

An underwater photograph showing a swimmer's arms extended forward in clear blue water. The swimmer is wearing a red swim cap and blue swim trunks. The water is bright blue with visible ripples and light reflections.

Troy Kirkham

***What makes a
Successful Club?***



Investigate innovative & inclusive youth retention strategies for Community Sport



The role that technology can play in youth sport retention strategies

Internal & External Locus of Control

The importance of unstructured play, along with the development of fun, and the significant role that both of these factors play in youth retention



The impact of parenting styles in youth sport retention – particularly around female engagement and retention

What is Fun?

Parent Education

Unstructured Free Play

Coach Education

Talent Development

Sampling v Specialisation

Deselection of Players

Diversionsary participation programs



Socioeconomic influences – and the importance of programs to support accessibility for all

Bio Banding

Research, Data & Insight Investment

Facility Development

Youth Advisory Councils

Character Education & Life Skills

Inclusive program development – ensuring opportunity for all



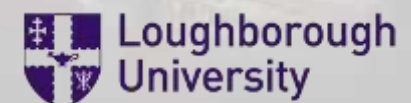
Youth advocacy and empowering youth in program and product development

Access to the Game

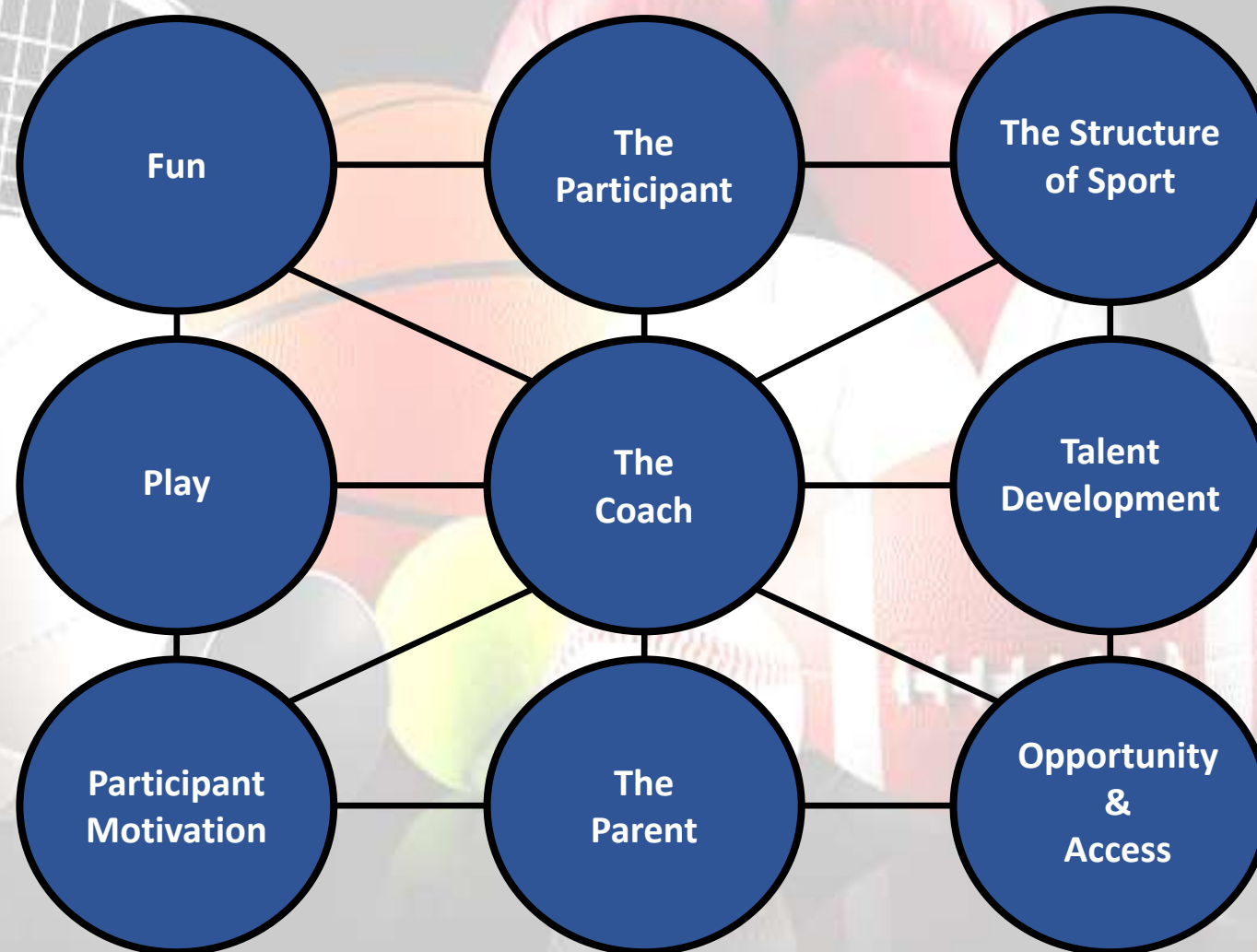
The development of Physical Literacy and Fundamental Movement Skills



