

State Infrastructure Plan



2018 Conference
9 June 2018



Introduce yourself

- Sport facility planning specialists. Don't dabble in town planning or development assessment. R.O.S.S.
- More importantly I have about 36 years of involvement in Little As.
- First athlete at my little country centre to go "all the way" U7 to U15. I was Ass Centre Mgr at 18. I've coached, I worked for LAQ as a DO and I'm now a proud dad of two little a's athletes. My daughter just received her 10year award. Still cttee member, coach, help set-up age marshal....just like all of you!

I don't want this to be a case of me being up here to preach at you. Interactive presentation – if you think I'm wrong – then challenge me. I'm thick-skinned and I'm certainly not precious. I have a pen and paper up here with me to add your thoughts as we go along. Ultimately, this is your Plan....not mine

But I will be using words like WE, US and OUR because the Plan is important to me.

Now as much as we are all about Family Fun and Fitness – who doesn't like a bit of competition. On most of the upcoming slides I'll be asking you to ID the centre. And I have prizes!

Today



Purpose and scope
Approach
Key findings and directions
Project outputs

WHERE IS THIS? Maryborough

Purpose and scope – why has LAQ sent us down this path

Approach – what have we done

Key findings and directions – what have we learnt

Project outputs – what will this Plan actually look like and how will you be able to use it to assist you

Purpose and scope



Sustainability and growth
Evidence-based decision-making
Realistic
Facilities for LAQ and QA

Where is this? ROMA

SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

LAQ want to ensure opportunities exist for VIBRANT GROWING CENTRES that have the facilities they need to deliver a range of quality products (centre-level activities, regional- and state-level competitions).

We don't want WHITE ELEPHANTS that are rarely used and similarly we don't want facilities that are flogged to death (where kids are turned away)

EVIDENCE-BASED

Whether it is you all as centres liaising with your local Councils, your schools, your Sport and Rec Advisors or knocking on the door of your local State Govt reps you will always get a much better reception when you have a strong data driven demand for your infrastructure requirements. This Strategy will assist you in this manner

Similarly, LAQ need to paint a clear picture of prioritised facility demand so that they can clearly advocate for themselves and on your behalf in discussions with State Govt regarding optimal investment

REALISTIC

Easy for us to write a Strategy suggesting every centre needs a full synthetic track. Realise this is clearly non-sensical. The priorities have to recognise the resource realities of centres, schools and councils. And it's not only \$ related, resource realities include considerations like how much land is available? Do we even have enough hands to undertake maintenance?

LAQ and QA

Importantly, State Govt has required us to also consider the facilities required to deliver QA activities. By far, the vast majority of the work revolves around LAQ but we have also outlined the facility requirements for QA at local, state and higher level



WHERE IS THIS? Cassowary Coast (Mourilyan, south of Innisfail)

As I have already alluded to - this is 'Your Plan for You'. So, it is not surprising that engagement at centre-level has been the key focus for the project.

CENTRE SURVEY

Survey monkey has been circulating now for many months – to be honest been real tussle dragging in returns. If there is anyone sitting here who isn't sure whether their Centre has returned please come and see me at lunch

CENTRE VISITS

Between two of our staff we have visited many of your centre facilities. Certainly not all. I know we have both had trips where we did almost 1500kms in three days and there have certainly been days when we've fallen asleep with visions of parallel black painted lanes and concrete circles.

