Organisational change in seven selected sports:
What can be learned and applied?

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Introduction

New Zealand sports organisations have been through significant structural and organisational change over the last decade: some driven by a desire to improve what they do; others forced into change because of financial, internal or political issues.

SPARC commissioned this review to help identify lessons from these change processes. SPARC has been closely involved with many of these organisations as a change or support agent, providing time, oversight and direct investment. More organisations are now considering change. Before looking at further investment, SPARC has asked:

- What are the preconditions for successful change?

- Can avoidable errors be identified and mitigated?

- What real evidence is there that the change has had a positive effect?

The organisations reviewed covered a wide range of sports – tennis, athletics, gymsports, surf lifesaving, rugby league, football and bowls – and used varying approaches in their change processes.

The underlying rationale was to improve and strengthen the development and delivery of their game throughout New Zealand. To a lesser or greater degree, all the sports reviewed have achieved their aims. Some still have a distance to go. Others have had to navigate unforeseen issues, which may have been avoided with better leadership and planning.

The national sports organisations (NSOs) included in this review were diverse. They varied in size (number of participants) and in ability to generate income from intellectual property or national and international competition (rugby league and football). Some received funding from their international federation (football) while others received nothing. Because of its involvement in television and its community/social focus, surf lifesaving had a higher public profile than others, such as gymsports. These and other functional or structural differences all influenced the change processes and their perceived success or failure.

The reviewed sports all believed they now performed better because of the changes they had undertaken. Participants agreed, however, that – given the opportunity – they would conduct various parts of the change process differently.

One constant was evident. Respondents continually referred to this, both as part of the reason for success and part of the explanation for failure:

He aha te mea nui? He tangata. He tangata. He tangata
Translated:
What is the most important thing, it is people, it is people, it is people.

An outline of the review process is included as Appendix 1.

Summary

The following key findings applied to all the NSOs reviewed:

- Interaction with volunteers was not always well managed, leading to disengagement and a loss of interest. The result was more work (unplanned and unbudgeted) for professional staff, leading to more disengagement – a vicious cycle.

- Little understanding was shown of the level of input (time, effort) by volunteers into the sport and the cost of replacing this with professional staff.

- Little modelling of new systems or processes was completed, leading to volunteers believing the new centrally delivered product was of a lower standard than what was previously in place

- Major stakeholder engagement was not managed well.

- Clear identification and articulation of the whole 'new' organisation was needed, not just the hierarchical structure.

- KPIs were either not set or not measured and reported on.

- The baseline or starting point was not measured: Where were we before the change started? What was our culture like?

- Detailed implementation plans were needed, with a structured rollout and review process to ensure that, as regions changed, lessons learned from one were incorporated as the implementation continued.

- Pause points in the process were needed to enable the organisation and volunteers to reflect, learn and apply learnings from what had been implemented.

- Plans should allow some flexibility for differences in demographics, culture, history etc in the various areas of the country.

- The various stages of the change cycle – understanding / learning, consulting, developing, agreeing, planning, changing (test model), reviewing, understanding/ learning, etc – were not always clearly identified and understood.

For all sports, the process of change was ongoing, with significant amounts of work still to be completed. All have outstanding issues – mostly relating not to structure, but to people, behavioural and cultural change within the organisation, and, importantly, developing trust up and down the delivery system (NSO to club to members/member to club to NSO).

Fully understanding the parts of the delivery system and the value exchange between each layer is an important aspect of the change process, and should be identified and communicated constantly to the membership during the organisational change process. If constituents can see the value of the change, they will change; if there is no value why change?

Comments on levels of funding during and after the change process highlight sustainability as a key driver. All respondents commented on the amount of funding now required to maintain the increased level of service provision, staffing, programmes and so on being undertaken by national offices. For some sports, the structure depends on short term financing; once financing stops, the structural change will be reassessed. For others, it is a race against time to develop commercialisation models to replace the support funding that will or may be withdrawn.

Volunteer engagement was a critical factor mentioned by every respondent. In some cases, it was cited as the reason for the delays or failures of implementation: not recognising the importance both of engaging *with* volunteers and of engaging them in the core purpose of the organisation led to more protracted processes and a failure to achieve the desired outcomes.

Sports bodies need volunteers – and the only way to get their agreement is by negotiation.

Change in any sports organisation requires significantly more trust between the parties than is required for the same process in a corporate environment, where change may be driven through more readily. To be successful, an NSO or not-for-profit must negotiate with volunteers. This negotiation happens at every stage of discussion, agreement, implementation and review of the change process. Sports bodies need volunteers – and the only way to get their agreement is by negotiation.

This negotiation with the volunteer base requires good-faith discussions supported by a level of trust between the parties. Without this, volunteers will not buy in to the change process, and organisations will not achieve their desired outcomes.

An important aspect of the engagement process is the language used in meetings by the leadership team. It was noticeable that all executives, CEOs and volunteer board members interviewed used controlling language when discussing why change was needed (own, control, manage, etc), whereas members and other volunteers used inclusive or personal language (our game, my game, members, etc).

This may seem trivial, but volunteers and members of the sporting family take umbrage when someone suggests they (executives, CEOs) will own, control and/or manage their game through proposed changes.

Sport in New Zealand did not start with national organisations. The members initiated, led and developed the growth of the sport until it needed a national structure to fulfil certain functions.

Emerging themes & recommendations

Is the platform burning?

The desire for change is a powerful driver, especially when encased in a crisis. But structural change without a corresponding behavioural and cultural change is essentially wasted effort.

When asked what drove the need for change in their sport, respondents often referred to financial issues (crisis), loss of members, inconsistent delivery of the game, lack of control over the game or an inability to engage with members. These were valid reasons but may have demonstrated behavioural and cultural issues rather than a need for structural change. The platform may be burning, but perhaps the behaviour and culture of those on board started the fire.

"...structural change without a corresponding behavioural and cultural change is essentially wasted effort"

Even when significant change was required, the real issues appeared to result from poor organisational culture and associated behavioural issues within sections of the organisation's leadership. However, as one interviewee said, "...you should never let a good crisis go by without using it to effect change..."

Wholesale change driven by the desire to fix one aspect of an organisation is like cutting off a hand because one finger hurts. Before starting the change process, organisations should understand both what they are trying to fix and whether the proposed changes will actually fix the problem and not lead to a range of new issues.

Importantly, organisations must understand if the situation facing them requires the organisation to undergo evolution or revolution.

Evolution of a sports structure is significantly less disruptive than a revolution in organisational design. Minor adjustments to structure, process and behaviours can bring immediate benefits, while revolution in organisational structure can lead to significant unforeseen issues, such as those faced by rugby league and surf lifesaving.

"...understand if the situation facing them requires the organisation to undergo evolution or revolution"

Understanding whether evolution or revolution is needed should be based on a realistic assessment of the

organisation's history, readiness and capacity to change. Overall, the organisations reviewed in this document completed their reviews from a purely technical viewpoint, considering mainly structure. Resistance to change by those affected, like volunteers and members, is frequently cited as the reason for implementation issues and as the biggest impediment to successful change.

The leaders of the process must remember that change in itself is not the goal, but the means to an end – fulfilling the organisation's purpose. If behavioural and cultural change is to be successful, employees and members must be expected and empowered to play an active role, and must believe in the project.

Clarity around the core purpose of the organisation is an essential prerequisite. This is the cornerstone of the process and the point to refer back to when diverging opinions surface. The whole sport and the formal structure are not the same thing. Understanding and agreeing the core purpose of the NSO within the wider sport is a mandatory first step in any change. Failure to do so will lead to confusion and dilution of effort

"...Understanding and agreeing the core purpose of the NSO within the wider sport is a mandatory first step"

Recommendation:
Before identifying the type of change, carry out the following steps:

- Clarify the organisation's core purpose.

- Clearly identify the levers for change

- Is evolution or revolution required?

- Understand the behavioural and cultural aspects that may require change as well as the structural aspects. Apply equal amounts of resource to all aspects.

- Is the new or changed platform self-sustaining in the long term? Model different scenarios for future growth, revenue etc to determine sustainability and resource needs.

Future delivery models – structures
A number of the NSOs cited falling membership and the changing participation model as influencing the change process. In identifying this, these organisations assumed that all that was needed was a new constitution and fewer layers between them and the members.

They did not always stop and ask:

- Does the organisation's historical delivery model fit with the changing needs of the current members and constituents, as well as the new casual/informal members/participants?

- If not, is the proposed model right for delivering the sport in the changing world, or do we need to completely rethink how we view our historical members, constituents and their needs compared with the casual/informal participants?

- What would an ideal model/models look like?

These questions become more important when other factors are included, such as commercialisation of intellectual property and the need to engage with regional sport trusts.

This highlights an important paradigm shift that NSOs must make. They must deliver to their traditional members through clubs and regions while, at the same time, developing their own intellectual property for commercialisation – forming commercial partnerships to deliver product directly or through clubs or with other providers, and seeking to engage and derive value from the large group of casual /informal participants.

Recommendation:
- That international research is conducted examining sustainable structures that deliver to a diverse membership and pay-for-play constituency.

Members and volunteers

Any change process must both connect with and engage all those involved in every facet of the sport – from the noisy, sideline supporter to the quiet volunteer who turns up every Sunday to clean the clubhouse toilets. The engagement of the sport's membership in the process is critical; without it, the change process is doomed to eventual failure.

For all organisations, the aspect of the change process that consumed the most resources and caused the most issues was dealing with the volunteer base – from board level through to the member on the court or beach. Respondents commented that engaging with and getting volunteers engaged in the change process was the hardest and most frustrating part. It was and is however, the crucial component of success.

> *Without engagement of the membership the change process is doomed to eventual failure*

Volunteer engagement and management are the most critical levers for success or failure in any change process in a sports organisation. All the sports reviewed completed some aspects of this engagement well. However, they all performed badly at various stages of the implementation phase. These failings were attributable to one or more of the following;

poor consultation, incomplete planning, lack of detail, insufficient resources (budgeted, obtained or reallocated), and, finally, a lack of ongoing open and transparent communication throughout all phases of the change process.

Both paid staff and volunteers felt this frustration, which originated from a simple dichotomy between the grassroots volunteer's view of the world and the view of professional management. Under normal circumstances, this tension would be restricted mostly to the boardroom. However, during the change process, this dichotomy of views becomes the nexus of the change process.

Changes in the volunteer base as volunteers come and go from positions of authority add to the tension. For professional management charged with securing any change having to renegotiate the 'contract' with volunteers not just once but repeatedly is a significant point of frustration. However, this is the reality of the volunteer organisation and must be accounted for in all aspects of the change plan. This frustration increased because volunteers often have a real passion for a particular aspect of the sport they feel is critical, e.g. junior, high performance programmes and so on. This leads to a detailed interest in those areas of high interest and a laissez fair attitude to the remainder.

Volunteers also often felt frustrated, feeling they were not being told the whole truth, believing that what the national office really wanted was to control the game and get a hold of the assets volunteers had built up. Highlighting this level of mistrust, one respondent said, "...as soon as they brought their lawyer along, we got one too..." when commenting on discussions about proposed constitutional changes.

Some could not see that the organisational structure was actually broken, with comments suggesting volunteers wondered if the NSO actually knew what happened in the regions and what they really did. All respondents were asked if a clear picture of what the organisation would be like, the value proposition (from NSO to clubs and clubs to NSO), the plan of implementation, stages and measurements of success had been articulated. None of the respondents could confirm that this had happened during the consultative phase of the change process.

The main elements that led to disengagement with the volunteer base were the lack of, or inability to articulate, a vision of what the journey of change would look like and what the final destination would mean from a value perspective, combined with an apparent lack of credibility, trust and transparency. This disengagement meant organisations had to continually re-engage and renegotiate with clubs and members.

Development of trust and credibility between people and organisations happens over a period. It requires significant investment of time, effort and resources by the NSO and does not develop after just one meeting or communication through e-news. In some

organisations, the change process they undertook was the first time they had really engaged in conversation with their members in any depth.

Before any successful organisational change, a sufficient level of trust and credibility must be developed to allow the engagement with the volunteer to occur. For some organisations, this initial level of trust and credibility was not there, which resulted in a more difficult and at times fractious relationship with the regions and members.

Recommendation:

- Communicate openly and regularly in a transparent and credible manner. There should be no secrets.

- The organisation's leadership should front and drive the change.

- Involve all levels of the organisation in the change process and communication.

- Understand the level of resource and commitment needed to replace volunteer input with paid staff. Do not underestimate the level of input and work completed by volunteers. Measure this and understand its importance to their continued association with the game.

- Meticulously record areas of agreement and dissent. Reconfirm areas of agreement with each meeting or communication, and resolve to respond to any discontent.

Leadership

The role of leadership in the change process varied across the organisations reviewed. For some, such as gymsports and surf life saving, leadership during the initial change process was the critical factor in achieving agreement to change. For others, for instance football and rugby league, it was the reason change was needed.

