



AUSTRALIAN SPORTING ALLIANCE
FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY



DISABILITY SPORTS – COMMUNITY FACILITY GUIDELINES

Volume 1: Indoor

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FORWARD

Sport is a powerful force for inclusion, empowerment, and community connection. For people with disabilities, access to well-designed, inclusive sporting facilities is not just a matter of equity—it is a foundation for participation, achievement, and social integration. Yet, despite progress in recent years, significant disparities remain in the opportunities and experiences available to people with disabilities compared to their able-bodied peers.

The Disability Sports – Community Facility Guidelines (Volume 1: Indoor) have been developed to address these challenges. This document provides a comprehensive, practical resource for planners, designers, managers, and all stakeholders involved in the creation and operation of community sports facilities. It is informed by the lived experiences of athletes, coaches, administrators, and organisations dedicated to advancing disability sport in Australia.

These Guidelines are grounded in the principles of universal design, sustainability, and collaboration. By consolidating the needs of partner sports and focusing on multi-use outcomes, this resource aims to ensure that every new or upgraded facility is accessible, functional, and welcoming for all.

We hope that this document will serve as a catalyst for positive change—supporting the growth of participation, fostering integration between people with disabilities and able-bodied athletes, and enhancing the overall sporting experience for everyone. By working together, we can build a future where sport truly belongs to all.

John Croll AM

Chair and Independent Director

Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability



1. INTRODUCTION

The **Disability Sports - Community Facility Guidelines** (the Guidelines) are a practical resource for planning, designing, managing and utilising community sports facilities for activities involving people with disabilities and their associated organisations.

1.1. GUIDELINE NEED

While positive strides are being made to enhance outcomes within sports infrastructure for people with disabilities, a significant disparity remains between the community participation opportunities available to the able-bodied and those available to people with disabilities. This inequity spans locational accessibility, facility functionality and design, access to fields of play, and the overall experience of people and delivery organisations, highlighting a critical need for improvement.

While there is a genuine desire within the government and the sports sector to address the challenges mentioned, limited resources are available to guide public servants, sporting organisations and industry advisors. A comprehensive tool that integrates the needs of people with disabilities and associated organisations from early planning to delivering and managing community sporting infrastructure can significantly enhance outcomes. By adopting a realistic, sustainable and phased approach, we can ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same opportunities and experiences as other members of the sporting community.

The Guidelines are needed in order to support people with a disability with:

- « Improved accessibility to venues and indoor facilities;
- « Growth in participation and sustainable competition opportunities;
- « Improved sports participation integration between people with disabilities and able bodied athletes;
- « Enhanced knowledge sharing and education between sport for people with a disability and able bodied sports;
- « Venues and facilities that are designed to incorporate the needs of and to optimise the user experience for athletes with a disability.

1.2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Guidelines is to inform community sporting infrastructure locational accessibility, management and access arrangements, and facility design. The Guidelines are envisaged to support sporting organisations, planners, architects, builders, operators, government agencies, and educational institutions in enhancing sporting outcomes for people with disabilities.



1.3. SCOPE

The Guidelines are prepared for the specific needs of the following sports infrastructure types:



This *Guideline (Volume 1)* relates to indoor sports infrastructure.

Otium Planning Group (Otium) prepared the Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability. Athletes, coaches, administrators and stakeholder organisations of the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability have reviewed and provided input to ensure Guideline accuracy and capacity for implementation.

Given that most sporting facilities are non-sport specific, the Guidelines consolidate the needs of partner sports into a single document, with a focus on achieving multi-use outcomes.

1.4. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Guidelines are informed by, leverage and be consistent with the following Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability strategic documents:



Members sport specifications, guidelines and recommendations

Produced by Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability.

2. FACILITY HIERARCHY

2.1. VISION

The Vision of the Guidelines is for community sports facilities for people with disabilities to:



Provide a similar level of locational accessibility to community sports facilities to that enjoyed by able-bodied athletes.



Provide peak time accessibility to fields of play for training and competition opportunities for people with disabilities.



Encourage a collaborative and integrated environment between people with disabilities and the able-bodied.



Enhance opportunities to put sport for people with disabilities on display to the broader community.



Support a healthier community by optimising opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport, socially integrate and be physically active.



Enhance the investment in and sustainability of sports infrastructure by optimising use and viability.

