

Social and Economic Value of State Sport Centres Trust

PUBLIC REPORT

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IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST





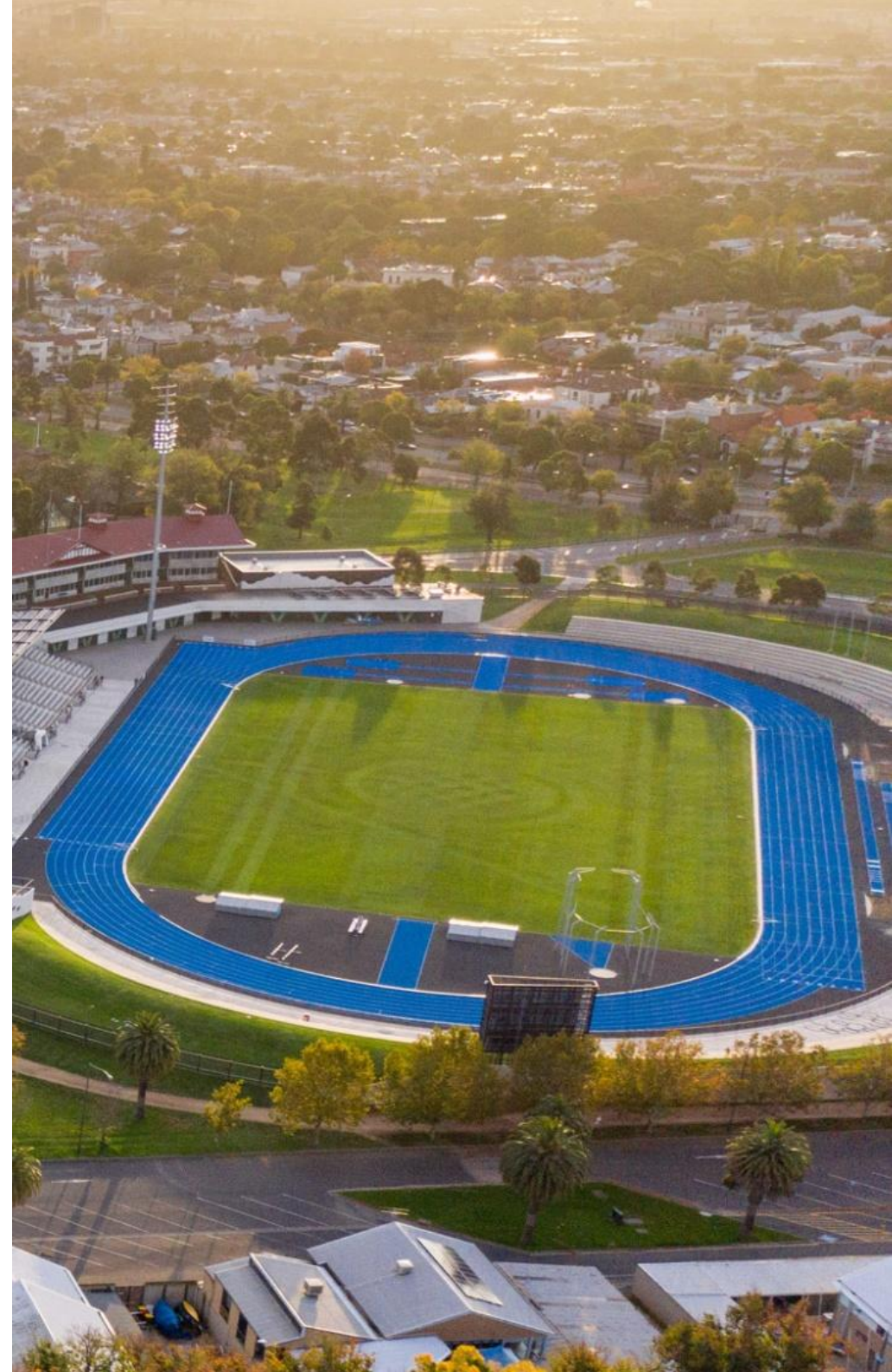
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

BDO and State Sport Centres Trust pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work, and connect; the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples. We pay respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nations people and their continuous and inseparable connection to the land, its waterways, and skies.

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Executive summary



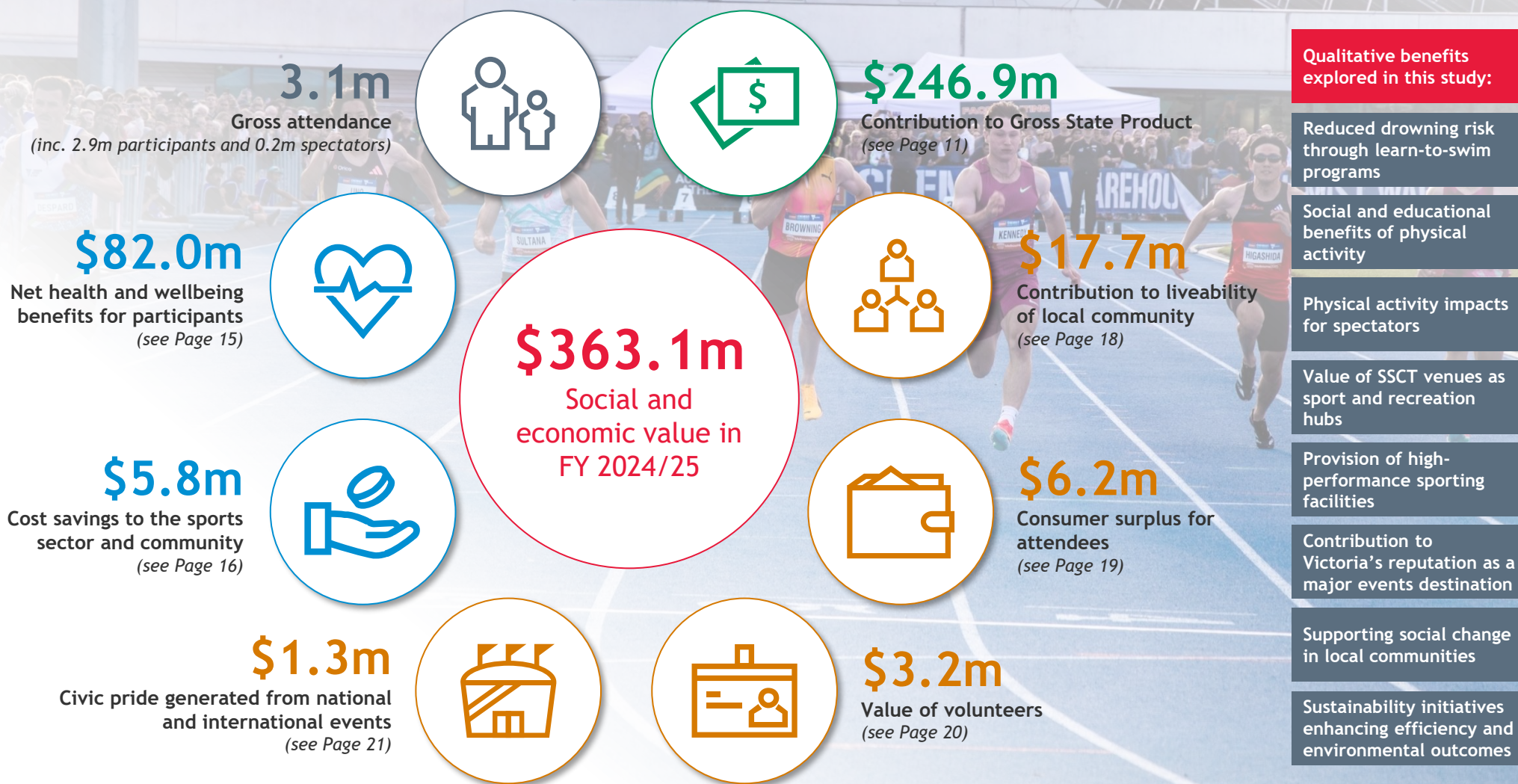
Executive Summary

State Sport Centres Trust (SSCT) manages and operates four of Victoria's most visited community and elite sporting venues. These venues played a critical role in the State's sporting landscape by providing sport and recreation access to 3.1 million individuals during the 2024/25 financial year. The venues housed 46 tenant organisations, hosted 58 major events and more than 4,000 other events and functions, and relied on the support of 2,444 volunteers.

	Gross attendance	Major events	Other events and functions	Tenant organisations	Volunteers
Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre	1,545,000	23	2,347	24	655
Lakeside Stadium	151,000	6	262	10	540
State Netball and Hockey Centre	150,000	12	1,174	5	68
Knox Regional Sports Park	1,235,000	17	214	7	1,181
Total	3,081,000	58	3,997	46	2,444

Executive Summary

Activities enabled by the venues delivered significant estimated social and economic value of \$363.1 million to Victoria in the 2024/25 financial year. This only considers those benefits quantified in this study, meaning the true value of the State Sport Centres Trust would be significantly more if the qualitative benefits explored in this study were quantified.



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Introduction



SSCT's role as a state sporting trust

SSCT operates four state-owned sports venues in Victoria - Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC), Lakeside Stadium including the State Athletics Centre, State Netball and Hockey Centre, and Knox Regional Sports Park including the State Basketball Centre. These venues host a diverse range of community and high-performance sporting events, activities, and programs.

State Sport Centres Trust

SSCT is a statutory authority established under the State Sport Centres Act 1994. Governed by a board of Trustees, the Trust manages, operates, and maintains four state-owned sporting venues in Victoria: MSAC, Lakeside Stadium including the State Athletics Centre, State Netball and Hockey Centre, and Knox Regional Sports Park, which includes the State Basketball Centre.

SSCT's mission, assets, and operations stand apart from other Victorian sporting trusts such as Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust (MOPT), Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust (MCGT), and Kardinia Park Stadium Trust (KPST). While those trusts primarily focus on hosting iconic sporting and entertainment events, SSCT prioritises year-round community access. SSCT venues provide schools, grassroots clubs, professional teams and Victorian residents access to world-class facilities - 365 days a year, up to 16 hours a day. SSCT inspires participation by enabling community users to train and compete alongside elite athletes, promoting health, wellbeing, and inclusion.

SSCT venues are integral to hosting international sporting events such as the FINA World Swimming Short-Course Championships and the Maurie Plant Meet, while also providing elite training and recovery facilities for global competitions. Notably, Lakeside Stadium supported teams competing in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup Football.

