

Top five is the aim for 2016

THE Australian Sports Commission says taxpayer funding must be used much more efficiently as it announced a major overhaul in a bid to address the nation's slide down international rankings.

In launching the 10-year project, Australia's Winning Edge, the ASC has set a target of a top-five finish on the medals table at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, but has told sport-

ing bodies they must be more accountable and efficient with their use of funding.

Elite sport will not receive any more than the \$170 million annual contribution from the Federal Government.

ASC chairman John Wylie said the \$170 million must be invested wisely.

"There is an opportunity to improve efficiency, reduce duplication, reduce complexity and improve collabor-

ation in the Australian sporting system. These can and must be addressed," Wylie said at the project launch at the MCG yesterday.

Among the initiatives is a \$20 million investment over the next four years for coaching and leadership.

The Australian Institute of Sport will also be drastically restructured and will hand over control of sports programs to individual sporting bodies, which will have

greater responsibility. Funding will be based on a sport's ability to win medals and its administration meeting high standards of governance.

The AIS will also conduct an annual draft camp in order to attract potential champion athletes.

Australia has won fewer total medals at each summer Olympics since Sydney 2000 and this year will have about half the world champions it did a decade ago. AAP

LAST LAUGH?

Kookaburra Fergus Kavanagh will be among 10 London Games players looking to make amends for missing Olympic gold when they chase a record fifth straight Champions Trophy title in Melbourne this week.

Picture: ROB LEESON



Belgium's rise has Kookaburras nervous

Team to fear

Matt Windley

THE Kookaburras won't be taking Belgium lightly in today's Champions Trophy opener at Melbourne's State Hockey and Netball Centre.

Winner of only one Olympic hockey medal, a bronze at the 1920 Games, which it hosted, Belgium failed to qualify for the Olympics from 1980 to 2004 and finished a disappointing ninth in Beijing.

But several recent underage successes, backed up by a promising fifth place at the London Olympics have Kookaburras coach Ric Charlesworth convinced Belgium is a team to fear.

"They're a team that's growing in stature. A team that's been increasingly doing better and better the last two Olympics," Charles-

MEN'S HOCKEY CHAMPIONS TROPHY	
	
AUSTRALIA v BELGIUM	
TODAY, 2.30PM STATE HOCKEY AND NETBALL CENTRE	
TV ABC1 2.30-6pm • Tickets from Ticketmaster	
ALSO TODAY	
NETHERLANDS v PAKISTAN 10.30AM	
GERMANY v NEW ZEALAND 12.30PM	
ENGLAND v INDIA 4.30PM	

worth said yesterday. "Their ranking has been rising.

"They've got a very good group of young players who have done very well in Europe, so this group of players fancy themselves and we have to be ready for that."

Ranked No.8, Belgium is not yet a powerhouse in world hockey, but that time

may not be too far away, according to Charlesworth.

"They're coming, they've been coming for a while now and the game is really getting a footing there," he said.

"Their most successful Olympic team has been their hockey team and, of course, they are right next door to Holland, who are the home

of hockey in Europe, if you like."

After Australia came home with a bronze medal in London, the Champions Trophy has been labelled something of an experimental tournament for the Kookaburras. But Charlesworth, who will take a back seat and allow assistant Graham Reid to take the head coaching role, said expectations were still high.

"We go to every tournament wanting to play well, wanting to win the thing, get to the main game and do well," he said. "That's always our aim and we don't resile from that. Whatever team we put together we think we can (be successful).

"The rules at the moment are 18 play each game, so we can use them all each day and that will happen."

Warriors still on ball

FROM little things, big things grow.

And that is the case with North Geelong Soccer Club, which this weekend celebrates its 45th anniversary and the 20-year reunion of its Victorian Premier League-winning side.

The 1992 team had many players and a coach — **Branko Culina** — who kicked on to make huge contributions to Australian soccer.

Culina, in his first job, was named coach of the year and went on to coach Melbourne Knights, Sydney United, Sydney Olympic, Sydney FC and Newcastle Jets.

Players include **Steve Horvat** (32 Socceroos caps and NSL champion with Melbourne Knights); **Adrian Cervinski** (Olyroos, Melbourne Knights, Carlton, Wollongong and Northern Spirit); **David Cervinski** (best mullet in the NSL and four NSL titles); and **Bogdan Bonk** (Melbourne Knights and 1992 VPL player of the year). And **Josip Skoko** (51 Socceroos caps) was junior player of the year in 1992 and 1994 VPL player of the year.

The Warriors will have a gala evening tonight and tomorrow will hold a family picnic and All Stars match at Echo Park.



Bump start: Felipe Araujo, Grant Hackett and Francis Hegerty at Calder Park. Picture: DAVID CAIRD

Hackett's new challenge

OLYMPIAN **Grant Hackett** and footy bad boy **Brendan Fevola** will be among the famous faces testing themselves in the latest muddy endurance craze to sweep Melbourne.

Hidden Warrior kicks off at Calder Park this weekend with thousands expected to line up for the 10km adventure challenge.

Aussie rower **Francis Hegerty** and Brazilian swimmer **Felipe Araujo**

joined Hackett for an early glimpse of what participants can look forward to.

They will make up team Alpha and hope to raise cash for the Victorian Westpac Lifesaver Helicopter Service.

Organisers have said the circuit will have 22 crazy obstacles and feature less running compared to similar events staged around Australia since the gruelling challenges took off.



Bomber boy

HERE is news that will excite Essendon fans.

Champion Bomber full-forward **Matthew Lloyd** and his wife **Lisa** are celebrating the birth of their first son.

Jacob was born on Tuesday and is a brother for the Lloyds' two young girls — Jaeda and Kira.

Bombers fans are dreaming about the prospect of a father-son selection.

Port adds Vanstone

PORT Adelaide has announced the appointment of **Amanda Vanstone** (above) to its board of directors.

Vanstone, who served as a senator for South Australia from 1984 to 2007, before becoming Australia's ambassador to Italy until 2010, takes up her position immediately. She was appointed for a three-year term by the SANFL.

She is a passionate Port supporter and her appointment follows October's announcement of TV personality **David Koch** as the club's new chairman.

Odd one out

WESTERN Bulldogs recruit **Jackson Macrae** grew up supporting Hawthorn.

Of the 18 AFL clubs, only one didn't speak to him before the national draft. And, yes, you've guessed it, Hawthorn was the odd one out. Jackson was disappointed because he wanted to meet Hawk coach **Alastair Clark**... and tell him Hawthorn should never have lost the Grand Final.

