent pool. Not only is Australia's talent pool small

compared with most international rival countries, also, those same countries are spending more on high performance sport than Australia is (Boston Consulting Group, 2017).

Many of these sub-elite, early retirees attend Australian universities, and apart from the very robust AUS international Unirooms program, currently, there is a lack of credible university competition opportunities created by AUS or NSOs for this cohort.

National University Women's Sevens Series – a model for the future?

The advent of the National University 7s Series in 2017 may represent a future solution to university competition offerings in Australia. This competition supports the Women's 7s elite student-athlete pathway and is a partnership between the Australian Rugby Union, AUS and eight universities who have entered teams in the inaugural competition. This model has the potential to pave the way for additional competitions in other sporting disciplines; a proliferation of this type of partnership model could significantly bolster competition opportunities for under-23, sub-elite and elite student-athletes – thus adding depth to Australia's relatively small pool of talent.

It is clear that AUS, in partnership with members, NSOs and the ASC/AIS, can and must create more credible competition opportunities to better service the growing cohort of elite students-athletes. This should become a priority for future planning.

International University Sport Federation (FISU) – and the growth of international competition pathways

FISU manages World Championship events in single sport formats, as well as major multisport events such as the Summer and Winter Universiades. AUS has a long and respected record of participation in FISU events.

The Summer Universiade, recognised as a legitimate pathway, has graduated many high profile, elite student-athletes to the Olympic and Commonwealth Games podiums. Organisationally, the Summer Universiade delivery model is a clone of the Olympic Games, complete with accreditation and outfitting hassles, delegation village living challenges, and transport, polyclinic and food-hall distractions. The event attracts around 10,000 athletes competing in 30, mostly Olympic, sports – so the Summer Universiade is Olympian in size as well (www.fisu.net).

The AIS is a major funding partner of AUS, evidencing the importance they put on the Universiade in respect to the national high performance pathway. In addition to AIS and AUS resources, the Universiade team delegation – the "Unirooms" – attracts multiple funding partners including universities and NSOs; a great example of multiple partner collaboration. The typical AUS Universiade program budget is between \$1.5 and \$2 million AUD, with variations caused by the event location and delegation size.

Basketball Australia Coach, Andrej Lemanis, who also coached the Unirooms men's team in the 2015 Universiade (South Korea), had high praise for the quality of the Games: "From a basketball perspective, the Summer Universiade is treated very seriously by all countries. It's a fantastic standard of competition and the environment itself is the best replica you can get of an Olympics" (<http://basketball.net.au/news-archive>).

Indeed, the Summer Universiade is a world standard competition, where the performance required to win a medal exceeds that required to win a medal at the Commonwealth Games in most sports (G. Maw, 2012).

The international pathway for elite students-athletes continues to expand. FISU's latest sport development initiative aims to create international competition opportunities for university teams that win national championships. This would enable Australian university teams that win a national championship to represent their university, in university branded competition wear at FISU World University Championship events. Considering the amount universities currently spend promoting their brands to international markets, this opportunity offers great value.

With this in mind, here is another strong driver for AUS and members to upgrade the quality of the national sporting program. This will ensure university teams that win national championships have won in a high quality, competitive championship format, and the qualification pathway to international levels has been robust.

Retaining our best and brightest

Most Australian NSOs will attest to the fact that many young athletes capable of enrolling in higher education opt to pursue overseas dual career opportunities, predominantly in the US collegiate system. The National Collegiate Athletes Association (NCAA) offers nearly 200,000 "full-ride" (or full tuition, living, meal and study support) athletic scholarships annually (www.ncaa.org). Approximately 10% of these full-rides are taken up by international students, and although we do not know what percentage of the international cohort are Australians, it is clear that many are – perhaps 10 to 15%.

The destination of Australian student-athletes is not limited to the NCAA system; there are over 5,000 colleges/universities in the US and only 1,200 are NCAA affiliated. In fact, many more Australian student-athletes end up in smaller, less prestigious colleges, than in the more robust NCAA system (D. Knapp, 2011). A number of sport emigrants, when interviewed, stated that if Australian universities offered a more robust, competitive sporting program, they would have chosen an Australian institution over an overseas offer (D. Knapp, 2011).

This is another driver for change and motivation to upgrade the national university sport program in order to retain more of our best and brightest in the Australian higher education system. Better retention of those contemplating an overseas student-athlete offering will in-turn increase the size and depth of Australia's elite athlete talent pool.

A clear appetite for change

In the context of the AUG, many participants perceive binge drinking as a fun, playful, bonding experience and one that sees individuals drinking to fit in or to be accepted and achieve a sense of belonging (D. Anderson, 2017). Clearly, these are very powerful cultural drivers of behaviour, and very difficult to shift without totally revisiting the event delivery model and perhaps, aiming to create a new product.

