

Coaching Onkaparinga Women's Rugby Team

'Sisters Coming Together'

A coaches perspective of cultural and gender engagement with rugby at a 'grass roots' community sporting club

Before I give my views for the journey of Indigenous women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby Club, I would like to acknowledge that what I have written is not based on an experts view or opinion on Aboriginal culture and meaning. My view is that the experts of these matters of Aboriginal culture and affairs can only come from the Custodians of the land in which I write. The writing I have submitted is based on my observation, my employment position, my research thesis 'Does the promotion of sport for Aboriginal youth help reduce the risk of offending behaviour?' And my experience as a rugby coach of a women's team in South Australia, which has a large contingency of Indigenous women players.

Ross Tanimu

The following information is a coach's analysis of why the Onkaparinga women's rugby team has developed and nurtured a unique situation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's participation with rugby at grass root community sports in South Australia.

I have based the following findings from my experience as a coach at a local rugby club where I have been heavily involved with youth for the past 12 years and more recently, Indigenous women who are playing rugby. My academic research paper and my employment position have given me the core grounding and knowledge in the understanding of Aboriginal issues and complexities that exists in the community. I am in a unique position whereby I can merge both areas of my life towards empowering Aboriginal youth and women to be involved with sports. It must be noted that working as an outreach case manager/social worker, and a community coach that is heavily involved with the Aboriginal community, both areas will merge or overlap due to the community and mob connection. The powerful aspect is that the work that I do is recognised holistically in the community and creates stronger ties, this ensure a trusting and secure relationship.

Uniqueness is based on the following observations:

1. Rugby Union as a sports in a predominately AFL state

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2. The number of Indigenous participants at one particular community sporting club
3. The follow on effect of Indigenous female youth and children participating
4. The families and community mob supporting and praising the Indigenous women participating
5. The growth of players since coming into the competition in 2010
6. The limited time taken (3 years) to achieve recognition as state champions.

The journey as a coach for the Onkaparinga women's team has many tasks; more importantly is how you as an individual connect to the playing group as well as their family members. Your nurturing manner and your empathetic approach will ultimately build trust and rapport with players and family members, more so with the Aboriginal community as the extended family connections are a very important feature of how you are seen in the wider Aboriginal community. Importantly, I make myself available at anytime should a concern or issue arise from my playing group that I believe may be detrimental to team unity or cohesion.

'Word of Mouth' within in the Aboriginal community is a powerful tool as this acknowledges you as a person of worth and trust, especially if you are supporting, empowering and advocating for Aboriginal community members. When trust has been built, then there is the opportunity to be frank and open with discussion, without being seen to be discriminating or disrespectful. The women and community members realise that my discussions and approach are for the betterment and empowerment for culture and gender.

Sports as a vehicle to life skills

Part of my Thesis *'Does the promotion of sports for Aboriginal youth help reduce the risk of offending behaviour?',* I have described the importance of translating sports principles to principles associated with life skills. This is very important as it makes coaching translation form specific meanings to the playing group. This enables women to decide what they will be doing and why they need to do it, allowing them to think how they can apply themselves to the task at hand (determination).

Setting goals

As a male coach for a women's team it is important to allow women to be self determined where possible. I encourage my women's team to set realistic goals as to what the playing group would like to achieve for the year. I mentioned what I think they can achieve from my observation but let them determine what they think they can achieve. Through this process I encourage that goal setting can also be done on a personal level and ask them to write down things they as individuals would like to achieve playing rugby. From my conversation to the Ross Tanimu 2012

Aboriginal playing group, they mentioned aspects of determination, wellbeing - spiritually, physically and mentally, and importantly equality and inclusiveness in local community as part of their outcomes for their personal goals.

Example A:

2010 was the first year into the competition and we had only 4 experienced women rugby players. We had a 10 Aboriginal women playing rugby for the very first time and another 8 women playing for their first time. The women's competition had 5 teams and some of those teams have been around in the competition for 15 years.

Goals 2010

1. *Play with what God has given us on the day*
2. *Play to our best ability*
3. *Enjoy ourselves as sisters*
4. *Win at least 1 game for the season*

Result: All the players contributed to the season, they all enjoyed themselves and we won 1 game.

Example B:

Goals 2011

- 1 *Play with what God has given us on the day*
- 2 *Enjoy ourselves and play to our best ability*
- 3 *Make it into the last 4 teams for finals*
- 4 *Recruit more players*

Result – All enjoyed themselves and played to their best ability. 3 new Indigenous players. Made it to the Grand Final for 2011

Example C:

Goals 2012

- 1 *Play with what God has given us on the day*
- 2 *Enjoy ourselves*
- 3 *Make it into the finals*

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- 4 *To stand up and be counted as a serious contenders for 2012 – we need to face our fears in life and take positive steps to achieve this.*

Result - enjoyed the season, played as a team, commitment to training and won the grand final.

Setting Boundaries:

As with many sports there are team rules to consider, without team rules the ability to make headway becomes problematic. With my women's team I outlay my coaching and personal boundaries as a reference point for the women to gauge my limitations as a coach, my boundaries are flexible but I do have borders. These boundaries apply to all the team members and I emphasize that I am flexible and reasonable for consideration. Part of the process of having multiculturalism women participation is that there needs to be common understanding and grounding of what is required of them to be successful or competitive - this is another life skill application.

From my experience and observation:

1. Be respectful and mindful of cultural issues, custom's and protocols and respect will be reciprocated
2. Do not harp on issues at training or at games – point our respectfully and in a positive frame alternative ways to do things. This reduces being 'shamed '
3. Engage the family and children that come out to play and incorporate some of the drills to be inclusive of children – A holistic approach. This builds stronger relationships as a coach and will ultimately build a strong connection to the children. I am now referred to as an Uncle to all the women's children.
4. Be transparent in decisions so as not to create disparity – this issue of disparity has been applied to every aspect of Indigenous culture lives since colonization. Disparity represents inequality and to some extent many may feel excluded. If this occurs then the likelihood of participation is minimized. However if possible, decisions are made for team and training purposes, and then it must be explained accordingly to all. Keeping things simple and keeping 'things real', highlights my humbleness and sincerity, this is quickly picked up and respected. I do not promise anything that I cannot follow through on but always mention that I would endeavor to do my best as a coach to see things through.
5. Be aware that if a player does not want to play or train respect that decision. If you respect that, they will eventually train when they are ready.

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6. Endeavour to understand some of the common cultural language that is used and ask respectfully if it is appropriate to also use the same terminology. It is important that you make the time to find out about aspects of Indigenous culture and language. As with many Indigenous cultural groups around the world, understanding part of their culture is a sign that you respect and acknowledge them as custodians of the land.
7. Being at training 2 nights a week and 1 day on the weekend brings stability for many, especially as a male coach because you are seen as a father figure, brother, mentor and a positive role model. Many of the women are single mothers and have experienced hardships with relationships, money and family issues. As part of my role as a coach I have assisted where possible to alleviate these issues. Part of my coaching duties is to apply for government sporting grants to support the women. I have been successful over the 3 years to subsidise the majority of their fees, and pay for specific clothing and training items, so all the women can look united in the same clothing items.
8. If there is an Indigenous event or specific day that has a special meaning, endeavor to attend, participate or support. This builds respectful relationships and stronger bonds with the women's team – see attachment of reconciliation week 2011.
9. Laughter is a good approach but needs to be applied at appropriate times
10. Advocacy is important and constantly needs to be applied when representing the women's team. This will also apply to teaching aspects of cultural competency to club officials and other club members. By doing this, then perceived barriers are brought down. The ability to enhance inclusiveness becomes stronger because club supporters and members know that irrespective of culture, creed or religion, we all play under the same colours that unite us as one.

EMPLOYMENT POSITION – NGO**Case Manager/Social worker - School Assertive Outreach Program for NGO**

My role as a case manager/social worker, working with predominately indigenous youth, has created an opportunity to use sports as part of my engagement program. The Nunga Touch sporting carnival has built momentum over 5 years and has grown with school and student participation, as well as a growth with community business support. Previous documentation of our Nunga Touch Carnival has been submitted for this inquiry and explains the process of how we facilitate and conduct group work and touch training.

It is very important to convey the message that the carnival is a cultural sporting event and that there is no clear individual team winners at the end, as everyone (Aboriginal students/culture) are winners. There is no recognition for 1st, 2nd last in the Nunga Touch Carnival competition. Every school receives the same trophy, every student receives the same T shirts and caps. The reason being is that a majority of Aboriginal communities are subjected to this type of preference placement in society and through this construction, perceived division forms, from a winner to loser perception to have and to have not. The carnival represents a day of wellbeing that evokes inclusion and equality for all as a cultural group.

Through this culturally specific program there have been positive responses from students and schools that are involved. Participants range from various educational institutions and year level. Our program funding targets students between the age of 12 -18 who are at risk of homelessness and disengaging from school. Majority of Aboriginal students are aligned to mainstream schools, however I have actively engaged with alternative learning institutions to enhance the same opportunities for disengaged Aboriginal students and those who have come in contact with the justice system. From my experience and observation when working in different educational environment, there is a need to apply different approaches to gain attention and trust, however, it is just as important to maintain a basic foundation that is applied across the board when working with Aboriginal youth.

Introduction: who I am, my history and journey as an Indigenous man from another country. Make mention of your understanding of the cultural land you are working in and explain your knowledge of their mob connection and people you know.

Work in groups – this lessens any stigma's and it is easier to convey any messages

Explain the nature of your work, why you are there, what you would like to achieve with them as a group and what they are all working towards (Nunga

Touch Carnival). There must be clear distinct lines for a beginning, middle and end. I explain to the students that the criteria for being part of the Nunga Touch Carnival is that they try and do their best at school and home and remember the word Respect (life skill boundaries). Keeping goals simple ensures that we have maximum participants for the carnival. Always empower the youth with positive reinforcement about their culture and identity, I always mention that the Nunga Touch Carnival is their carnival and be proud of that.

Describe the rules for the program, rules for the game and the rules for coming to the carnival event. These rules are to do your best, respect yourself, teammates, other schools and referees. It is important to put down boundaries, so the students understand the consequences of their actions, (life skill). Students will tend to respect your decision if you explain yourself, however the boundaries must be very flexible so students can still participate. This also gives the opportunity for students to gauge you as a character and your transparency – respect will follow. Explain that the rules that have been put down also apply to the workforce and the society in which they live. Although it must be understood that cultural rules and protocols play an important aspect in their lives as well, and they need to have a balanced approach.

My experience and observation when coaching sports to Aboriginal youth;

It is just as important to identify yourself and explain yourself to the community group you are working with. Sharing of culture and experience will be respected and acknowledged, this will require you to highlight your own strengths and weaknesses, your highs and lows in your own journey and any aspirations that you would like to achieve. This will show your character to be transparent and real.

- 1 Have some understanding about Aboriginal culture and history.
- 2 Understand social, emotional and financial dilemmas faced by Aboriginal people
- 3 Understand the components of wellbeing and what effect this has with engagement and participation
- 4 Understand the priority preference that will take place, family 1st, community 2nd, then mainstream commitments
- 5 Understand that being in groups is more comfortable than being individualistic
- 6 Build trust and rapport through effective humor

- 7 Possibly need to work also with family and extended family members when working with youth – holistic approach
- 8 Be positive in appraisal
- 9 Work outside normal working hours
- 10 Be made available outside normal working hours
- 11 Be committed to share culture and language
- 12 Understand cultural customs and protocols where possible
- 13 Know the elders and senior members in the community
- 14 Highlight and support options with education and career pathways
- 15 Where possible attend specific cultural events and celebrations – this gets recognised by wider community
- 16 Explain and support concepts about self determination and cultural empowerment through education – Sports as a vehicle can achieve some of these outcomes through teamwork, commitment and goal setting.
- 17 A lot of male Aboriginal youth may not experience positive male role models in their home or social life, being constantly involved with them through our program brings to light a stable and recognizable figure that they can identify with.
- 18 Must be passionate and committed to working in the community

Personal Note

I would like to mention that the success I have achieved when working in the Aboriginal community in Adelaide (Kurna) with youth in a working capacity (NGO) and with the women in my volunteering capacity (Local Community Sporting Club) are based upon:

1. My character as a person
2. My passion and commitment to the task I have set out to achieve working with disadvantaged communities. I am employed on a part time basis at work (4 days a week) but work 7 days a week as a case manager and as a coach. I work on average, excess of 25-30 hours unpaid work to see the results that have been generated. This is due to my commitment and passion to empower and enhance wellbeing for the Aboriginal community. To advocate for social inclusion at both local and wider community only enhances their self belief and determination to feel inclusive within mainstream society.
I have managed to achieve this through sports participation in the community

Ross Tanimu

Acknowledgement: My Creator and the Kurna people of SA as well My Mentor Tui Leleisiuao for teaching me about the importance of Identity and Culture.

Identity – PNG

Centacare – School Assertive Outreach Manager

Coach – Onkaparinga women's rugby team. SA

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Onkaparinga Rugby Union Club- “Sisters Coming Together”

A cultural Journey

My sisters I have been asked to put in a submission to a Parliamentary House of Representatives Committee about sports for Indigenous people in the community, including women’s involvement in community sports. If you could be so kind as to answer the following questions and if you like elaborate on other areas you feel worth mentioning.

Name : Carole Rogomaicake

Name of your land : Torres Strait Islands (Mer, Darnley, Stephen)

Aboriginal Queensland (Koori)

1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

Through my friends within the southern region area.

2 What made you want to play rugby?

I first started going to the training sessions, after getting to know my team mates, coach and other members of the club who made it very welcoming to play the sport. I then decided to play as majority of my friends who I seen as my sister girls was playing so I thought why not.

3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

I was playing mixed netball and played women’s basketball at Morphett Vale.

4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

Coming from Perth to live in Adelaide was a challenge as I didn’t know anybody. Once I played community sport I got to know local workers around my work area and the local community. It has made me feel a part of the community itself. A lot of my friends (sistagirls) have become like family to me which is great.

5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

I have a cousin that plays for the women’s team also. In saying that I think Onka’s as a club has become like one big family, especially the women’s team.

Supplementary Submission 001.1

- 6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?**

My journey has been great. I have a respect for the game and really enjoy playing it. I have built friendships within the club and like the fact that when I'm in public wearing THE ONKA shirt there is always someone saying hello.

- 7 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.**

The club is very family orientated. They have many events were kids can attend also which awesome as the family feel like they can be a part of the team even as spectators

- 8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?**

My coach (Rosco) is a very caring man to everyone. I have learnt so much about the sport from my coach. Rosco is very motivating for us women and is a positive male role model in my life. The management staffs are very supportive of our team and make our journey as sport players very comfortable.

- 9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?**

Absolutely!. As our team has diversity of other cultures we are all aware of their cultures. Our coach is very appreciative of our cultures. When we had the finals we had the Maoris' song then we had the Aboriginal smoking ceremony which gave us extra confidence to win .

- 10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?**

Winning the Finals was the biggest highlight of my journey.

- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?**

My family have been very supportive of my sporting in general. They have more so since playing rugby as it's a very competitive sport. I have seen a lot more of the community came out to home games. The finals game and the support we had was overwhelming as I seen people from the club, work mates and the local community.

Supplementary Submission 001.1

- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?**

Maybe a family fun day, where the mums could come out and try the sport and have rides, games for the kids. A real community feel about it.

- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?**

It has made me more confident. I feel like I can face anything that comes in my path. It truly is an inspirational sport for women and has made me a little fitter also.

- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?**

It shows other Aboriginal women that they can play the sport too. It has given me a sense of courage, not just within the sport but in my personal life too. I feel so empowered as an Islander/Aboriginal women.

- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?**

I think it's great to have a team of so many Aboriginal women as it's so empowering for all of us. As soon as one sistagirl joined we all did as a support. It's more as in your Aboriginal so am I so I got your back.

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Name – option

Azra Rochester

Name of your land

Ngarrindjeri Nation

- 1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

I heard about the Onkaparinga Rugby Club from Roscoe, at Centrecare, because he works closely with my high school students, doing Nunga group Work and Nunga Touch Rugby. A few of my students played for the club. It originally began with my little cousin playing last year and I watched him and the girls play. From that I was keen to be a part of the women’s team.

- 2 What made you want to play rugby?

I liked the social aspect of rugby as well as the ‘sisterhood’ comradeship I felt being a part of the team. I also wanted to get fit and healthy. There are a lot of chronic health problems in my family and I didn’t want that.

- 3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

I have played many sports when I was younger but then I grew out of it because I probably didn’t think I can balance my life to fit it in because at that point it wasn’t a priority.

- 4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

At a community level I have gotten to know so many other indigenous people in this community. I am not from here, but have made many connections with cousins I have

Supplementary Submission 001.1

never met. I have developed, personal, professional and social networks since joining the club.

- 5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?
I have guardianship of my little cousin and he plays for the under 12's.

- 6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

I had never played rugby in my life, I used to be an AFL girl but could never imagine switching back now. Since playing my confidence in my own abilities as a player and as a person as grown. In the beginning I was never sure of my place in the team but the girls welcomed me into the sisterhood. They supported my learning, and that gave me the confidence to go hard on the field.

- 7 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.

I have found the club to be welcoming to me and my little cousin. I have never felt awkward being there, but that meant I also made the effort to be a part of it as well. I helped when I could in the canteen and other events. The club has a welcoming feel to it the moment I first came there. Knowing Roscoe was there made it feel welcoming.

- 8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?

As a new player I felt I had excellent support and guidance from the coaching and management staff. I couldn't complain they helped and patiently explained me through my learning of the game.

- 9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?

Yes, seeing some of the older women playing made me realise that despite nearing thirty I could still play something as demanding as rugby. The coaching staff are an amazing team. I would remain with onka's just to be under their guidance and support.

- 10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?

Supplementary Submission 001.1

I have more confidence in myself as a player and as a person. They have always been welcoming to me and my boy.

- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?

Yes, amazingly my mum has come and watch which was great. Particularly because my step dad is a Queenslander so he wanted to watch me. My family comes and watches most home games, only because my away games clashed with my boys games. Even when I broke my finger, they were an amazing support.

- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?

I think if we continue to raise awareness because with most Aboriginal things, it does rely on word of mouth. If we can continue to promote it with adequate support than we would see more interest by aboriginal women.

- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?

I think there is to a degree. Being on that field is a little like life. Yes, I stand there waiting for the kick off alone, but as soon as I have the ball my teammates are right behind me, supporting and protecting me even when I am down. Being a part of something bigger than myself, knowing that I am a part of that is a great feeling. I feel physically better and spiritually and emotionally I feel great. As I said I am more confident in myself as a human being.

- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?

Tough but I'm not alone. I have met other great Aboriginal women, women I probably wouldn't have had the chance to meet.

- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?

I think it's great, because it's like Aboriginal women are taking back control of their lives and their future. Stereotypes don't matter. It's great because just talking with them in our language is fantastic after not living with my own community for a while. Saying something and having someone understand is awesome.

Onkaparinga Rugby Union Club- “Sisters Coming Together”

A cultural Journey

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Name – **Hilda Wilson**

Name of your land - **Kaurna, Narungga**

1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

My sister Naomi

2 What made you want to play rugby?

Game looked good, like game at the time..

3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

Netball, football

4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

Met a lot of people including meeting Abl family connections, and friends

5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Yes my nieces, family and friends

6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Sore, love it, best feeling to win grand final

7 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.

Yes, look after each other and us at the club

8. What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?

Excellent coaching and management staff, very happy with it

- 9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?

yes

- 10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?

Grand final win

- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?

yes

- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?

I feel rosco is doing enough to support our Aboriginal women in our community.

- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?

Not really, I feel it's a new sport for me, always played netball and football.

- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?

Sore, injuries, still a good feeling though, injuries always looked after

- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?

Excellent, good to see them all out and doing something positive instead of sitting at home doing nothing. Everyone talking about rugby, recruiting players and encouraging Abl people to be a part of club

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Name – **Katelyn Wilson**

Name of your land - **Kaurna, Narungga**

1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

Through family

2 What made you want to play rugby?

Just watching it

3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

Yes football netball basketball, little athletics, school sports, nunga touch, touch rugby

4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

It means having fun to me.

5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Yes, my aunties, cousins, friends, my carer

6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Really good

7 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.

yes

Supplementary Submission 001.1

8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?

Good coaches and management staff

9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?

Yes, encouragement to play to be part of the team

10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?

Being water girl for the team first and helping out with the team, winning 7's grand final was great for me, safe space

11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?

yes

12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?

I don't know

13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?

yes

14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?

Good and scared sometimes

15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?

Its good. Its getting Abl people out to do something positive and healthy with their lives instead of drugs and alcohol all the time.

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Name – **Kayla Wilson**

Name of your land - **Kaurna, Narunnga**

1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

Cos all my family and friends were family

2 What made you want to play rugby?

Good way to get anger out, good fitness, family and friends played

3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

Yes netball, football, little athletics, school sport, touch rugby and tag.

4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

Don’t know

5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

yes

6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Great, enjoy getting fit

7 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.

Yes

Supplementary Submission 001.1

- 8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?
Good coach and management staff
- 9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?
yes
- 10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?
Won grand final, won 7's grand final, won tag grand final, loved mad Monday, wear pink for cancer day how our team wore pink rugby tops for the day to support cancer vicitms.
- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?
yes
- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?
no
- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?
yes
- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?
Feels great
- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?
good

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Name – **Jessica Gray**

Name of your land

Wirangu and Kokatha

- 1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club? **Through my Aunty.**
- 2 What made you want to play rugby? Thought I’d try a different area in sport and **try something new.**
- 3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby? **Yes, Netball and Basketball.**
- 4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?
- 5 Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club? **Yes.**
- 6 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club? **Pretty awesome, got to make new friends meet new people and also inspiring others.**
7. Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members? **Yes**

Supplementary Submission 001.1

- 8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?
- 9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture? **Yes**
- 10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?
- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga? **Yes, very supportive.**
- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?
- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing? **It connects with all levels.**
- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport? **Very empowered.**
- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?

Onkaparinga Rugby Union Club- “Sisters Coming Together”

A cultural Journey

My sisters I have been asked to put in a submission to a Parliamentary Senate Committee about sports for Indigenous people in the community, including women’s involvement in community sports. If you could be so kind as to answer the following questions and if you like elaborate on other areas you feel worth mentioning.

Name – Naomi Hicks

Name of your land – Narungga, Gunditjamarra, Adnaymanthna, Nukuna

1 How did you get involved with the Onkaparinga rugby club?

I was asked by Violet Buckskin to come out and join up because the club was recruiting new players. I am very grateful for her asking me because I was in a very emotional hurtful space with some major challenges in my life.

2 What made you want to play rugby?

For fitness and be a part of a sport team sport in Southern area and to focus on the something positive while I was dealing with challenges in my life. I tried out for a football team but faced some challenges by players in the team.

3 Did you play any kind of sports before rugby?

Yes netball, basketball and wanted to play football but no team in the South.

4 What has sports meant for you at local community level?

Keeping fit, focused on healthy and positive mind physically and mentally. Something fun and bring family and community together. It was great Bringing kids out for a fun family day of sport and recreational time and I enjoyed being taught rugby skills ifor my own fitness.

5. Do any of your other family members play rugby at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

Yes, I asked my sister Hilda, Amy to play, sister in law – Aliasha, daughter – Jessica,, nieces Katelyn, Kayla and friends Carol and Kainee to play. They were recruiting players at the time.

- 5 What has your journey been like since you played at the Onkaparinga Rugby club?

When I first began to be a part of the team it was really family orientated, very supporting on and off the field, positive and helpful space. The team had just put this team together for the first time in ten years. They were flexible with my family commitments.

I loved learning to play the game and family environment and support it offered. I had never played the sport so I was learning a new sport from scratch at the age of 36. I was constantly supported by coach and volunteer staff on teaching me how to play rugby.

- 6 Does the club seem to provide a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for you and family members?.

The club provided a safe and cultural appropriate surrounding for my family and I. The kids have had an amazing time and we all have met other community people in our area and from other areas. Sometimes it's been hard to leave the club space. I notice that everyone around the club has always looked out for each others kids so we are all safe which allows us as parents and caregivers to feel safer while we are playing rugby and enjoying the other games going on.

- 8 What are your views on the coaching and management staff on your team?

The coach being Rosco was outstanding in his positive talk to me when things got challenging for me personally and professionally on and off the field. He always supported me in being at the club and when I couldn't be. As I am a foster carer he has also supported in other ways that has been from the kindness of his generous heart. I did have some challenging thoughts around the funding of Aboriginal money at this club and I spoke to Rosco and he took my thoughts on board and brought them to the attention of the club.

This was resolved. This is what happened.....In the second year of playing rugby Rosco applied for a grant which meant money was backing the Onkaparinga Womens Rugby Club. Rosco was successful in getting this funding for our women. I am very thankful for Rosco in gaining funding for our team. This meant we paid less fees, helped with boots, and clothing for training etc...

I believe things changed a lot when there was funding involved. The commitment to this team was stricter and and there was a lot less support to my family committents. There was strictor rules on attending training. It got to the point to receive a tracksuit you had to turn

Supplementary Submission 001.1

up for training! I got quite upset about this kind of control as my deep embedded feelings was “this is Aboriginal money, there is already conditions on gaining funding, and our people in our lives, why make it even stricter for each player, when we were all out here supporting the club the year before with no money and we all paid for our own fees and gear. The club also supported for free second hand boots and gear if families didn’t have enough money. Now that is what I fell in love with the club for. Every one looked after everyone and made everyone feel equal no matter what. Now that changed when control was put on the funding that was allocated to help us all feel equal, strong women, playing rugby for Onkaparinga Womens club. I felt it should have been allocated to all the players equally for their own personal commitment to club not put conditions on all of us to be at training to get something. Every one had different family commitments and was able to attend training when they could. Roscoe always understood my commitment level and supported me all the time in attending when I could and my grievances around this issue. He helped me resolve things.

Another time I was upset when certain players and certain staff were not happy that I was not attending training and were quite happy to talk about it to each other instead of directly at me about my attendance at training. Being an Aboriginal woman with a lot of commitments and obligations in working, and taking care of my family, I thought staff would be understanding. I feel at one point lack of communication and consultation with me personally was the reason for this confrontation. I ended up talking it out to the staff involved and told them how their behaviour had made me feel around decisions about Aboriginal money and me not attending training. This part of the conversation was never really solved so I decided not to play anymore. Roscoe always encouraged me to continue despite other staff and players feelings. Roscoe was very happy for us to attend training when I could. I appreciated this totally from him. Instead of playing I supported my family in getting to and from games etc....

9 Do you believe the coaching staffs have provided an appropriate mentoring and advocacy role for women and culture?

Yes I do.

10 Has there been any outcomes you would like to highlight with your journey at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – Does it feel Inclusive?

I enjoyed the family environmet, the equal feeling, the support it offered and the continuing resolution of issues if they were to come up. Personally enjoy playing and

Supplementary Submission 001.1

working through my personal challenges and obtaining certain goals through out the season, standing up for myself when I was challenged, and working through it.

- 11 Has your family and community members been supportive of your sporting journey at Onkaparinga?

I have always been supported by my family. Sometimes I have been supported by community members. When challenging personally issues happen outside the rugby space this has an effect on the rugby space.

- 12 Is there something you believe would/could be put in place by the community sporting club or even Government Bodies, which would encourage more sports participation by Aboriginal women at local community clubs?

The people who have been allocated the funds, to stop putting more control on players receiving the money and support.

- 13 Do you think there is a connection between playing sports (rugby) and your spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing?

Yes definitely. I was feeling fitter and stronger each week, having positive things for myself to look forward too. You do so much for kids but us mums forget about ourselves. It balanced me.

- 14 What does it feel like as an Aboriginal woman playing a physical demanding sport?

It feels great until I got injured. I felt great until then. Now I happy to watch the younger ones play. May still come out and train for fitness though.

- 15 What's your view on having so many Aboriginal women playing rugby at the Onkaparinga rugby club? – And why do you think this has happened?

My view is that our people like to do things in groups I guess, and the woman that contacted us to play are well known and well supported in the community, it offered a togetherness, family environment, a place where our kids were safe and be together. It felt like a gathering place, a place we had goals and a place we could support each other. A place to gain fitness and laugh and enjoy new friendships.