The Victorian Government's Statement of Expectations for SSCT

requires SSCT to provide universal access while advancing strategic priorities for 2024-26. These include:

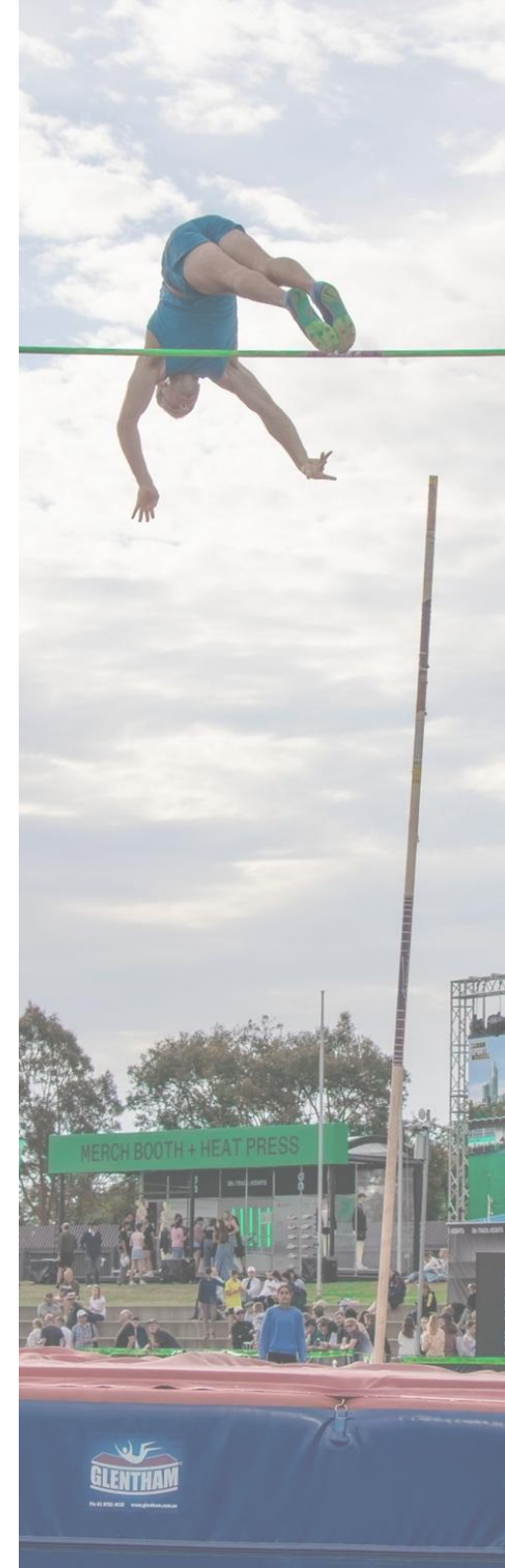
- Supporting community sport and increasing participation
- Maintaining and optimising venue standards to attract state, national, and international events
- Engaging with State Sporting Associations (SSAs), National Sporting Organisations (NSOs), and professional teams to strengthen Victoria's sporting ecosystem.

By simultaneously servicing community and high-performance sport, SSCT contributes to Victoria's reputation as a leader in sport and recreation.

About this Study

In 2025, BDO was commissioned to assess the social and economic value of SSCT for the financial year ending 30 June 2025. The study covers SSCT's activities and its tenants across the four venues, including tenant activities enabled by these venues, which are considered integral to the venues' impact.

This Study draws on primary and secondary data, stakeholder engagement and extensive research to estimate the far-reaching economic and social value of SSCT. It is not possible to quantify all social and economic benefits, as some do not have a recognised market value. For this reason, the estimated social and economic value can be considered conservative. Some of those benefits not able to be quantified are explored qualitatively in this study with the support of case studies.



Introduction

SSCT venues provide unrivalled year-round access to world-class sporting facilities, uniting community participation and elite sport to strengthen Victoria's liveability and deliver lasting social, health, and economic value.

Unmatched accessibility

SSCT venues provide year-round access for Victorians - open 365 days a year and operating up to 16 hours a day. From early-morning swimmers to late-night basketball and netball games, these venues serve the community every hour they can. No other state sporting precinct provides this year-round level of access for both community and elite performance use. This approach transforms SSCT venues into true public assets, maximising value from every venue hour while reinforcing Victoria's reputation as a global leader in sports and recreation infrastructure.

Inclusive community use

SSCT venues are shared and valued by all parts of the community. This is important not only for residents who live near these facilities, but also broader Victorian residents who travel to utilise these state-of-the-art facilities.

SSCT's affordable pricing structures and accessible programs remove barriers to participation, allowing people of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds and abilities to participate in sport and recreation and reap the benefits.

For many schools across Melbourne, SSCT venues are utilised for their school or regional sports days. Were it not for SSCT, many schools would have nowhere else to go. Daily use by local schools, community groups, and families highlights the precincts' role as welcoming, safe, and inclusive public spaces where social connection and active lifestyles thrive. SSCT's

equitable access contributes directly to improved physical and mental wellbeing of the Victorian community.

Servicing a diverse group of users simultaneously

The design and operational flexibility of SSCT venues - especially those with multiple pools and multi-sport layouts - enable different user groups to benefit at the same time. At MSAC, for example, several pools operate concurrently, allowing major swimming carnivals or water-polo tournaments to run seamlessly alongside general lane swimming, learn-to-swim programs, and rehabilitation sessions.

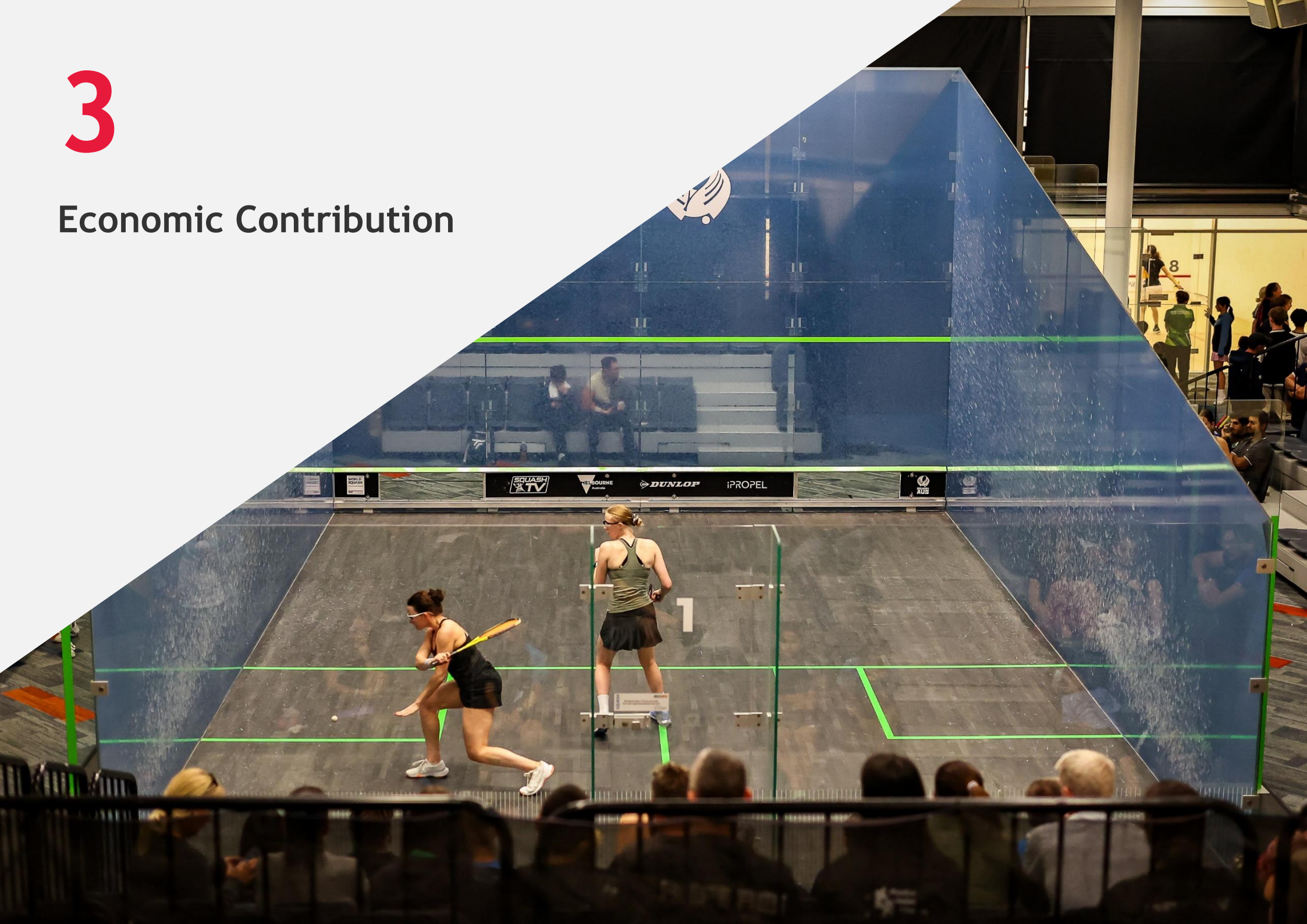
This model preserves consistent public access even during large-scale events, ensuring the needs of both the community and high-performance athletes are met. Such versatility exemplifies SSCT's broader mission: to connect elite sport and community recreation within the same spaces, creating shared experiences that reinforce the social, health, and economic value of sport in Victoria.