In 2016, AUS once again facilitated seven regional forums, specifically to explore members' concerns about the desired brand, and actual image projected from the AUG. Members' feedback collected from these forums provided a strong evidence base of converging views, including:

- A willingness and appetite for change
- A desire to create a better quality sporting event where sport (not the party) becomes the priority for participants
- An understanding that the current AUG event format was carrying too much risk, owing to high levels of binge drinking; and
- A recognition that mitigating risk was a shared responsibility.

The multi-faceted drivers of change identified during the 2016 members' forums fit nicely into four main areas. It is interesting to note that the drivers identified by members (below), align very closely with several of the external drives identified above.

1. Research findings provide ample evidence there is an embedded culture of binge drinking that is unlikely to change without disrupting the current AUS delivery mode (D. Anderson, 2009; and S. Rundle-Thiele, 2016). In spite of implementing multiple programs and strategies aimed at mitigating risks associated with binge drinking at the AUG, levels of use and abuse of alcohol has not decreased since 2009 (S. Rundle-Thiele, 2016).
2. The higher education sector has become more risk averse generally, owing to the impact of *The Hunting Ground Australia Project* (www.thehuntinggroundaustralia.com.au/about-thg-australia/), several high profile legal cases involving serious sport related accidents including death, life-long disability and sexual assault. These incidences have had an impact on both members' and AUS sport programs.
3. The profile and value of sport and fitness on members' campuses has been elevated significantly in the last few years. Increasingly, sport and fitness activities are contributors to the quality of student experience, while Sport Delivery Agents' governance structures are more closely aligned with the university's strategic plan and management hierarchy on most campuses.
4. Investment in dual career education, or elite athlete and personal excellence (EAFU) programs has grown by 30% in the higher education sector since 2014 (USBA, 2016). There is a need for more high quality national and international competition opportunities in Australia, particularly for the under-23 age group. University sport can better cater for this cohort by improving the quality of its sport offering, without detracting from regional, or campus based, grass roots participation programs.

Subsequently, the AUS Board tasked the Sport Strategy Committee (SSC) with the job of developing a future event model in consultation with members and key stakeholders who embraced the appetite for change.

Creating a future event that “I would be proud to take my VC to”

National University Championship – Future Model

In total, four different models were developed and considered over the course of the year. Eventually, the SSC and members reached near unanimity for a two divisional national championship model. The interim name for the preferred model is *The National University Championship – Future Model* (T. Jermyn & D. Knapp, 2017), and the document detailing the new model is included in this paper as Appendix A.

The SSC, in consultation with members, developed a set of aims and objectives supporting the drivers of change, while providing a values framework for the new model. Those aims and objectives include:

- Implementing a program that attracts and retains the highest level of university athletes;
- Strengthening the engagement with National and State Sporting Organisations to ensure that the AUS championship events contribute to the domestic competition and pathway programs for elite athletes;
- Facilitating a professionally managed sporting competition that meets national standards;
- Improving the sport outcomes for student-athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers by creating a championship event that is respected within the national sporting landscape;
- Providing economic, social and cultural benefits to the host city and region;
- Mitigating risk and providing a safe, sports focused program for all Championship participants (including Championship workforce, athletes and partner organisations);
- Creating a financially sustainable event that balances the financial standing of students, members and the future sustainability of regional and national championship events; and
- In partnership with key stakeholders, attracting significant national, state and regional profile, media and commercial partners (T. Jermyn & D. Knapp, 2017).

Tim Lee, AUS Life Member and Director of Melbourne University Sport expressed these aims more succinctly when he said, “I just want to visualise a National Championship event that I am proud to invite my VC to, and one the student-athletes take great pride in representing their university at” (23 March, 2017).

The SSC recommended the *National University Championship – Future Model* to the AUS Finance, Audit & Risk Management Committee (FARM) for approval two weeks in advance of the 13 February Board meeting. FARM subsequently recommended the model for the Board’s approval with the following motion:

That the Board agree to:

1. *Endorse the two divisional National University Championship model;*
2. *Authorise management to continue to develop the Model to achieve the aims and objectives of the change agenda;*

3. *Continue communications with the membership and key stakeholders with a view to implementing the two divisional championship model in 2018; and*
4. *Locate Divisions 1 and 2 on the Gold Coast for an initial consolidation period of two years - subject to successful negotiations with Tourism & Events Queensland (AUS Board Minutes, February 2017).*

The motion passed unanimously.

Conclusion

After 25 years, the 2017 AUG will be the last delivered in its traditional format; and there will be a number of changes implemented in the 2017 event aimed at supporting the transition to the National Championship model for full implementation in 2018.

