what is the relationship between SPORT AND NATIONAL and cultural identity?

This chapter is associated with the relationship that sport has with both national and cultural identity. We examine the role of government funding in relation to the high value that Australian society places on sport. Politics and sport have become intertwined and we explore specific instances of this in terms of the consequences this relationship has had on sport, athletes and the Australian public. This chapter also investigates the role of physical activity and sport in the lives of Indigenous Australians and a variety of cultural groups in Australia.

Australian sporting identity

National and regional identity through sporting achievements

Since colonial times, sporting successes have assisted the emerging nation of Australia to establish its identity. Contests between the colonies and Britain were considered to be tests of the new settlers, and their British counterparts admired the physical ability of the colonists. The Australian colonies demonstrated their maturity through their successes in sport, particularly cricket. The first ‘Test’ match was played in 1877, before the nation of Australia was formed at Federation in 1901. Sir Donald Bradman’s extraordinary batting ability lifted the spirits of Australia during the tough times of the
1930s Depression era. Cricket continues to be a source of fierce rivalry between Australia and Britain, particularly during test matches for the coveted Ashes trophy.

Australians have identified with national sporting successes, including wins in Davis Cup tennis, medals at Commonwealth and Olympic Games, qualification for World Cup soccer and wins in the cricket Ashes. Victory in the America's Cup in 1983 united the nation with a sense of pride in Australia's sporting achievement. It also increased Australia's international profile because it entailed the defeat of a 'super power': the United States of America. More recently, Australia has celebrated success in the sporting domain and continued to upgrade and reinforce its international standing by hosting the Olympics in Sydney in 2000 and the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006.

Uniting nations through sport
A nation's success in the Olympics is seen as a measure of that nation's standing in the international community.

The identity of a nation is showcased at the opening ceremony of the Olympics, and also with the playing of its national anthem at medal ceremonies, the raising of its flag, the wearing of the official national uniform, and the presentation of the national team to the host nation's head of state.

Nations who compete internationally in political and economic arenas place great importance on the success of their athletes at the Olympics. Athletes are increasingly targeted at young ages for specialist training in an effort to increase the medal tally. Government funding is directed to developing athletes for the purpose of enhancing the profile of the nation, rather than that of the individual.

The media, by providing live coverage and commentary, have played a very important role in creating Australian sporting heroes and in promoting Australian sporting success.

Uniting communities through sport
For many Australians, sport has the ability to unite a community. Rugby league's State of Origin series is an example of an event that promotes regional identity. Supporter loyalty for one's 'state of origin', be it New South Wales or Queensland, is fiercely exhibited. Players are proud to be selected to represent their state and view this as a great honour.

With the success of local individuals or teams, communities gain recognition. Local heroes become national heroes and this often has an economic and social impact on the local region. Associating a community with a sports team has been common, particularly in the football codes. Rugby league teams names such as Cronulla, South Sydney and St George, and AFL team names such as Collingwood, Richmond and Carlton are all directly associated with localities. Players were originally drawn from the local talent of these communities. Spectators flocked to matches to support their local side, which often provided working-class communities with a sense of opportunity and hope.

Figure 13.1 Sir Donald Bradman is one of Australia's sporting icons
By John Taylor
Newcastle Jets owner Con Constantine says that his team has conquered the rugby league heartland and is now just as popular as the Knights.

Just days before the Jets aim to shoot down Queensland for a place in the Grand Final at the Sydney Football Stadium on Sunday week, Constantine declared that it would be ‘an Origin battle’ and insisted star striker Joel Griffiths was Newcastle’s latest sporting hero.

‘For 20 years rugby league dominated this city—not any more,’ Constantine said yesterday as his team worked to cast off the memory of losing the major semi-final to the Central Coast on Sunday.

The Jets were eliminated 3-2 on aggregate after falling 3-0 in the return in Gosford.

‘When we started out three years ago I would have given the Jets a rating of 6/10. The Knights were 10/10.

‘We’ve got just as much credibility now and we’re all square. The people in this place just worshipped Andrew Johns. He was God.

‘I loved the man myself. A great guy.