One identified risk element linked to leadership was 'confirmation bias', often the result of leaders of the change process listening only to or accepting data and comments from those who agreed with their own view of what would or would not work. This has led a number of the organisations to adopt structures that were either not adopted in full by the constituents or resulted in further issues.

This can be mitigated during the change process by assigning members of the project to investigate the negative aspects of the model or structural design the organisation plans to use, looking for why it may not succeed. Discuss these with the members, listening to and incorporating their feedback and comments.

Key ingredients for successful leadership were:

- Having a clearly articulated core purpose and strategic plan for the sport, which the sport agreed with

- Ensuring every decision and action aligned with achieving these desired outcomes

- Getting the right people into the organisation and the wrong ones out

- Continually, and transparently, communicating with the members and key stakeholders

- Doing what was said would be done and if not, fronting up to explain why not.

Having a consistent and focused leadership at both board and executive level is critical to the change process. While the board may be distant from the implementation phases, its adherence to good practice in all aspects of its role is critical in supporting the leadership, particularly in cases where the leadership (CEO/key staff) changes. Ensuring that the new leadership has the necessary skill sets required will allow the change process to continue.

Recommendation:
- Ensure the leadership team agree on and believe in the change proposals. They must embrace and live the behavioural and cultural changes expected of everyone else.

- The people (members, stakeholders etc) are the most important thing.

- Do what you say you will, when you say you will do it, or front up and explain why not.

- Regional differences can be marked – there is no such thing as "one size-fits-all"

- Develop a cascading leadership structure to lead the change process, identifying, motivating and equipping leaders at every level of the organisation to allow them to lead the implementation. Cascading refers to an increasing number of participants at each level of organisational structure, e.g. executive leadership team numbers five; the regional leadership structure is 10 (two in each of five regions); the district leadership structure is 20 (four in each of five districts); and club leadership structure is 50 (five in each of 10 clubs within a district).

This type of leadership structure has a number of benefits, helping ensure a consistent message and providing excellent communication via the cascading levels. It also helps identify the next generation of leaders. Finally, it develops trust and credibility throughout the organisation as you deliver on what you say you will and communicate effectively with all the various constituents and groups that make up the organisation.

A critical position on the board is that of the Chair. The Chair plays a pivotal role in not only the discussion and planning stages, but in making sure that the executive are the right people to undertake the change process. While this may sound trite, it is fair to say that some of the issues faced by the organisations reviewed were a direct consequence of poor leadership at both board and executive level.

Resource capability

Capability in this context applies to the ability of the organisation to obtain all the necessary resources to undertake the change process and put in place business plans to ensure that the newly installed structure and delivery mechanisms are sustainable. This may be through key stakeholders, commercial means, members, or from reallocation of resources.

Resource reallocation and procurement (funding and human) were significant issues for the sports involved. A lack of planning around resource allocation or procurement was associated and detailed against the implementation/strategic plans. Some strategic plans contained goals with no resource allocation or procurement plan in place. One sport commented that a major plank of its change process was a new database, yet they had no idea where the money was coming from, even though they had sent out RFPs.

In all cases, the level of human resource needed to successfully implement the change had been underestimated or – if procured – was funded only in the short term (one year). This type of short-term support made it difficult to embed the behavioural and cultural change needed, and did not give organisations enough time to acquire, develop, or market products that would develop sustainable income.

All organisations agreed the consultative stage of the change process had been an extensive drain on internal resources. The following stages, such as deploying sport development officers, were predominately funded through grants. For most organisations, this funding is on a year-by-year basis. This type of annual funding arrangement is not conducive to supporting long-term planning and implementation during or after a change process.

All participants felt strongly about the level of expenditure that required either reallocation from internal sources or procurement from external funders. All were exceptionally grateful for the support given by key stakeholders, in particular, SPARC during the change process. However, some wondered if the approach of funding individual specific aspects of the change process achieved the greatest value and effect. For example, one sports change process budget included legal fees equivalent to the combined spend on communications and marketing, people (undefined), financial systems and planning.

This discrepancy highlighted a need to refocus expenditure into areas of potentially greater benefit, notably communications, people and planning**.**

Most sports' strategic plan or change process plan did not include a resource requirements and allocation plan, which created significant problems. How could achievement of the goals be reasonably secure if the sport had no idea if, or from where, it could secure the necessary funding and/or resources? In cases where funding (dollars) had been allocated for specific tasks, the extra resources required – time, energy, etc – to undertake the project was often overlooked, resulting in under delivery.