LAQ STAFF INTERVIEWS

Have also undertaken interviews with key LAQ staff along the way

No.1 Key finding



We are all DIFFERENT
...and that's totally ok



WHERE IS THIS? Laidley

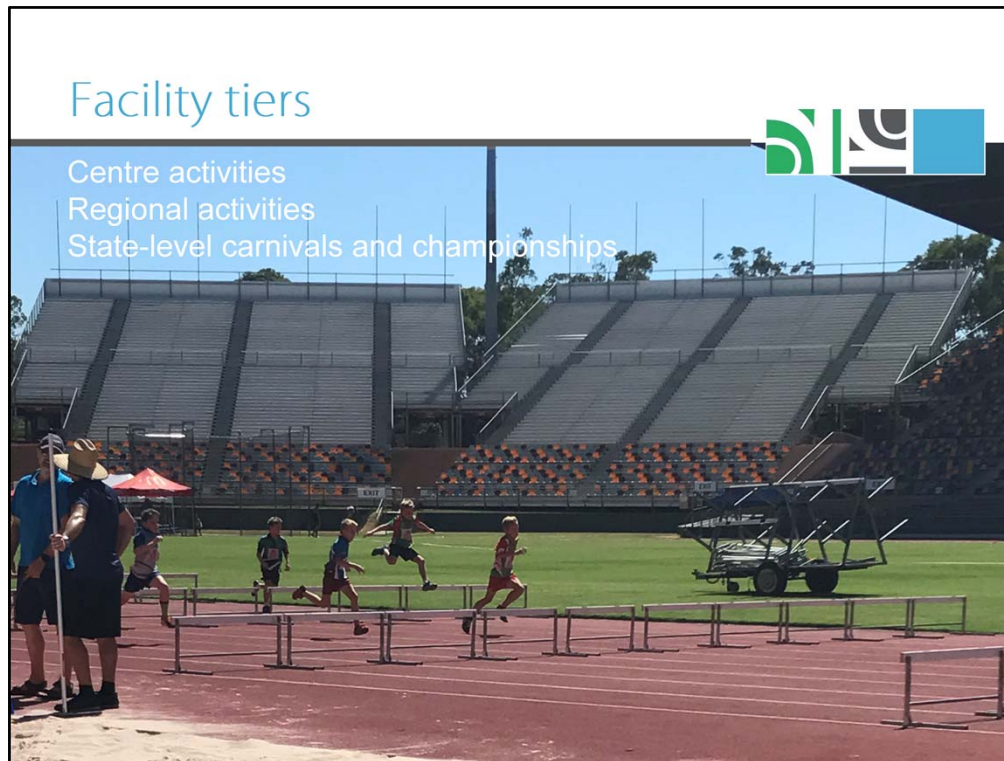
I am throwing this slide in very early in the presentation on purpose because I think it is so important.

When it comes to preferred facility provision a one-size-fits-all 'cookie cutter' approach simply won't work.

- Some centres run mid-week in a short timespan, some spread out across more time on a weekend. Some have access to lights, some don't.
- Some run four events each week, some run 5, some used to include dinner in the program!
- Some host training, some don't.
- Some centres have access to lots of facilities, some compete with very little.

But with all of this – that's ok. We don't need to necessarily be comparing our facilities with our neighbours.

If you have a strong happy membership base and good retention rates then it probably doesn't matter that your discus area has an old indoor cricket net strung up between portable posts rather than an IAAF approved mega-cage



No prizes for this one...

What do we need to run our sport?

CENTRE LEVEL: expectations so different. For one centre a key priority was access to new photo finish equipment at their full synthetic facility for another it was simply to have one concrete circle rather than a wobbly line drawn on the grass.

We need facilities that meet our own needs as centres to deliver the product that we think our members want. Example – Wynnum less than 15mins drive away there is another centre. Both pretty strong. Offer different products. Mid-week at night v sat afternoon. Families choose what works for them

In next slide will talk more about centre-level requirements

REGIONAL LEVEL: a key product of LAQ is the ability for our kids to compete against and with others and to visit different venues. Regional relays and regional champs offer these opportunities. IMPORTANTLY here again they are different. We have some regional-level events that are far smaller than some centre weekly activities

What is key is that there is at least one venue within each regional suitable for hosting regional level events. In SEQ often means a large facility with synth track and significant spectator seating. In other areas might mean quality grass track with appropriate throws and jumps facilities

STATE LEVEL EVENTS: these are our LAQ-run events like Spring Carnival, junior and senior carnivals and pentathlons. For these events athletes expect full synthetic facilities

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: State relays and State champs. Here again expectation of full synthetic and significant parking, spectator facilities and officials facilities

Capacity benchmarks



WHERE IS THIS? O'Quinn St Toowoomba

To ensure the document can provide guidance for new centres, existing centres, and help schools and councils. We have presented indicative facility benchmarks depending on the size of the centre. Now, again I STRESS these will all depend on the way that you and your members want your centres to run. They are a guide only.

