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Dr Ken Henry AC  
Australia in the Asian Century Task Force  
PO Box 6500  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Henry

### **Submission to the Australia in the Asian Century Task Force**

I refer to the Australia in the Asian Century Issues paper (December 2011) concerning what action Australia should take to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges arising from the Asian century which is already unfolding.

Netball appreciates the opportunity to provide comments that may assist in shaping and strengthening Australia's future and enhancing the quality of Australia's engagement with Asia.

### **Background**

As Australia's leading female sport, netball strives to deliver fair, safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive environments for all Australians. We believe that netball offers the enjoyment of participation, a sense of belonging and life-long involvement – no matter whether that's as a player, coach, official, administrator, volunteer or fan.

Netball in Australia (Netball Australia and the State/Territory Netball Associations) are committed to leading social change, strengthening and building capacity and capability in communities and providing innovative and sustainable netball programs to empower women and girls. Netball can make a real difference in the lives of women and girls.

Netball is ranked as the leading women's participation team sport and the top team based sport in Australia for 15 to 24 year olds. Over 1.2 million participants enjoy the game nationally and Australia has been dominant on the international stage since 1963. Netball Australia has more than 330,000 registered members; 5,000 clubs nationally; 570 Associations; and eight member organisations.

Netball Australia is committed to advancing the sport of netball internationally. Australia has an obligation, as a world leader in netball, to share our knowledge and expertise to support international harmony, international relations and build capacity within other nations.

Historically, Netball Australia has provided technical expertise to other netball countries to assist with existing netball programs, primarily in the areas of athlete, coach and umpire development.

However, sport is increasingly being recognised and used as a low-cost and high-impact tool in humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts. Sport can play a significant role as a promoter of social integration and economic development in different geographical, cultural and political contexts.



Sport is a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and networks, and to promote ideals of peace, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice. Sport can be used to reach out to those most in need including refugees, victims of conflict and natural catastrophes, the impoverished, persons with disabilities, victims of racism and discrimination as well as persons living with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

By way of examples, the Australian Sports Commission has partnered with Netball Australia to deliver the Australian Sports Outreach Program in Samoa, Tonga and India. This program aims to:

- Help build the capacity of committed individuals and organisations to manage and deliver activities;
- Use quality and inclusive sport and physical activities; and
- Contribute to improved leadership, health promotion and social cohesion.

As part of the Pacific Netball Partnership, Netball Australia in conjunction with Netball New Zealand and the Australian Sports Commission have developed a Netball for Development Framework to guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of sport for development projects. This framework has been utilised in Samoa, Vanuatu and Cook Islands to establish a strategic approach to capacity building. Capacity building activities are focused on three levels:

1. The individual: human resources development, e.g. training coaches;
2. The organisation: organisational development, e.g. integrating life skills training in processes and program of member countries; and
3. The broader system: institutional development, e.g. capacity building to partner with the government, non-governmental organisations or the private sector to implement netball projects.

As a legacy from the Pacific Netball Partnership, Netball Australia will utilise the framework to build the capacity of member countries within the Asian Region and other countries (determined on need and available funding).

### **Asian Region**

Netball is the largest female community based sporting organisation in the world, with more than 21 million participants world-wide, across 70 nations playing. There are 5 Regions - Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe and Oceania - each with a respective Regional Federation.

In the Asian region, member countries include Australia, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Brunei, Chinese Taipei, Dubai, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In order to engage closely with our Asian neighbors, Netball Australia is the secretariat for the Asian Netball Federation and represents the Asian Region on the International Federation of Netball Associations Board.

The increased importance of the Asian region for netball was recognised with Singapore winning the rights to host the 2011 World Netball Championships.

The International Federation of Netball Associations won the Brand Presentation at the International Sports Event Management Awards with the other nominees being the AFC Football Cup 2011, World 9 Ball Championship, 2nd Asian Beach Games Muscat and Emir Cup 2011. The World Netball Championships won

as it had best demonstrated the use of sports event branding to drive consumer awareness, customer loyalty and established a positive brand image in the minds of spectators.

Examples of recent activity in the Asian region include:

- Al Ain played host to the 26th Intergulf Championships in March 2012. The Intergulf Championship is a non-funded competition which brings together teams from around the gulf, including Bahrain, Oman, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al Ain.
- The Punjab Netball Association hosted the 10th National Women's Netball Championship 2012 at LUMS University, Lahore in February 2012, under the supervision of Pakistan Netball Federation.
- The Pakistan Netball Federation organised Junior National Girls U-17 (Regional) Netball Championship in Islamabad, in collaboration with Australian Sports Commission.
- Commitment to develop a position on issues that impact on women in the Asian region, including developing a policy on adapted playing uniforms for religious and cultural reasons.
- Building relationships with influential government, corporate and community leaders in the Asian region.

