



## Strategic Plan

FINAL PLAN

May 2010

**Amendments August 2011**

# Strategic Platforms



**Secure and upgrade facilities to enable the sport to grow**



**Build capacity within the baseball community**



**Develop strong relationships across the sport**



**Increase participation across the entire player spectrum**



**Create a communications niche from which the sport can be heard**



**Optimize the financial resources available to develop the sport**



**Major Fun to Major League**

**The strategic goal 1: Secure and upgrade facilities to enable the sport to grow**

Strategically, facilities are at the core of any sport business. Without the supply of facilities, many sports cannot exist. Baseball, like many other sports, relies on specialist facilities - at least for the competitive “adult” form of the sport. In Australia, for most sports, it is local government authorities that are important providers of this resource. The importance of facilities for the sustainability of baseball throughout Victoria was noted by all stakeholders involved in this project.

It was identified that baseball does not have a large facility footprint in Victoria. Its dependence on specialist facilities may potentially limit growth opportunities for the sport, and the lag time in facilities being established may inhibit growth in new markets (such as population growth corridors across the state).

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Secure facilities that provide baseball with good playing conditions.	a) Seek potential project funding/grants from SRV to conduct a facility audit of all current facilities and their attributes.	✓			
	b) Develop an expanded competition and operating model through the introduction of a number of selected ‘orbital hubs’ across Victoria. Identify and validate the proposed hubs for the sport and seek SRV & LGA grant funding for both major and minor capital works.				✓
	c) Develop a Master Plan for each of these premier centers.				✓
	d) Undertake a consultation and engagement process (at a regional level) with members to explore the proposed new organizational and competition structure and in particular the implications for facilities.				✓
	e) Resolve how the new ABL facility will be integrated into the broader BV facility strategy.	✓			
B. Retain, and fully utilise existing facilities for baseball across Victoria	a) Ensure existing baseball facilities are retained for association and club use. Work towards ensuring all facilities are used 12 months of the year.				✓
	b) Assist clubs develop business cases for presentation to LGAs for support for ongoing facility maintenance and re-development		✓		
C. Secure investment in baseball infrastructure.	a) Provide incentives for clubs to invest in facility development through the development of a needs analysis to justify the development proposal				✓
	b) Meet with clubs and Associations to assist them in their preparation of submissions for facility maintenance and upgrade support from SRV and LGAs		✓		

**The strategic goal 2: Build capacity within the baseball community**

Volunteers are the backbone of most Australian sports, and baseball is no exception. Volunteers in sport clubs are required to take on increasingly complex, and time-consuming roles if sport clubs (and therefore sports) are to survive. Finding willing volunteers is difficult not an easy task for any sport. Further, ensuring that willing volunteers are appropriately skilled, or trained to undertake the requirements mandated in many roles within sport clubs is sometimes even more demanding. Baseball in Victoria is supported by a loyal and enthusiastic group of volunteers in clubs around the state that have enabled them to achieve the success they currently experience. However, the capacity of baseball clubs across Victoria varies and emerges as a potential vulnerability going forward.

It was identified that clubs are seeking assistance in building capacity within their clubs. Many times this ‘seeking of assistance’ was directed at Baseball Victoria however many clubs reported some confusion with roles and responsibilities between clubs and Baseball Victoria.

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Develop BV as the key provider of skill development for members across Victoria	a) Undertake a review of the skill set available among the BV staff	✓			
	b) Review the skill sets required to deliver the appropriate courses and programs.		✓		
	c) Up skill existing staff or recruit staff with the skills required to enable BV to ‘teach the teachers’		✓		
	d) Provide development opportunities to young adults through participation in Leadership Camps to ready them for leadership positions within their club.		✓		
B. Every member to have at least once yearly access to appropriate coaching, umpiring and scoring accreditation programs.	a) Develop a schedule for courses across the state in coaching, umpiring, scoring and other program or administrative roles.		✓		
	b) Identify and then target clubs that require up-skilling and training where required.		✓		
	c) Promote the schedule and available opportunities to members		✓		
	d) Undertake and evaluate the courses as per the agreed schedule		✓		
C. Every member to have one appropriately accredited coach, and umpire for each registered team. Every member to have an accredited score at the club.	a) Publish a baseball coaching and officiating pathway (identifying all opportunities) and distribute to potential participants		✓		
	b) Provide incentives for individuals to become accredited coaches, umpires and scorers.		✓		
	c) Identify and then target individuals within clubs to engage in accreditation courses		✓		
D. Every member to have at least once yearly access to appropriate administrative or marketing courses to	a) Develop or identify opportunities to use existing resources (for example those available through international associations, other sports, SRV or ASC) resources/templates in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Volunteer management</li> <li>ii. Sport development</li> </ul>		✓		

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion
assist in delivering baseball more effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Safety and risk management</li> <li>iv. Financial management</li> <li>v. Governance</li> </ul>	
	b) Develop partnerships with ASC, ACHPER, Sport Medicine Australia, SRV, VicHealth and VicSport to assist in the development and acquisition of sport resources.	✓
	c) Target past members, international expatriates and international businesses operating in Victoria to become involved in baseball as volunteers.	✓
	d) Utilise available resources of volunteering organisations (such as Volunteering Australia) to help deliver key objectives.	✓
	e) Ensure long serving volunteers are recognized and rewarded through all forms of information distribution, including newsletters, websites etc.	✓

**The strategic goal 3: Develop strong relationships across the sport**

Baseball, like many other sports, has a range of key stakeholder groups and organizations with which it works - directly and indirectly. An organization's ultimate success can depend upon the way in which it works with its stakeholders. The way in which a company works with both its internal and external stakeholders is a key feature of corporate culture, and a feature that is key to an effective organization.

It was identified that alleged poor communication had lead to Baseball Victoria's relationships with internal stakeholders (members, clubs, and associations) being fractured and relationships with external stakeholders were perceived to be weak due to the sport's lack of presence.

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Create clear roles and responsibilities for the BV Board, staff, committees, Member Associations and Clubs	a) Develop position descriptions and establish contractual, management and reporting mechanisms for BV staff.	✓			
	b) Promote the portfolio structure of the BV Board to members and other stakeholders	✓			
	c) Create clear protocols for the Board and senior management in regards the management of key issues			✓	
	d) Review the roles and responsibilities of all committees and groups reporting to the Board.			✓	
	e) Discuss and develop a service checklist with each member - to articulate the roles and expectations of members and BV. This should include both broad protocols for engagement as well as development of detailed roles, responsibilities and expectations. This should cover all peer to peer relationships - including BV to club, club to BV and club to club.			✓	
	f) Discuss service level expectations with the ABF and the ABL.	✓			
B. Develop and implement a climate survey that is undertaken annually.	a) <b>Create online satisfaction survey template for sub-committees.</b>			✓	
	b) <b>Facilitate each sub-committee to undertake an annual survey.</b>			✓	
C. Implement a communications program that allows each member to provide strategic input.	a) <b>Restructure and refocus President and Secretary Meetings to focus specifically on competition issues, with separate forums made available for Directors to allow discussion of key strategic issues.</b>	✓			
	b) Ensure key decisions are communicated widely across the sport.	✓			
	c) <b>Develop constitution, by-laws, policies and strategic plan templates to be used by affiliated Associations (i.e. Leagues and BUAV).</b>			✓	
	d) <b>Develop constitution, by-laws, policies and strategic plan templates to be used by individual clubs.</b>				✓

**The strategic goal 4: Increase participation across the entire player spectrum**

Sport development is a core responsibility for sport organizations. Sport development is a process whereby opportunities, processes, systems, and structures within the sport enable participation. Sport development ensures that opportunities to participate in sport regardless of age, gender, culture, geographic location are provided, as well as pathways for individuals to reach their performance potential. One of the greatest challenges for sports is to remove barriers that allow individuals opportunities to participate, as well as transition through the sport to performance levels. Essentially, there are two important components to consider in successful sport development - systems and pathways.

It was identified that baseball needs to be able to attract and then retain more people, in particular young children into the sport, as this is a major challenge for the sport. The replenishment of the ‘pool’ of young players was identified as vitally important for the sport to be sustainable.

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Develop a standard recruitment program to increase junior participation by 15% over 4 years.	a) Work with the ABF and members to define an athlete pathway for new participants; from social participants to elite/ internationally contracted players - that is a pathway that is represented by Major Fun to Major League. Publish a baseball athlete pathway (identifying all participation opportunities) and distribute to participants in development programs and clubs.		✓		
B. Increase junior player retention by 25% over 4years.	b) Invest in the <b>National entry level program, Aussie T-Ball</b> , to provide a fun and healthy sport choice for children, which also provides a good skill base for development. Invest in appropriate collateral to support the new program.		✓		
	c) Further develop ‘come and try days’ to introduce new participants to clubs and the sport of baseball.		✓		
	d) Partner cultural, consulates, organisations and universities to target families born in countries with strong baseball cultures <b>to create participation opportunities, utilizing tournament and Aussie T-Ball models.</b>		✓		
	e) Seek to develop programs for people with a disability – expand and develop existing programs where relevant. Work with VicHealth, PICSAR, and SRV to develop new programs or opportunities to serve new markets.		✓		
	f) Encourage and develop a culture of ‘recruit, retain and teach’ within and across all members to ensure the widespread health of the sport. Create a culture of sustainable self development within each club.		✓		
C. Focus efforts at schools to drive engagement with club come n try days or other recruitment activities	a) Provide incentives for clubs to leverage relationships with local schools in their area.			✓	
	b) Provide resources that allow clubs to implement recruitment strategies with local schools in their area.			✓	
	c) Work with ACHPER to develop teacher-coach strategies in target schools. Target teacher coaches in schools			✓	
	d) <b>Work in close partnership with the Melbourne Aces to access public promotional activities and school visits that benefit both increased participation in Baseball Victoria clubs as well as improved attendance at Melbourne Aces games.</b>		✓		

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion
D. Create competitions that more correctly align with player motivation to increase senior player retention and recruitment.	a) Consider different <b>and alternative</b> game formats including indoor, mixed, and alternative social participation, such as Yard Ball and tournaments	✓
E. Create new competition and operating model to provide a more targeted delivery of the sport across Victoria	a) Further develop a new competition model based on the identification of a number of orbital hubs and regionalization of the sport across Victoria.	✓
	b) Commence and engagement process with members about the benefits and advantages of the new model	✓
	c) Include a review of the existing competition formats, junior participation and opportunities for different levels of involvement in baseball (for example a social pathway and a high performance pathway). Work with the existing clubs to ensure the new competition structures simplify the current programs and encourage stronger participation from all Victorians.	✓
F. Establish a footprint for baseball in new growth areas across Victoria.	a) Identify the key growth areas across Victoria.	✓
	b) Work with existing clubs or consider the establishment of new baseball clubs to take advantage of this population growth. Develop an action plan for each identified growth area.	✓
	c) Initial focus should be on creating opportunities for junior level participation in the sport.	✓

**The strategic goal 5: Create a communications niche from which the sport can be heard**

The battle for many non mainstream sports is to raise awareness and shape perceptions about the sport itself. This is an issue of strategic marketing plans, marketing communications, and public relations. The marketing of baseball needs to consider external and internal stakeholders, as well as existing and future consumers - both participants and spectators of the sport. Marketing is about establishing a reputable brand in the marketplace, and maintaining it through consistent and integrated marketing and communications activities throughout the organization.

It was identified that there is a great and immediate need to rebuild the public profile of the sport of baseball. The challenge is to rebuild the brand and reputation of the sport. This of course resonated from the discussions with external stakeholders where there is little knowledge about the game or sport.

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Develop a member communication strategy.	a) Prepare an overarching strategy for communicating with members. Create greater visibility and transparency for BV through this new strategy.		✓		
	b) Work with members, through the assistance of SRV, VicSport, LGAs and other groups, to assist them in the preparation of their own communication strategy.		✓		
	c) Prepare a set of key messages for baseball, considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. what players say are the benefits of baseball</li> <li>ii. what the public or sponsor may embrace (i.e. speed of the game, skill, ability to represent ones country or play professionally)</li> <li>iii. association with MLB</li> </ul>		✓		
	d) Redevelop the website and online functionality that will provide BV with distinct opportunities to communicate with members, stakeholders and the wider Victorian community. This should include but not be limited to forums, video, audio and new platforms (e.g. face book, twitter etc). Explore a member’s only quarantined area of the site to house key communication and information.	✓			
	e) Identify a Board member or supporting committee to drive the web innovations and development. Engage key individuals from clubs to assist and contribute to this development.	✓			
	f) Increase the proportion of up to date and individual email and mobile contact information to facilitate a wider distribution of information that can be disseminated by email and voice/SMS messaging.		✓		
	g) Collect record and inform all causal participants in baseball of ongoing available opportunities (such as at the National league Games, Melbourne Show etc.)		✓		
	h) Establish greater connection and communication with a wide cross section of the industry state-wide.	✓			
B. Develop an external communication strategy.	a) Develop a brief internal communications plan for Baseball Victoria, and protocols about who can speak on behalf of Baseball Victoria		✓		
	b) Prepare a set of key messages for baseball, considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. what players say are the benefits of baseball</li> </ul>		✓		