One point I would like to stress is that centres shouldn't necessarily be looking to upgrade their facilities purely to be able to host regional-level events. If meeting the needs of your centre means things like synthetic approaches or a track with more lanes is required that's ok but it should be driven by centre-level demand

Capacity benchmarks



Facility	Up to 50	51-150	151-300	300+
Track	5-lane 200m (with 100m straight or separate area)	8-lane 400m	8-lane 400m with opportunity for front and back straight events	8-lane 400m with opportunity for front and back straight events (and potential extra straight)
LJ/TJ	Single approach (grass)	Two approaches (grass or synthetic)	Two approaches (synthetic)	Four approaches (potentially dual ended synthetic)
HJ	Single grass approach	Two grass (or synthetic) approaches	Three grass (or synthetic) approaches	Four grass (or synthetic) approaches
DIS/SP	One concrete circle for each	One concrete circle for each	Two concrete circles for each	Two concrete circles for each
JAV	One grass approach	One grass approach	Two grass (or synthetic) approaches	Two grass (or synthetic) approaches

These are guiding principles only

REITERATE - completely depends on how your centre chooses to operate

Capacity benchmarks



Facility	Up to 50	51-150	151-300	300+
Toilets	2 pedestals	4 pedestals	8 pedestals	10 pedestals
Storage*	2-bay	2 to 3 bay	3 to 4 bay	4+ bays
Canteen [#]	Non-essential	Small servery	Medium servery	Large servery
Parking	Up to 30 spaces	Up to 90 spaces	Up to 180 spaces	200+ spaces
Spectators	Shaded spectator seating near each event site and finish line. However, ideally, most spectators are assisting as age marshals and at event sites			
Others	What about areas for coaching and game play, undercover areas for activities?			

* Largely dependent on the number of bulky items such as high jump mats, hurdles, tractors and/or mowers

[#] Many centres will function with a simple servery with pre-packaged items rather than a 'traditional' canteen. This is completely a centre decision

What have we learnt



Where is this?? Ravenshoe

81% surveys responded. Non-respondents chased up over the phone for direct interviews. Now down to 10.....

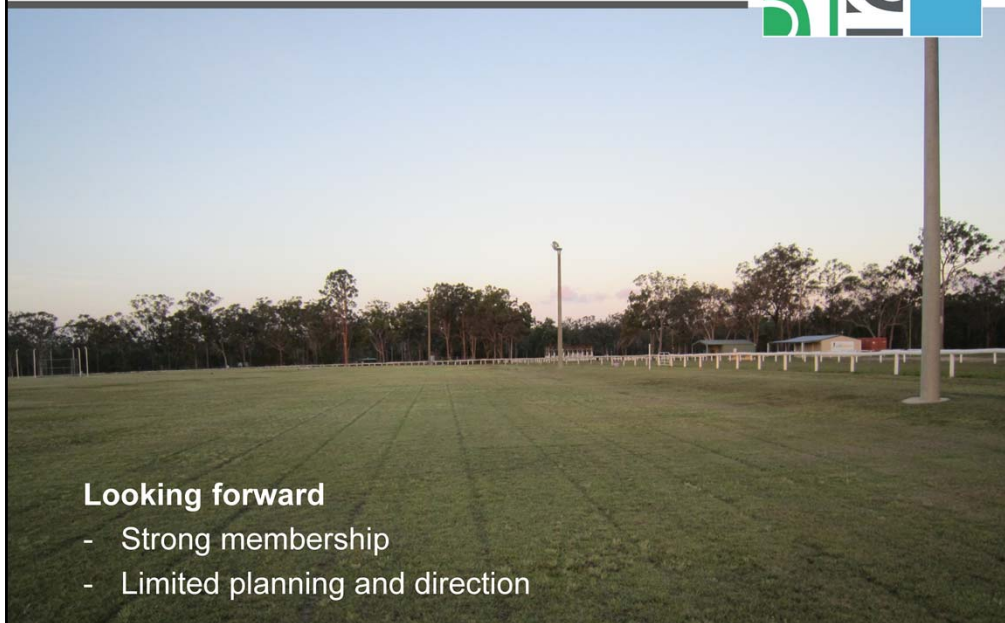
STATE OF PLAY

When we do this style of surveys we generally expect a filter of negativity to overlay the results. When people review things like centre facilities they often just look at the issues and only report on those

One of the key questions in the survey was to indicate whether your current facilities are suitable. Then 13 different facility types (like track, canteen, sp, lighting etc). Honestly predicted that well more than half would have resulted in NOT SUITABLE. Amazingly, not a single facility type considered more not suitable than suitable. Lighting was the closest with 34% suitable, 26% not suitable and 40% do not have.