Australia has provided guidance on sports leadership to assist women develop their leadership skills and confidence. Examples include:

- Netball Australia's National Director of Umpiring attended the Nations Cup event in Singapore to work with identified umpires in the Asian Region.
- A number of coaching and umpiring workshops were delivered as part of the Hong Kong Tri Series Tournament in January 2012. Coaches, Players and Umpires Working Together, Preliminaries and Protocols of the Game, Rules in Action, Observation and discussion of a "friendly" game, Game analysis and statistics, Making training productive, creative and meaningful, and Development of a home fitness program for players.
- Netball Australia's Coach and Athlete Development Manager delivered a Coach Presenters course in Singapore in February 2012.
- As part of funding received by the Australian Malaysian Institute as well as International netball federation's Net Effect funding, Netball Australia personnel delivered coach training to identified coaches and teachers to deliver NetSetGO! (Netball Australia's Junior Development Program). Thirty coaches undertook a two day coaching workshop which included delivery of the program and drafting of a Malaysia NetSetGO! Pilot/ Development Plan.
- Malaysian Netball Association will be piloting NetSetGO! in 14 locations throughout Malaysia for girls aged 5 – 6 years old.
- Netball Australia also facilitated a planning session with key Malaysian Netball Association personnel and stakeholder to identify the barriers and opportunities that exist to further grow and develop netball throughout Malaysia.
- Netball Australia works closely with the NAZ Foundation, which is a New Delhi based non-governmental organisation working to address sexual health issues. NAZ received funding from Australian Sports Outreach Program to assist with the delivery of 'Goal', an Empowerment Program that uses netball and life skills education to transform the lives of young underprivileged girls in India. Netball Australia staff travelled to India to deliver capacity building sessions for Goal netball coaches in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

- Netball Australia's International Development Manager facilitated a 3-week internship on the Goal program, to act as a mentor and document activities conducted at each of the sites in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

## ***Opportunities***

### **China**

China is currently missing on the World and Asia map for netball. Given the popularity of the sport in over 70 countries and that it is a key sport for girls and women, both the International Federation of Netball Associations and the Asian Netball Federation are keen to see the sport of netball being introduced to China. This strategy aligns with the Chinese Government's focus on the health and wellbeing of the population.

### **World Netball Championships 2015 – Sydney, Australia**

Sydney recently won the rights to host the 14th World Netball Championships in 2015. This event will give netball a unique opportunity to showcase the remarkable skill and athleticism of the world's best players, and inspire future generation's netballers for years to come.

A principal motivation and benefit for hosting the World Netball Championships 2015 is to build and enhance the brand of netball in the Asia and Oceania regions.

Netball Australia has secured significant funding from the New South Wales Government, through Events New South Wales to support, amongst other initiatives, development and education programs and resources for the Asian Region.

In terms of legacy, development and transfer of knowledge, Netball Australia will employ a part time Development Officer for the Asian region. The purpose of this role will be to focus on development of strategic plans for each member country; delivery of development and education programs in umpire development, coach development and high performance; development and implementation of participation strategies; maintenance of Netball Asia web site and other communications; administration of Asian Youth and Asian Netball Championships; and secure funding for the implementation of Netball Asia programs. All resources developed from this strategy will be made available to developing netball nations globally.

With the Australia hosting the Asian Football Confederation Cup in January 2015, the Cricket World Cup in February and March 2015, and the World Netball Championship in August 2015 there ought to be a number of opportunities to leverage Asian tourism campaigns; Austrade initiatives such as the Business Club Australia; AusAID and the Australian Sports Commission Sport and International Development programs; and Multi-Cultural Affairs opportunities such as Harmony Day.

### **Net Effect Program**

The International Netball Federation offers grants to develop netball worldwide. The Net Effect program is aimed at providing support regional federations to allow them to make the most of opportunities to undertake development activities. The program offers grants (up to £5000) in five categories (1) Coaching,

(2) Umpiring, (3) Governance, Club Development or Administration, (4) Event Management, and (5) Empowering Women Initiatives.

With investment, there is considerable scope and prospects to expand this program in the Asian region and build capacity and capability.

### **Challenges**

As identified in the Australia in the Asian Century Issues paper (December 2011, page 5) future prospects depend on a range of interrelated drivers and constraints. In Netball' Australia's views these are exacerbated for women and children as many opportunities remain elusive for them purely as a result of their gender and associated socio-cultural norms which result in lower living standards, debt and poverty, unequal access to political and religious power, occupation and health facilities, higher mortality rates, and disparity in schooling.

The World Bank's 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development<sup>1</sup> found that;

*The lives of girls and women have changed dramatically over the past quarter century. The pace of change has been astonishing in some areas, but in others, progress toward gender equality has been limited—even in developed countries.*

*This year's World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development argues that gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. It is also smart economics. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative.*

Regardless of what policy frameworks and actions the Australian government adopts, there is a critical need to consider gender disparities and constraints, along with the transformative role sport can play.

Netball appreciates the opportunity to provide comment and looks forward to ongoing involvement.

If you require further information, please contact me on phone (03) 8621 86009, or email [infonet@netball.asn.au](mailto:infonet@netball.asn.au).

Yours sincerely

Nadine Cohen  
Head of Strategy & Government Liaison

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<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0,,menuPK:7778074~pagePK:7778278~piPK:7778320~theSitePK:7778063~contentMDK:22851055,00.html>