Injury



An Interconnected Model for Youth Retention in Community Sport



KEY DRIVERS OF AN INTEGRATED CLUB BASED PARTICIPATION MODEL

ADDRESS THE KEY BARRIERS

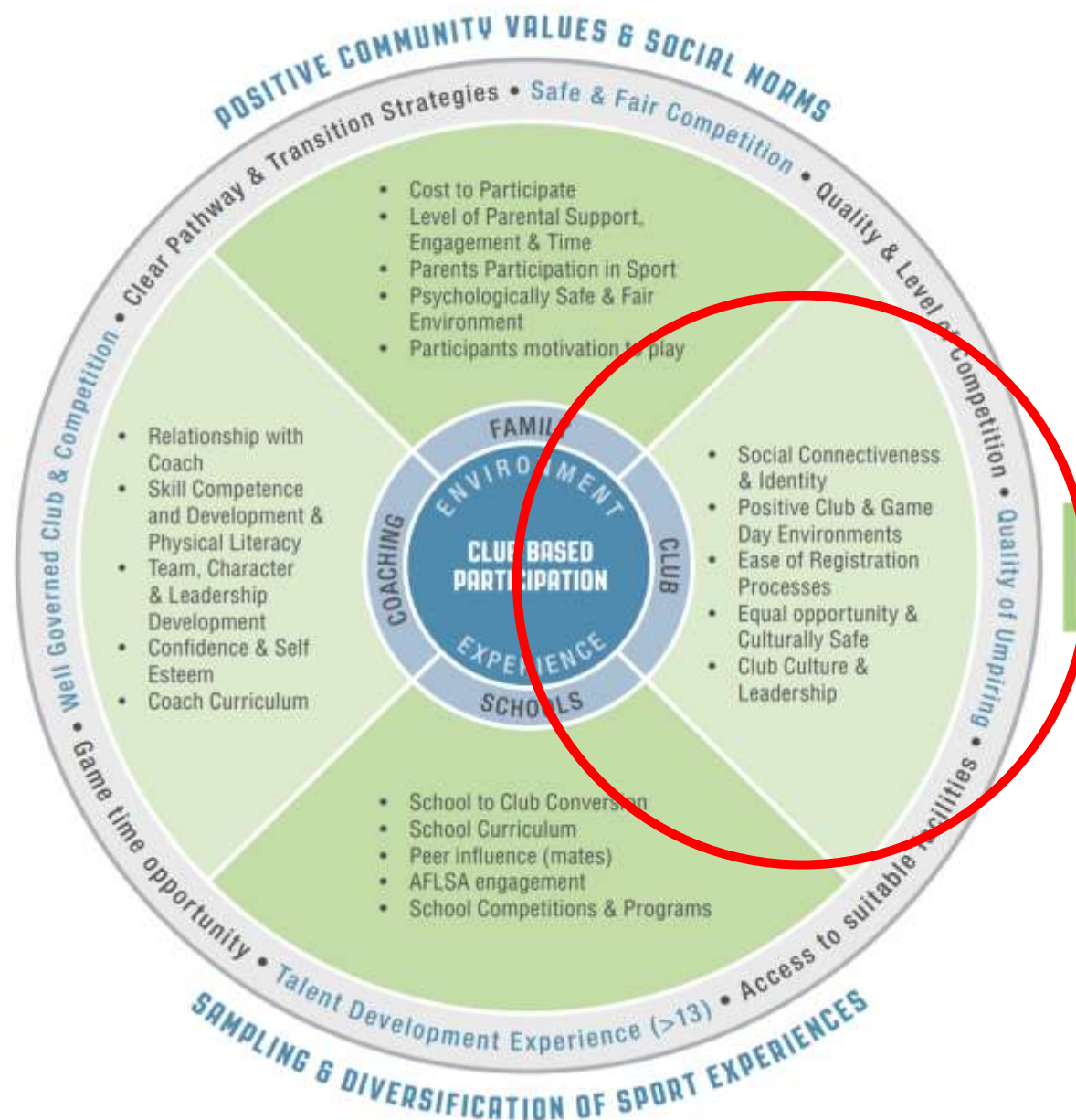
- Cost to participate
- Time choices & increase in options
- Previous poor experiences in sport
- Fear of injury
- Accessibility to participate
- Transport
- Peer disapproval
- Competition v Participation (i.e. too competitive)
- Stereotypes

FUN & PLAY

KEY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES OF JUNIOR SPORT

A progressive and sequential introduction of Laws of the Game and skill development to meet developmental needs of the player, including:

- Player numbers,
- Ground and ball size & game time,
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- Limiting scoring and ladders,
- Zones
- Player rotation & development focus



KEY SUPPORT ENABLERS

- Market insights & segmentation research to understand customer
- Product & Brand Development
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- Workforce capability (inc. coaches, volunteers & Club development)
- Customer Satisfaction & Feedback
- Centrally coordinated best practice methodologies & delivery structures
- Consistency established in delivery systems, structures & processes
- Volunteer Support

OUTCOMES

Competence
Confidence
Connection
Character
Contribution

IMPACT

Increase and Retain number of Participants & Enhance the Quality of Experience

GAINING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN PARTICIPATION

- Data driven decision making & understanding the market
- 'Own the school' space
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- Competitor Analysis
- Consistent & stable delivery model
- Parent Education & Support

The Benefits of Community Sport

Parent

Key Outcomes Of Sport

Competence
Confidence
Connection
Character

+

Contribution

Government

WA Sport SROI

- **\$1.1B** direct economic value
- **5,715** jobs supported
- **\$1** invested → **\$7.10** economic & social benefit (*\$1.43 mining*)
- **\$10,178** return per participant from participating
- **41.9m** Volunteer hours

Community

Key Outcomes Of Sport

- Community mental & physical health benefits
- Avoided health costs
- Reduced crime & recidivism
- Sport supports local businesses
- Social inclusion & civic pride
- Sport connects communities when community needs it most

This is all built on the Foundation of

Community Clubs

&

Volunteers

Don't ever underestimate the importance of what you do in your Sport

What makes a club successful?



What makes a club successful?

Clear Identity & Purpose

Connection to Community

Communication (Int & Ext)

Good Social Environment

Diversity of Committee

Financial Stability / Health

Quality of Coaching

Volunteer Retention

Parent Education & Connection

Retention of Members

A Focus on the Experience

Clear Processes / Systems

Quality Club Governance

Leadership & Culture

Inclusive & Safe Environments

What makes a club successful?

Clear Identity & Purpose

Quality Club Governance

A Focus on the Experience

Quality of the Coaching

Retention of Members



Clear Identity & Purpose

- As a club are you 'crystal clear' on **what your purpose as a club is**? Do your members understand this, and how is it communicated internally and externally?
- How **aligned** is your club identity & purpose to your club's strategic plan and constitution?
- How do you stand out from others in your **local community** – what's your **identity and point of difference**?
- What is the 'blend' that you achieve between **Participation and Pathway**?
Auskick: 0.04% / Swimming: 0.03% (0.0007%)
- How do you take your club from being **Transactional to Transformational**?



The Importance of Quality Club Governance

- **A Values Led Organisation** - Leadership of the club in terms of purpose, culture, strategy and values.
- **The Race is Never Won** – Good Governance is an ongoing opportunity & evaluation to improve, transform and be better.
- **Size Does Not Matter** - No matter the size of the organisation good governance principles are critical.
- **The Structure** – Clear processes are in place for good decision making and risk mitigation.
- **The Goal** - Clubs that embed Good Governance principles:
 - More sustainable longer term
 - Higher levels of engagement with members & volunteers
 - Retain more members, volunteers & coaches

A Focus on the Experience:

The Key Moments of Impact



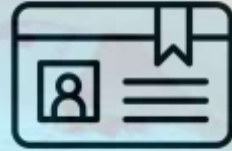
The Trigger

*First Impressions
Matter*



The Consider

*Expectations
Matter More*



The Commit

*Ignite
Aspirations*



The Prep

*Provide the
Support*



The Arrival

*Everything
Speaks*



The Start

*Always Start
Well*



The Activity

*Involve
Me*



The Challenge

*Find the Zone
(Goldilocks)*



The Peaks

*Seamless is
Boring*



The Finish

*Always End
on a High*



The Reaction

*Be Memorable –
What will you be
famous for?*



The Next Steps

*The Start of
Something Else*

Quality Coaching

- The Coach is the **number 1 reason** an athlete will walk away from the sport.
- A quality coach puts the **Person before the Performance**. Make it about them!
- **Focus on relationships** between you and the athletes ... AND between the athletes themselves. Its critical to making it a meaningful social experience.



What is Quality Coaching?

Essential Coaches Knowledge

- **Professional Knowledge** - Know your sport and how to teach it
- **Interpersonal Knowledge** – Know how to relate to and lead others
- **Intrapersonal Knowledge** – Know yourself and how to sustain improvement efforts