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. what the public or sponsor may embrace (ie speed of the game, skill, ability to represent ones country or play professionally)</li> <li>iii. association with MLB</li> </ul>	
	c) Establish greater connection and communication with a wide cross section of the industry state-wide.	✓
	d) Priority on redeveloping the BV website to create a more powerful gateway for external audiences. Use new technology to create more interaction with all external audiences.	✓
C. Develop a promotions strategy that leverages the full benefits from the introduction of the ABL.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop a set of consistent promotional messages for baseball that all members and volunteers can reinforce</li> <li>b) Prepare and disseminate baseball fact sheets for schools, parents and potential participants. This would cover opportunities to participate, what makes a good baseball player; cost to play; equipment; the pathway to elite competition etc.</li> <li>c) Recruit an appropriately skilled and experienced committee to work with the Melbourne Franchise (in the National league) to identify opportunities to leverage the new league to further develop the sport across Victoria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
D. Create a structured link with the media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop champions in the media (press, radio and TV – statewide, metropolitan and regional areas).</li> <li>b) Develop relationships with key print and television media to publish regular stories.</li> <li>c) Identify retired players or past members who may assist to develop a promotional network.</li> <li>d) Utilise public role models; former Olympians; and international players (such as Australians in MLB) to promote baseball publicly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>

**The strategic goal 6: Optimize the financial resources available to develop the sport**

Identifying the parameters within which Baseball Victoria operates is helpful in identifying the areas in which it can create and sustain a competitive advantage. The sport industry in Australia has matured, and sport organizations must be prepared to manage increasingly complex structures, to consider alternate forms of organization and management, and adhere to new and differing agendas that drive sport delivery.

It was identified that the financial capacity of Baseball Victoria to achieve sustainable growth is questionable due to its dependability on government support, inability to attract meaningful sponsors and reliance on participation fees. Despite this, it was also acknowledged that baseball required the continued support and increase of government funding.

Targets	Actions	Timeline for completion			
		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A. Obtain sponsorship agreements for each level of baseball competition.	a) Commence development and compilation of the necessary 'building block' to build evidence set which can be used as the platform for the development of sponsorship proposals. This will include measures of coverage, participation, history, international profile and other key points of interest.			✓	
	b) Identify and agree on the 'products' that could be available for sponsorship.			✓	
	c) Identify likely sport, community and business partners whose objectives could be met through sponsoring baseball.			✓	
	d) Prepare major sponsorship proposals to support the ongoing operation of baseball			✓	
	e) Negotiate with ABF to agree consistent sponsorship, promotion and related servicing arrangements.			✓	
	f) Prepare and undertake fundraising activities – benefiting baseball in Victoria - particularly in the lead-up to the launch of the national league.			✓	
	g) Seek a sponsor to produce a suite of high quality posters, wallpaper, and 'point of sale' information and distribute at development programs, schools, facilities and via websites.			✓	
B. Increase government funding by 20% in 4 years	a) Establish and then nurture relationships with SRV and LGAs. This should commence with an introductory presentation of BV and its new strategic plan.			✓	
	b) Align with the health agenda as proposed in the Crawford Report			✓	
	c) Monitor local, state and federal government sport policy initiatives and react accordingly to obtain funding opportunities			✓	
C. Develop user pay model for player development programs.	a) Build a business case for user pay models for player development programs			✓	
	b) Engage and consult with members about new user pay models			✓	

D. Create best of class business model	a) Prepare an analysis of the baseline and future anticipated cost of business for BV	✓
	b) Review funding model to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="451 178 1921 203">i. A consistent funding structure across all baseball</li> <li data-bbox="451 203 1921 227">ii. Value for money for all participants</li> <li data-bbox="451 227 1921 251">iii. Remove all inequities in the funding model</li> <li data-bbox="451 251 1921 284">iv. Consider casual pricing and service delivery models</li> </ul>	✓
	c) Explore the opportunities for collective purchasing arrangements for all members.	✓
	d) Explore the opportunities for relocation of the office (for example with the ABL's Melbourne Team) to drive efficiencies and a greater access for members. With this relocation also explore opportunities for generating additional revenue through the provision of training facilities.	✓

## Acronyms & Explanations

ABF - Australian Baseball Federation

ABL - Australian Baseball League

ACHPER - peak body for school physical and recreational education

ASC - Australian Sports Commission

**Aussie T-Ball - ABF introductory baseball program**

BV - Baseball Victoria

Crawford Report - Independent sports review report, released in 2010

LGA - Local Government Authority (i.e. local city, rural or shire council)

Members - BV Clubs and Associations/Leagues

MLB - Major League Baseball

PICSAR - VicHealth funding program

Rally Cap - Baseball Canada introductory baseball program

RSA - Regional Sports Assemblies

SRV - Sport & Recreation Victoria, the sports department of Victorian Government

Tee Ball - modified baseball game for children

VicHealth - Victorian Health Promotion

VicSport - peak body for sport in Victoria

Yard Ball - 4x4 modified baseball game