

Tassie ice sports dreams frozen - only state without a rink

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Tasmania's ice sports community is rallying around a fresh call for state government support following confirmation the state's only ice rink will soon close.

The privately-owned facility is one of only 20 ice rinks in Australia, and as Tasmania's sole outlet for figure skaters, ice hockey players, paralympic sled hockey players and recreational skaters, the decision to sell and repurpose it is a huge blow.

"Hundreds of social and competitive ice-hockey and figure skating athletes have no local future in their sport and our young people have lost a place of community connection," Anna Holliday, president of Ice Sports Tasmania said today. "Come 21 May, all of them will be left without a home to train, compete and play together."

As Australia's southern-most state, Tasmania is ideally situated to nurture vibrant, successful and sustainable ice sports.

Ice Sports Tasmania, the peak body in the state, is working to secure a future for the state's ice sports.

"The evidence of the benefits of participation in sport feeding into improved health outcomes and stronger community connection is well documented, Ms. Holliday said. "More importantly for the future, the ice sports need a new full-sized facility.

"A new facility would see us introduce sports such as ice speed skating, curling and broomball, school-based junior programs and vulnerable youth programs.

"With a new full size ice rink with modern amenities, Ice Sports Tasmania would also plan to establish a raft of ice sports programs for people with disability," she added.

Since the announcement of the rink sale, Ice Sports Tasmania has recorded a strong and immediate groundswell of support for a new full size ice sports centre. An online petition from the group has gathered over 1100 signatures within the campaign's first 48 hours.

"We are humbled by the influx of messages from local and interstate supporters, and we also realise the impact our local situation may have on ice sports on a national scale," Ms Holliday said. "The messages are consistent, that ice sports in Tasmania need to be saved by securing a new full size ice sports centre."

If Tasmania was to end up being Australia's only state or territory without an ice sports centre, it would thwart the state's residents from benefiting from the support and promotion of sports such as curling, ice speed skating, ice hockey and figure skating which attract key development funding from international and national bodies. For example, the World Curling Federation is keen for Australia's curlers to grow the sport far and wide following the first-ever Winter Olympic Games appearance by two Aussies in the mixed doubles.

"Government investment in ice sports is worthy – enabling physical activity as well as offering the state social, economic and sporting outcomes in the near future," Ms Holliday said. "We are calling



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on the Tasmanian Government to work with Ice Sports Tasmania, the private sector and our community to establish a new full-sized Tasmanian ice sports centre.

“This includes exploring a potential partnership between government and private investors,” she added.

For more information and to provide your support, go to www.icesportstasmania.com.au

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