***"The State Sport Centres are the only world-class sporting venues in Victoria that are accessible to community users on a daily basis. Every day, you will find casual swimmers, little athletics participants, school netball groups and local basketball teams; swimming in the same pool as Ariarne Titmus, running on the same track as Gout Gout, playing netball at the home of the Vixens, and shooting hoops where the Phoenix play. That is a unique contribution to Victoria's sports sector."** - Kate Roffey, SSCT CEO*



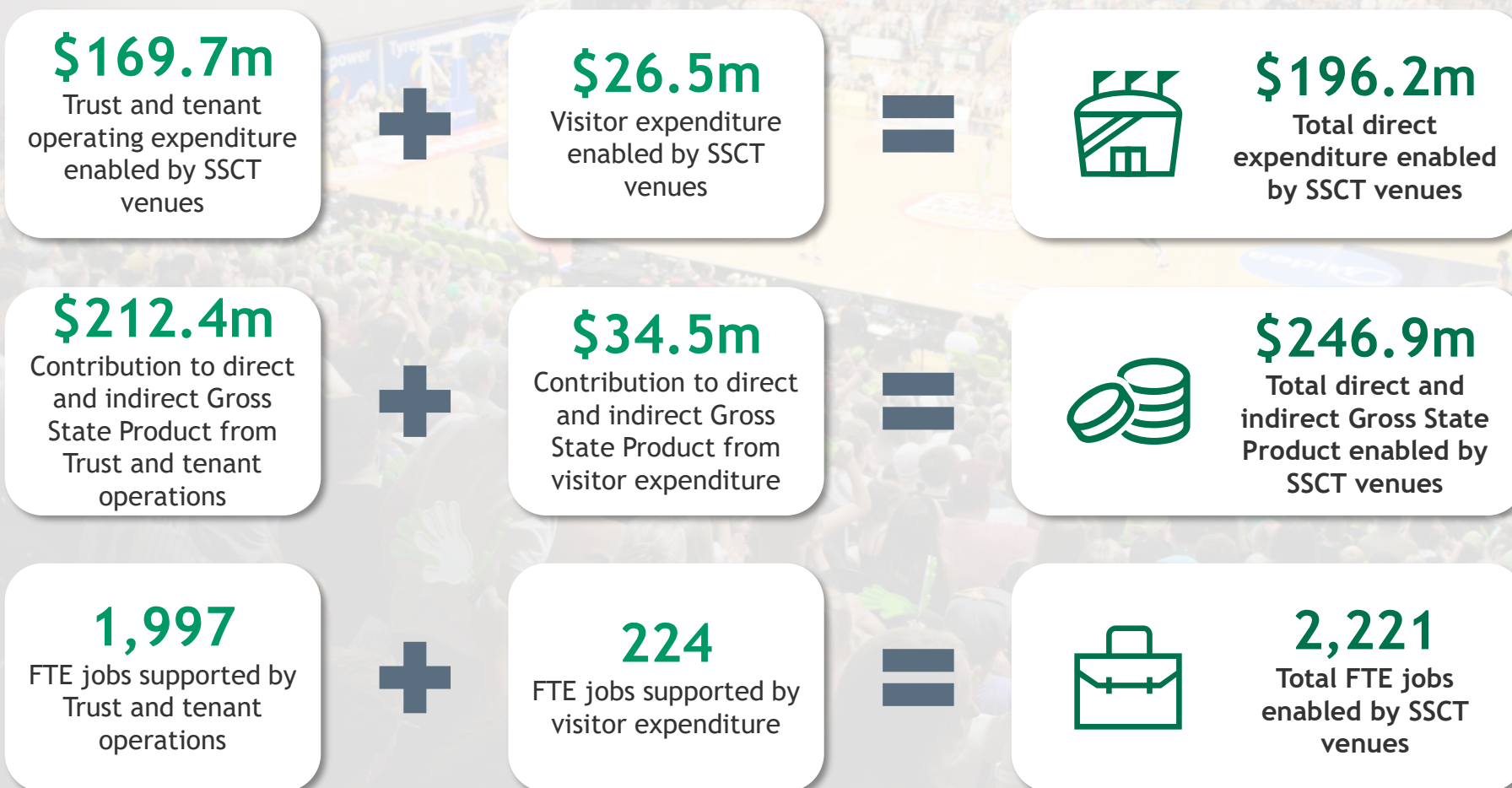
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Economic Contribution



Economic contribution of SSCT in 2024/25

Activities and operations at SSCT venues contributed an estimated \$246.9m to direct and indirect Gross State Product and supported up to 2,221 full-time equivalent jobs in 2024/25.



Contribution of operating activity

The operating activities of the Trust and venue tenants contributed an estimated \$212.4 million to GSP and supported 1,997 FTE jobs in Victoria's economy during 2024/25.

Operating activity of the Trust

With overarching responsibility for managing, operating, and maintaining Victoria's state-owned sports centres, SSCT's operations play a pivotal role in advancing both community participation and high-performance sports outcomes across the State.

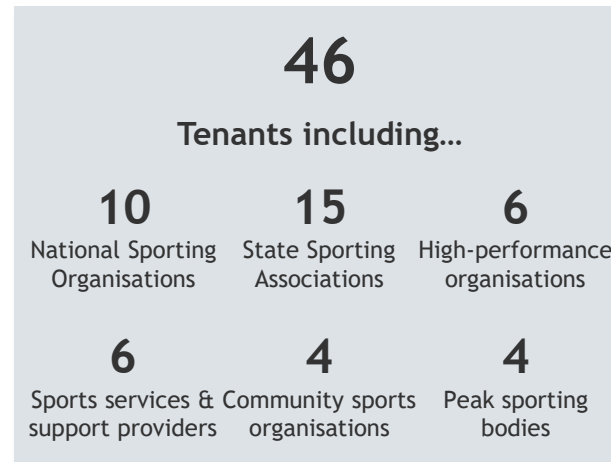
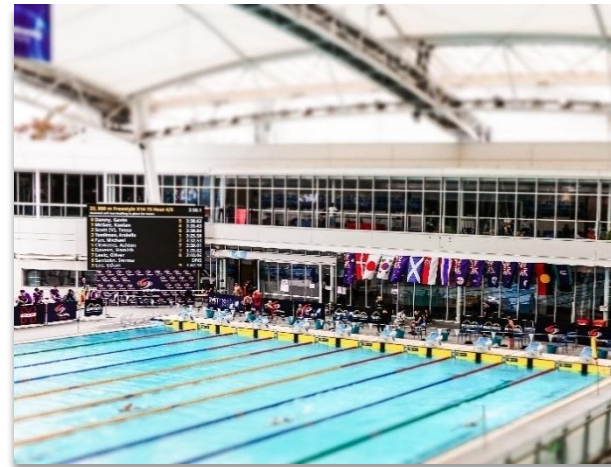
The Trust provides expertise and leadership to tenants and event organisers using its venues, enabling participants across all pathways, from community members through to high-performance athletes, to access world-class facilities. By facilitating activity across its venues, SSCT's operations generate direct economic benefits while supporting sport and recreation at all levels.

Tenant activity

Across its four venues, SSCT provides a home for many Victorian and Australian sporting and community organisations, making a major contribution to not only Victoria's, but also Australia's sporting ecosystem.

Tenant operations and activities, made possible by SSCT venues, generate significant economic and social impact for Victoria. In 2024/25, SSCT's four venues collectively housed a diverse mix of sporting and community organisations including 24 at MSAC, 10 at Lakeside Stadium, 7 at Knox Regional Sports Park and 5 at the State Netball and Hockey Centre. Among these were 10 NSOs and 15 SSAs - reinforcing SSCT's role as a critical hub for sport at every level.

Beyond providing world-class facilities, SSCT provides tenant organisations with dedicated offices that streamline their business operations. The proximity of tenants fosters collaboration, drives innovation, enables efficient sharing of resources, and enhances the delivery of events, development of sporting talent and pathways and provides access to essential equipment.



\$169.7m

Direct expenditure



\$212.4m

Contribution to GSP

Including \$58.7m direct and \$153.7m indirect



1,997

FTE jobs supported by Trust and tenant operations

Including 779 direct and 1,218 indirect

Contribution of visitor expenditure

Visitor expenditure at major and minor events held at SSCT venues contributed an estimated \$34.4 million to GSP and supported 224 FTE jobs in Victoria's economy in 2024/25.

Major events at SSCT venues

In the 2024/25 financial year, SSCT venues hosted 58 major events that attracted approximately 137,000 attendees, including 12,000 from out-of-state who collectively spent an estimated \$3.8 million in Victoria.

- MSAC hosted major national and international events including the Australian Volleyball Super League, Australian Junior Squash Championships, Artistic and Masters Swimming Nationals, and Jiu-jitsu Nationals and Pan Pacific Championships.
- Lakeside Stadium staged the prestigious Maurie Plant Meet - Oceania's only World Athletics Continental Tour Gold event - as well as the Zatopek:10 National 10,000m Athletics Championships and Athletics Victoria's State Championships; and Australia Cup and National Premier League football fixtures.
- State Netball Hockey Centre hosted three Hockey One Australian professional hockey league matches along with the International Hockey Cup; the Netball Victoria Association Championship Finals, National Futsal Championships, and Senior Victorian Gymnastics Championships.
- The State Basketball Centre at Knox Regional Sports Park staged four NBL games, ten WNBL games, and three Australian All Star Cheerleading Federation events.

Minor events at SSCT venues

In 2024/25, SSCT venues hosted 360 minor events that attracted approximately 282,000 attendees, including 25,000 from out-of-state who collectively spent an estimated \$4.8 million in Victoria.

Minor events comprised sporting association and club meets, championships, and intra- and inter-school carnivals. Basketball, swimming, athletics, soccer, and netball recorded the highest participation rates across these minor events.

Major and minor event attendees

419,000

Total estimated attendees at major and minor events

382,000

Estimated Victorian visitors at major and minor events

37,000

Estimated interstate and overseas visitors at major and minor events

\$17.9m

Estimated Victorian visitor expenditure

\$8.7m

Estimated interstate and overseas visitor expenditure

Contribution to Victoria



\$26.5m

Direct expenditure



\$34.4m

Contribution to Gross State Product

Including \$12.3m direct and \$22.2m indirect



224

FTE jobs supported by Trust and tenant operations

Including 105 direct and 119 indirect

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Other Economic Benefits



Net health and wellbeing benefits for participants

By offering accessible and high-quality physical and recreational activities, SSCT venues empower community members to improve their health and wellbeing and live more fulfilling and connected lives.

Community participation in physical and recreation activities

SSCT venues enable community participation across a wide range of physical and recreational activities, providing access for community members of all ages and background to participate, connect and thrive.