‘But don’t think for one minute that Joel Griffiths is not as big a personality as Andrew was. You go into pubs and clubs and everyone talks about Joel.

‘Aside from his looks, he’s a coach’s dream the way he plays the game.

‘He gives it everything. He works his butt off and it was an absolute credit to him that he was the league’s top scorer. He’s a class above the others.’

With a place in the grand final at stake in Sunday’s winner-take-all preliminary final, Constantine—who has poured millions into the club—said the buzz around the city now would be dwarfed if the Jets managed a victory over the Roar.

‘This is not Sydney or the Central Coast we’re playing—this is Queensland,’ he said.

‘This is like an Origin battle. ‘And you know what NSW people think about Queenslanders. The fans will come out in their thousands to cheer our boys on and drive them home. This is just as big as when the Knights won their last grand final [against Parramatta in 2001].

‘What some people may not be aware of is that we get over this hurdle and we’re into Asian football.

‘How good’s that going to be for this city? ‘It’s also very special for the city in that soccer was played here over 100 years ago by Adamstown and to think we’ve come this far.

‘We had a hiccup last Sunday [against the Mariners].

‘It was one of those days. That’s the round ball for you.

‘I said when I took on the Jets that I believed it would take off. It was not easy at the beginning but this year we have gone to another level.

‘As for the A-League, the sky’s the limit.’

But Constantine’s dream is to see the Jets and Knights unite.

‘There’s room for both to exist,’ he said.

‘One’s played in winter and the other in summer. Let’s have no more conflict,’ he said. ‘We have a very good relationship with the Knights now and I know we can do it [unite].’

A grand final spot is one thing and a re-match with Central Coast beckons.

But victory over the Roar will also mean an automatic place in next year’s Asian Champions League.

Daily Telegraph, 13 February 2008

Research and Review
1 Read the article below, then complete the following tasks:
   a Outline how sport can unite a community.
   b Describe how sport assists in developing a regional identity.
2 Identify other examples of how local individuals and local communities have benefited from sporting success.
3 Clarify how the coverage given to the Olympic Games and State of Origin football promotes Australian national and regional identity.
Government funding

Sport has become highly valued in Australian society. This is indicated by the amount of media coverage, sponsorship investment, and federal and state government funding sport receives as well as the high esteem with which Australians view their sporting heroes. Sport is considered to be an important pastime, and its ability to raise Australia’s international profile results in infrastructure being established to support sport development. This infrastructure includes local and state facilities, and ventures associated with Australia’s hosting of the Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

Government funding and development programs are initiatives that began in the 1970s in Australia. Prior to this, athletes were generally expected to fund their own participation in international contests, and to develop their own talent. This practice stemmed largely from the British ideal of amateur sport. Competitive sport was for those who participated for the glory, and clubs were responsible for financing their teammates, based on the principle of esprit de corps (group morale). In 1914 the Australian Olympic Committee (Federation) was founded, with its primary role being to raise funds for future Olympics. Hosting the 1956 Melbourne Olympics spurred the federal and state governments to assist in supporting the infrastructure required for an international competition.

In 1972, with the election of the Whitlam Labor Government, various initiatives were undertaken to enhance Australian involvement in sport. These measures included the promotion of community fitness, provision of financial assistance to national sports associations and improvements in sporting facilities. Local governments supported the establishment of swimming centres, parks and playing fields for community participants.

Australia’s failure to win a gold medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics was attributed to the fact that many other nations had increased funding of training and had developed talent-identification programs. Because of this perceived failure of Australian athletes and the tarnishing of our international sporting image, the Australian Government felt compelled to act. It could not risk athletes and coaches moving overseas to access the superior facilities and knowledge base they could find there. As a result, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) was established in 1980 in Canberra. Its primary aim was to raise the standard of Australia’s elite performers.

Since the 1970s, federal governments have continued to support sport by providing funding for training facilities and technology, and employing experienced coaches and support personnel, such as nutritionists and sport psychologists. The Australian Sports Commission has been established to assist in coordinating sports development in Australia. More recently, governments have funded facilities for high-profile events, such as world cups, Olympic and Commonwealth Games and grand prix events. These measures create employment and tourism opportunities.

Research and Review

1. **Explain** why the Australian Institute of Sport was established.
2. **Outline** the benefits that were gained by athletes and the nation from the establishment of the institute.
3. **Discuss** why many sports have gained corporate funding as well as government funding.

Politics and sports

Sport and politics have a close interrelationship, with international sport often acting as a diplomatic tool. Governments have the ability to provide and withdraw funding, and individual politicians have often aligned themselves with a state or nation’s sporting successes. Examples include:

- Former prime minister John Howard wore a Wallabies or Australian cricket team tracksuit on his morning walks and provided a strong presence and passion at sporting fixtures of those teams.
- The success of the 2006 Commonwealth Games was closely associated with former Victorian premier Steve Bracks and his government.
- The success of the bid for the Sydney 2000 Olympics was closely associated with John Fahey’s NSW government.
- Former NSW premier Neville Wran battled with the prospect of World Series Cricket (a break-away league created by media magnate Kerry Packer) in the late 1970s.
- In 1933, the then Australian prime minister, Joseph Lyons, defused the ‘bodyline’ cricket issue. This was an issue arising from the bodyline cricketing tactic being employed by English bowlers, which caused diplomatic controversy between Australia and England.

WEB

A website that allows you to examine the history of the AIS can be accessed via www.oup.com.au/pdhpe12

The 1956 Melbourne Olympics marked the first time that the Olympic Games had been held in the Southern Hemisphere.

Chapter 13 | WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORT AND NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY?
Stop playing Games, it’s always political

By Garry Linnell

Bloodied protestors, Armed police wielding batons. Security guards with chiselled jaws and thousand-yard stares. It’s Olympics time and it can only mean one thing. The usual love is in the air.

That is, it should be if you are a paid-up subscriber to the International Olympic Committee, or a card-carrying member of the Chinese Communist Party.

For the past week, as the flame, making its way toward Beijing, came close to being snuffed out by a string of violent pro-Tibet protests across Europe, the mantra from the Olympic movement has been loud and strong.

Leave our torch alone. Politics and sport should never mix. The Olympic movement is a force for good in the world and it should never be sullied by grubby disputes over money, borders or whether the host nation chooses to imprison [or] shoot … dissidents opposing its rule …

It’s an easy image to fall for. The Olympics are unique—still the greatest show on earth—and eight years ago those of us in Sydney, supposedly the home of the cynical, felt the love.

When it works, as Sydney did, it’s like visiting Disneyland. You might be sceptical of the hype and the merchandising and the lousy takeaway food, but for 16 days something happens that allows you to suspend disbelief.

Sydney turned itself upside down. Drivers gave way to pedestrians, Beggers gave coins to passers-by. Train travellers relished the sensation of sardine-like journeys to Homebush and even taxi drivers reached deep into their pockets and invested in deodorant.

But Sydney was rare and even those in the Olympic movement will admit to it. Ever since the modern Games began in 1896 this once-in-four-years carnival has often been hijacked for political purposes.

The most blatant was in 1936 when Hitler used the Berlin Games to stage a propaganda-fest for his Third Reich.

The Melbourne Games of 1956 are largely remembered for the blood in the pool during the water polo match between the Soviet Union and Hungary. There were boycotts staged by many nations over issues ranging from the Suez Canal crisis to the USSR’s invasion of Hungary.

Oh, almost forgot. Wasn’t it China that decided not to go to the Melbourne Olympics just a fortnight before the opening ceremony? Something to do with Taiwan being recognised as an independent state.

So please, let’s dispense with this pretence the Games are aloof and above political fray. If that’s the case, why do we have such an all-important medal tally if not to measure bragging rights against other nations?

The 1960s and ’70s saw some eastern bloc countries turn their athletes into steroid monsters in order to top that medal table.

In 1972 Munich was wracked by the tragedy of 11 Israeli athletes massacred by terrorists. The 1980s became a blur of boycott-plagued Olympics—all politically motivated.

Awarding the Games to a totalitarian regime is a blatant political act to begin with. China has claimed that hosting the Olympics is its own way of staging its coming out party.

After almost 5000 years of keeping the door largely closed, it says its embrace of capitalism and its opening up since the death of Mao have laid the path for the biggest debutante celebration in history.

In other words, China wanted the Games in order to strut its stuff. But as Australia discovered when its indigenous welfare issues were aired around the world, you can’t party without some of your dirty linen falling out of the cupboard.

China’s answer to the demonstrations by Tibetan monks in recent months—protests that have sparked a world-wide movement now fuelled by the daily progress of the Olympic torch—have been nothing more than reaching into the past. Oppress. Silence. And shoot when necessary.

China claims it has brought Tibet into the modern age. Tibetans claim it has oppressed the native population and developed an apartheid system by encouraging Chinese migration into the region and giving them preferential treatment …

Tibet is just one of the human rights issues upon which China now finds itself being tested by the larger world community.

Welcome to the real Games.

Last year Juan Antonio Samaranch, the diminutive Spaniard who regally presided over Olympic history. ‘It’s a phrase old Juan has uttered before. He got it right last time he used it.

But for Beijing to pull it off, it may need more than just a touch of that Olympic magic because these Games are not just a sporting contest.

They never have been, never will. And nor should they be.

Daily Telegraph, 11 April 2008
Over the years, various state and federal governments have played important roles in securing national and international competitions, such as Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Prior to the 1950s, however, governments in Australia rarely intervened in sports policy, and international teams were free to tour to nations of their choice.

The 1970s and 1980s provided several political complications for sports administrators and the Australian Government. The 1971 South African Springbok rugby tour was clouded with public protests condemning the apartheid policies of the South African Government at that time. Subsequently, there were bans on participation in sport with South African teams, and tours to South Africa were not undertaken by sporting teams. The question of whether to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics was another controversial political issue. The federal government strongly supported the boycott, but the Australian Olympic Federation decided to participate in the Games. The government showed its opposition to the decision by offering teams and individuals considerable amounts of money if they agreed not to participate.

The Olympics have well-established links with politics. The tally of medals won is a measure of a nation’s success and symbolic strength at the Games. In 2008 much controversy was witnessed surrounding China’s hosting of the Olympics due to its human rights record and treatment of the people of Tibet. The torch relay was severely interrupted, and in some countries abandoned, due to political protests.

Figure 13.3 A ‘free Tibet’ protest along the 2008 Olympic torch relay course

Government legislation ensures certain sporting events (including the Olympic Games) are broadcast on free-to-air television.

Australians go to Moscow

The Australian Olympic Federation has voted to send an Australian team to the Moscow Olympic Games in defiance of Federal Government policy. The tight 6–5 ballot, announced by Federation president Syd Grange at Melbourne’s Sheraton Hotel, ends speculation about Australia’s role following America’s boycott of the Games. The USA has withdrawn from the Games in protest against the Soviet invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, was critical of the decision, expressing hopes that Australian participation would not be interpreted as an endorsement of Soviet policy. ‘I can’t give them any blessing to go but I can say that I hope that any athlete who does compete in Moscow makes damn sure that he or she beats everyone else in whatever the event may be,’ he told television reporters. But Syd Grange, explaining the rebuff to the Fraser Government, said, ‘There’s always been conflicts in our loyalties to the government and our loyalties to amateur sport.’

The Federation vote was welcomed by Opposition Leader Bill Hayden, who said, ‘It was a decision that took a fair bit of courage,’ adding it would be unfair to ask Olympians to sacrifice their chance to compete in the Games when Australia continued to trade in wheat and wool with the Soviet Union.

23 May 1980
Rebels to tour South Africa

An agreement was reached today to allow a rebel cricket tour of South Africa by a team of Australian players, beginning in November. As a result, the players concerned will face bans from Australian cricket for up to three years.

Rumours of a possible rebel tour to South Africa originally surfaced in mid-April, after it was reported that 15 Australians with first-class cricket experience had agreed to two tours in 1985–86 and 1986–87. This was ironic, as the English players who had embarked on a similar tour three years earlier were just coming off their bans and would now be eligible to rejion Test cricket in the upcoming Ashes tour. The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) responded to the rumours by asking that all players selected for the Ashes tour sign statutory declarations denying any involvement in the rebel tour and stating their availability for all future matches.

Within days, the details of the rebel tour became clearer. It would commence in November, the players having been approached on behalf of the South African Cricket Union (SACU) by former Australian Test player Bruce Francis.

12 July 1985

Critical inquiry

1. Read the article on page 260, which explores the influence of politics on sporting events, then complete the following tasks:
   - Identify instances where Australia has used sport for political purposes.
   - Outline instances where politics has been a factor prior to or during an Olympic Games.

2. Examine the preceding articles concerning the boycotts associated with the Moscow Olympics and the rebel cricket tour to South Africa.
   - Discuss how politics was involved in these instances and the impact it had on the associated sports and athletes.

Research and Review

1. Evaluate the impact of political involvement on the athletes and the Australian public.

2. Listen to the ABC ‘Sport vs politics’ podcasts, which debate the issue of politics and its relationship with sport, then complete the following tasks:
   - Summarise the viewpoints presented.
   - Should politics be involved in sport? Justify your response.
The meaning of physical activity and sport to Indigenous Australians

Traditional activities and sports

Before European colonisation, Indigenous Australians participated in a variety of games, dances and physical activities that mirrored their daily survival activities of hunting and fishing, and their affiliation with the land. For Indigenous Australians, an organised notion of sport, such as held by the British, did not exist.

Physical activities often included elements of play. Games included throwing spears at targets and using boomerangs, and basic movement skills, such as the running, jumping and climbing activities that formed a part of everyday life. 'Sport' competitions were organised by elders and included activities such as tree-climbing races and throwing spears for distance. These physical skills were paramount to the people's survival and, as such, were highly valued and encouraged. As a means of solving intertribal disputes, wrestling competitions were organised. Young boys participated in practice fights to improve their wrestling skills.

Dance was both an amusement and a teaching tool used by Indigenous Australians. Dance played a major part in the initiation process of young boys, and corroborees were performed for ceremonial purposes. Tribal corroborees were performed to celebrate good fortune and involved all members of the tribe in dance, music and song-making. Movements of animals were replicated to portray stories, both of the past and of daily activities. Tracking was a necessary skill learnt by all children, and games centred on identifying the correct track or noise.

Games involving catching, throwing and kicking using various types of balls were played. Balls were constructed of materials such as possum hair, kangaroo intestine, beeswax and seeds. Games were informal, often lasting many hours or days, with few rules and no need for umpires or referees. Both males and females played these games and their purpose was to promote interaction between tribal members and encourage participation.

Those Indigenous Australians who had access to waterholes or coastal beaches engaged in water activities, such as fishing, canoeing and swimming. Young Indigenous Australian children were encouraged to learn to swim from an early age.

Indigenous Australian games and activities were closely linked to teaching survival skills and respect for tribal elders. The major focus of 'organised' games was enjoyment rather than a result, and Indigenous Australians developed pastimes that demonstrated clear links with their family, tribe and land.

Links between community and identity

In 1962 the Yuendumu Games were created as an alternative sporting event for Indigenous Australians. The Yuendumu Games are a mixture of cultural events and sports, providing remote Indigenous Australian communities with the opportunity to participate in contests such as boomerang-throwing and Australian football. These games reflect the cultural identity of their participants, and assist in unifying their communities.

Boxing has provided an avenue for a number of Aboriginal men to find fame. One notable Indigenous Australian boxer is Lionel Rose, who became World Bantamweight Champion in 1968. In the same year, Rose was awarded the honour of Australian of the Year, becoming the first Indigenous Australian to receive this award.

The importance of Australian football to Indigenous Australians and their communities is paramount. Local successes of region against region, and having local boys targeted by AFL teams, assist in bonding local communities and establishing an identity for both Indigenous Australians and their regions. The AFL has recognised the significant contribution of Indigenous athletes to its sport by each year commemorating their contributions in the Indigenous round. In this round the Sydney Swans play the Essendon Bombers for the MarnGrook Trophy. Players such as dual Brownlow medallist Adam Goodes and premiership player Michael O'Loughlin from the Sydney Swans are seen as positive role models for young Indigenous Australian children.