A number of transitional strategies will apply to the 2017 AUG with the aim of improving the quality and competitiveness of the sporting program, while mitigating risk in a number of areas. For example, the results from the 2017 AUG will have a major influence on whether teams qualify for Division 1 or Division 2 status under the new model in 2018.

There will also be a de-emphasis of the traditional AUG social program, with sport scheduled into the evening where possible, and more alternative evening activities for student-athletes to enjoy.

Monash University, whose management staff have been influential drivers of the change agenda, has adopted a set of team management principles. AUS Director and Director of Team Monash Martin Doulton outlined these principles at the SSC Meeting on 4 November 2016 – all of which will be in place this year, including:

- evidence that the University has undertaken a comprehensive risk assessment of its attendance at an AUS sanctioned event;
- evidence that the University has in place a suite of Local Incident Management Protocols to meet the identified risks and that a comprehensive pre-departure and event checklist has been completed prior to the University teams' attendance at the event;
- evidence that the University has given formal approval for the individual students and teams to be entered; that the team management structure is compliant with required staffing ratios and that these staff are deemed competent (by the University) to manage the team on behalf of the University; and
- evidence that all University team managers and team administrators have completed the AUS Be the Influence program either online or on campus and/or a University developed team leadership program that includes the implementation of university approved incident management protocols.

It will be a requirement that all universities have some of these measures in place for the 2017 AUG, while all principles must be in place for the 2018 National Championships.

To conclude, AUS and members understand that the implementation of such a substantial change agenda will not overnight mitigate all risks associated with the AUG, and transform the quality of sport to extreme elite. Achieving the desired culture and behaviour changes will take time and persistence, and an ongoing commitment to best practice event and team management principles.

In due course, AUS and its member institutions strive to develop a National University Championship event that is a respected and valued addition to the national sporting landscape and elite student-athlete pathway.

Clearly, creating a new and improved event will be a challenge, and one size never fits all. However, as stated by Paul McJannett at the Eastern Regional Forum held in March 2017, "Australian Catholic University, with its multiple campus situation will face some unique challenges with team selections for the National Championship model, but we will find a way to make it work because we believe the model is right and the way of the future. We are excited about the proposed change."

Report ends

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June 2017

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Acronyms used in this paper

AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
AOC	Australian Olympic Committee
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
AUG	Australian University Games
AUS	Australian University Sport
BIT	Be the Influence (sport leadership and training program)
CERM	Centre for Tourism and Leisure Management
EAFU	Elite Athlete Friendly University program
FISU	International University Sports Federation
Go8	Group of Eight (8) Universities
IOC	International Olympic Committee
MQU	Macquarie University
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletics Association
NSOs	National Sporting Organisations
SSC	Sport Strategy Committee (AUS Board Committee)
THGAP	Hunting Ground Australia Project
VC	Vice Chancellor

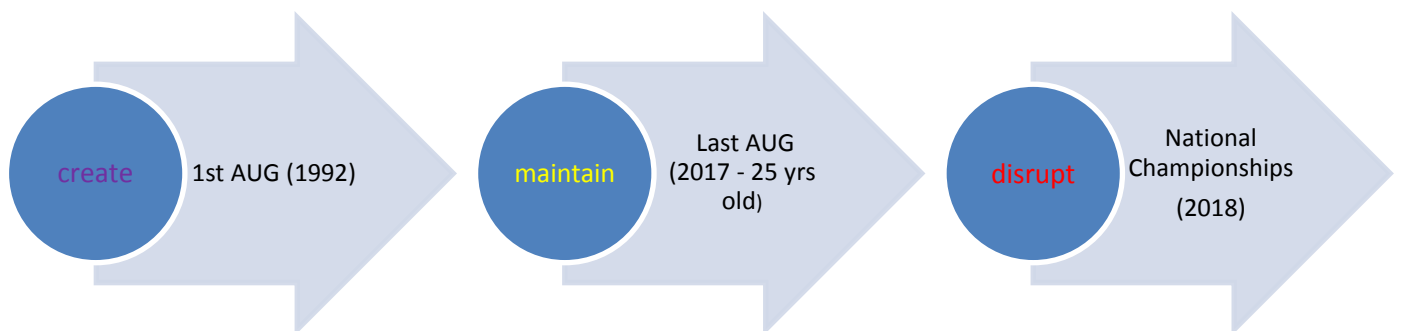
Appendix A

National University Championship

Future Model

Institutionalism - Change Theory

(P. DiMaggio & D. Powell, 1991)





PRINCIPAL PARTNER



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



PRINCIPAL PARTNER



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission