

Inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring

11 October 2012

Committee Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
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Introduction:

The Football Federation Victoria is the affiliated body to the national governing body Football Federation Australia. Our vision is to have football regarded as the sport that provides genuine access and value to quality experiences which inspire Victorians. We want to deliver the best possible football experiences and opportunities to our participants and partners. It is very important that indigenous Victoria is part of this successful narrative.

We have worked with Football Federation Australia to develop a national Indigenous Football Strategy, titled "Football Dreaming." This was released early in 2012. Details of the strategy are detailed below:

Vision

TO DECLARE FOOTBALL AS THE SPORT OF FIRST CHOICE OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Mission Statement

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, FFA WILL STRIVE TO STRENGTHEN, CELEBRATE & SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF FOOTBALL AT ALL LEVELS, TO ENSURE THAT IT IS ACCESSIBLE AND ENJOYABLE FOR ALL

Our Purpose

Football for social development: As a not-for-profit organisation, FFV's responsibility is first & foremost with the community. FFV recognises football as a prominent vehicle responsible for social development, including health, education & employment outcomes

Creating opportunities in & through Football: The World Game is one of the most inclusive & provides life experiences like no other sport. FFV aims to ensure football remains accessible at all levels and can be enjoyed by all.

Key Priority Areas

1. USE FOOTBALL AS A VEHICLE TO POSITIVELY IMPACT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, SUCH AS EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & HEALTH
2. MAXIMISE INDIGENOUS FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES
3. IDENTIFY & DEVELOP TALENTED INDIGENOUS FOOTBALLERS

We offer the following insights into the terms of reference as stipulated by the committee.

Sporting bodies increasing opportunities for Indigenous participation, including opportunities for Indigenous women.

The Indigenous State Football Carnival engages communities from across Victoria. Over the past 2 years approximately 300 participants have been engaged in 3 carnivals, with approximately 40% female.

The Indigenous Football Development Small Grants program, supported by the Australian Government aims at assisting clubs to provide inclusive programs and solutions for Indigenous young people facing financial challenges to participation. As a result of this Indigenous participation in football has increased by over 49% in the last 12 months alone.

Football Dreaming School & Community Programs aim at increasing school attendance by offering football as an incentive to attend school. Six programs were delivered in 2011 and 2012 with the most successful program delivered by the National Female Coach of the Year and Indigenous leader, Jamara Maza, at Worawa Aboriginal College.

The support of new clubs in highly populated Indigenous communities, particularly in Mildura and East Gippsland, remain a priority for the organisation.

FFV is in discussions with Sport Education Development Australia (SEDA) to establish a new education program in Mildura and Gippsland specifically for girls aged 16 – 19 in a similar vein to CLONTARF.

Strong partnerships with the games top tier clubs – Heart & Victory – have assisted in celebrating Indigenous culture and participation in football.

Appointment of Indigenous Football Ambassadors and celebrating achievements of these individuals has been important to grow interest in the sport. Many of these ambassadors have been delivering messages regarding the responsible use of illicit drugs & alcohol, which have been well received by community leaders and youth.

Non-government organisations utilising sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people.

Providing valuable experience for Indigenous young people is a key performance measure for FFV. We have as part of our Indigenous strategy plan an objective to explore and facilitate work experience for young people. Experiences in event planning, facilitation and recruiting lead to employment outcomes including part time, casual and full time.

Other outcomes include participation in one of Australia's and the world popular sports through a sophisticated plan, talent opportunities including representing Victoria and A-League teams Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart (David Williams).

One of the keys to the sports recent success has been its ability to identify passionate leaders from within community and form an FFV Indigenous Advisory Committee comprising representatives from

State Government, Victoria Police, Department of Justice and other Aboriginal community service providers, including VACSAL.

It is FFV's intention to continue to work with non-government agencies that are eligible for and obtain funding to ensure they consider football as a sport which can deliver social outcomes and achieve funding requirements (eg; Prevent and address bullying & lateral violence in Victoria's Koori youth, Improve ability to resolve conflict, Greater respect among community members especially for women & mothers, Increased understanding of healthy living and more people within the Koori community with a desire to choose such a lifestyle, etc).

The contribution of Indigenous sporting programs

Engaging with Indigenous Victoria and beyond provides a terrific growth opportunity for football in Victoria. It also enriches the sport in many ways. Some of which are,

- Reflects contemporary Australia
- Celebrates Indigenous customs including traditional games.
- Creates awareness of Indigenous traditions and cultural importance
- Facilitates respect and acknowledgement of the contribution the first Australians have made to this land
- Provides greater engagement, talent, participation and education outcomes for football.

FFV provides services which empower community leaders to deliver football in an accessible and enjoyable manner. We invest much time in the training and development of such leaders and acknowledge their contribution as football & community advocates.

In summary

Football Federation Victoria has a strong commitment and strategy plan in place to build on the earlier work done in football. We have continued to invest time, resources and financially into making football a sport where Indigenous Australians can see themselves reflected in the game as players, coaches, administrator's referees and on club boards and committees. We are committed to closing the gap.