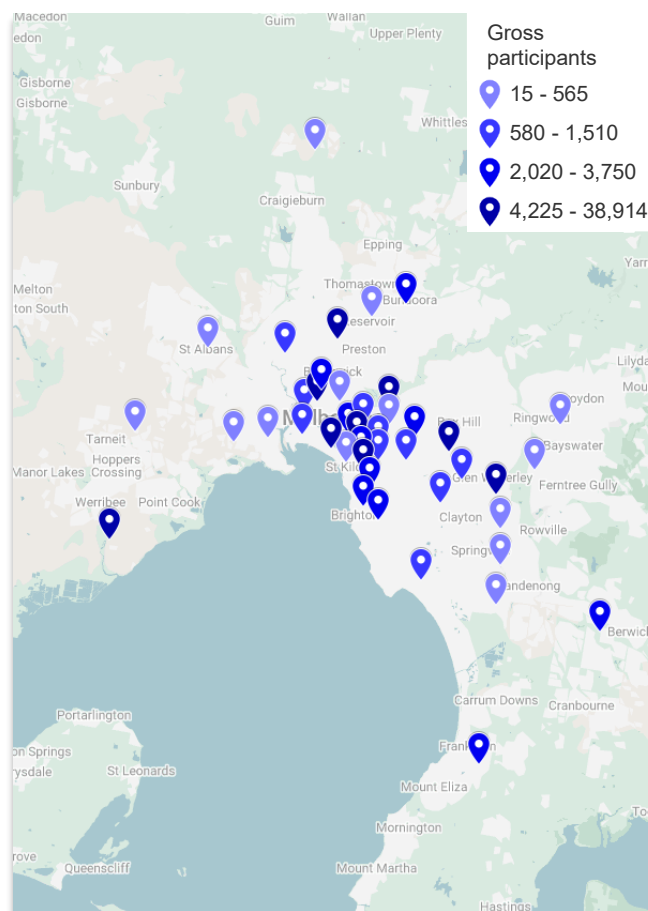
SSCT's venues were visited by 2.5 million community users in 2024/25. Community user groups include members of MSAC, Melbourne Central Basketball Association and Knox Basketball; swim school and swim squad participants; and casual visitors engaged in swimming, badminton, soccer, basketball, squash, gym, group fitness, table tennis, and athletics.

SSCT venues serve as important hubs for schools and sporting associations, providing access to essential sporting facilities that many Victorian schools would not have otherwise. In 2024/25, more than 90 Victorian schools and sporting associations booked over 900 intra- and inter-school sport carnivals, championships, and training sessions at SSCT venues. Figure 1 shows the geographic spread of these organisations.

Benefit calculation approach

This benefit measures the net health and wellbeing impacts generated for Victorians that engaged in physical and recreational activities at SSCT venues in 2024/25. Our estimation of the health and wellbeing benefits leverages research on the per-hour benefit of physical activity. This research incorporates avoided costs to the Victorian healthcare system, productivity impacts, and broader recreation benefits attributed to physical activity (adjusted for injury).¹ An incremental benefit was applied for individuals previously assumed to be physically inactive, reflecting the significant cost of inactivity on the economy.²

Figure 1: Location of Victorian schools and sporting associations that booked SSCT venues in 2024/25



Note: An additional 7,800 participants came from schools and sporting associations located beyond this map's boundaries, including Ballarat North, Castlefield, Corio and Officer.



\$82.0m

Net health and wellbeing benefits for participants



2.5m

Victorian members, casual visitors, and community sport participants



145,400

Victorian minor event participants



127,400

Swim school and swim squad participants

Cost savings to the sports sector and community

SSCT provides subsidies and rebates to a wide range of organisations in the sports sector to support the growth and development of sport across Victoria.

SSCT provides subsidies and rebates to support the sports sector

SSCT provides financial support through venue hire discounts, rental subsidies and sports rebates to a range of users, including NSOs, SSAs, and elite and professional sporting teams, and schools. NSOs receive a 20% discount on their tenancy, while SSAs benefit from a 50% discount. These reduced rates allow them to access high-quality fields of play along with essential administrative facilities. SSCT venues also proudly support four elite female sporting teams - the Melbourne Vixens and Mavericks Premier Netball League teams, the Southside Flyers WNBL team and the HC Melbourne Hockey One team. Without the support of SSCT subsidies, these women's teams would not have access to the elite training bases required to succeed .

In 2024/25, SSCT venues housed 46 tenants. 24 at MSAC (including 7 NSOs and 8 SSA), 10 at Lakeside Stadium housed 10 tenants (1 NSO and 2 SSAs) and 5 at State Netball and Hockey Centre (1 NSO and 2 SSAs). A full tenant list can be found on page 35.

Feedback from tenants emphasised that SSCT's shared facilities are essential to their operations, with some noting that they would struggle to find suitable alternatives.

“Without our tenancy, we would be lost to find the appropriate position to accommodate our community.” - SSCT tenant

Beyond direct financial support, SSCT delivers cost savings to the sector by donating surplus assets to community organisations (see right).

Benefit calculation approach

This benefit represents the total value of hiring and rental subsidies and sports rebates provided to SSCT venue tenants during 2024/25.

Assets donated by SSCT in 2024/25

SSCT donates equipment suitable for repurposing to Victoria's community sporting sector, delivering savings to SSCT in disposal costs, avoided purchase costs to the recipient, and improved sustainability outcomes.

In 2024/25, SSCT donated a 2,000-seat portable grandstand and large indoor pool LED screen to Wyndham City Council for reuse at its regional training facility. SSCT also donated other assets including fixed grandstand seating to the Melbourne Aces professional baseball team, Cranbourne, Neangar Park and Yarra Valley Pony Clubs, Bankstown Basketball Association, Indoor Sports Victoria, City Side Sports, and Sports North East; table tennis tables to schools, community sports clubs, and coaches; spin bikes to local schools and staff; and small gym equipment through a silent auction supporting charity.

Figure 2: State Netball and Hockey Centre portable grandstand in use at Tarneit



\$5.8m

Total cost savings provided to the sports sector and community including...



\$2.6m

Venue hire discounts provided to the sports sector



\$2.5m

Rental subsidies provided to NSOs, SSAs and commercial operators



\$0.7m

Rebates provided to the sports sector

5

Social Benefits



Contribution to liveability of local community

SSCT venues strengthen Melbourne’s reputation as a premier hub for sport and active recreation by providing year-round, affordable access to high-quality sporting opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

SSCT venues deliver community and high-performance sporting outcomes that significantly enhance the liveability of local communities

SSCT venues elevate Melbourne’s position as a hub for sport and active recreation, boosting Victoria’s liveability and community pride. Open year-round, they provide affordable access to high-quality sporting facilities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, including nearby social and community housing residents.

These venues cater to elite and grassroots levels and everything in between, with tenant organisations delivering programs and events that bring together schools, community groups, and professional athletes. Community events not only inspire engagement but provide participants the opportunity to access the same facilities as elite athletes, strengthening the connection between grassroots sport and high performance. By inspiring participation, fostering belonging, and encouraging active lifestyles, SSCT venues enhance the liveability of their local communities by providing consistent, equitable access to world-class facilities that support everyday engagement in sport and recreation.

Benefit calculation approach

Research shows that people are willing to pay a premium to reside near community sporting assets.^{3,4,5} The contribution of SSCT venues to the liveability of the local community has been estimated by attributing approximately 2% of the annual growth in dwelling prices within a 2km radius of the venues. While many users travel from outside this radius, primary research has not been conducted and a conservative approach of local liveability has been undertaken.

State Basketball Centre and Knox Basketball

Located at Knox Regional Sports Park, the State Basketball Centre is one of Victoria’s premier indoor sports facilities and home to Knox Basketball, Australia’s largest association with around 12,000 active weekly members. In addition to hosting basketball on a daily basis, the venue also hosts major cheerleading, boxing, and multi-sport festivals that draw over 10,000 visitors on weekends. These events attract participants and spectators from Victoria and interstate, generating significant regional and state economic benefits.

Girls Sport Victoria

Girls Sport Victoria (GSV) is one of Victoria’s largest independent girls’ school sporting associations, serving nearly 17,000 students across 23 member schools. GSV hosts weekly competitions, carnivals, and championships across all four SSCT venues. As an MSAC tenant, GSV’s close access to premier facilities streamlines event coordination and fosters collaboration with neighbouring sports organisations. Competing in high-quality venues enhances the experience for students and spectators, boosts community engagement, and supports GSV’s mission to provide exceptional sporting opportunities.



\$17.7m

Contribution to liveability of local community



1

MSAC is the only venue in Victoria with two competition standard 50m pools



1

State Netball and Hockey Centre is the sole venue in Victoria equipped to host major national and international hockey competitions



3

Lakeside Stadium features one of only three FIFA-sized rectangular pitches in Victoria that meets training standards required for major soccer events

Consumer surplus for attendees

Attendees at SSCT venues value their experience at SSCT over and above the price of admission, realising a consumer surplus that reflects the exceptional quality and appeal of these sporting experiences and events.

Attendees value their experiences above the price they pay

SSCT venues enable Victorians to participate in day-to-day sport and recreation, with 2.5 million attendances recorded from members, casual users, and community sport participants in 2024/25. In addition, SSCT hosted 58 major and 360 minor sporting events, attracting approximately 382,000 Victorian participants and spectators to marquee competitions such as the Maurie Plant Meet, NBL and WNBL, Hockey One, and the Australian Volleyball Super League.

Events and experiences at SSCT venues generate considerable consumer surplus. Whether through day-to-day recreation or attending high-profile events, individuals value their experience beyond the cost of admission or participation, reflecting SSCT's critical role in delivering broad community and sporting benefits.

Benefit calculation approach

Consumer surplus measures the additional value that spectators and participants are willing to pay over and above the entry price for an event or experience.

Secondary research and a benefits transfer methodology has been utilised to estimate the willingness to pay of visitors to SSCT venues. However, public sources indicate that consumer surplus can range from 15-58% of the entry price, depending on the event or experience.⁶ This study adopts a conservative estimate, applying a 15% consumer surplus to the average entry price paid by spectators and participants across various SSCT events and experiences in 2024/25. The estimated benefit reflects use value and is limited to Victorian residents.

Affordable access to quality sporting facilities

SSCT venues offer highly affordable access to quality sporting facilities compared to comparable venues nationally.



Casual entry for adult lap swimming

MSAC - \$8.50⁷

Aqualink - \$9.20⁸

SA Aquatic and Leisure Centre - \$9.50⁹

Sydney Olympic Park - \$9.70¹⁰

Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre - \$11.40¹¹



Casual basketball full court hire

MSAC - \$30 per hour⁷

Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre - \$67 per hour¹²



Casual badminton court hire

MSAC - \$27.50 per hour⁷

Sydney Olympic Park - \$36 per hour¹⁰



\$6.2m

Consumer surplus for spectators and participants



2.5m

Victorian members, casual visitors, and community sport participants



382,000

Victorian participants and spectators at major and minor events

Value of volunteers

Volunteers provide essential support to tenant organisations at SSCT venues, from leadership roles to grassroots support through student placement volunteers. Their unpaid contributions provide support and expertise for event and program delivery, fostering vibrant communities and enhancing the participant and spectator experience.