At the 1994 Commonwealth Games and the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Cathy Freeman draped herself in the Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 metres. This demonstrated her identification with her community and culture. Her Aboriginality was an important aspect of her own identity, and her achievements in sport have assisted in establishing an identity for Indigenous Australian people.
Indigenous Australian track and field athletes include Kyle van der Kuyp, Nova Peris-Kneebone, Cathy Freeman, Patrick Johnson and Joshua Ross. These athletes have been positive sporting role models for indigenous Australian communities.

The Australian Sports Commission, through its Indigenous Sport Program, is aiming to improve the participation rates of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in sport and recreation. The focus of this program is on community development.

![Figure 13.5](image)

Cathy Freeman draped in the Aboriginal and Australian flags at the 2000 Olympic Games

Research and Review

1. Select several indigenous Australian athletes who have been successful in their sporting endeavours. Analyse how their successes have contributed to a positive perception of their indigenous culture.

2. Investigate how physical activity and sport have influenced both the lives and identity of indigenous Australians.

Physical activity, sport and cultural identity

The role of competition

Modern sport is often defined as a competitive physical activity. In Western countries competition in sport is often valued as a form of training for the world of work because, through sport, young people learn to strive to win and to cope with losing. Competition is also regarded as an important motivational factor for excellence and participation. Yet such competition is not universally valued.

For some other societies, enjoyment, participation and playing for social and health benefits are the primary motivations for undertaking physical activity. In traditional indigenous Australian culture, partaking in physical activity is encouraged for its participation value. Members of family groups are encouraged to join in unstructured games for the pleasure of playing, rather than for the result. North American Indians traditionally based their games on cooperation and participation, rather than on competition. In Eastern cultures, the notions of bodily and spiritual awareness are highly valued. Activities that define the connections between body, mind and spirit are seen to be important, and less value is placed on the notion of competition.

Since the introduction of Western-style sports to such societies, competition has become more prominent in the physical activities that they pursue. Of course, not all people in Western countries enjoy competitive sport. Many people prefer recreational activities and informal games where there is little or no competition with others.

Links to cultural identity

Sport in Australia originally developed for a particular social and cultural group: Anglo-Saxon, middle-class males. Many Australians judged the value of newly arrived cultural groups on the basis of their ability to adapt to traditional Australian games.

Since colonial days, the diversity of the Australian population has increased, and many ethnic groups participate in particular sports traditionally associated with their culture, thus creating a link between cultural identity and sport. This link is witnessed with the Irish and Gaelic football, South Americans and Greeks with soccer, and Italians with bocce and soccer. Asian community leaders have also encouraged their youth to participate in martial arts clubs in an effort to create community links.

Australian football has long been associated with Indigenous Australian participation and identity. The style of the game reflects traditional Indigenous Australian activities, and success in local competitions is highly valued by Indigenous Australian communities. The Northern Territory has contributed many young Aboriginal players to AFL teams. Those Indigenous Australian players whose talents are
recognised by the AFL are supported and encouraged by their Indigenous Australian communities. Examples of well-known Aboriginal AFL players who originated from the Northern Territory include Andrew McLeod, dual Norm Smith Medallist (best on ground in the Grand Final) for the Adelaide Crows and Cyril Rioli, 2008 Premiership player for Hawthorn.

Relationships to health

In Australian society, sport and physical activity are viewed as pathways to health. Participating in physical activity is associated with a reduction in the likelihood of developing lifestyle diseases. During the 1970s and 1980s, significant government funding was allocated to advertising campaigns promoting health and participation in physical activity.

Critical inquiry

Using the article above as your stimulus, analyse the relationship between physical activity, sport and cultural identity.

practical application

Links to cultural identity

Select a variety of sports that are associated with a cultural heritage, such as Gaelic football with the Irish. As a class, participate in the sports you selected.
One such campaign was ‘Life. Be In It’. The purpose of this campaign was to encourage all Australians to participate regularly in some form of sport or physical activity. Campaigns in the late 1990s and today have concentrated on the importance of being physically active for life. For example, the ‘Live Life Well’ campaign reinforces a more holistic approach to health.