2.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles for the planning, design, development and management of sports facilities for people with disabilities are:



Respect and Recognition

Future community sports facilities will recognise and celebrate the important role that sports play in supporting a healthier community for people with disabilities.

Diversity

Future community sports facilities will offer numerous opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in sporting activities.



Collaboration and Integration

Future sports facilities will cater to disabled and able-bodied athletes, promoting social interaction, knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Sustainability

Future community sports facilities will support the sustainable growth of sport participation for people with disabilities and optimise the use and financial performance of infrastructure.



2.3. HIERARCHY

Regional, state, national, international and high-performance standard sports facilities provide important pathways in sport for people with disabilities. However, these Guidelines focus on optimising community sports participation for people with disabilities and do not include the broader classification needs of these higher standard uses and facilities.

Outlined below is a summary of the purpose, provision, catchment and accessibility for a district standard (community) indoor sports facility designed to meet the participation needs of people with disabilities and those without:

	DISTRICT STANDARD (COMMUNITY)	REGIONAL, STATE, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND HIGH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
Purpose	Can be standalone or incorporated within a broader, multi-purpose indoor court facility and services the indoor sporting needs of the local community, including people with disabilities, for home and away fixtures, social sport, training activities and participation programs.	<i>Outside of the scope of these Guidelines.</i>
Provisional Rate	« One multi-purpose court : 12,000 people. « Minimum number of courts per facility = three multi-use courts.	
Locational Accessibility	« Indoor sports facility to be located within a 15-minute drive time of most residents.	
Catchment Size	« Minimum 15-minute drive time catchment for a new facility = 36,000 people.	



3. FACILITY STANDARDS

The following facility standards are intended as a guide for preferred requirements, rather than minimum standards. Facility standards should be reviewed and applied in conjunction with relevant industry and construction standards.

The facility standards outlined below are general guidelines for a multi-use community sports facility designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities and those who are able-bodied.

3.1. INFORMATION

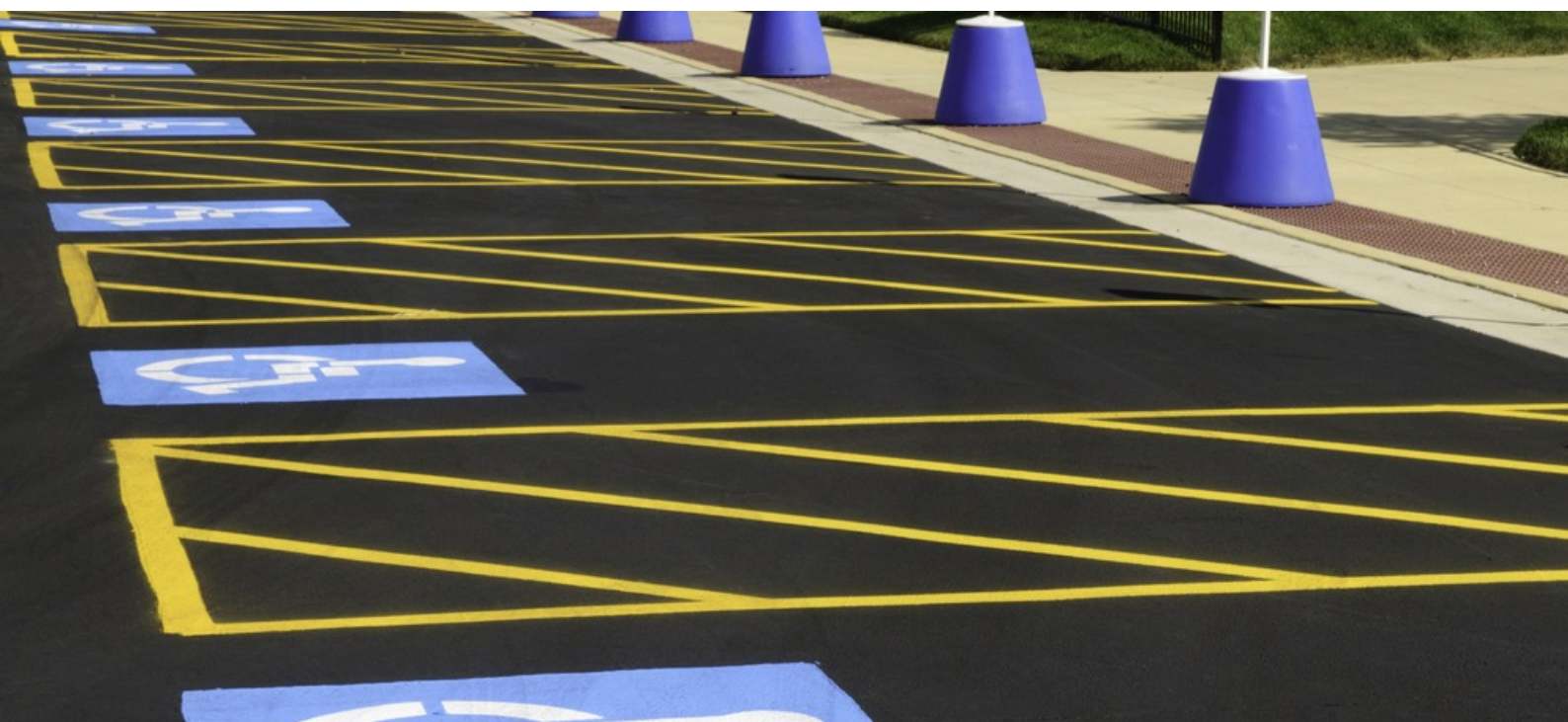
Publicly available information on a venue's suitability for people with a disability is the starting point for people with disabilities and influences their experience. To help people with disabilities research a venue's accessibility before they arrive, venues can implement a range of strategies that are informative, transparent, and easy to access, including:

