

Partnerships, mentoring and culture

- 4.1 Creating strong partnerships arose as a significant issue for the successful delivery of sporting programs for Indigenous Australians. Partnerships between governments, both state and Commonwealth, the private sector and the non-government sector were discussed in detail.
- 4.2 The value of integrating Indigenous mentors and role models throughout Indigenous sporting programs was another important topic of discussion. The Committee spoke to several Indigenous mentors and roles models and discussed with them what made a good mentor and role model.
- 4.3 The influence of culture on sport and sport on culture was raised by Indigenous individuals and organisations. The significant role that Indigenous culture in sport has on individuals and communities emphasised the positive impact sport has on reconciliation. Reconciliation through sport and the creation and implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans were discussed throughout the inquiry.

Partnerships

- 4.4 The importance of quality partnerships arose frequently during the course of the inquiry. Most importantly developing a solid relationship with members of the targeted Indigenous community was paramount in achieving successful outcomes through sport.
- 4.5 The Committee was informed that many of the partnerships were multi-faceted bringing together communities, the corporate sector, government, non-government organisations, schools and health centres.
- 4.6 Dr Alfred Bamblett, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd discussed the importance of developing effective partnerships by emphasising the need for community members to be participants in a program rather than simply recipients:

It is a statement saying very clearly: if you want to do anything in the area of Aboriginal issues, we have to be participants, not recipients of goodwill; not recipients of nice feelings; not recipients of just the money that you give, but in fact that we are actually able to participate and set a direction.¹

- 4.7 The National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA) commented in its submission that it was established seventeen years ago to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in sport and to provide young people with the opportunities to develop their sporting prowess and create career pathways.

NASCA was filling a gap to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent in sport, because no one else was. This was done through clinics, camps, carnivals, scholarships and talent identification programs, across the country.²

- 4.8 In its submission, NASCA commented that David Liddiard, its Director and Founder, for many years campaigned government and the major sporting codes to impress upon them the significant role that sport can play in improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

David spoke with seven successive CEO's at the NRL and it wasn't until David Moffett and David Gallop listened and finally got the ball rolling, creating the Indigenous programs now in existence at the NRL. NASCA was critical in opening doors and leading the dialogue in creating change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing.³

- 4.9 Miss Carla McGrath, Program and Sustainability Officer for the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) stated that the NCIE has been a success as a result of the localised partnerships that were developed with the Redfern community:

We would not be able to be here if it were not for having worked with the local Redfern community in order to make sure that we have the legitimacy to operate. We would not have been able to develop any of the programs that we have without working in with those people who have already been working on the ground and having seen some success in order to do that. So there is not an element of what we do that is not done in consultation with

1 A Bamblett, Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 6.

2 NASCA, *Submission 38*, p. 3.

3 NASCA, *Submission 38*, p. 4.

organisations that are already working at a local level and starting to see some success.⁴

- 4.10 Mr Richard Kilian, representing National Rugby League (NRL) discussed the need to develop strong relationships between the communities and different providers in order to develop the most effective programs:

You should see yourselves more as coordinators, understanding your backyard; having the consultations, understanding what the need is with the communities and having that relationship with those different providers, whether it is corporates, governments or philanthropic mining companies. They should see the funding that we give them as a seed and look at how they can actually grow that with those other agencies. We all recognise that we are not the professionals in delivering health programs or educational programs, but we do provide a really good platform or a really good tool to give those outcomes the best opportunities to actually happen. That is what those clubs are doing. They are working with the communities, having those relationships with the different providers such as Mission Australia. Then through a holistic approach we are able to deliver better programs for the communities based on need as opposed to perceived needs.⁵

- 4.11 Professor Mick Dodson made a significant point about not relying on Government support only, pointing out that effective partnerships between corporates, governments and communities are often more sustainable in the long-term.

I am not saying government should vacate the space – government has to be in the space. My point is that everybody has to do some of the lifting; it is not just all up to government. We cannot just sit back and wait for government to turn up. In fact, if we find some private money from the corporate sector, from our own resources or from elsewhere then government tends to come in. It is easier to persuade government to come in, but do not expect them to be first cab off the rank.⁶

- 4.12 The issue of tri-partnerships between communities, government and the corporate sector was discussed. Ms Trish Crews from NRL supported the notion of tri-partnerships by stating:

4 C McGrath, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 25.

5 R Kilian, National Rugby League (NRL), *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 18.

6 M Dodson, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 24.

Government and sport can work together to look at issues and then work together with corporate – absolutely, I think it can be tri-funded and tri-partnerships – so that you can go into a community and say, 'Okay, what are the issues here and how can we all work together to create it across, rather than down in silos?'

We only started this work six years ago; we have been reliant on funding from either government or corporate to be able to do that. We have worked in silos but we believe that given the work that we have seen – if you could go into Western Sydney, for example, and look at health, literary, employment and all of those Closing the Gap issues – we could work together in a partnership to address all of those issues. That would be a much more powerful opportunity, rather than working in silos.⁷

- 4.13 Mr Joshua Creamer, Chairman of the Titans 4 Tomorrow program highlighted the importance of tripartite relationships:

Specifically we have a program with Origin Energy in the Surat Basin, known as the 'I Can' program, which is due to expand in the new year as we bring Santos into that relationship. We understand the value of having an industry based approach with a tripartite relationship between the government, the corporate sector and Indigenous communities.⁸

- 4.14 Mr Shane Mattiske, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Rugby League Commission (ARLC) made the following comments:

We have some great ideas. We see what we can deliver as being really powerful, gaining that support from the whole of society – whether that is government or the corporate world – to support the programs we would like to assist in. That is the real challenge for us. We have a limited capacity and we have certainly made strong commitments to support these programs, but real outcomes cannot be achieved without working in coordination with government and with the corporate world.⁹

- 4.15 The Australian Football League (AFL) commented on the various partnerships they have established in the field of Indigenous sports programs.

We invest in the order of \$8 million into dedicated Indigenous programs and staff. In addition the AFL in partnership with the Federal government is providing support to initiatives such as

7 T Crews, NRL, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 18.

8 J Creamer, Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 2.

9 S Mattiske, ARLC, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 19.

the Korin Gamadji Institute, Cape York House and the Michael Long institute.¹⁰

- 4.16 The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) informed the Committee it uses partnerships effectively:

We have a really effective alumni, we have some great corporate partners and we have a really comprehensive school network.¹¹

- 4.17 The ARU discussed the important role that sporting codes play in terms of linking corporate partners in with smaller Indigenous organisations. Mr David Sykes commented:

Whether it is the AFL, rugby league or Tennis Australia, you have got sponsors knocking down your door to be associated with your brand. But you have both got a common objective, which is that you do have this corporate social responsibility, and if that is introducing people from Qantas to Tom and saying, 'Look, this is what Tom's organisation is about; it is fantastic. Will you back that?'¹²

- 4.18 Partnerships are critical for successfully building holistic Indigenous sports programs. The Adelaide Crows stated:

The Adelaide Football Club (AFC) in collaboration with ABLE Solutions (Managing Director former AFL player Andrew Mcleod) and Yourkids (Managed by APY Lands Program Manager Frank Leonard) have initiated a program for remote Indigenous youth that we believe, through sport, can create a positive social change in the areas of education, health and wellbeing, and with this hopes to change the landscape of Indigenous programs within Australia.¹³

- 4.19 Whilst partnerships at all tiers were considered vital, Mr Anthony Bowd from vicsport raised the issue of recognising that some large sporting bodies have much greater capacity in terms of budgets and branding power, enabling larger sponsorship deals whereas smaller sporting bodies don't have as much capacity. He commented:

The mainstream sports have big budgets and I hear about the numbers of their staff, and that is fantastic. But some of the smaller

10 AFL, *Submission 20*, p. 1.

11 D Sykes, Australian Rugby Union (ARU), *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 38.

12 D Sykes, ARU, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 42.

13 Adelaide Crows, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

sports – Darts Victoria, Table Tennis Victoria, Softball Victoria and taekwondo – are hand-to-mouth organisations...¹⁴

- 4.20 Another point that was drawn out of the discussion from Mr Bowd included the important role that peak Indigenous bodies play in terms of partnering with less financial sports to try to deliver programs. Mr Bowd provided the example of VicHealth funding a \$10.2 million program whereby 30 state sporting bodies could apply for funding to help disadvantaged community groups, of which Indigenous is one. He commented:

Of 30 sports that applied, only four were Indigenous programs. That is the flow-on effect of not having VAYSAR to work with and partner up with these smaller sports. This is something that should not be glossed over. Recognised peak bodies are needed so that Indigenous sport can partner and work with the less financial sports to try to deliver some of these second- and third-tier programs.¹⁵

- 4.21 In funding the Clontarf Foundation, DEEWR informed the Committee that it ensures that Clontarf maintains partnerships with other providers so that it has sustainable funding and is not just reliant upon Commonwealth Government funding. In a submission it stated:

The Sporting Chance Program school-based sports academy funding model requires the providers to source two thirds of the operating costs of an academy. The Foundation has strong partnerships with State and Territory Governments as well as the corporate community who also contribute funding to their academies.¹⁶

- 4.22 Partnerships are integral to the way NASCA operates. NASCA told the Committee ‘the government gives us one-third in cash and then we have to find the remaining two-thirds of the budget either in cash or in kind.’¹⁷ NASCA elaborated:

We have made that commitment around how we engage with the corporate sector and the philanthropy sector and, clearly, from a government perspective on how we have evolved on our funding to date. I think that from an opportunity perspective we are really looking forward to building on that, but we require that stability from government. In essence, the collaboration work that we are

14 A Bowd, vicsport, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 27.

15 A Bowd, vicsport, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 27.

16 DEEWR, *Submission 48.1*, p. 4.

17 G Nash, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 37.

evolving in that corporate sector has been a critical piece in the evolution of what we do at NASCA.¹⁸

- 4.23 Similarly, partnerships are integral to the way that the David Wirrpanda Foundation (DWF)¹⁹ operates. The Foundation is funded through a variety of Government, corporate and philanthropic sources. The DWF has over 22 MOUs and funding agreements with a variety of bodies. Some of the main sponsors of the Foundation include Rio Tinto, Shell Australia, Netball Australia, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Australian National Preventive Health Agency.²⁰
- 4.24 The Rumbalara Football Netball Club and VicHealth have demonstrated how partnerships are important ways to taking a holistic approach to health – understanding that health and wellbeing are directly linked to the context of broader social issues, such as healthy families, employment, and connection to land and culture and spirituality. With VicHealth, the club has created a health promotion model which uses sport as a way of empowering people to take control of their own health and have harnessed further community's support networks.²¹
- 4.25 Mr John Brady from the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health made the following comment highlighting the range of partnerships involved in the delivery of Indigenous sports programs:

This is going to be its third year and it is about seeing the changes and also the relationships that you form. As part of the Indigenous sports program, you are working with a lot of groups: Aboriginal medical services, non-government organisations, public schools, independent schools.²²

Sponsorship

- 4.26 Sponsorship was an issue that arose out of partnerships with the corporate sector. The Committee discussed with witnesses the access that sporting organisations have to sponsorship.
- 4.27 Professor Colin Tatz was adamant that corporate sponsorship in the area of Indigenous communities was an area that had great potential:

18 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 35.

19 DWF was established in 2005 by David Wirrpanda, a former Aboriginal AFL player.

20 A full list of sponsors can be found at:
<www.dwf.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76&Itemid=148>
accessed 7 May 2013

21 Rumbalara Football Netball Club and Kaiela Institute Limited, *Submission 23*, pp. 5-6.

22 J Brady, Institute of Urban Indigenous Health, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 40.

The private sector is an absolutely untapped source of income and resources. I am not going to talk about tobacco companies – forget it. And I am not going to talk about liquor companies; I think they should be left out of this picture altogether, for obvious reasons. But there are any number of industries – and I am thinking of chocolate industries or confectionery industries, or some food industries – that could be readily sold the idea of big-noting themselves by installing a gymnasium – I do not care if it is called the KFC gymnasium!²³

- 4.28 Mr Shane Mattiske, Chief Executive Officer of the ARLC discussed the way money is generated for the Indigenous programs each year through the annual All Stars rugby league match run at the start of each rugby league season.