Recommendation:
- Undertake a detailed analysis of resources in the wider organisation, noting what is available for reallocation and the consequences of that action.

- Implement a detailed resource requirements and allocation plan in all change processes. This must sit beside the strategic and change plans, with detailed analysis of the human requirements needed to complete the suggested projects or achieve the desired goals.

- Understand and quantify the level of resources needed to fulfil volunteer roles if they are to be replaced.

- Ensure security of funding for the change processes and implementation phases for up to five years. This should be whole-of-organisation funding (supported with plans) not targeted at specific individual projects.

- Pool resource funding for the change process (including associated projects) into a single available resource. which can then be assigned or reassigned to the appropriate areas.

Planning

The planning phase was problematical for all sports. The level of detailed planning required for the successful implementation of the desired goals was often not completed. This led to underestimation of resource requirements, which then led to implementation issues, including stress at all levels of the organisation, under achievement of stated goals, and projects being poorly managed and/or implemented. This was often exacerbated by no certainty around the necessary resources to complete elements of the project.

The lack of detailed analysis and planning was the leading cause of organisations being unable to deliver to members the stated value proposition that was the catalyst for agreement to change. As expected, this led to members being disillusioned, and focusing on the poor results rather than the wins they were getting.

Communication of the plan and progress against the plan was a key aspect missing from the sports reviewed, in the eyes of some respondents. The NSO must focus on completing development of the consultative stages (Table 1), followed by the detailed implementation

phases (Table 2). Understanding the consultative or pre-implementation phases may help organisations with planning.

Consultative Phases			
Phase 1 - Scoping	Phase 2 - Analysis	Phase 3 - Understanding	Phase 4 - Planning
Project agreement Forming committees (cascading leadership structure) Engaging with key stakeholders & members	Environmental analysis Internal analysis Member data collection and analysis Engaging with key stakeholders (members)	Clarifying purpose Considering options /ideas. Agreeing all aspects of the change with stakeholders & members What is the value proposition? Engaging with key stakeholders (members)	Identifying critical issues, objectives, strategies Preparing action plans (detail) Detailed timeline of implementation Resource requirements planning Engaging with key stakeholders & members
Continuous open and honest communication to the membership and key stakeholders			

Table 1: Phases of Project Planning

The next aspect of implementation is the development of a structured implementation plan (Table 2).

Implementation Phases			
Phase	Phase	Phase	Phase
Implement easy wins 1)? 2)? 3)? Engage with key stakeholders – is the implemented aspect delivering value to members? Implement, test and review structure in one zone, region or district Pause Point – review, modify, learn from this phase before moving to next	Continue identified implementation phases. 1)? 2)? 3)? Are we delivering agreed value? Pause Point – review, modify, learn from this phase before moving to next	Continue identified implementation phases. 1)? 2)? 3)? Are we delivering agreed value? Pause Point – review, modify, learn from this phase before moving to next	Continue identified implementation phases. 1)? 2)? 3)? Are we delivering agreed value? Pause Point – review, modify, learn from this phase before moving to next Review and analysis change and report back to membership.
Continuous open and honest communication to the membership and key stakeholders			

Table 2: Implementation Phases

The glue that binds these phases together (Tables 1 and 2) is the culture of change developed by the leadership of the organisation. For successful change to be implemented, the organisation's leadership must live and breathe the desired cultural and behavioural attributes they wish the rest of the organisation to develop and acquire.

The characteristics of a change culture (Table 3) relate to problem solving and innovation. This can be achieved through a cascading structure of teams within the project team.

Change Culture	
Organisational	*Outcome*
Focus	Problem solving & innovation
Structure	Matrix of teams
Management style	Participative
Engagement	Mutual goal Setting / communication

Table 3: Organisational Focus and Structure

The management style must be participative not dictatorial or overbearing. Finally, engagement with the membership and key stakeholders must be one of mutual goal setting, and open and transparent communication.

The role of an NSO is to support the delivery of sport in the regions, towns, cities and clubs where the members exist. If an NSO wants to deliver services to the wider casual or pay-for-play audience, this needs to be clearly identified in the consultative stages (Table 1) and the value proposition communicated to the membership.