Volunteers provide vital support for daily operations and events

Volunteers provide essential support to the day-to-day operations and event delivery of tenant organisations at SSCT venues. In 2024/25, 2,444 volunteers contributed their time and skills, with 1,501 supporting daily activities and 943 assisting during events.

The volunteer workforce across tenant organisations encompasses a wide range of roles and responsibilities. For example, Knox Basketball's volunteer workforce includes Board Members, Life Members, and committee members from Junior Domestic, Domestic Club, Junior Raiders, and the Victorian Basketball Referees Association Knox Branch. At the grassroots level, Netball Victoria relies heavily on student placement volunteers from SEDA College and Deakin University, particularly among more junior volunteer roles. This volunteer involvement reduces operational costs for tenants while building vibrant, connected communities. Beyond cost savings, volunteers enhance the participant and spectator experience by ensuring programs and events run smoothly through coaching, officiating, and event management.

Benefit calculation approach

The economic value of volunteer contributions was estimated by assuming day-to-day volunteers donate one hour per week (52 hours annually) and event day volunteers contribute 20 hours annually. This time was valued using the National Minimum Wage rate (effective 1 July 2025).¹³ The total value was calculated by multiplying the number of volunteers by their respective hours and the wage rate. This approach quantifies the significant cost savings and social benefits volunteers provide to SSCT tenant organisations and their events.



\$3.2m

Value of volunteers



1,501

Volunteers donated their time to day-to-day operations



943

Volunteers donated their time to event days

Civic pride

Victorians value the State's status as Australia's premier events capital, with major national and international sporting events hosted at SSCT venues delivering significant community and economic value.

National and international sporting events are held at SSCT venues

Victoria's major events calendar, valued at \$3.3 billion per annum,¹⁴ is an immense source of pride for Victorians. Boasting four world-class venues in the heart of Melbourne and the east, SSCT makes a significant contribution to Victoria's major events calendar.

In 2024/25, SSCT venues hosted a diverse calendar of national and international events across multiple sports. MSAC staged the Australian Volleyball Super League, Australian Junior Squash Championships, Artistic and Masters Swimming National Championships, and Jiu-jitsu Nationals and Pan Pacific Championships. Lakeside Stadium hosted the Maurie Plant Meet, Zatopek:10, Athletics Victoria's State Championships, and Australia Cup and National Premier Leagues football fixtures. The State Netball and Hockey Centre featured Hockey One, Cheerbrandz Nationals, Futsal Nationals, International Hockey Cup, and School Sport Netball Nationals. Meanwhile, the State Basketball Centre at Knox Regional Sports Park hosted 13 NBL and WNBL fixtures and three Australian All Star Cheerleading Federation events.

SSCT venues also provided essential training and recovery facilities for major sporting events and teams (see page 26 for further detail). Without these facilities, Victoria's ability to attract and host professional and major international sporting events would be significantly compromised.

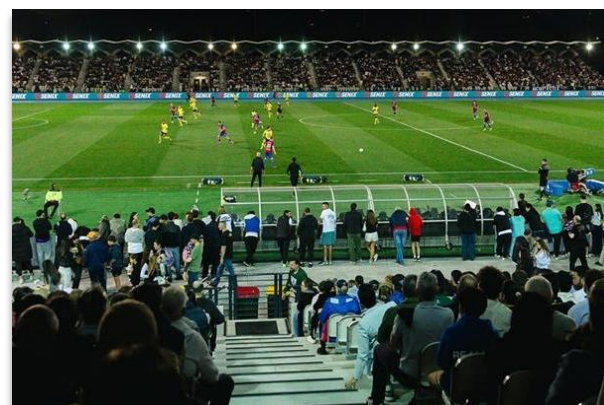
Benefit calculation approach

This benefit estimates the value that Victorians derive from the existence and preservation of SSCT venues, regardless of whether they visit them. The approach leverages internal studies previously undertaken by the BDO team to estimate the civic pride value associated with Victoria's major events calendar, attributing a portion of this value to SSCT's major events calendar.

Hahn Australia Cup Final

On Saturday 4 October 2025, the Hahn Australia Cup Final attracted 10,000 spectators as Newcastle Jets defeated Heidelberg United 3-1 after extra time at Lakeside Stadium. Less than 12 hours later, the venue hosted the South Melbourne Districts Little Athletics' weekly meet, illustrating the versatility of SSCT venues in supporting both high-profile national competitions and grassroots community sport events. This seamless transition between elite sporting showcases and community participation highlights SSCT's critical role in delivering social and economic value for both community and professional sport.

Figure 3: Hahn Australia Cup Final 2025 at Lakeside Stadium



\$1.3m

Civic pride generated from major events



80,000+

Total attendance at national and international sporting events and competitions



19

National and international level sporting events and competitions

6

Qualitative Benefits



Reduced drowning risk

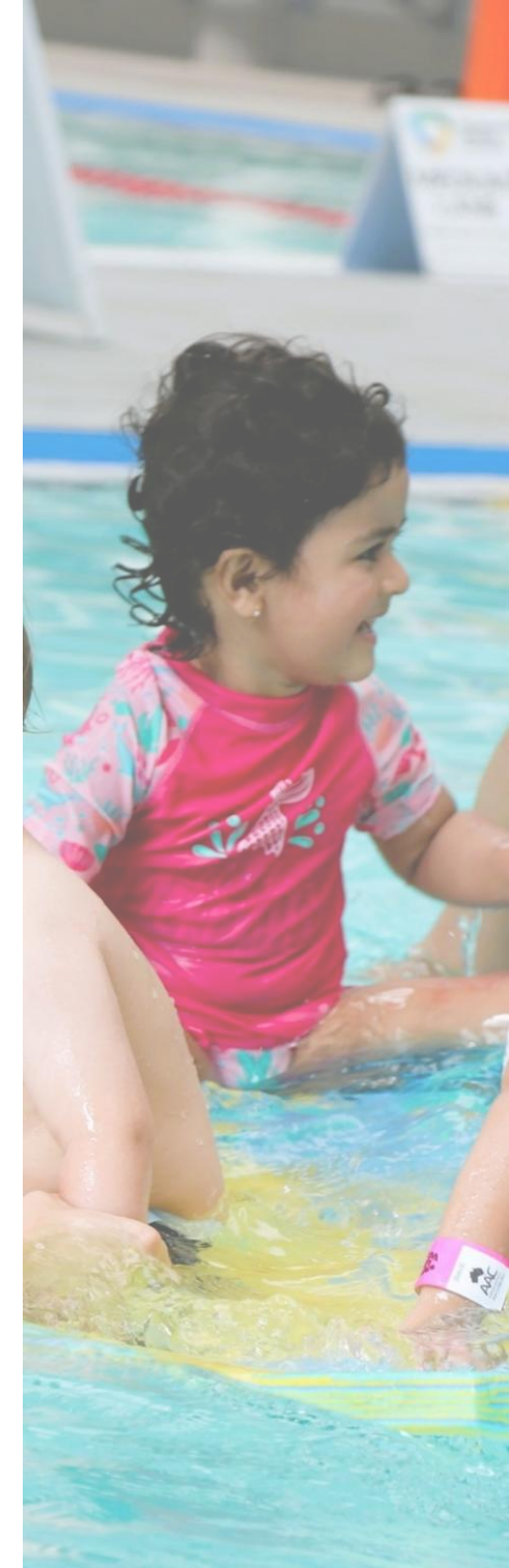
MSAC's learn-to-swim programs equip thousands of Victorians each year with vital swimming and water safety skills, significantly reducing drowning risk, preventing costly fatal and non-fatal incidents, and delivering enduring public health and economic benefits to the State.

MSAC's swim school helps save lives

MSAC plays a crucial role in reducing drowning risk through its learn-to-swim programs, which have long delivered life-saving water safety outcomes for Victorians. The 2025 Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report identifies swimming and water safety education as essential to drowning prevention, particularly since most fatal incidents among children aged 5-14 stem from accidental falls into water.¹⁵ By equipping children, young people, and adults with fundamental aquatic skills, MSAC's learn-to-swim programs directly address these risk factors, building confidence, safety awareness, and competence in the water.

In 2024/25, MSAC's swim school engaged 6,971 unique participants, including school and pre-school students, adults, teens, and infants. These programs provide structured, evidence-based instruction that reduces the likelihood of both fatal and non-fatal drowning. The long-term community impact of these programs is substantial. Royal Life Saving research estimates the economic cost of a single drowning death in 2017 was \$4.25 million, and a non-fatal drowning was \$400,000, with 5% of survivors incurring lifelong disability and costs exceeding \$6.9 million per incident.¹⁶ The continued delivery of MSAC's learn-to-swim programs generates significant public safety and economic value for Victoria by preventing drownings and reducing the long-term costs associated with water-related injuries and fatalities.

Beyond annual participation statistics, MSAC's learn-to-swim programs contribute to statewide water safety resilience by supporting generational skill development. The Royal Life Saving Society's long-term research on non-fatal drowning emphasises that basic swimming ability, learned from an early age, is one of the most effective interventions for preventing drowning in all settings. By sustaining high-quality aquatic education for thousands of Victorians each year, MSAC strengthens Victoria's capacity to reduce drowning incidents, protect lives, and lessen the long-term social and economic burden of water-related injury and death.



Additional benefits of physical activity

Physical activity delivers measurable health benefits while also strengthening social connections and supporting educational outcomes for participants. Exposure to high-performance athletes can further inspire spectators to increase their own levels of physical activity.

Social and educational benefits of physical activity

In 2024/25, an estimated 2.9 million participants engaged in physical and recreational activities at SSCT venues, fostering interaction among people of all backgrounds and abilities. These activities strengthen social outcomes for individuals and communities, with research highlighting benefits such as:

- Developing social skills including teamwork, leadership, decision-making and trust
- Increasing personal confidence and self-esteem through self-expression
- Reducing isolation and exclusion
- Building stronger connections with communities.^{17,18,19,20}

Research also shows that increased levels of physical activity enhance educational outcomes for students. Specific benefits include faster and more accurate cognitive responses, improved focus in the classroom and during study, and better overall academic behaviour.^{21,22}



Physical activity impacts for spectators

Major events at SSCT venues provide spectators with the opportunity to experience elite athletes performing at the highest level across a diverse range of sports, including swimming, athletics, basketball, netball and hockey.