Quite remarkable results.

What have we learnt



Looking forward

- Strong membership
- Limited planning and direction

Where is this?? Burrum District (Torbanlea)

LOOKING FORWARD

- Only four centres predicting membership decreases and almost half expecting increases. This tells me that we do need to ensure suitable quality facilities
- Of concern less than ¼ being guided by a development plan or business plan. Means the centre can be a bit rudderless jumping from one decision or priority to the next as cttee personnel change. Likely to be lacking a clear strong direction. (For those coming to my workshop after lunch – this is what we will be working on)

What have we learnt



Training

- 83% offer
- Need to ensure flexible facilities

Where is this?? North Rockhampton

TRAINING

- Far more than I would have expected – about 80%
- Highlights the need for flexible facilities
- Best coaching and training doesn't necessarily need to use the throws circle, jav runway or lj approach

What have we learnt



'TOP 3' Facility improvements

1 - LJ/TJ approaches (new and upgrades)	33%
2 - Discus/SP facility development	24%
3 - Installation of lights	23%
4 - Additional storage	22%
5 - Toilet upgrades	20%

Each Centre asked to list top 3 facility requirements. Then tallied up the top threes together

Here again – there is nothing that is a standout facility requirement.

None of these most common improvement requests are off the “Taj Mahal” wish list.

Realistic and achievable and readily attract funding

What have we learnt

Carnivals – 59%



Where is this?? Ipswich

COMPETITIONS

- Highlighting that most centres have appropriate facilities – 59% have hosted carnivals
- For the 40% that haven't hosted a carnival most just wrote NO. But there were 4 that specifically outlined that their facilities were not up to scratch for a carnival while 5 suggested that they didn't have the human resources to host a carnival. AND again – that's ok. Not everyone needs the burden

What have we learnt



Where is this? Biloela

Interesting analysis

I wanted to know whether centres based at schools were any more or less pleased with their facilities than those at councils

- Should note: we also have unis, tafe, state govt

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 43% expect increase at Council AND 59% at schools. But no clear comments that seemed to differentiate between the two and explain why?

SUITABILITY

- Quite remarkably across all the event facilities (track, shot, jumps etc) results almost identical. Tells me that little a's centres have been able to develop the track and field facilities they need at schools (and clearly schools can then get advantage from that)
- Biggest differences were in ancillary facilities. This probably only reinforces what you might have guessed – next slide

What have we learnt



School v Council

School	Council
Toilets	Canteen
Storage	Clubhouse
Parking	Lighting !!

Where is this? Pittsworth

SCHOOL – toilets, storage (school benefits from sharing aths facilities like HJ mats), parking
COUNCIL – canteen (70 to 39), clubhouse (52 to 30) and lighting (46 to 11).

For those at school facilities or considering going to school facilities – don't necessarily shy away just because you might be looking for a lit venue. More and more schools looking to embrace community groups and erect lights. Also can be funded by State Govt



Where is this? Cairns Barlow Park

QA chasing more athletes training and competing at synthetic venues. They don't shy away from this at all!

Preferred model is regional centres with quality venues with all required infrastructure (e.g. photofinish).

Then in SEQ mix of local level synth venues (predominantly schools) where athletes can train and there can be local style competitions, then high-level venues that can host QA meets to offer in addition to Brisbane meets

With Mackay now under construction, outside SEQ view the only real missing link as
ROCKHAMPTON

Within SEQ continuing issue Bris North, Ipswich and Gold Coast

Quality grass facilities available for local training where no nearby access to synthetic exists

What does this mean for Little A's delivery? Would be great to think there would be a centre based at each synthetic venue (both regional and within SEQ at the local schools). Issue would be cost of hiring and ensuring appropriate access if carnivals and casual training became more popular. May require some assistance from LAQ in negotiating suitable arrangements between centres and landlords (be that Councils or schools).

Key directions



Continue to focus on event facilities

Where is this one? Hervey Bay (Dundowran)

EVENT FACILITIES

I was really impressed to see lj/tj approaches, suitable dis/sp facilities and lighting as the top three priorities

Continue to focus on these areas and track upgrades as this is where our young athletes actually “do” our sport. Tracks in particular need to be attractive (and safe) if you want to ensure high levels of retention.