When asked if life was better within the 'changed' structure and delivery model, respondents generally agreed that it had – although quantifying this was somewhat more difficult. When asked the same question, respondents from outside the NSO were reticent or perhaps lacked a clear understanding because of a lack of communication about the achieved value proposition.

This raises the aspect of measurement against agreed outcomes. Most sports could detail specific outcomes of specific components, such as the introduction of sport development officers to regions: yes, the officer was employed. However, quantifying the benefit achieved by their employment was more difficult: did they bring in more members, or deliver more services?

Understanding and measuring the right outcomes from a change process or allocation of resources is imperative to understanding if the changed structure and/or process needs to be redeveloped and improved, or implemented elsewhere.

Recommendations:
- Plan the consultative phases of the change process in line with Table 1. Ensure the implementation phases follow the structure outlined in Table 2.

- For each implementation, prepare a detailed plan, including resource requirements.

- Focus the change culture on the areas outlined in Table 3.

- Measure success by understanding the base point and agreeing on the detailed desired outcomes.

Successful change – a summary

Successful behavioural and cultural change has a number of key components and steps to success:

- **Change management, planning and implementation**

1. Identify and agree with members, volunteers and stakeholders the core purpose of the NSO.
2. Clearly identify and agree the benefits of the change and how they are to be measured early in the project. Constantly communicate and reinforce these benefits, with small wins celebrated as much as big ones.
3. Ensure the leadership (CEO/Board) are the sponsors of change, continually highlighting its strategic importance and benefits.
4. Assess the organisation's readiness to adopt and implement the changes. Understand local variances and needs.
5. Develop and implement a communications plan that includes communication mechanisms such as a complete and accurate database.
6. Identify and communicate constantly with the various stakeholder groupings, especially members.
7. Put in place an education and training plan to ensure that when new processes and structures are implemented, members and staff know the how, what, when, where and who.

- **Pause points**

Pause points are predetermined pauses in the change process. They allow time for the project team and/or organisation to reflect on the implemented changes and the achieved outcomes before moving to the next phase. At each pause point:

1. Review progress against the plan – the successes or failures. Communicate these honestly to all involved.
2. Identify areas of additional resistance, ensuring that these are mitigated and those concerned are communicated with and listened to. Where concerns are valid, review the plan and correct.
3. Once identified, put in place programmes to mitigate the effect of any behavioural and cultural issues.
4. Identify gaps. Where achievements do not match expectations, communicate why, and what will be done.

Behavioural and cultural change takes time to embed in an organisation. Celebrating success, and admitting and correcting failures are two important aspects of this, along with excellent communication and credible engagement with the members and volunteers.

Appendix 1: Research process

Representatives at various levels of all the named sports organisations were interviewed, including Board (Chair and Director), Chief Executive (past, if appropriate), and regional and club representatives. In some cases, previous office holders were spoken to, as they had been key participants in the change process.

SPARC and the identified organisations provided the necessary introductions. The support received from all the sports in gathering data and interviewing participants was outstanding. The willingness with which volunteers at all levels were willing to give freely of their valuable time when it comes to their sport made the research easier.

All participants gave permission to record interviews, which were used with written notes to ensure that responses were not taken out of context. Some participants asked not to be named in the report. So, while organisations are identified, no participants' names have been used. Thirty-seven participants were interviewed (average 1.5 hours per interview).

Data coding

Data collected included the interviewer's handwritten notes and the recordings. During initial analysis, the recordings were replayed while the notes from each interview were reviewed. This process enabled a more detailed analysis of the answers and the identification of common themes across all seven sports.

Limitations of data

Agreement to participate was obtained during an initial telephone call, during which the parameters of the interview – including the questions for discussion – and the scope of the review were outlined. In some cases, participants were recalling information on the processes or reasons for a change that may have happened up to a decade previously. While it was possible to get some anecdotal verification from other participants' recollections, because of the review timetable it was not possible to further verify the recalled information. While acknowledging these shortcomings, the information could clearly be broken down into themes that were repeated during all interviews.

Review outline

The preceding sections outline the background and research processes used in this review and some of the data limitations. The following sections start by reviewing the sports and the drivers or initiators that change. This is followed by an analysis of the identified themes – such as leadership or volunteers – that were identified as contributing to or inhibiting the success of the process. Finally, the review draws together the key elements identified for successful change process to occur using the identified themes. These findings highlight important elements that are core to successfully undertaking change in sporting organisations.