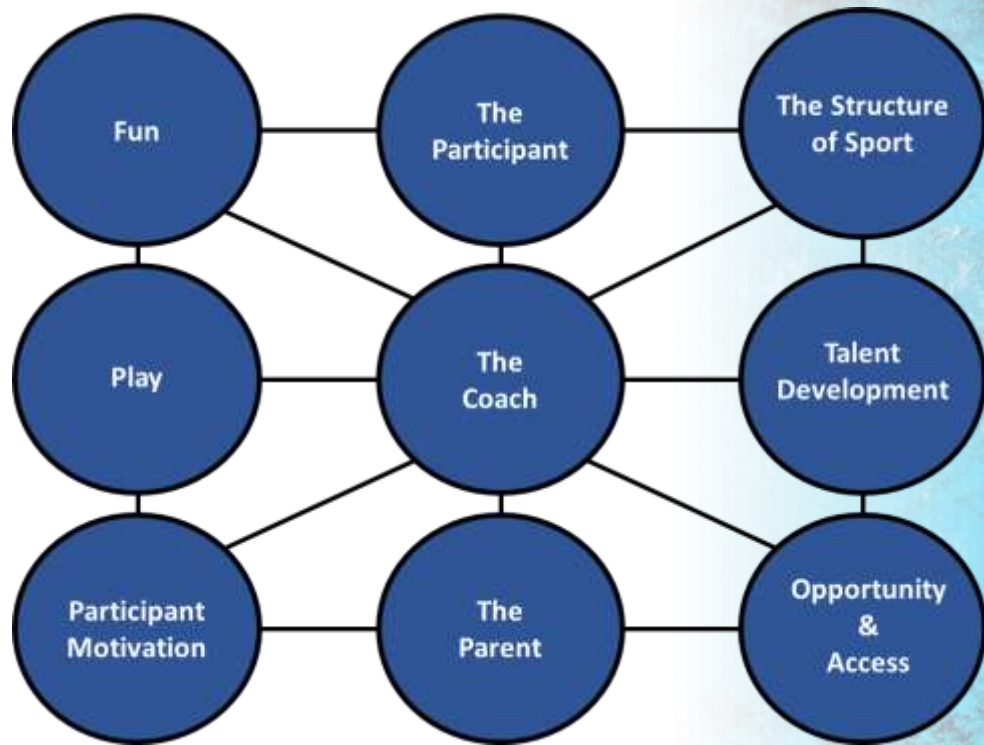
Athlete Centred Outcomes

- **Competence** – sport-specific technical, tactical and performance skills; improved health and fitness; and healthy training habits
- **Confidence** – self-belief, resilience, mental toughness and sense of positive self-worth
- **Connection** – positive bonds and social relationships with people inside and outside of sport
- **Character** – Values of True Sport, respect for the sport, ethical and morally responsible behaviour, integrity and empathy

Contextual Fit

- **Participation sport for children** – Junior Community Sport
- **Participation sport for youth & adults** – Youth & Senior Community Sport
- **Performance sport for youth** – Development squads
- **Performance sport for adults** – Elite system

Member / Participant Retention





Fun must be at the core

A photograph of three young boys playing in a swimming pool. They are surrounded by several long, cylindrical foam noodles in bright colors: green, yellow, and blue. The boy on the left is smiling and looking towards the center. The boy in the middle is also smiling and looking towards the center. The boy on the right is looking towards the center. The water is blue and splashing around them. In the background, the pool deck is visible with some pool toys and a person's feet in sandals.

**We need to create a
culture of play**



Understanding Participant Motivation



The Participant

A photograph of a coach from behind, wearing a white polo shirt with the word 'COACH' printed in large, bold, black letters. The coach is standing at the edge of a swimming pool, looking out at a swimmer in the water. The swimmer is wearing a yellow swim cap and blue goggles, and is captured in a dynamic stroke, creating a splash. The water is a deep blue. The overall tone of the image is professional and focused.

COACH

The Coach



The Parent

A swimmer wearing a green cap and a black watch is captured mid-stroke, swimming freestyle in a large outdoor pool. The pool is divided into lanes by blue and white lane lines. In the background, there is a large, modern building with a wooden facade and several windows. A sign on the left side of the pool reads "Beach Access" and "8 week beach fitness program". The sky is dark, and the scene is illuminated by pool lights and ambient light from the building. The text "The Structure of Sport" is overlaid in white at the bottom of the image.

