



HUSSEY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Australian Cricket Association (SACA) was one of the founding states in the Sheffield Shield competition which began back in 1892/93. SACA has won the competition 13 times but only twice in the last 44 years and not at all in the last 24 years. This inability to win titles is at the heart of this Review.

In recent times, there have been a number of positive outcomes for the state, particularly the production of Australian players, able to perform consistently at the highest levels of all forms of the game. It is worth noting that just a few years ago the Redbacks made consecutive Sheffield Shield finals. However, the last three seasons have seen the Redbacks finish at the bottom of the Sheffield Shield table.

102 people were interviewed for this Review covering a cross section of the cricket community, including High Performance experts; opposition players and coaches; past and present SA players, coaches and staff; Presidents, coaches and players of Premier Cricket clubs; parents of young SA players as well as CEO's and Board members. I am pleased to say that there are many passionate SA cricket fans who would love to see their SA teams successful.

There were key themes to emerge from the interview process around the guiding principles of Culture, System and High Performance.

Success for South Australian cricket is derived through having the appropriately skilled people operating within clear governance structures. Overseen by high quality and capable people involved in the broader administration of the SACA. In addition, and a key focus of this Report, is the building of strong relationships at junior, school, Premier Cricket and State levels which will ensure that the systems and processes provide opportunities for players and SA teams to meet their cricket objectives.

As one of the smaller populated states, depth is always tested and as a result SA will regularly need to 'punch above its weight'. For this to happen, the SACA will need to think and act differently in some areas of its cricket high performance. The SACA must be process, rather than outcome driven. It has to have the expertise and knowledge to get the strategy right, put robust systems in place from grass roots through to the professional game and implement a supporting structure to service player requirements and development. All this bonded together with a consistent selection philosophy and process.

If the SACA wants to move forward then there must be change. Building relationships and trust from the bottom up and from the top down will require strong, consistent leadership. There will have to be an element of letting go of the past and focusing on the future.

Unfortunately, a strong view from the people interviewed is that South Australian cricket has had a culture of mediocrity for many years and acceptance of it has been a barrier to success. There are governance issues that allow this to happen. The cricket foundations i.e. Premier Cricket, club and junior cricket are generally not strong making it difficult for SA to consistently compete with other states. The SACA Board should have an increased focus on the business of cricket, the HP Committee should have more recent HP experience and the Premier Cricket Committee is proving to be ineffective in providing a high-quality Premier Cricket competition.



Premier Cricket is a crucial part of the pathway, which firstly needs to be acknowledged, then respected. Changes will need to be made to ensure a higher quality competition that provides tough, competitive cricket and in doing so, breeds players capable of performing at the next level and beyond. Changes in the number of teams in the competition and a better relationship with SACA HP should be adopted. I appreciate that this is not a simple process but this is required if the Board wants sustainable success.

Relationships built on respect, honesty and being valued underpinned by a selection policy based predominantly on performance in Premier Cricket will provide genuine aspiration for players. An element of selector independence is required given current selectors are full-time executives in the HP programme and are seen as conflicted.

Player and Coach development at all levels of the organisation must improve to help build depth, competitive players and teams. The quality of coaching at junior level isn't good enough. The foundations of the game haven't been developed well enough for successful transitions from juniors to Premier Cricket. There are also gaps in the level of specialised coaching in the pathway programmes, particularly in the seam and spin bowling departments.

The effect of participation in the current High Performance system has created a sense of entitlement for many young players, not just in SA but around the country. They feel the Pathways Programme will assist them to by-pass Premier Cricket to achieve long and successful first-class careers. This has proven to be unsuccessful and created a myriad of problems such as, devaluing the importance of Premier Cricket and creating behavioural traits that won't set players up for long-term success.

The appointment of the new Redbacks Head Coach is a crucial decision and should not be rushed. Building a strong Redbacks coaching unit that have complimentary skill sets and personalities with the ability to build strong relationships and have a bigger presence at Premier Cricket will have a huge bearing on the future success of the Redbacks.

The effects of Covid-19 will be felt by all cricket associations. It has provided an opportunity to focus on what is most important in cricket programmes. It is clear securing the right people, having strong junior cricket foundations and more reliance on Premier cricket (and less reliance on Pathway Programmes) will be outcomes of the pandemic.

I would conclude by suggesting the recommended changes in this Report will be more cost effective than the delivery of the current Pathways Programme.

HUSSEY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>1. Ensure strong talent for current and future roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review job positions to ensure alignment with business strategy. (b) Conduct talent review to assess employee performance and capability as well as identify talent gaps. (c) Conduct succession planning/bench-strength review. (d) Put development/succession plans in place to ensure continued performance and success.
<p>2. Improve coaching in juniors at Premier Cricket Clubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review coaching structures and SACA Development Officer involvement at Premier Clubs.

