

Palmer, Tamara (REPS)

From:
Sent: Tuesday, 1 June 2010 8:39 AM
To: Committee, ATSIA (REPS)
Subject: Involvement of Indigenous Juveniles

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BY: ATSIA

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Having read the article "*True Justice*" in *About The House – May 2010*, I would like to suggest to our Governments that involvement in sport be made accessible by ALL families particularly those in the lower income socio-economics brackets.

I raised three boys, 2 adopted from Sri Lanka and my maternal son. All three were able to participate in a lot of sport and music. Their peers throughout school ranged from those who could afford it to those who could not and it became evident to our family that many Aboriginal children were excluded from sport purely because their parents would not/could not pay their sporting fees which we even found were expensive during the period when we had a mortgage and many additional expenses typically associated with a young family.

I believe that insurance has made sport quite inaccessible to the poor. Families with problems of finance control (particularly gambling/smoking/drinking) can not and will not afford to pay those sporting fees. Instead they pull the child out of sport. We witnessed this on many occasions. The child or teenager would play for the first three or four games. The Club then demanded payment for the associated fees only to see the child have to be withdrawn from the sport. If those children could possibly get assistance to continue participating this involvement would give them an interest, teach them behavioural rules/manners, give them a sense of belonging to a team with mates of all nationalities and social levels. Often Aboriginal children excel at sport but it is truly sad to see them disadvantaged just because their parents blow the money jar on grog/poker machines.

Undoubtedly our Government is trying to assist them by paying the dole to many families but there is small value in this if the money continues to feed the bad habits of irresponsible parenting. All sporting Clubs should be able to apply to the Government to claim the sporting fees which would retain the involvement of any disadvantaged child whether they are black, white, brindle. Clubs presently can't afford to cover their fee – Clubs are struggling to exist because of the high insurances. Our Governments could develop an insurance policy which covers all sporting Clubs making it more affordable to participate.

I have personally lent money to one Aboriginal family whose son was selected to compete at State Level for sport but otherwise could not have afforded to be represented. How sad if he had missed such an opportunity. That family partly repaid me which was OK by me even though I later heard the mother was a poker machine addict and had probably invested the remainder unsuccessfully.

Please give my request some consideration, as residing in a rural town I can see the direct benefits of participation in sport and can stand back and view the groups who have been able to participate against those who have not.

Employment in teenage years is also the same. Those fortunate enough to be given Traineeships which finally develop into true employment is another plus. So many times the same young adults are offered many traineeships – never to develop to full time employment, just terminating once their 12 month traineeship is up. How discouraging to them, it is like saying..."Sorry, your work was just not good enough to keep you on!" Employers will see it as an opportunity to use cheap labour, not to really train people up so that they will stay. The employer will then just employ a replacement trainee. Just using that young teenager because it is \$\$\$ supplemented.

Do hope you will think about my suggestions. I would dearly love to help initiate some programme which supported youth in our rural community through involvement rather than thinking of ways to punish youth, although I am aware for many it is too late....those that have developed this lifestyle will need to be punished worse luck!

Regards,

Cheryl Cooper