The Structure of Sport

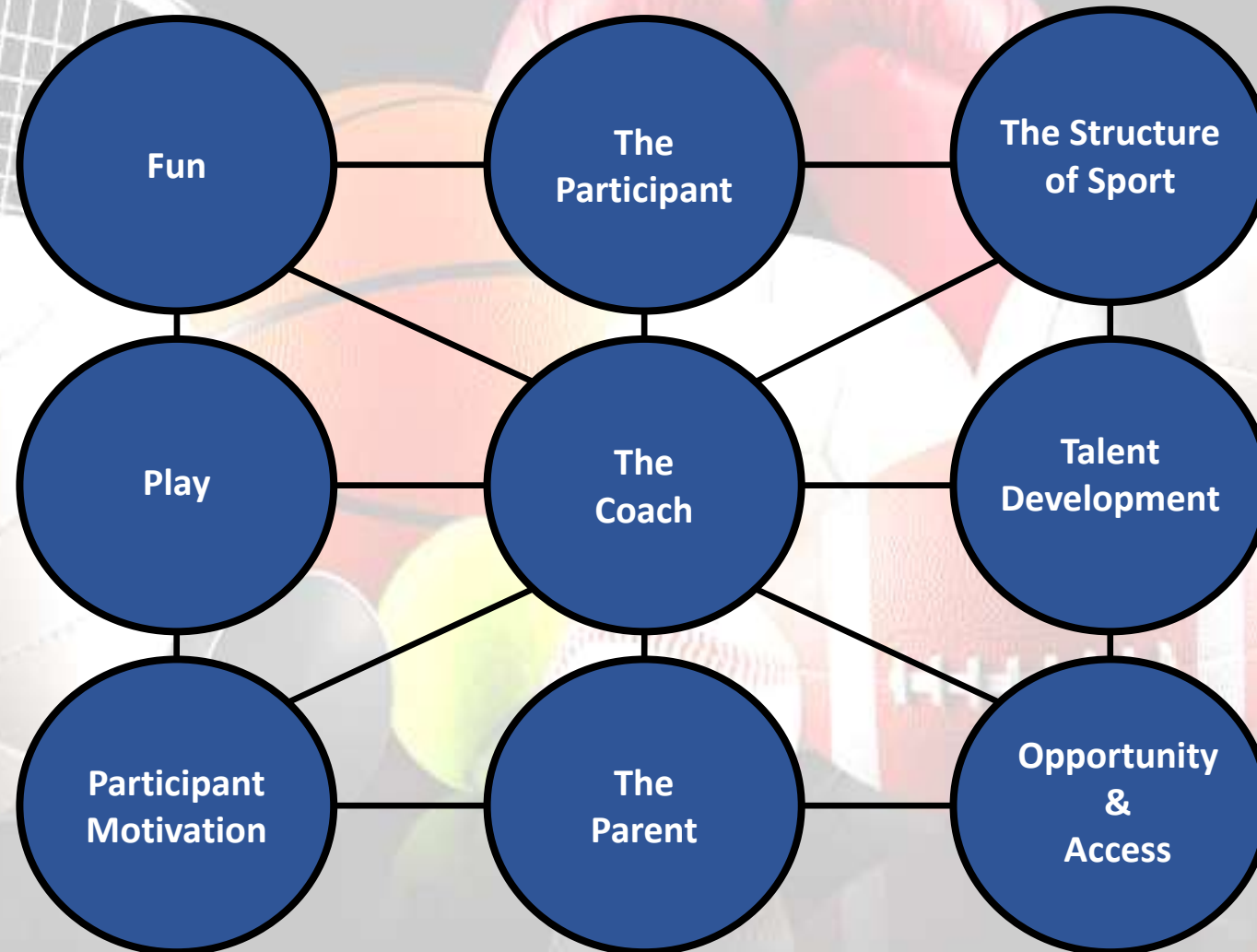
Talent Development





Opportunity & Access

***An Interconnected Model for Youth Retention
in Community Sport***



What does this mean for the Sport?

Identity: is the structure of the sport, the competition and participation formats right