Interesting – when I talk about facility planning for our football codes – I would generally be saying the opposite. They need to focus on suitable facilities for referees and ensure that there are car parking, shaded seating and toilets for spectators. For us – if you are running a really successful centre you won’t have too many ‘spectators’. You will have engaged parents and carers moving from event to event and helping out.

Additionally, it is far cheaper to be focused on upgrades such as synthetic jump approaches and permanent cages than it is to be chasing a clubhouse or full service canteen



Where is this? Marlin Coast (Smithfield SHS Townsville)

FLEXIBILITY

No I'm not suggesting you all bring in yoga instructors. Think flexible facilities

Almost every centre is now hosting training. And I would hope that everyone includes some form of coaching. SO

- Why do we only build single throws circle in individual cages and not just a long line of concrete perhaps with one area in the middle where a cage can be put up for competition days
- Why do we put the long length of our jump pits hard up against fences and the track so that we can't use the maximum width
- Why do we have no large undercover areas where we can do games and technical work without worrying about the weather
- Why do so few of us think to use the back straight to run shorter sprint and hurdles races

I'm certainly not suggesting you should go and rip down facilities and start again. However, if you have aging facilities that are due for replacement just have a think about some innovative opportunities that might just offer you something different/new or exciting

Key directions



Where is this? Browns Plains

FOCUS ON YOU

It hasn't really come through in the surveys but I have heard it conversations – there are a few centres looking at facility upgrades so that they can host carnivals. That's ok if it is upgrades that also meet the centre demand. However, if you are building a second discus cage for regionals when you only need 1 – that's a complete waste of resources. And to be frank there appear to be enough quality facilities capable of hosting our regional carnivals in each Region

Similarly, if you think the provision of shaded areas is an important aspect for your centre then build shade structures and plant trees right in the middle of the oval. I love this!

Ultimately, our resources are short – use them to grow your association and support your members



Where is this? Gympie

KEEP NEGOTIATING

I was really impressed that more than 80% of respondents had held discussions with their landlords (council and schools). Many respondents listed off the facilities that had been achieved through these discussions - and even better very few of you noted negative experiences (other than being told there was no funding available in the budget)

How many of you have invited Councillors or key school admin staff to you centre days or carnivals?? HANDS UP

Nothing gets things done quicker than having the decision makers see what you want them to see.

- You need a toilet block – you invite them along when you know it will be wet and kids are lined up in the rain needing to ‘go’.
- You need more shade, invite them down when it’s nearing 40 degrees and everyone is dripping in sweat.
- You need irrigation, wait until the season is nearing a close and the track has been flogged to death and invite them down.

Anyone ever thought to invite Simon or any of the other LAQ staff along to these negotiations to add a little more ‘strength’ to your arguments

Tactical negotiations can go a long way to achieving upgrades



Where is this? Monto

UPGRADES and SINKING FUNDS

HANDS UP – which centres have a sinking fund set aside for full cost facility upgrades??

Sporting organisations that manage specialist synthetic surfaces such as athletics tracks and hockey venues are becoming more and more proficient at setting up sinking funds to ensure that adequate resources are available for full resurfacing at the end of useful life. Pretty clear now that many of you need to start doing the same sort of asset management budgeting.

Reality is that facility upgrades (as opposed to developing new facilities that more directly increase participation) are lower on the local and State Govt funding priority list. Let's face it these folk like to cut red ribbons on flash new facilities.

Far better to budget for track upgrades, replacing sand in jump pits or rebuilding cracked concrete circles and to seek funding for 'real' new developments such as lighting and potentially amenities facilities

Project outputs



Where is this? Wynnum

OUTPUTS

So what does this thing look like?

Two parts

1- FRONT END – Strategic directions

- tiered hierarchy of what makes a good Centre facility
- high-level facility demand and gap analysis
- articulate the importance of planning and close liaison with Councils and State

Govt Sport and Rec

- overall implementation and action plan. How to achieve the key recommendations and ensure quality outcomes for little athletics 'customers'

2- BACK END –Analysis

- Region by region with each centre alphabetical (membership data, current facilities, key facility issues and actions). So - you will actually have a section in the Plan that outlines the key facility directions for each of your centres. Something specific and concrete to strive for

The document will be something that you as a centre can use to help drive your planning and decision-making and grant applications

- and of course LAQ can use the doc as a key planning tool and to provide suitable support and advocacy for you as centres