

Driving Passion & Profit

Unpacking Impact Investment in and through Sport

24 & 25 November 2025 | Brisbane, Australia



In cooperation with



Impact Investing and Sport Forum | Summary Report

The inaugural **Impact Investing and Sport Forum** convened in Brisbane, Australia, bringing together sport leaders, investors, philanthropists, and policymakers to explore sport as an asset class for impact investment. Hosted by Sport Matters in partnership with For Impact Capital and Sport4Impact International Network, the forum addressed the urgent question:

"Are we ready to receive impact capital in sport?"

Participants agreed the sector stands at a transformative moment—with billions in global impact capital actively seeking credible, measurable, and inclusive opportunities. This report outlines key insights, investment enablers, inclusion imperatives, innovation trends, and next steps to position sport as a scalable solution for sustainable development.

DAY 1:
Roundtable session (3hrs)

DAY 2:
Full-day interactive forum & networking reception



Why now? The case for investing in sport

Sport is increasingly recognised not just as entertainment or physical activity, but as a powerful vehicle for scalable social, environmental, and economic transformation. With more than USD\$2.7 trillion in global impact capital actively seeking aligned investment opportunities, the sector stands on the brink of significant growth. This evolution is being accelerated by major commitments, such as the Finance in Common coalition pledging USD\$10 billion to sport and sustainable development by 2030, and the International Olympic Committee increasing its solidarity and development budget to USD\$650 million for 2025–2028.

Forum participants emphasised that the question is no longer whether impact investment in sport is feasible, but whether the sector is prepared to meet investor expectations. Sport has the global reach, community trust, and capacity to catalyse behavioural change and foster inclusion.

But to realise its full potential as an investable sector, sport must shift from goodwill-based programming to outcome-focused, capital-ready strategies. This includes aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopting Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, and developing the internal capability to manage investment responsibly.

“Sport has become an attractive target for investment ... The latest IMF data for 2024 already indicated that impact investment in terms of asset management as of last year has reached \$2.7 trillion dollars, a significant amount of money but still growing and growing very fast. We do believe that this is an opportunity for sport and people involved with sport. It just requires a different way of thinking to the way we are planning and projecting.”

MARIO CARLO FERRARIO (Milan, Italy)

Investment Banker REDIFIN Ltd & Founder, For Impact Capital Investment Company

What investors need: Data, measurement, & readiness

Credible data and evidence of impact are essential. Investors increasingly rely on ESG performance indicators and social return metrics to inform their decisions. The forum emphasised that the ability to attract and retain capital now hinges on rigorous Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), real-time data capture, and transparent reporting mechanisms.

Measurement is no longer a “nice to have” but the entry point to serious investment. Impact-driven, co-designed, and culturally relevant methodologies are essential—particularly for programs targeting Indigenous, Pasifika, or marginalised communities.

Organisations must show more than participation numbers; they must demonstrate systemic change and track progress over time. This includes blending qualitative insights with quantitative metrics and building evaluation capacity from the earliest stages of program design.

Investment readiness also requires:

- ✓ Strong governance and transparency
- ✓ Clear articulation of financial and social return
- ✓ Defined audiences and outcome metrics
- ✓ Robust risk management and disclosure
- ✓ Professional communication with investors

Forum participants called for sector-wide capability building, shared metrics, and alignment with investor motivations. Without these elements, sport risks remaining underfunded and overlooked.



Inclusion & co-design: From optics to ownership

Inclusion was identified as both a strategic imperative and an investment requirement. **“Nothing about us, without us”** underscored the importance of authentic, community-led design. The absence of lived experience in decision-making was cited as a key risk—leading to tokenism, cultural disconnection, and failed outcomes.

Case studies highlighted effective co-design, including:

- The Grass Skirt Project (PNG)
- Pasifika Sisters in Sport
- Queensland Disability Network and the EMPOWER project
- First Nations and grassroots initiatives



Participants emphasised that inclusion must be embedded from the start—not retrofitted. Leadership, funding access, and ownership must reflect the diversity of the communities served. Persistent inequities in sport investment must be confronted: women continue to be under-represented in leadership and funding; disability remains largely invisible in professional models; and First Nations leaders must be recognised as knowledge holders and delivery experts.

Forum speakers linked these insights to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, whose legacy plans centre on equity, representation, and long-term impact. Investment strategies that prioritise co-design, equity, and culturally responsive approaches are more likely to succeed and generate enduring value.



Cities, events & legacy: Sport as a catalyst

Major sporting events are no longer judged by their spectacle alone, but by the legacies they leave behind. The forum explored how sport investment is being integrated into city-building, infrastructure, and economic development.

Local governments and Brisbane 2032 organisers shared how sport-related capital projects are now tied to long-term public value—using tools like visitor economy modelling, employment metrics, and sustainable infrastructure planning. Public development banks and Olympic stakeholders now require major events to demonstrate environmental sustainability, harm minimisation, inclusive access, and economic benefit for communities.