All Stars match are actually quarantined and turned around and dedicated to Indigenous programs. So it is a really effective way for us to generate funds that can support Indigenous programs. That is a commitment that the game is very keen to make. We see the very positive outcome of that activity, that celebration that happens on one day but has a flow-on effect throughout a whole season or in fact a whole year.²⁴

- 4.29 The NRL acknowledged the success they have in attracting corporate sponsors to deliver Indigenous sports programs. Mr Richard Kilian from NRL commented:

The support from the corporates has been overwhelming. Obviously we all recognise that they have corporate social responsibility to give back to Indigenous communities and we feel that we provide a solution for them in terms of delivery of their outcomes through the vehicle of sport, particularly rugby league and particularly with the state of origin job experience program. When we approached the corporates to see if they wanted to be involved in it, it was primarily around providing work experience for Indigenous kids. Their response was: 'Yes, we would love to be involved. But what are the other expectations?' And we said, 'Basically it is just to provide a safe environment for these kids to do work experience and an environment that is culturally appropriate.' As far as the program, that was it. Since their

23 C Tatz, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 7.

24 S Mattiske, ARLC, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 13

involvement in it, they have started coming back to us and saying, 'We are quite keen to do more in the Indigenous space.'²⁵

4.30 The power of the AFL brand attracts a range of partners including corporate and broadcast partners, government agencies and community organisations such as Clontarf, The Long Walk, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, Worawa Aboriginal College, Garnduwa Sport and Recreation.²⁶

4.31 Ms Nadine Cohen from Netball Australia observed that sport has traditionally been excluded from the philanthropic sector. She commented:

The not-for-profit reform agenda that is being looked at both federally and in some jurisdictions, as well as the not-for-profit tax reform working party, really needs to have a look at how sport can access some of the philanthropic opportunities without having to set up separate foundations which then add compliance and regulatory burdens, governance arrangements et cetera. I am not talking about providing incentives for sport outcomes per se but opportunities to use sport to achieve health and wellbeing, and other social change outcomes.²⁷

4.32 Mr Tim Rowe from the Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) discussed the need for IMP to access tax deductible gift reciprocity status to raise money from the private sector:

I suppose at the moment it is quite minimal support that we receive from the private sector. I think we are limited in the fact that we do not have deductible gift reciprocity status, although there is the Australian Sports Foundation, which we are linked through, which is enticing for individuals to donate to because they also get a tax concession. This Australian Sports Foundation has been great, however, there are guidelines to how we are to acquit those funds which do not necessarily fall to where we need to spend the money.²⁸

4.33 Mr Jon McGregor from the Australian Drug Foundation commented on funding and sponsorship for remote communities.

The issue of funding and sponsorship is especially important in those remote communities where there are very few other options. Around the country what we have found is that when clubs can

25 R Kilian, NRL, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 13

26 AFL, *Submission 20*, p. 3.

27 N Cohen, Netball Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 24.

28 T Rowe, Indigenous Marathon Project, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 29 November 2012, p. 7.

change the culture and attract more members than other businesses and philanthropists then a range of other organisations are willing to make investment into the space.²⁹

- 4.34 Dr Bruce Hearn Mackinnon spoke about the limited opportunities to seek business support in remote regions such as Yuendumu:

A really important question was asked earlier on about sponsorship and funding. If we are talking about remote communities – as I said, that is my experience – obviously you are limited. There tends not to be any local businesses there. In the Yuendumu there are two shops. In some areas of the country, there might be mining companies with opportunities for sponsorship but by and large in a lot of remote communities it is going to be dependent upon government funding.³⁰