	(b) Increase the level of coaching expertise and skill development.
3. Vastly improve and value Premier Cricket.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Improve SACA relationships with Premier Cricket Clubs. Genuinely work with and resource appropriately, place value in and acknowledge the importance of Premier Cricket as an integral part of the pathway. (b) Reduce the number of Premier Cricket teams to between 8 - 10 and remove the bye. This decision to be made by the clubs. (c) Produce pitches with more pace and bounce (may mean playing some games away from football ovals in first half of the season). (d) Explore different ideas to create a better contest between bat and ball. (e) Review points system, introduce bonus points for the second innings of games to discourage games being called off early. (f) Encourage first-class players to play Premier Cricket when available with, at the discretion of the Redbacks Head Coach being able to manage players, particularly fast bowlers, when needed. (g) Actively recruit quality and experienced players back from community cricket and give genuine hope of Redbacks selection through performance. (h) Re-visit the Zadow Report reviewing recommendations and working with the Premier Clubs to implement where appropriate.
4. Improve relationships with Premier Cricket Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Genuinely work with the Committee - communicating, respecting and resourcing appropriately. (b) Include Premier coaches and players in an advisory capacity to ensure messaging is clear and aligned.
5. Develop relationships with Schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide coaching resource where needed. (b) Ensure high calibre coaching and cricket directors are in place. (c) Place value and acknowledge as an important part of the pathway. (d) Negotiate with schools for players being able to play 1st grade Premier Cricket where possible. Make this an aspiration for schools not a liability.
6. Remove Redbacks League (Formerly Premier League).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Subject to the number of Premier clubs being reduced. A couple of state trial games before Redbacks squads are selected would suffice. (b) Begin Premier Cricket earlier with all state contracted players available.
7. Assemble a high calibre, high quality, complimentary Redbacks coaching unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Employ an experienced Redbacks Head Coach who is organised, planned, disciplined, focussed on values, standards, culture and development of players.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) Encourage diversity in the coaching unit, complimenting skill sets, different personalities and coaching backgrounds. A balance between people who know the SA way and people from outside the state who have worked in successful programmes. (c) Genuinely value and have a presence at Premier Cricket, developing relationships with coaches, administrators and players. (d) Employ a full-time batting coach of the Redbacks, complimenting the coaching unit. (e) Structure contracts around culture, behaviour, development of players and Premier Cricket involvement and relationships.
8. Improve coach development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Use vertical integration exposing the Redbacks coaching unit through the pathway and Premier Cricket. (b) Provide personal development opportunities for Redbacks coaching unit. (c) Invite club coaches to be involved in the pathway and Redbacks programmes. (d) Use current and past players as a coaching resource. (e) Review coach development programme, ensuring the coaching philosophies are consistent through the HP programme.
9. Improve player development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) See Premier Cricket recommendations. (b) Retain Emerging Redbacks squad, increase specialised coaching expertise (especially fast and spin bowling) and more focus on cricket skill development. Ensure training doesn't clash with Premier Cricket training and encourage players to train with their clubs. (c) Encourage players to work with coaches of their choice outside of Redbacks training. (d) Assistant coaches to act as mentors for 1st – 3rd year players and/or interstate recruits. Local successful business people in the community could also be utilised. (e) Use past players as a coaching resource.
10. Selection panel to include the Redbacks Head Coach and two or three independents, one being classified as Chairman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Remove High Performance Manager and Talent and Pathways Manager as selectors. (b) Independent selectors to be fairly remunerated by the SACA but not connected to SACA High Performance. (c) Must be highly capable, respected and able to attend Premier Cricket, Second XI (If applicable) and State matches. (d) Work closely with SACA Talent and Pathways Manager. (e) Select on performance giving genuine hope to Premier Cricket players.
11. Add high calibre people with recent HP experience to the HP Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Don't have to be Board members (b) Be creative, highest calibre people could be from other states or sports. (c) Encourage different people in the HP programme to contribute at HP committee meetings.



	(d) Attend training, meetings, planning and reviews occasionally.
12. Improve recruiting strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Focus on developing SA players through Premier Cricket and the pathway.(b) The Redbacks Head Coach, HP Manager and Talent and Pathways Manager to develop a consistent vision and long-term strategy with regards to list management and recruitment incorporating talent, age profile, positional depth, character and personality.(c) Identify and try to recruit the best young talent around the country (former Aust U/19 players not contracted) and engage them through Premier Cricket making them earn opportunities at the next level.(d) Identify quality players from interstate with first-class experience to recruit to fill holes in the current list or holes that will develop in the near future.(e) Target the best 10th – 15th players from other states.
13. Combine Redbacks and Strikers programmes.	