Exposure to such performances can serve as a powerful source of motivation and inspiration, encouraging people to take up new activities or increase their existing participation levels.²³ Community members can train and compete in the same world-class facilities as the athletes they admire - an experience that deepens their connection to sport and reinforces a sense of local pride. This creates aspirational pathways and breaks down barriers between grassroots and elite sport.

In turn, this uplift in physical activity generates additional health benefits, strengthens community engagement with sport, and reinforces the role of SSCT venues as key contributors to Victoria's sport and recreation landscape.



Empowering Victoria's and Australia's sports industry

SSCT venues serve as vibrant sport and recreation development hubs, fostering organisational collaboration, community engagement, and athlete growth across Victoria.

SSCT venues foster sport and recreation development

SSCT venues support sport and recreation development across Victoria by bringing together a dynamic mix of athletes, sporting organisations, service providers and communities from grassroots to elite levels. In 2024/25, SSCT venues housed 46 tenants, including NSOs, SSAs, high-performance entities, community sports organisations, and peak sporting bodies. The proximity of tenants fosters collaboration, drives innovation, and facilitates resource sharing. Survey insights show that 72% of tenants agree or strongly agree that their tenancy enables them to collaborate on projects and initiatives and to share ideas and learnings with like-minded organisations. Stakeholder consultations demonstrate how this collaborative environment drives innovation in sport and recreation technology, such as Swimming Victoria's partnership with Hawk-Eye Innovations.

Sony Hawk-Eye swimming review technology

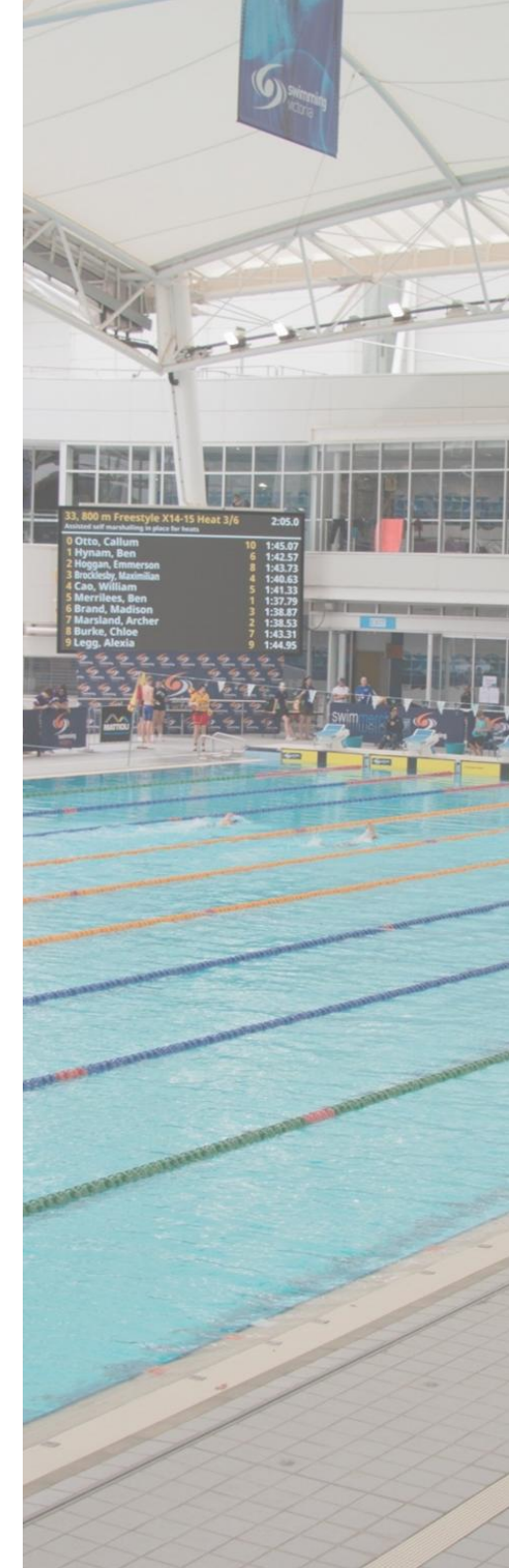
In 2021, Swimming Victoria collaborated with Hawk-Eye Innovations, a Sony Group company, to develop a proof-of-concept for the world's first swimming review technology. The technology debuted at the 2022 Victorian Age Long Course Championships held at MSAC and was subsequently adopted at the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is now used at all Swimming World Championships and World Cups. Both pools at MSAC are equipped with this system, which fundamentally enhances the fairness, integrity, and transparency of swimming officiating by providing objective evidence for decision making.

SSCT's high-performance facilities are vital for athletes

SSCT venues underpin Victoria's high-performance sport network by providing elite training and recovery facilities that support leading organisations such as the Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS). By offering access to advanced high-performance gyms, hydrotherapy pools, and athlete performance centres, SSCT venues are purpose-built to support intensive training loads, injury prevention, and rehabilitation. These facilities are vital for sustaining Victoria's sporting excellence, helping athletes achieve peak performance while providing world-class preparation and recovery environments. SSCT's enduring partnership with the VIS further enhances this impact by driving innovation, collaboration, and sustained success across Victoria's sporting landscape.

Victorian Institute of Sport

The VIS stands at the forefront of elite athlete development in Victoria, delivering world-class programs in strength and conditioning, coaching, sports science, and recovery to more than 450 athletes across 50 sports.²⁴ Its success is underpinned by the high-performance centre at Lakeside Stadium and access to SSCT venues including MSAC and the State Netball and Hockey Centre, which host training for sports such as swimming, basketball, wheelchair basketball, athletics, netball, hockey, table tennis and archery. The partnership between the VIS and SSCT provides the foundation for athlete preparation and wellbeing, driving innovation, collaboration, and sustained sporting excellence across Victoria.



Enabling Victoria's major sporting events calendar

By delivering world-class facilities, SSCT venues are fundamental to Victoria's success in hosting and preparing for major international sporting events.

Supporting Victoria as a major events destination

SSCT venues play a leading role in strengthening Victoria's position as a premier destination for major sporting events, both nationally and internationally:

- MSAC is the only venue in Victoria with two competition standard 50m pools, a minimum requirement for hosting national and international swimming events, and one of only two venues in Victoria capable of staging major squash tournaments
- Lakeside Stadium is Victoria's premier and only athletics track suitable for international competition; it also features one of only three FIFA-sized rectangular pitches statewide that meets the training standards required for major soccer events.
- The State Netball and Hockey Centre is the sole venue in Victoria equipped to host major national and international hockey competitions.
- The State Basketball Centre is Australia's largest basketball venue by court capacity, featuring 18 indoor courts including a 3,200-seat show court with additional courtside seating.

SSCT venues play a crucial role in supporting Victoria's bids for major sporting events by providing world-class athlete performance centres, high-performance gyms, hydrotherapy pools, and specialist recovery spaces. These facilities meet the rigorous standards expected by elite international athletes. Victoria's ability to attract and host some of the most prestigious global sporting events - such as the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup which attracted 159,000 fans across six matches - relies on the support of SSCT's infrastructure.²⁵

Major sporting events and teams supported by SSCT venues

SSCT venues support major international events by providing dedicated training and recovery facilities. In 2023/24, Lakeside Stadium enabled competing teams in the **FIFA Women's World Cup** to prepare for competition, while also supporting training for the **All Blacks** ahead of the **Bledisloe Cup** and hosting the **Socceroos'** preparations for **FIFA World Cup Qualifiers**.

During 2024/25, MSAC provided facilities for teams competing in the **Ford Ballin'24** basketball competition - including the **Boomers**, **Japan**, **China**, **Rollers**, and **Gliders** - as well as for the **Olympic** and **Paralympic** swimming, diving, table tennis, and athletics teams. Lakeside Stadium supported the training efforts of the **Wallabies**, **Matildas** and **Socceroos** ahead of their respective international fixtures, while the State Basketball Centre enabled the **Opals** to prepare for the **FIBA Women's Asian Cup**.

In 2025/26, SSCT venues have continued to support major sporting events with specialist training and recovery spaces. Lakeside Stadium provided training grounds for teams competing in marquee soccer and rugby fixtures, including the **Wallabies** and **Wrexham A.F.C.**, while the **Diamonds** and the **Silver Ferns** prepared for the **Commonwealth Games** and the **Constellation Cup** at the State Netball and Hockey Centre.



Supporting social change in local communities

SSCT drives positive social change in local communities through its reconciliation and gender equity efforts. The organisation supports these commitments with dedicated Action Plans.

SSCT's strategic initiatives support social change

SSCT drives positive social change through initiatives that foster an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment for all visitors, employees, and community members. These initiatives celebrate cultural heritage, promote equity, and support diversity, strengthening social cohesion and empowering people from all backgrounds to fully participate in events and programs at SSCT venues. Through targeted action plans and workplace strategies, SSCT continually enhances its commitment to safe, inclusive, and equitable sport and recreation experiences.

Reconciliation Action Plan

SSCT has developed its inaugural 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), marking a committed step towards strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and advancing reconciliation. The plan prioritises improving employment outcomes for First Peoples and increasing supplier diversity to support economic and social progress within the organisation and the broader community. SSCT has formed foundational partnerships with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to guide these efforts.

SSCT developed the RAP through an internal working group that harnessed staff expertise and drew on successful RAP frameworks from the Victorian public sector and sports industry. The Trust views the RAP as a significant opportunity to deepen engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

communities and to collaborate with sporting organisations at the state and national levels to collectively advance reconciliation. This plan establishes a foundation for sustained cultural respect, economic empowerment, and partnerships within SSCT's sphere of influence.

Gender Equity Action Plan

SSCT's [Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025](#) commits the organisation to actively promote gender equality across its workforce and community. The plan focuses on valuing all genders as capable and credible leaders, providing equitable opportunities for career progression and flexible work arrangements, and taking proactive measures to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in the workplace.

In line with its obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2022, SSCT conducts Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) for most new or updated public-facing policies, programs, and services to ensure they are gender-responsive and inclusive. SSCT's leadership team has completed targeted training to effectively undertake GIAs, reinforcing the Trust's dedication to fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment for all employees and stakeholders.



Supporting social change in local communities

SSCT's support for social change is further demonstrated through its diversity and inclusion efforts, Workforce Days of Significance calendar, and provision of period product vending machines at the State Netball and Hockey Centre.

Inclusion Action Plan

SSCT's [Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025](#) recognises sport and recreation as powerful platforms for fostering inclusion across Victoria's diverse communities. The plan supports stakeholders of all genders, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and life circumstances. An internal working group drives targeted initiatives to improve equitable participation and employment outcomes for underrepresented groups such as culturally diverse communities, refugees, women, gender-diverse individuals, LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities, and older adults.