- « Dedicated section within the venue web page, including the potential for a companion website.
- « Implementation of a companion app.
- « Include on the web page the use of visual aids, including photos, videos, virtual tours and floor plans.
- « Provide the opportunity for accessibility ratings and reviews.
- « Offer downloadable resources.

3.2. ARRIVAL AND NAVIGATION

The preferred arrival and navigation facility standards within a venue are:

- « Provide wide, step-free paths of travel, automatic doors with sufficient circulation space and wide corridors within the venue.
- « Ensure travel distances are minimised, with accessible parking spaces and vehicle set down areas located at the same level and as close as possible to the building entrance.
- « Optimise co-location of key facilities such as fields of play, changerooms and other amenities.
- « All internal and external floor surfaces for paths of travel should be smooth, firm, non-slip and designed to reduce friction as much as possible.
- « Incorporate automatic doors at entry.



3.3. SURFACES

The preferred surface facility standards within a venue are:

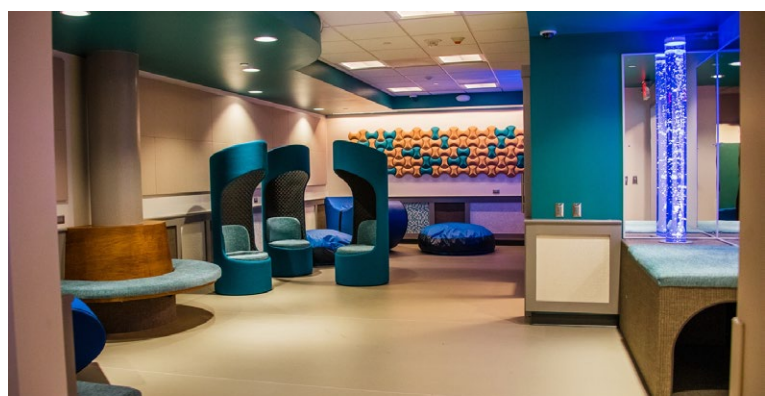
- « Where possible, wooden polished sports floors.
- « Where wood floors are not possible, the surface should support:
 - Light in colour
 - Smooth rolling
 - Durability under repeated use
 - Slip resistance
 - Ease of maintenance
 - Minimal glare and reflection.
- « Avoid hard surfaces that could create confusing sound reflections.



3.4. SUPPORTING FACILITIES

Where feasible, consideration should be given to providing the following disability sport support facilities:

- « Accessible multi-purpose program rooms to support a diversity of non-court indoor sport and active recreation opportunities.
- « Accessible meeting rooms.
- « Call room for athletes' pre-competition waiting.
- « A quiet room and low-sensory space.



3.5. LIGHTING/ ACOUSTICS

The preferred acoustic facility standards within a venue are:

- « Incorporate partition walls or sound-absorbing materials.
- « Implement acoustic treatments such as sound-absorbing panels on walls and ceilings.
- « Isolate HVAC system noise.
- « Create buffers from external noise sources such as traffic, other sports, or public areas.
- « Provide acoustic barriers between spectator areas and the field of play.

The preferred lighting facility standards within a venue are:

- « Ensure adequate lighting throughout all access routes, particularly for those persons with minimal light perception.
- « Uniform lighting with the ability to dim.
- « Lighting intensity should be at least 300 lux.
- « The light source must be at least five metres above the floor.
- « Ensure adequate lighting within a venue for those with minimal light perception.



3.6. AUDIO/ VISUAL/ TEXTURAL

The preferred audio/ visual/ textural facility standards within a venue are:

- « High-quality public address systems with minimal echo and distortion for announcements and cues.
- « Public address systems designed to prevent sound bleed into the field of play during play.
- « Include hearing loop technology throughout the venue.
- « Employ directional speakers or sound beacons to help visually impaired athletes orient themselves.
- « Ability to incorporate consistent, recognisable sounds for game signals and navigation.
- « Ensure digital displays support real-time visual information on large, readable screens.
- « Use colour-coded zones or signage to indicate different areas within the venue.
- « Incorporate textured or raised floor markings to assist with navigation.
- « Include braille and raised-letter signage for room labels, exits and venue maps.
- « Combine visual, auditory and tactile cues for navigation.
- « Ensure alarms include flashing lights, vibration and sound.
- « Ensure wall colourings differ from equipment colours.
- « Ensure clear glass has bright colour on it, at an appropriate height for people using a wheelchair, to support people with visual impairment.



3.7. CHANGEROOMS AND AMENITIES

The preferred changerooms and amenities facility standards within a venue are:

- « Include a changing places room following Changing Places Design Specifications 2020.
- « Incorporate additional ambulant cubicles with grab rails and easy-access fittings.
- « Design with wide circulation spaces.
- « Ensure lockers, benches and pathways allow for side-by-side turning and passing, including provision for companion seats.
- « Showers should include
 - Roll-in showers in the changeroom with a fold-down seat, handheld shower head and grab rails.
 - Open shower areas for ease of access with curtain separation where appropriate.
- « Toilets should include
 - Accessible toilets per team zone.
 - Additional ambulant toilets to meet peak-time demand.
- « Provide three (3) accessible toilets, two (2) ambulant toilets and two (2) accessible showers.
- « First aid rooms should be nearby and in a calm, accessible environment.



3.8. TEMPERATURE

There is no one preferred temperature to support sports for people with disabilities. However, the following facility standards within a venue are preferred:

- « Ensure ambient temperatures remain consistent, stable and moderate.
- « Ensure good airflow.



3.9. COACHING/ OFFICIATING

The preferred coaching and officiating facility standards within a venue are:

- « Incorporate accessible viewing and coaching areas to support observing and interaction with athletes.
- « Ensure flexible layouts that can be reconfigured to accommodate different sports and coaching styles.
- « Provide visual and auditory aids for coaches, officials and athletes, such as screens, tablets, or assistive technology.
- « Ensure clear sightlines to the field of play over any facility barriers.



3.10. SPECTATORS

The preferred spectator facility standards within a venue are:

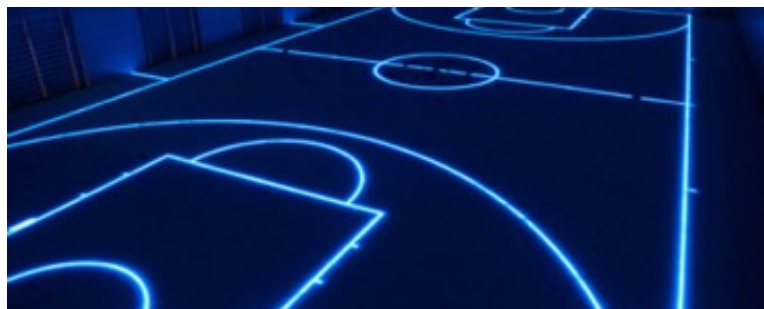
- « Design spectator areas and position spectator seating sufficiently away from the field of play to prevent sound interference with play.
- « Incorporate acoustic barriers between spectator areas and the field of play.
- « Ensure spectator areas are clearly separated from the field of play.
- « Wheelchair and companion spaces
 - Must be on an accessible route and not overlap circulation paths or aisles
 - Companion seating
 - At least one companion seat should be provided next to each wheelchair space
 - Alignment should allow shoulder-to-shoulder seating with the wheelchair user
 - Should be a standard seat, not a folding chair or temporary seat
 - Wheelchair users must have comparable lines of sight to other spectators
 - Wheelchair and companion seating must be dispersed throughout the venue across different viewing angles and price levels.



