



EXECUTIVE MINUTE

on
**JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT
REPORT 415
Audit Report No. 12 2008-09, Active After-school Communities Program**

General comments

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program was developed by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) as a nationally resourced and coordinated approach to engaging Australian children in sport and structured physical activity. The AASC program has been operating since 2005 and targets children not traditionally active or involved in mainstream sport.

The program focuses on creating a fun and inclusive environment for the introduction of sport and other structured physical activities to primary-school aged children. This approach ensures children of all abilities are engaged in the activities and have a positive and successful experience. In an environment where the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Australian children is increasingly high, the AASC program has proven to be an effective vehicle to increase physical activity levels of primary school children.

Response to the recommendation(s)

Recommendation No. 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission determine ways in which to measure the development of motor skills of children participating in the Active After-school Communities Program and that it seeks to have funding for the measurement of motor skills included in its next funding bid.

This recommendation is not supported.

The objectives of the AASC program are:

1. To enhance the physical activity levels of Australian primary school-aged children through a nationally coordinated program
2. To provide increased opportunities for inclusive participation in quality, safe and fun sport and structured physical activity
3. To stimulate local community involvement in sport and other structured physical activity.

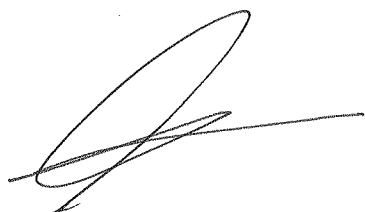
Motor skill development was previously identified as a secondary outcome that may demonstrate achievement of Objective 1 above, but was not a major focus that influenced program design.

The AASC program has been designed to be flexible to offer introductory experiences for all sports. There is no set curriculum for delivery within the program. Instead, the program uses a coaching approach termed 'Playing for Life' which uses games to introduce the skills of a variety of sports and other structured physical activities. The approach creates a fun and inclusive environment and ensures children of all abilities are engaged in the activities and have a positive and successful experience. This approach however, precludes any deliberate or planned introduction of motor skill development for the participating children. Rather the program delivery focus is on providing a positive introduction to a variety of sports, to inspire children to join a club and participate for life.

Therefore, the focus of the research and evaluation processes for the AASC program has been on whether it is meeting its three primary objectives. Extensive research has been conducted with the program participants, parents, coaches, schools, AASC program staff and other related stakeholders to determine whether the program is meeting these objectives.

Given that motor skill development is not a primary objective of the AASC program, the program design and delivery solution cannot guarantee an improvement or impact within this area. As such, it was recommended and approved to remove the stated secondary outcome of objective 1 (which was to increase fundamental motor skills) as of 2009, to remove any ambiguity surrounding the objectives and desired outcomes of the program.

On behalf of the ASC I would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the AASC program's audit report.



Matt Miller
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Sports Commission