Current initiatives include inclusive recruitment practices, gender pronoun resources for public-facing roles, and creating fit-for-purpose spaces to better accommodate



employees and community members with disabilities, caregiving roles, or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These focused actions foster a more equitable and welcoming environment, enhancing participation and representation in sport and recreation throughout the State.

Safe, inclusive and respectful workplace

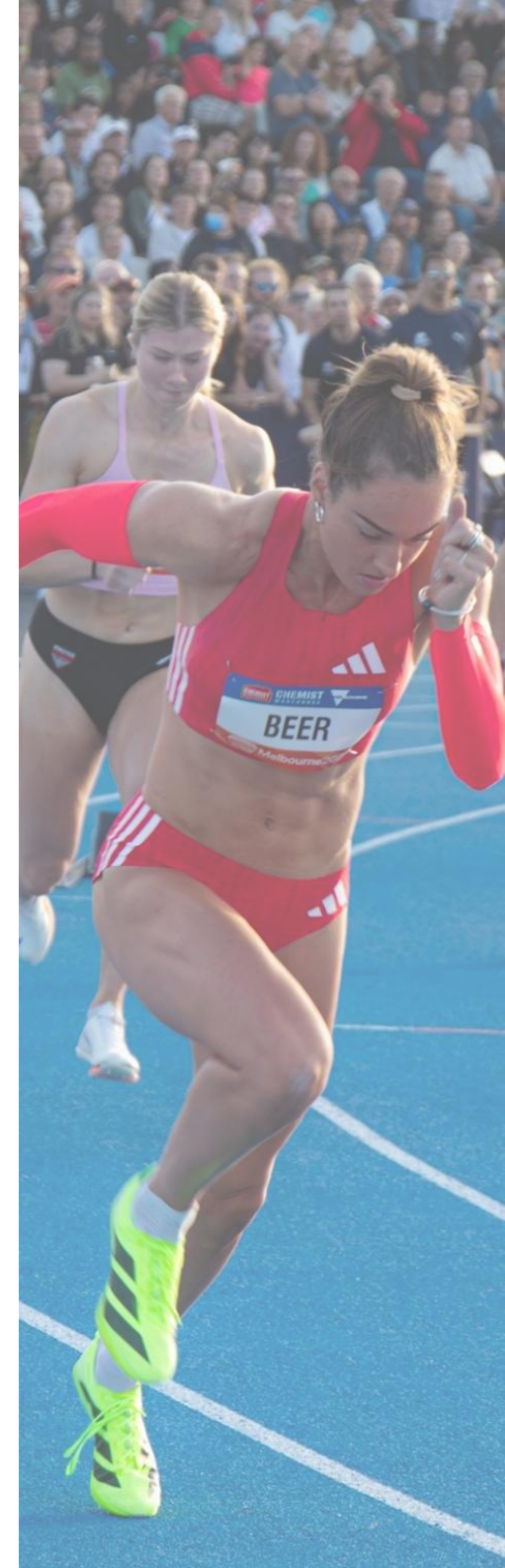
SSCT fosters a safe and inclusive workplace through quarterly face-to-face training on rotating topics that build staff capability and confidence, including workplace behaviour, child safeguarding, and complaints handling. These programs clarify responsibilities and behavioural expectations around discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation. As part of the onboarding process, it supports SSCT's professional and accountable culture.

Workforce Days of Significance calendar

SSCT recognises and celebrates workforce diversity through its Workforce Days of Significance calendar, which promotes awareness, training, and events aligned with Victoria's major inclusion dates. Key occasions include Midsumma Pride March, International Women's Day, Cultural Diversity Week, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC, and International Day of People with Disability. These activities build inclusivity, cultural respect, and community engagement across SSCT.

Period product vending machines at State Netball and Hockey Centre

As part of a Victorian Government initiative to improve menstrual health access, vending machines providing free pads and tampons were installed at the State Netball and Hockey Centre in August 2025. This program removes barriers to sport participation and promotes dignity, equality, and inclusivity for women and girls at SSCT venues.



Sustainability initiatives driving operational efficiency

SSCT has made long-term commitments to sustainable operations, cost-effective infrastructure management, and meaningful contributions to Victoria's environmental and sporting landscape.

Enhancing operational and environmental outcomes

SSCT has implemented a suite of sustainability initiatives that deliver substantial operational cost savings and reduced environmental footprint. These efforts span energy management, resource recycling, and investments in cutting-edge infrastructure. By prioritising efficiency and sustainability, SSCT ensures its facilities remain world-class while supporting broader community and environmental objectives.

Energy-efficient lighting upgrades

SSCT has transitioned venue lighting to more energy-efficient alternatives as part of its capital renewal program. LED and induction lighting units have replaced older systems across stadiums and show courts, resulting in a 75% reduction in power consumption compared to previous fixtures. These upgrades not only lower ongoing utility costs but also contribute to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The planned rollouts prioritise areas with high daily usage, maximising both savings and sustainability impacts.

Pool plant efficiency enhancements

Recent infrastructure investments across the MSAC aquatics facilities include the replacement of aged sand filtration systems, generators, and the upgrade of air handling units to energy-efficient EC fans and variable speed drives. As MSAC's pool facilities are in constant operation, these initiatives deliver tangible reductions in energy consumption and maintenance costs while ensuring water quality standards are consistently met.

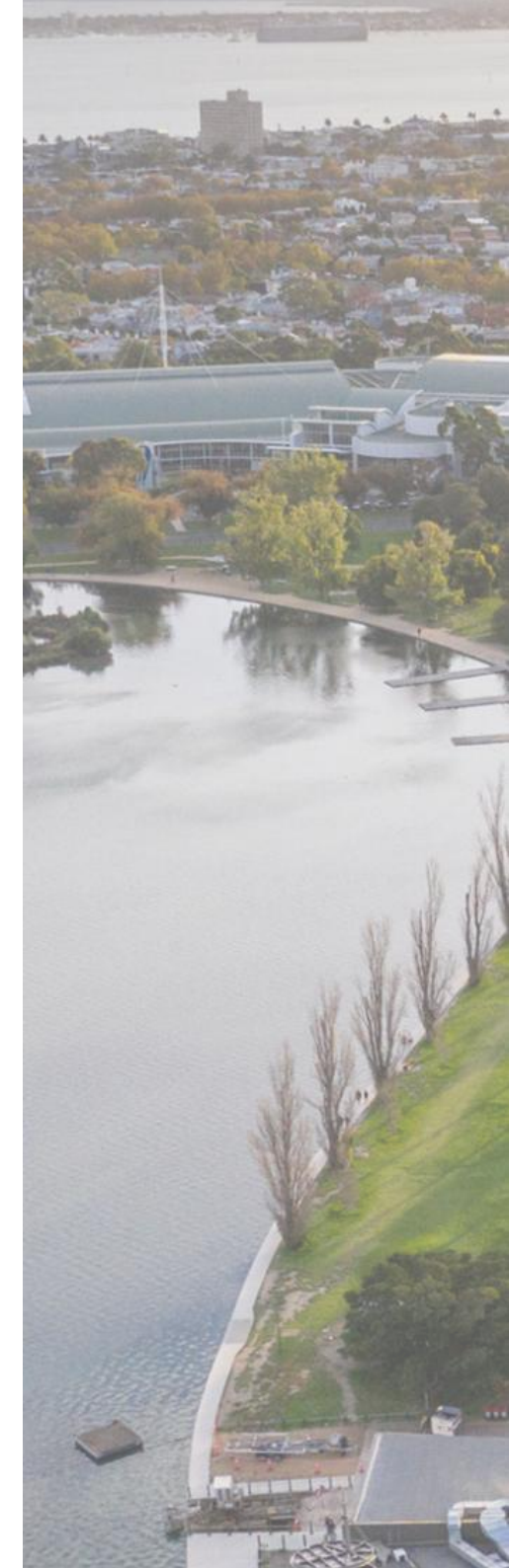
Solar panel expansion

In 2025, SSCT worked with external providers to initiate a substantial solar panel expansion at MSAC, deploying more than 850kW of rooftop solar capacity. This initiative is expected to significantly reduce grid energy reliance and support Victoria's renewable energy targets, with immediate financial benefits in the form of lowered energy bills. The project demonstrates SSCT's leadership in green infrastructure and further enhances the resilience and sustainability profile of its flagship venues.

Water recycling at Albert Park Lake

In 2024, the outdoor pool undertook a major renovation that required 4 million litres of water to be emptied from the pool. Rather than discharging this water into the general waste system, SSCT partnered with Parks Victoria to recycle the water and discharge it safely into Albert Park Lake to help lift the low water level. The water underwent rigorous testing to meet Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, ensuring environmental safety.

This recycling initiative reduced potable water consumption and supported lake health, demonstrating efficient resource management. It also lowered operational costs linked to water use and aligned with broader sustainability and climate resilience goals within the precinct. This project exemplifies SSCT's commitment to environmental stewardship through innovative water reuse and strong community collaboration.



