

A fit for purpose Australian Institute of Sport

Submission into the inquiry on the future of the AIS

From the outset the Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum strongly feels the Australian Institute of Sport should remain in the National Capital.

The major reasons are:

1. The significant support from key Australian sports executives and athletes to upgrade the current AIS facilities.
2. Its location in the National Capital, and close to the Canberra airport, the North Canberra Hospital and Canberra's city centre.
3. Its current facilities are ideal, they just need upgrading.
4. The Canberra climate and environment is perfect for training.
5. The upgrading of facilities at the AIS will allow athletes sufficient lead time for their preparation for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This once prestigious institution with world class facilities has been neglected by respective Federal Governments over the past two decades. With appropriate investment this facility can return to lead the world in sports medicine and the training and development of Australian athletes. As a national institution it should remain located in Australia's capital city.

1. Current support for upgrading the AIS in Canberra

The Tourism Leaders Forum joins a number of Federal Members of Parliament, senior sports administrators and executives, many former and current athletes and other interested parties in calling for the Federal Government to invest in restoring the AIS in Canberra to its former glory.

Michael Milton, Paralympian and Australia's most decorated Winter Paralympian is a member of our Tourism Leaders Forum. Michael, over his career spanning more than 20 years, claimed 11 Paralympic medals – including six golds – across six Paralympic Games. He was also captain of the 2002 Australian Winter Paralympic Team. Michael is well placed to lend support to the retaining of the AIS in the National Capital.

Robert de Castella, has lived and trained in Canberra for many years. He is a four-time Olympian, competing in the men's marathon at the Moscow 1980, Los Angeles 1984, Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games. As a former Director of the Australian Institute of Sport from 1990 to 1995, Rob has always felt the AIS should be returned to its former glory and remain in Canberra.

2. Its location in the National Capital,

The AIS is located:

- just 7.5 kilometres from Canberra's city centre
- less than 15 kilometres from the Canberra International Airport and
- within 5 minutes of the Canberra North Hospital

The Capital itself is easy to navigate and its attractions and accommodation choices are all within close proximity to the AIS. It's lack of traffic congestion is a major feature.

3. Its current facilities need upgrading

The training facilities at the AIS need upgrading and there is plenty of material outlining what is required through the CEO of the Australian Sports Commission Kieren Perkins.

It is also important to note the AIS hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, including school groups from all over Australia as part of the Federal Government's PACER program, funding students to visit their National Capital.

Over 4,000 international athletes travel to the AIS annually to take advantage of their world leading sports medicine expertise. The AIS website states their 'aim is to ensure Australian athletes achieve their performance goals because they engage with **world-leading performance support** that provides **extraordinary impact** for **enduring success**.

The institute conducts an award-winning 90-minute guided tour of this premier elite sports precinct using athletes as tour hosts. The AIS also is home to Sportex, one of Australia's leading interactive sports exhibits.

The Atomic Design Group developed a master plan for the AIS Visitor Centre. Their website states

'The Australian Institute of Sport is the pre-eminent elite sports training institution in Australia. Their Sports Visitor Centre forms the public face of the Institute and receives close to one million visitors a year'.

4. The Canberra climate and environment is perfect for training

Canberra has a clean, pollution free environment, a perfect place for athletes to live and train.

5. The upgrading of facilities at the AIS will allow athletes sufficient lead time for their preparation for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

This point is obviously a major consideration in any decision on the future of the AIS and has been raised frequently over the past few months. The Australian Institute of Sport was established in 1981 in the suburb of Bruce in Canberra. Athletes from Australia and around the world have trained at the AIS over the past 42 years.