



Children  
at Play

## Why is Play Australia collaborating in the National Sports Convention in 2020?

An open letter to Play Australia's diverse members and stakeholders from Kieran Brophy, Assistant Director – Play Australia.

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*Last week Play Australia celebrated the announcement that the National Sports Convention (NSC) is gearing up for another exciting agenda in November 2020, after COVID19 postponed initial July plans.*

*This gathering is a significant event on the national sporting calendar, bringing together leading thinkers and specialists on all things sport and active recreation to discuss shared challenges and to shape future priorities post-COVID19*

*This year the program is being offered as three one day forums in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne with online participation options to embrace our new normal.*

### ***So what does all this have to do with play?***

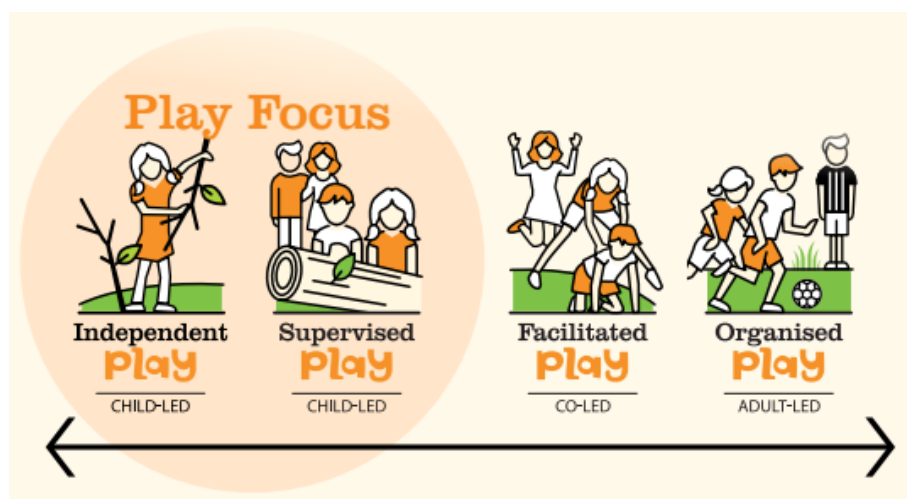
The relationship between sport and play is a fascinating one; in our humble opinion sport can be generally summed up as *organised play which is adult-led*.

Although in more recent years we have also witnessed the rise of informal or social sport that promotes more facilitated play models with children/participants taking a stronger lead in the organisation of games.



**Play Australia loves all kinds of play and recognises that people, particularly our developing children and young people, benefit from a wide array of play experiences (both structured and unstructured) across diverse settings to provide challenges and properly grow their social, emotional, cognitive and physical capabilities.**

In our recently launched [five year strategy](#) we highlight our own play focus, as being on child-led play that is either supervised or unsupervised by parents/caregivers



The above graphic represents our play continuum that depicts where our play focus lies in relation to organised play (or sport).

**Play Australia is committed to building a healthier Australia through play – which means we want to help more children and young people to play freely outside every day, so they can improve their physical activity levels and mental wellbeing, as well as becoming more meaningfully connected to their communities.**

When we consider promoting increased physical activity (PA) levels through play, we must recognise the leadership provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in developing the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, to create more active people for a healthier world.

Play Australia follows the WHO's recommendation to adopt a system-based approach to ensure our interventions create long-term impact by promoting their four key themes:

**1. Active societies** which focuses on creating positive shifts in social norms and attitudes towards PA.

**2. Active environments** which focuses on creating and maintaining supportive spaces and places for PA.

**3. Active people** which focuses on creating and promoting access to opportunities and programs for PA.

**4. Active systems** which focuses on creating and strengthening governance and policy enablers for effective and coordinated action.

*What this means is that Play Australia is working to connect our play system to enhance play, physical activity and health outcomes for everyone.*



A system-based approach allows us to work collaboratively (from global to local partnerships) and build a national physical activity strategy that values all kinds of play (structured and unstructured) to improve the physical literacy of Australians and get more people moving across all life-stages.

This is why Play Australia is collaborating in the National Sports Convention so we can actively contribute to our shared national and global agenda to support more people moving more often.

This year the NSC involves key representatives from sport, active recreation, the fitness industry, active travel groups, universities, the education sector, government (planners and policymakers), private industry and many others.

**And one thing COVID19 has hammered home, is that TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**

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*A special thanks to Martin Sheppard and his team at Smart Connection Consultancy for keeping the NSC on the 2020 calendar and collaborating with Play Australia on an exciting program that incorporates play.*

*Check out the [full program here](#) featuring Robyn Monro-Miller, President of the International Play Association (and Play Australia Board Member) as well as our very own Barb Champion, Executive Director of Play Australia.*

*We welcome and encourage our Play Australia members and stakeholders to attend.*