7

Appendices



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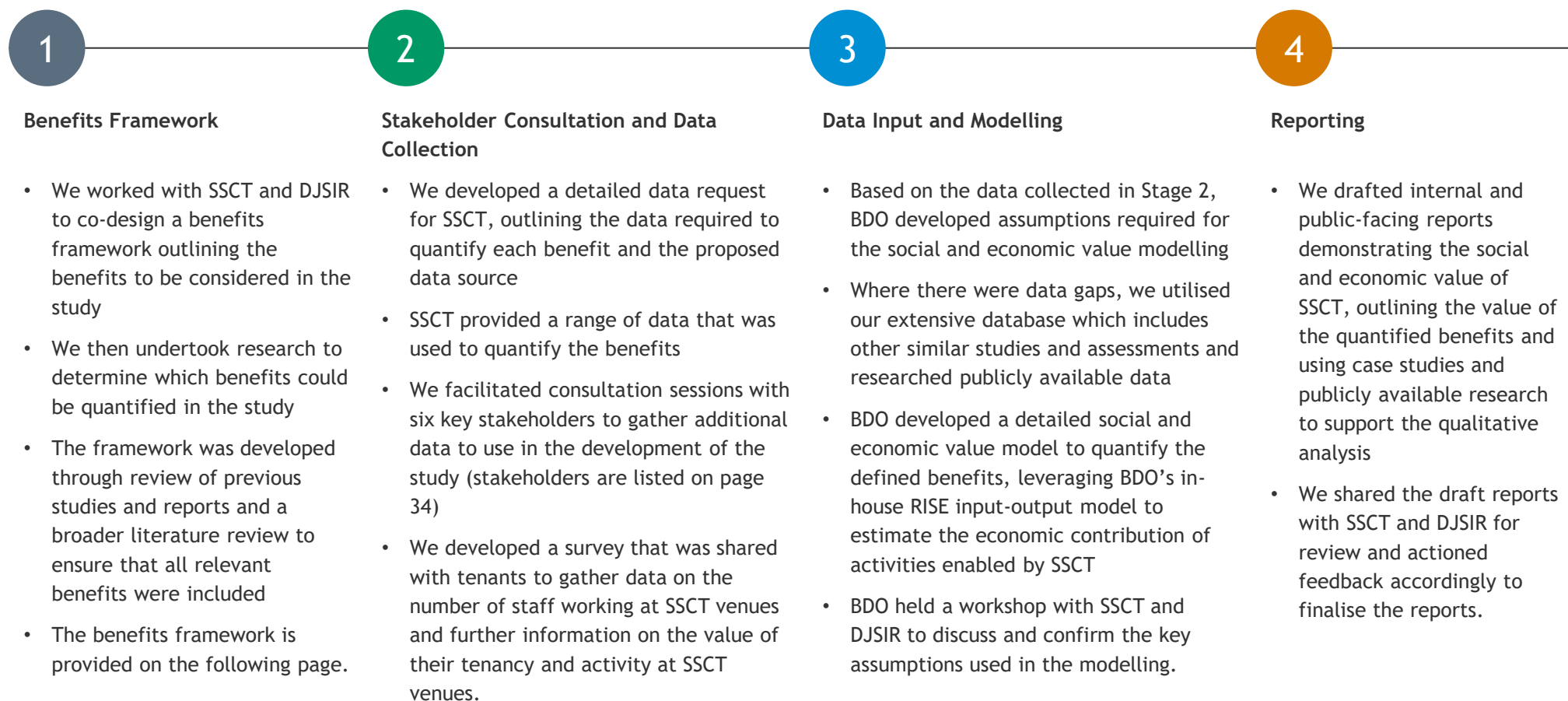
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Appendix A - Approach

Overview of our approach

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the social and economic value of SSCT to the State of Victoria in 2024/25, quantifying benefits where possible and using qualitative analysis where required. The economic contribution assessment uses input-output (IO) modelling to estimate the direct and indirect contribution of activities enabled by SSCT. The qualitative analysis is supported by case studies of activities and initiatives enabled by SSCT to demonstrate the tangible outcomes provided to Victorians.

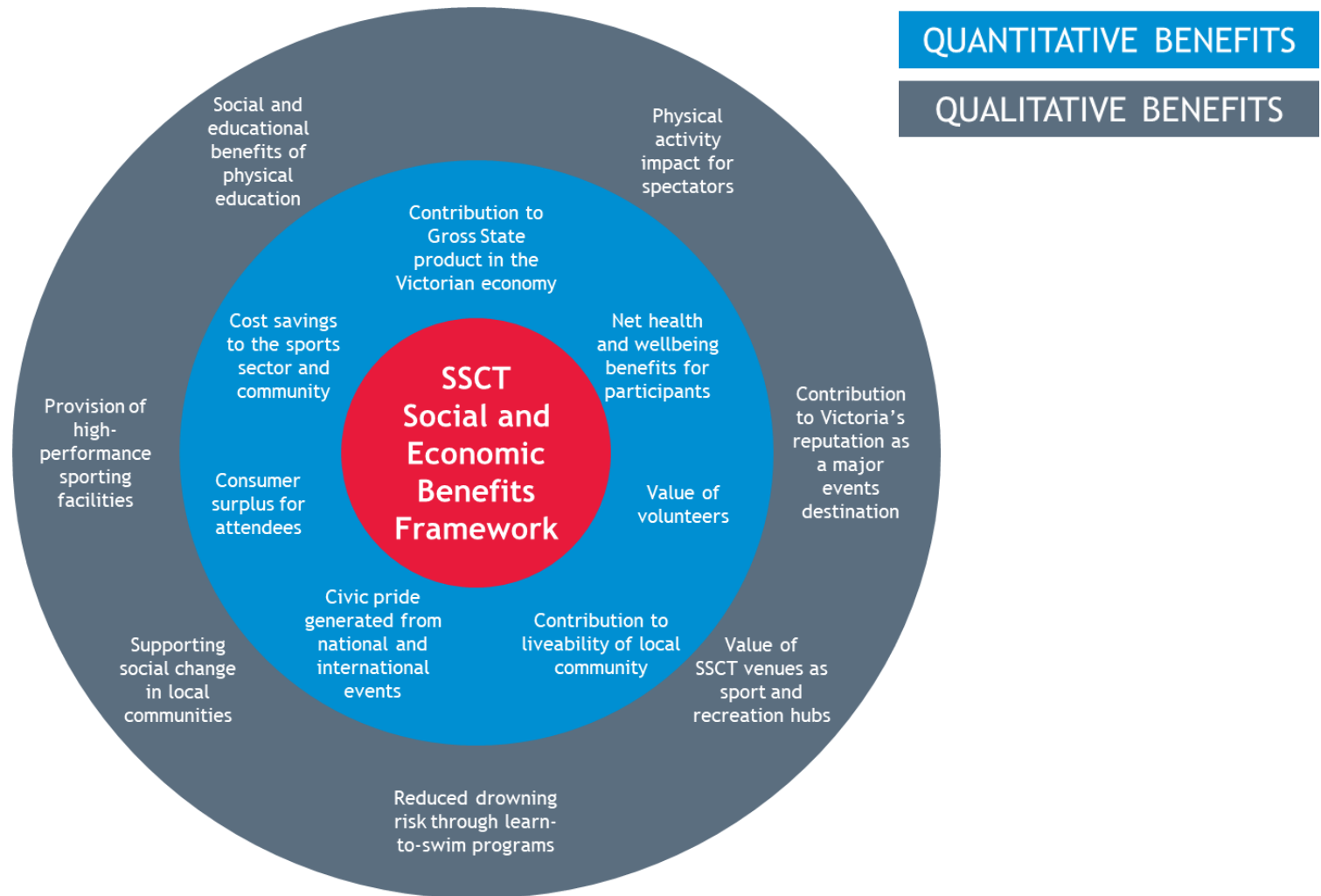
The figure below presents an overview of the study approach.



Appendix A - Approach

Social and Economic Benefits framework

Illustrated below is the benefits framework that was co-designed between BDO, SSCT and DJSIR.



Appendix B - Data Sources

Primary and secondary data sources

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES:

BDO extends its appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the development of this social and economic value study. Consultations were undertaken with, and primary data provided by, State Sport Centres Trust, Swimming Victoria, Athletics Victoria, Netball Victoria, Knox Basketball, and Girls Sport Victoria. Additionally, primary survey data was provided by venue tenants listed on the following page.

SECONDARY DATA SOURCES:

1. Marsden Jacob Associates. *Victoria's nature-based outdoor economy*. Available [here](#).
2. Medibank. *The cost of physical inactivity*. Available [here](#).
3. Ashwin Property. *Housing prices set to boom off 2032 Olympics' suburbs*. Available [here](#).
4. Property Council of Australia. *What value does the property market put on green space?* Available [here](#).
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10. Sydney Olympic Park Authority. *Fees and Charges 2024-25*. Available [here](#).
11. Glen Eira Leisure. *Casual Pricing*. Available [here](#).
12. City of Gold Coast. *Major Venues - Summary of Hire Fees and Charges*. Available [here](#).
13. Fair Work Ombudsman. *Minimum wages*. Available [here](#).
14. Visit Victoria. *Victorian visitor economy sets new record*. Available [here](#).
15. Royal Life Saving Australia. *National Drowning Report 2025*. Available [here](#).
16. Royal Life Saving Australia. *A 13 Year National Study of Non-Fatal Drowning in Australia*. Available [here](#).
17. VicHealth. *Participation in physical activity: A determinant of mental and physical health, Research summary*. Available [here](#).
18. Queensland Government. *Benefits of being active*. Available [here](#).
19. Western Australian Department of Health. *Physical Activity*. Available [here](#).
20. Healthdirect. *Benefits of physical activity for children*. Available [here](#).
21. World Health Organization. *WHO reviews effect of physical activity on enhancing academic achievement at school*. Available [here](#).
22. St Francis Xavier College. *Physical Activity and Learning: How Fitness and Exercise Play a Role in Education*. Available [here](#).
23. Mutter, F & Pawlowki, T. *Role models in sports - can success in professional sports increase the demand for amateur sport participation?* Available [here](#).
24. Victorian Institute of Sport. *Victorian Institute of Sport unveils new facility upgrade*. Available [here](#).
25. Austadiums. *FIFA Women's World Cup Crowds*. Available [here](#).

Appendix B - Data Sources

List of venue tenants

MSAC (inc. Sports House):

- AusTriathlon
- Badminton Australia
- Badminton Victoria
- Chase Basketball Victoria
- Diving Victoria
- Girls Sport Victoria
- Gymnastics Australia
- Lacrosse Victoria
- Lakeside Sports Medicine
- Masters Swimming Australia
- Masters Swimming Victoria
- Melbourne Central Basketball Association
- Paralympics Australia
- Seddon Hypnotherapy
- Softball Australia
- Sports Dietitians Australia
- Squash & Racquetball Victoria
- Swimming Australia
- Swimming Victoria
- Table Tennis Australia
- Table Tennis Victoria
- VicSport
- Volleyball Victoria
- Water Polo Victoria

Lakeside Stadium:

- Athletics Australia
- Athletics Victoria
- Australian Sports Foundation
- Combat Institute of Australia
- Little Athletics Australia
- Little Athletics Victoria
- Rowing Victoria
- South Melbourne Football Club
- Victorian Athletic League
- Victorian Institute of Sport

State Netball and Hockey Centre:

- Hockey Australia
- Hockey Victoria
- Netball Victoria
- Sports Excellence Scholarship Fund
- Sports Medicine Australia

Knox Regional Sports Park including State Basketball Centre:

- Basketball Australia
- Basketball Victoria
- Football Victoria
- Knox Basketball
- Knox Gymnastics
- South East Melbourne Phoenix
- Southside Flyers

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