In Australian society, health is equated with fitness, muscularity and being slim. Toned, muscular male physiques and toned, slim female physiques are valued. These physiques are often associated with participation in serious competitive sport or physical training. In other societies, such as Asian societies, participation in physical activity is undertaken for other purposes, such as linking the mind and body.

**Ways of thinking about the body**

In Western societies, the body is seen to be a machine that can be trained and developed to achieve success in competition. In the past, the body was considered as separate from the mind, with training focused on physical development. More recently, however, successful participation in competitive sport has involved training the mind as well as the body. Sports psychologists and motivational trainers have been employed by elite athletes and teams to improve their concentration and focus.

Sport has also been important in the way we view ourselves physically. The aesthetic appearance of an athlete—toned and with muscular definition—is a sought-after body image.

Traditionally, in Eastern cultures, humans are viewed more holistically, with an awareness of connections between mind, body and spirit. This view has been nurtured by physical activities such as tai chi and yoga, which encourages participants to centre their concentration and mental energy when performing movements. These types of activities are considered to foster a sense of self, personal control and well-being in participants.Participants develop body awareness through regulated breathing patterns, allowing the body and mind to relax during a series of physical poses. More recently these types of activities have enjoyed a surge in popularity in Western cultures as we realise their holistic benefits to overall health and well-being as well as sporting performance.

**Research and Review**

1. Investigate sporting opportunities for females in a variety of different cultures, then complete the following tasks:
   - **Outline** how opportunities for physical activity differ for girls from different cultural backgrounds.
   - **Identify** how the difficulties identified above could be overcome by adjusting the program or the school rules.

2. Investigate a variety of sports or physical activities that have a cultural significance, then complete the following tasks:
   - **Identify** the key elements of each identified sport or physical activity.
   - **Explain** the cultural significance of each identified sport or physical activity.

---

**practical application**

**Ways of thinking about the body**

1. Participate in a variety of activities that stem from traditional Eastern cultures. Yoga and tai chi are suitable examples.
2. Describe the impact these activities had on you personally.
3. Discuss why athletes may incorporate such activities into their training.

---

Figure 13.6 Tai chi is a traditional Chinese physical activity that enjoys growing popularity in Western cultures.
what is the relationship between sport and national and cultural identity?

chapter summary

- National and regional identity are closely associated with sporting achievement and this association is promoted.
- Government funding is linked to sporting achievement.
- Sport and politics are interrelated and this is evidenced by Australia using sport as a tool in various instances.
- Physical activity and sport have a strong influence on the lives and identity of Indigenous Australians with traditional activities and sports mimicking daily life.
- Sports such as Australian football and the Yuendumu Games reflect the cultural identity of Indigenous Australian participants and contribute to unifying their communities.
- Strong indigenous Australian role models have also assisted in creating a sense of identity.
- Physical activity and sport has a cultural significance for particular groups.

extension activities

1. Investigate the current government funding allocated to sport. Tabulate your findings.
2. Construct a timeline investigating the role that politics has played in Australian sporting history.
3. Research a variety of traditional Indigenous Australian games.
   a. Outline the basic purpose of each game.
   b. Participate in these games as a class group.
   c. Describe your feelings after participating.

revision activities

1. Select a sporting event that promotes regional identity. Outline how this is achieved.
2. Sport and politics should not mix. Clarify your thoughts on this statement.
3. Describe the traditional activities and sports of indigenous Australians.
4. Contrast the meaning of sport and physical activity for a variety of cultural groups.

exam-style questions

1. Analyse how sport has contributed to the establishment of an Australian national identity. (12 marks)
2. Discuss how government funding has assisted the growth of sport in Australia. (8 marks)
3. Evaluate the impact on athletes and the Australian public of sport being used for political purposes. (12 marks)
4. Describe the contribution that sport and physical activity has made to the identity of Indigenous Australians. (8 marks)
5. Assess the relationship between physical activity, sport and cultural identity. (12 marks)