3.11. LINE MARKING

The preferred line marking facility standards within a venue are:

- « Line marking that is highly contrasting, non-slip and durable, with differentiated colours.
- « Avoid glossy or reflective tapes that may cause glare under lighting.
- « Where feasible, LED lit line marking technology should be explored.



3.12. STORAGE

The preferred additional storage facility standards for disability sports within a venue are:

- « Sports chairs
 - Area for 10-15 sports chairs
 - 35-45m²
 - Capacity to accommodate a wide base of up to 900mm
 - Secure access and adjacent team lockers.
- « Equipment storage
 - Include an additional 40m² per activity space for disability sport needs.



3.13. FACILITY COMPONENTS (INCL. FIELD OF PLAY) AND DESIGN

Facility Components

The following facility components and spatial areas are preferred for a district standard indoor sports facility that integrates the needs of people with disabilities:

FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SPATIAL AREA	FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP
Multi-purpose Courts	Three courts, as follows: « 42.25m x 30.5m (including run off and additional area for accessible coaching and officiating). « Storage – Equipment – 120m2 « Sport chairs – 40m2.	4,350m2	
Multi-use Program Room	« Open space for multiple activities « Storage.	120m2	
Drop-off Area	« Three car space and overtaking lane.	240m2	« Located adjacent to the main entry « Position on the same level as the entry.
Universal Car Parks	« 30 universal standard car parks.	750m2	« Close to the front entry « Position on the same level as the entry « In addition to standard car parks.
Meeting Room	« Boardroom style room.	50m2	
Call Room	« Open space area for marshalling.	100m2	« Connect to courts.
Quiet Room	« Low-sensory room.	100m2	« Position in close proximity to the courts.
Control/ Operations Room	« Clear glass frontage with desk.	15m2	« Sightlines over courts.
Player Changerooms	Two changerooms, as follows: « Changeroom area – Benches – Companion seats – Lockers. « Showers – Four lockable cubicles – Two roll-in showers. « Toilets – Four pan toilet cubicles – Three accessible toilets with two abluent toilets.	270m2	« Ensure lockers, benches and pathways allow for side-by-side turning and passing.

FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SPATIAL AREA	FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP
Officials Changeroom	« Changeroom area – Benches – Companion seat – Lockers. « Showers – One lockable cubicle – One roll in shower. « Toilets – One pan toilet cubicle – One accessible, abluent toilet.	35m2	« Ensure lockers, benches and pathways allow for side-by-side turning and passing. « Potential for short term use as an anti-doping room.
Changing Places	« As per <i>Changing Places Design Specifications 2020</i>	14m2	« Position in close proximity to the courts.
Public Toilets	« Male toilets « Female toilets « Accessible toilet.	90m2	
First-aid Room		25m2	« Connect to courts.
Seating	« 35 seats per court « Five wheelchair and companion spaces « Acoustic barriers to courts.	150m2	« Wheelchair and companion spaces should be on an accessible route and not overlap circulation paths or aisles.
Foyer	« Open area to support people gathering, reception, kiosk and retail.	300m2	« Located at the entrance. « Connect the kiosk and the reception « Indoor and outdoor chairs and tables, including those to accommodate wheelchairs and companion chairs « Foyer area to support retail and merchandise racks.
Management/ Administration	« Open space area with workstations and storage to support venue operations.	70m2	« Located behind reception and kiosk for off-peak front of house support.
Circulation Areas	« Oversized to support wheelchair and sport chair use.		

Notional Layout

The notional layout below incorporates the spatial areas and functional relationships outlined throughout Section 3. The design is non-site specific and therefore does not factor in specific opportunities and constraints that may be presented at a particular site.



Spatial Impact - The recommended facility components and spatial layout are projected to expand the footprint by less than 10% compared to a venue that does not accommodate sport for people with a disability.

4. MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS

The provision and standard of sports facilities are essential components in enabling people with disabilities to participate. Equally important is ensuring that management and access arrangements support fair outcomes for people with disabilities.

