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School Sport Australia appoints three Independent Directors to strengthen governance and drive future growth

23 November 2026

School Sport Australia (SSA) is pleased to announce the appointment of three highly experienced professionals to its Board, marking a significant milestone in strengthening governance, strategic leadership and the future of school sport across Australia.

The newly appointed Independent Board Members are Ms Karla Della Pietra, Ms Vivienne Partridge and Mr Tyrone Thwaites (Victoria). The appointments follow a comprehensive national recruitment process.

A significant milestone in national governance

The appointments have been made possible through changes to the School Sport Australia Constitution, unanimously supported by all eight SSA Member Bodies representing the state and territory education jurisdictions. The Constitution adopted on 10 October 2023 provides for up to three independent persons to be appointed by the Board, generally for terms of no more than two years unless otherwise determined by the Board.

Independent directors complement the education and school sport expertise of SSA's Member Bodies with additional professional capabilities in governance, commercial partnerships, communications, strategy and financial sustainability.

"This is a significant milestone for School Sport Australia. The unanimous support for constitution change from our eight Member Bodies demonstrated a shared commitment to strengthening governance, leadership and the long-term future of school sport in this country. Karla, Vivienne and Tyrone bring complementary skills that will help us make informed decisions, pursue new opportunities and build a sustainable future for national school sport."

— Mr Graeme Jennings, President, School Sport Australia

Karla Della Pietra | Governance and commercial partnerships

Based in South Australia, Karla is Chief Executive Officer of Life Education SA and previously led Volleyball South Australia as Chief Executive Officer. She brings extensive experience in sport, education, strategic planning, government relations and major events. At Volleyball SA she oversaw budgets of approximately $3 million and delivered a 400 per cent increase in corporate partnerships over two years. She also led community engagement for the 2025 Beach Volleyball World Championships, including a school engagement program reaching approximately 2,000 students.

Karla holds a Diploma of Governance and has served on the boards of Paddle SA and Baseball SA. Her experience will support robust governance, commercial partnerships, inclusion and the growth of participation opportunities.

Vivienne Partridge | Marketing, communications and positioning

Queensland-based Vivienne brings more than 25 years of executive experience in marketing, communications, strategy and organisational transformation. She is Marketing Operations Lead at Youi and has held senior roles with Optus and Foxtel, as well as working with major international brands. She served as a Non-Executive Director of Sunshine Coast Sports from 2021 to 2024, contributing to governance, risk management and the advancement of community sport.

Her expertise in brand development, digital transformation and stakeholder engagement will help SSA communicate the value of school sport, raise its national profile and build stronger connections with governments, families and partners.

Tyrone Thwaites | Financial sustainability and sporting pathways

Victoria-based Tyrone is General Manager of NBL1 and previously served as Acting Chief Executive Officer and Chief Basketball Officer at Basketball Western Australia. As Chief Executive Officer of Cockburn Basketball Association from 2017 to 2024, he helped grow annual revenue from approximately $700,000 to $2.4 million and advocated successfully for $20 million in government funding.

A former director of Cockburn Basketball Association, Tyrone holds an MBA (Digital) and brings expertise in commercial strategy, financial management, community participation and stakeholder relationships. His contribution will be particularly relevant to SSA's financial sustainability and accessible sporting pathways.

Supporting the next chapter of school sport

The appointments come as SSA develops its future strategic direction, enhances the School Sport Australia Games, expands inclusive participation and seeks stronger commercial partnerships. The organisation is also looking ahead to the opportunities associated with Brisbane 2032 and the role school sport can play in encouraging lifelong participation and developing future talent.

The three independent directors have been appointed for an initial two-year term.

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About School Sport Australia

School Sport Australia works with its eight state and territory Member Bodies to support representative school sport nationally. Through national championships and the School Sport Australia Games, it promotes participation, inclusion, student development and opportunities to compete and connect through sport.

Media enquiries: School Sport Australia - Phil Reeves 0437 832 096
eo@schoolsportaustralia.edu.au