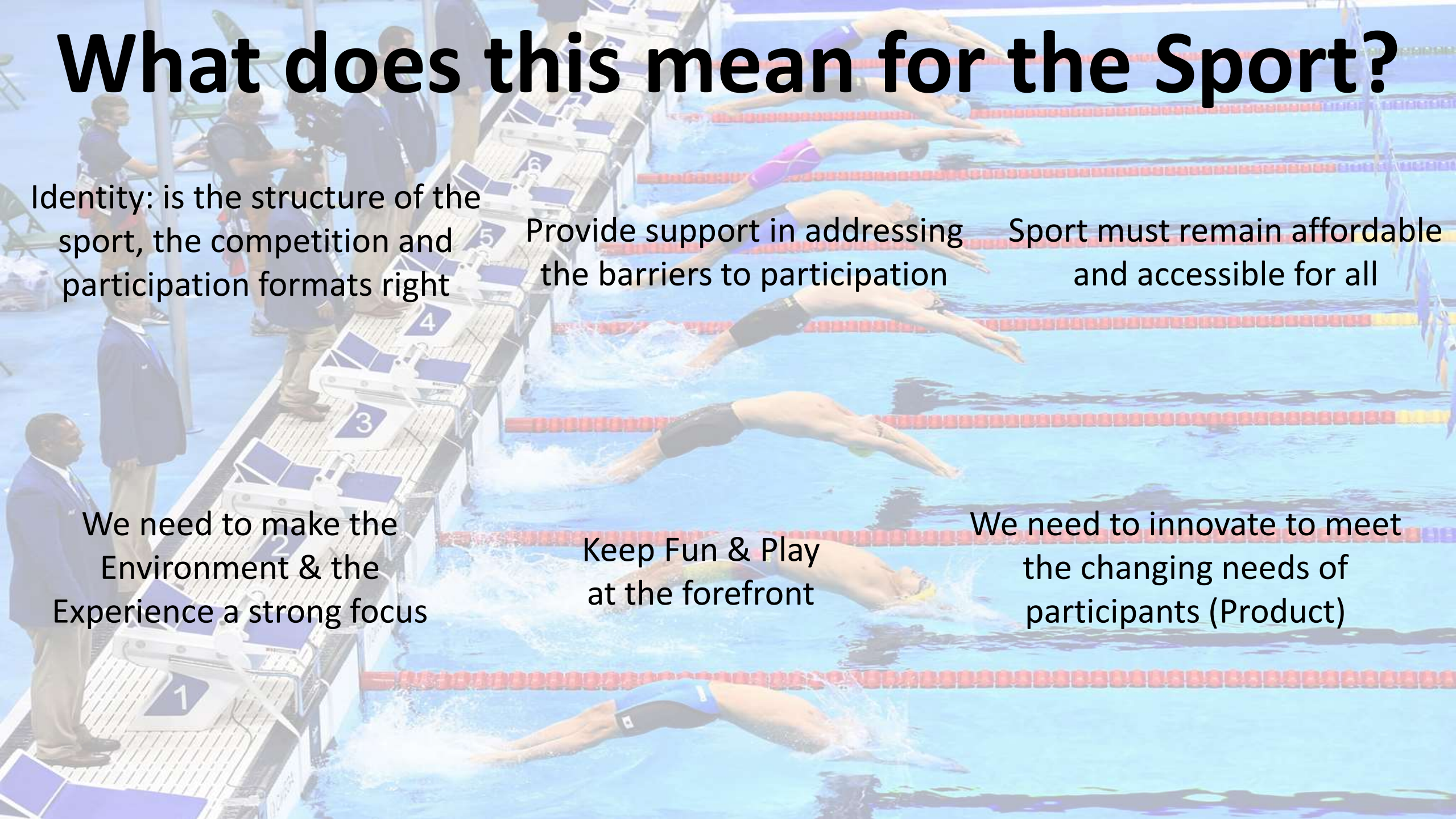
Provide support in addressing the barriers to participation

Sport must remain affordable and accessible for all

We need to make the Environment & the Experience a strong focus

Keep Fun & Play at the forefront

We need to innovate to meet the changing needs of participants (Product)



What does this mean for Clubs?

Drive & promote positive
Environments & Quality
Experiences

Create a psychologically safe club
that is inclusive & welcoming and
provide equal opportunity and
access to all participants

Understand your identity &
purpose and focus on Club
Values, Club Culture &
Leadership

Educate and drive clear
expectations with Volunteers,
Coaches & Parents

Positively engage with and
work collaboratively with
LGA's, venues and Swimming
WA

An intentional focus on
Quality Club Governance

What does this mean for Coaches?

Remember:
Community Sport is about
their ambition not yours!
Understand the context