4.1. USER ACCESS

Peak hour use of multi-purpose indoor sport facilities is typically:

- « Monday to Friday
 - 4pm until late.
- « Saturday and Sunday
 - 9am to 6pm.

Similar to other members of the community, people with disabilities attend educational institutions, work and care for others. As a result, many athletes with a disability have minimal to no available time during traditional working days and hours for their sporting pursuits.

To encourage participation growth and maintain competition sustainability, it is essential to provide training and competition opportunities for people with disabilities during peak times. Additionally, peak time participation opportunities should be integrated with other sports facility activities and programs to promote social interaction, knowledge sharing and collaboration.

4.2. MANAGEMENT TERMS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Regardless of the model implemented for managing the multi-use indoor sport facilities, the management arrangements should aim for best practice standards. Such standards include incorporating performance measures to ensure the objectives of a sports facility are realised. Within a multi-use indoor sports facility, the performance measures would typically cover:



In addition to these standard measures, to enhance sporting outcomes for people with disabilities, the following measures should be incorporated:



Peak time access

Minimum of eight (8) hours per indoor sports activity space per week for dedicated activities for people with disabilities.



Off-peak access

Minimum of ten (10) hours per indoor sports activity space per week for dedicated activities for people with disabilities.



Integration

Where possible, integrate activities for people with disabilities simultaneously with activities for other community members (except for activities by persons with disabilities requiring a quieter and/ or less lit environment).



Program and development

Develop new programs and activities aimed at increasing participation opportunities for people with disabilities.



Program diversity

Ensure sports facilities for disability sports provide access opportunities for multiple, diversified activities.



Key stakeholder status

Include disability sport user groups in venue communications and planning alongside other community groups.



Data and reporting

Support future advocacy of the benefits of disability sports by recording participation levels of people with disabilities.



Maintain facility standards

Endeavour to maintain sports facilities to meet the standards of service outlined in the Guidelines.



Education

Implement policy, training and communication strategies aimed to enhance community and stakeholder education of sport for people with disabilities.

5. BENEFITS

The implementation of the recommended facility hierarchy and standards, and management and access arrangements outlined in this Guideline, will greatly enhance opportunities and the experience of sport for people with a disability. As a result, the following benefits will be realised:



Social

Inclusion and Empowerment

- « Promotes social inclusion by breaking down barriers and stereotypes.
- « Empowers individuals with disabilities to participate actively in society.

Improved Mental and Physical Health

- « Enhances self-esteem, confidence, and mental well-being.
- « Encourages physical activity, which can improve overall health and reduce healthcare costs.

Community Engagement

- « Builds stronger communities through shared experiences and teamwork.
- « Encourages volunteerism and civic participation.

Education and Awareness

- « Raises public awareness about disability issues.
- « Educates people on the importance of accessibility and equal opportunities.

Role Models and Inspiration

- « Athletes with disabilities often become role models, inspiring others to overcome challenges.



Economic

Employment Opportunities

- « Creates jobs in coaching, event management, sports therapy, and administration.
- « Encourages inclusive hiring practices and workplace diversity.

Tourism and Events

- « Major disability sports events attract tourism and boost local economies.
- « Stimulates spending in hospitality, transport, and retail sectors.

Reduced Healthcare Costs

- « Active lifestyles can lead to fewer medical interventions and lower long-term healthcare expenses.

Innovation and Accessibility

- « Drives innovation in adaptive technologies and infrastructure.
- « Benefits not only athletes but also broader populations needing accessible solutions.

Sponsorship and Media Revenue

- « Growing interest in disability sport leads to increased sponsorship, broadcasting rights, and merchandise sales.

6. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS

The information in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium has applied its experience to the task, it has relied upon information supplied to it by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence' and these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

Otium's advice does not extend to, or imply professional expertise in the disciplines of economics, quantity surveying, engineering or architecture. External advice in one or more of these disciplines may have been sought, where necessary, to address the requirements of the project objectives. There will be differences between projected and actual results because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm, underwrite, or guarantee the projections' achievability, as it is impossible to substantiate assumptions based on future events.

Base level functional layout sketches, including renders and animated fly-throughs, are for indicative purposes only (not for design, construction or detailed costing purposes).

This report does not constitute advice, investment advice, or opinion and must not be relied on for funding or investment decisions. Independent advice should be obtained in relation to investment decisions.

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