Brisbane’s legacy planning includes leveraging Games-related investments to benefit Pacific neighbours, support small business growth, and drive inclusive participation. The forum emphasised that effective legacy planning starts years in advance and must include all stakeholders—sport organisations, policymakers, private sector partners, and community leaders.

Innovation & collective action

Scaling sport-for-impact solutions will require innovation in both technology and systems coordination. Sport technology networks and intermediaries are playing a key role in linking capital to community need, translating data into insights, and supporting new delivery models.

Key priorities identified include:

- ✓ Establishing a shared language of outcomes
- ✓ Investing in real-time, tech-enabled M&E tools
- ✓ Coordinating across silos to reduce duplication
- ✓ Increasing sport literacy among funders and practitioners

Innovation is most effective when it builds on what works. Participants called for collaborative platforms, knowledge sharing, and better alignment of systems that can amplify impact across the sector. As the sector matures, access to data expertise and evaluation capacity will become as important as access to capital.



Pathways to finance: Philanthropy, blended capital & next steps

Although sport delivers proven social benefits, it currently receives just 0.7% of Australia's philanthropic giving—despite a AUD\$2.4 billion national giving economy. Forum discussions addressed how to unlock more capital through tax-effective philanthropy, blended finance, and outcome-based models.

Mechanisms discussed include:

- Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs) and structured giving
- Ring-fenced impact capital
- Blended finance models combining grants, donations, and investor capital

Philanthropy remains a key pillar of sport globally, but sport organisations need to improve impact reporting and investment readiness to access more resources. Participants highlighted the importance of early-stage and patient capital to support innovation and capacity-building.

Participants agreed that courage, leadership, and visibility are essential to shifting sport from a grant-dependent model to a vibrant investment ecosystem. Early risk disclosure, strong alignment with funder values, and a focus on outcomes—not just outputs—will drive future capital flows.

“Sport remains under-utilised and under-funded despite being one of the most cost-effective responses to major development challenges. One area of enormous potential is the impact investment market still largely untapped in the sport sector. To mobilise more resources and activate innovative financing mechanisms, stakeholders need robust evidence on the social and economic returns on investing in sport. This calls for a common language, harmonised impact measurement methodologies, and global research initiatives aligned with policy and investment needs.”

PHILIPP MULLER-WIRTH (Paris, France)
Chief of the Sport Section, UNESCO



Engagement opportunities

To build on the forum's momentum, Sport Matters and partners are launching:

- ✓ **Webinar Series (2026):** Covering impact measurement, financing models, and inclusive design strategies.
- ✓ **Impact Investing and Sport Capacity Program (Feb–Mar 2026):** Workshops and learning during the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games for sport leaders, investors, and delivery partners.

Further information will be available via [Sport Matters](#) and [Sport4Impact International Network](#)

Photos and video presentations from the forum are available for reference:

FORUM PHOTOS:

(Photo credits: Jayden Guarnaccia)

[DAY 1 PHOTOS](#)

[DAY 2 PHOTOS](#)

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS:

[Mario Ferrario](#)
REDIFIN Ltd

[Philipp Muller-wirth](#)
UNESCO

[Dr Danny Samson](#)
ESG PERFORM

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS: [Presentation files](#)

For further details contact: Sport Matters CEO | Jackie Lauff | jackie.lauff@sportmatters.org.au

Powerful insights from presenters, panellists & facilitators



Aunty Kathryn Fisher

Aboriginal elder
On behalf of the Turrbal People of Brisbane



Jackie Lauff

CEO
Sport Matters



Paolo Bertaccini

CEO, For Impact Capital Investment Company
Founder & Chair, Sport4Impact International Network



Mario Carlo Ferrario (Italy) [\(via video\)](#)

Investment Banker REDIFIN Ltd
Founder, For Impact Capital



Philipp Muller-Wirth (France) [\(via video\)](#)
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Australian Sports Technology Network



Aaron Averay
Head of Sports Fundraising
Australian Sports Foundation



Dr. Matthew Pink
Head of ACU Engagement, ACU &
Deputy Chair, Engagement Australia



George Luc (USA)
Co-Founder and CEO
GivePulse



Dr. Liz O'Brien
CEO
Queensland Trust for Nature (QTFN)



Dr. Danny Samson (Melbourne) [\(via video\)](#)
Co-founder ESG PERFORM
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Keesha Booth (Papua New Guinea)
General Manager
The Grass Skirt Project



Fila Fuamatu (New Zealand)
Executive Director
Pasifika Sisters in Sport



Amanda Jenkins
Vice President, OceaniaSport &
Executive Director – Oceania, FIBA



Prof. Dr. Beatriz Ferreira (Brazil)
Vice President
ICSSPE



Jill Scanlon
Facilitator
Sport Matters



Amy Anderson
Project Officer
Queensland Disability Network