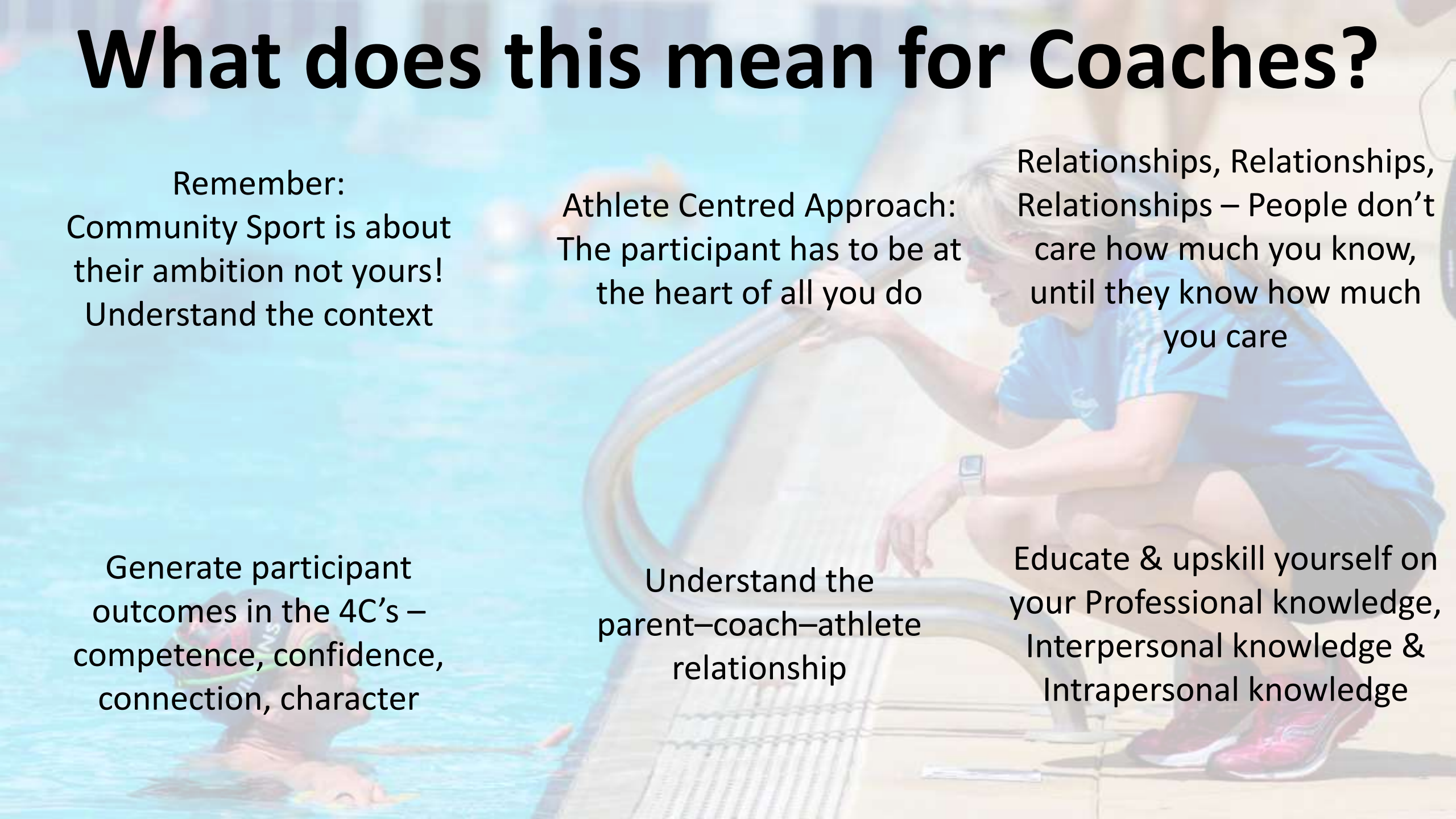
Athlete Centred Approach:
The participant has to be at
the heart of all you do

Relationships, Relationships,
Relationships – People don't
care how much you know,
until they know how much
you care

Generate participant
outcomes in the 4C's –
competence, confidence,
connection, character

Understand the
parent-coach-athlete
relationship

Educate & upskill yourself on
your Professional knowledge,
Interpersonal knowledge &
Intrapersonal knowledge



What does this mean for Parents?

5 Simple Words

I love watching you swim

The 5 things that successful clubs focus on:

- A key focus on the **Environment & the Experience**.
- They understand the importance of and drive **strong Club Governance**.
- They have a clear understanding of their **purpose** and **identity** and intentionally drive a **positive culture**.
- They appoint, educate and retain **quality coaches** who understand their role and the coaching context, and they make it **fun!**
- An intentional focus on the **retention of members**, volunteers & participants.



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Troy Kirkham

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To access the report, visit:

**[https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/
troy-kirkham-wa-2015/](https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/troy-kirkham-wa-2015/)**

2023 Swimming WA Conference