

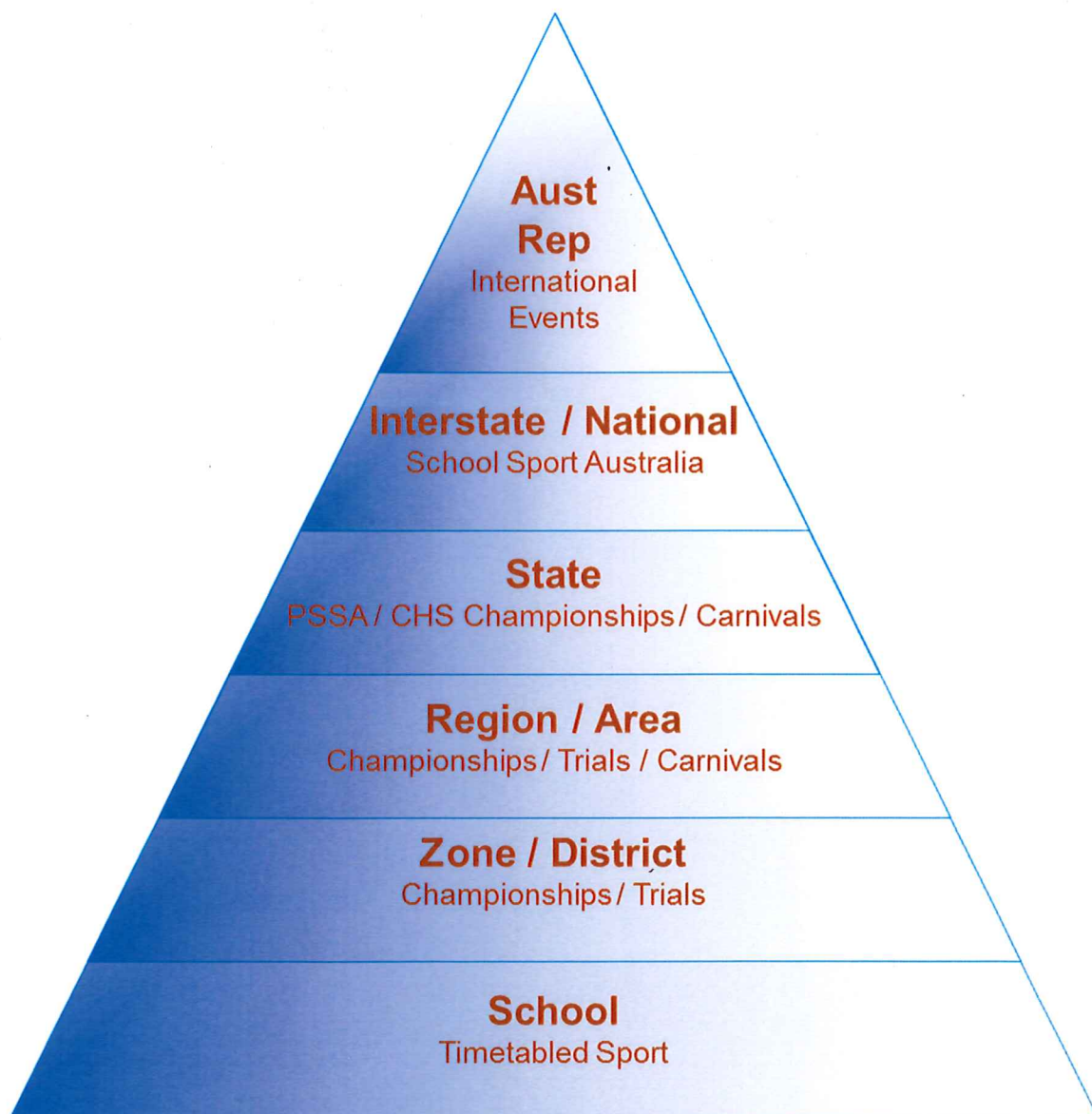
## Introduction



My name is Tracey Barnes, Principal of Goonengerry Public School. I am the Secretary of the Brunswick Valley District PSSA (Primary School Sports Association), Secretary/Treasurer of the Far North Coast Zone PSSA and the Senior Vice President of the North Coast PSSA.

## Context

Students compete in school sport beginning at the school level and progressing through to representative national and international events depending on their level of skill. Each level operates autonomously, with independent executive and financial responsibilities. School Sports Associations provide the pathways for both able bodied and athletes with a disability to compete at higher levels of competition within a multitude of sports.



**National** – Students representing Australia.

**State**- Students representing NSW

**Region** – Students representing North Coast School Sports Association. The North Coast Region is the longest of the ten Government school sports associations in NSW in terms of geography -(Approx. 500km – 6 3/4hr drive). Boundaries extend from the Queensland border in the north to Laurieton in the south, west to Dorrigo, Woodenbong, Hernani and Drake. Stretching East to Norfolk and Lord Howe Island.

As an organisation, North Coast Regional School Sports Association has:

198 Primary Schools - 15,200 students  
38 Secondary Schools – 25, 666 students  
In excess of 40,000 students.



North Coast SSA has 8 Zones:

Combined High Schools (CHS) - Far North Coast, Richmond, Mid North Coast, Lower North Coast.  
Primary School Sports Association (PSSA) - Far North Coast, Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, Lower North Coast  
(PSSA Zones are divided into 'Districts')

**Zone**- Students representing Far North Coast PSSA. The FNC PSSA represents 53 primary schools, extending north to the Queensland border, south to Evans Head and west to Alstonville and Tyalgum and approx. 10 000 students.



**Districts**- Students representing individual districts -Tweed, Murwillumbah and Headlands

**School**- Students representing individual schools.

## **Rationale**

Each year our Zone organisation conducts carnivals in all the major sports. Our three major carnivals are conducted in swimming, athletics and cross-country. These carnivals are selection events to allow students to progress to the next level of competition, eventually culminating in participation in carnivals at state level. School sport is the biggest gifted and talented program in NSW providing an inclusive pathway for both able bodies and students with disabilities to competition at the highest levels.

It recent times it has become increasingly difficult to find venues capable of hosting these events. Many sites that in the past, may have been suitable are now multi-use facilities and have gradually built additional infrastructure accordingly, making them less suitable for large sporting events. In addition Byron Shire Council continue to charge schools and PSSA groups for use of facilities which puts financial pressure on parents as user pays. This practice is not mirrored by neighbouring councils – Tweed and Ballina Shire. Three years ago, our FNC Association, frustrated with the lack of suitable venues to host our annual cross-country event, approached the Management of the North Byron Parklands. After extensive consultation with Parklands Management and numerous site inspections, we hosted our first zone event on the site in 2016.

The event was an outstanding success for a variety of reasons.

- The site was central to all schools within our zone.
- Hosting sporting events at this level is largely user pays. Parents pay levies that allow us to hire venues, release staff from schools to organise and manage events, provide professional learning for teachers, purchase uniforms, pay umpires and referees and assist families who struggle financially engage in sport at higher levels of competition. North Byron Parklands generously donate their venue to our organisation allowing us divert funds back directly to students.

- There was more than adequate parking for large numbers of cars at no cost to parents. An increasing number of venues across our zone and local government area have restricted paid and timed parking. The fact that parents and visitors can park their car for long periods free of charge is a significant factor for parents. There is also capacity for buses long term.
- Vehicles entering and leaving the site had no impact on the operation of the carnival and nor did they affect the course and risk student safety.
- The venue provided the opportunity for courses of a different length to cater for a variety of age groups. It also allows for flexibility, allowing us to modify the course depending on weather conditions, modify the terrain (graded roads, grassland or tracks) and vary the gradient (hills vs flats).
- Parents had opportunity to view a large percentage of the course without encroaching on the competition area.
- The toilet/shower/change room facilities were immaculate and highlighted the potential to sustain an even larger volume of people.

The feedback that was received from, students, parents and schools across the zone after that carnival was significant. Positive responses commented and thanked us for providing a purpose-built course where children could run a “real” cross country for the first time, and expressing what a “brilliant venue” the Parklands site was. Several students who spoke to me on the day appreciated the fact that they were not just running around the oval “like they had to at district”.

The overwhelming success of the initial carnival left no doubt in our minds, this was a relationship that would continue. Nth Byron Parklands once again opened its doors to the Far North Coast Zone carnival in 2017, where up to 350 students and 250 parents and staff visited the site during the event. Once again, it was a highly successful event. A representative from the FNC Zone Combined High Schools (CHS) and the North Coast School Sports Coordinator Officer attended this event and both have expressed their preference to host future zone and regional events at the Parklands after seeing firsthand the exceptional facilities and potential offered by the Parklands site. School sports events are held during school hours and are generally noise free to surrounding properties.

This year, the Far North Coast hosted a combined PSSA and CHS (Combined High Schools) carnival. This increased the number of participants to approximately 650 athletes and an additional 25 staff. In consultation with Parklands staff we were able to modify our parking to cater more than adequately for the inclusion of buses as a result of the high school team’s inclusion in the carnival. In addition, we were able to offer an exciting and challenging 4, 6 and 8 km course for our high school colleagues.

Districts and Zones do not receive any additional funding from the Department of Education to conduct our events. North Byron Parklands offers a venue for hosting sporting and community events that is free of charge, well maintained and professionally run. No other local government facility in our zone is able to provide anything that comes close to this site without passing significant cost on to parents and our organisation. We have been able to invest funds we have saved, into resources eg. signage, course markers, sound systems, which allow us to run a more professional, safe and high quality sporting event for students and parents in our zone.

Every year we host a carnival at Parklands we build on the relationship between Parklands management and our executive that is both extensive and professional; and embed strategic improvement measures. Both PSSA and CHS convenors are made aware of community use guidelines (including risk assessments, traffic management, safety rubbish removal etc) and admire the way that the Parklands staff enforce and monitor our use to ensure positive outcomes for all stakeholders, including residents of surrounding properties. As a result we are able to provide a high quality sporting event to the students of the Far North Coast sporting community. Every year we are amazed at the continual improvement of the site that obviously goes on each year. At a time when every business and Local Government organisation has their hand out for money, North Byron Parklands has demonstrated that it is a private facility who is dedicated to continual improvement of its own facilities and infrastructure, and is prepared to give back to local community organisations.

I have presented to the Commission on a previous occasion and need to emphasise that the only thing that has really changed is the "height of the bar". By that I mean that the level of consultation and support, the quality of the facilities, the number of students participating, the amount of positive feedback from students, staff and parents and the quality of our FNC events increases every year despite the fact that as an event we provide no benefit financial or otherwise to the Nth Byron Parklands PTY LTD. I believe you would be hard pressed to find that level of benevolence from another local company or organisation.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity to speak on behalf of North Byron Parklands and have been endorsed by the organisations I represent today to support unconditionally, their application for permanent approval as a Cultural Events Site.

**Tracey Barnes**

Principal - Goonengerry Public School

Secretary – Brunswick Valley District PSSA

Secretary/Treasurer – Far North Coast Zone PSSA

Snr Vice President – North Coast PSSA

**FAR NORTH COAST ZONE PSSA – Secretary/ Treasurer Tracey Barnes**

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