- 4.35 The Committee discussed the difficulty for some regional and remote communities to access sponsorship from larger corporations. During this discussion Professor Michael Dodson gave an example of where BHP was funding a leadership program for youth in Yuendumu despite not having a mining interest in the region. Mr Dodson explained that BHP was involved through Reconciliation Australia's Indigenous Governance Awards program.³¹

Community engagement and capacity building

- 4.36 The Committee examined what the key enablers were for successful Indigenous sporting programs. An issue that arose often throughout the inquiry was the need to achieve comprehensive community engagement. The following statement was echoed throughout the evidence received:

A long term successful sports program requires solid community engagement.³²

- 4.37 Dr Bruce Hearn Mackinnon recognised that sport was a positive enabler for Indigenous communities. He stated:

I see sports as being an opportunity to be leveraged in broader capacity building. Sporting teams need administrators, coaches, physios, bus drivers, cooks, timekeepers. Using sport as a model, I

29 J McGregor, Australian Drug Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 24.

30 B Hearn Mackinnon, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 23.

31 M Dodson, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 24.

32 A Bowd, vicsport, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 8.

can see it as having the opportunity to become the centre for growth in community development.³³

- 4.38 Mr Anthony Bowd from vicsport emphasised the importance of a community having someone to champion the program. He stated:

Community role models are very important. Sport has a role in going to communities and not just building the programs and moving on but also building community role models and people to deliver programs in the community. Those people then become champions of the program and also champions of the community more broadly. Sport has a role to play in building community role models, but sport also needs to be helped in itself to be able to understand how it should work with communities. If sport is going to be a deliverer and a trainer and try to build long-lasting programs, it needs to be assisted in that regard as well.³⁴

- 4.39 In its submission, vicsport highlighted a common problem with high turnover of non-community staff and low levels of community engagement.

Many sport and recreation programs operating in Indigenous communities do so in an environment of high turnover of development officers and low community involvement. Despite a general understanding that programs need to function as part of a 'whole-of-community' approach, there often appears to be little integration of the sport and recreation program with other parts of the community.³⁵

- 4.40 The Western Desert Sports Council echoed the view that sports programs can benefit communities in many ways:

Sport embodies community development for community members:

- They learn about the games and the rules of the games
- Through playing sport, indigenous kids learn about co-operation and teamwork which are skills they will take with them into the workplace.
- Capacity-building also takes place within the WDSC Board. Board members are elected representatives of the eight communities. The WDSC provides opportunity for these elected representatives to self-organise which leads to personal growth.

33 B Hearn Mackinnon, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 4.

34 A Bowd, vicsport, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, pp. 8-9.

35 vicsport, *Submission 34*, p. 6.

- It provides the opportunity to learn about and practice responsibility.³⁶

4.41 Mr Shane Phillips, CEO, Tribal Warrior Association commented that:

To sustain ourselves, we need to build capacity within our communities and within our services. That level of empowerment and engagement is paramount for what we are doing and what we aim to achieve.³⁷

4.42 Ms Julie Warren, AFL, discussed with the Committee the important role that AFL engagement officers have in terms of providing a key focus to make sure that the program is locally owned and run by community. She explained:

Across the country there are 400. In the Territory we have roughly 12 sites, and that is continuing to grow through partnership with the government. We are working to make sure that there is a person there and also trainees coming up, so we are growing the capacity to make sure that that is run by local community people. At this point in time most of those appointments are non-Indigenous people, but we are really focusing strongly on making sure that there are trainees coming through, so that ends up being owned and run by the community.³⁸

4.43 Mr Ross Tanimu shared with the Committee his own success story of engaging with his local community effectively in South Australia in terms of establishing a touch football competition and coaching a women's rugby team. The evidence demonstrated that Mr Tanimu acted not only as a facilitator but as a mentor and champion of the game. In terms of growth and success Mr Tanimu comment:

We started off with seven high schools and 70 students. From 2011 to 2012 it has increased to 21 high schools with 270 kids playing touch football as our vehicle of engagement.

I was approached to coach a women's rugby team, with initially three Aboriginal women. Now I have close to 17 on the books. Within three years we won the grand final. What it says to me is that sport is setting life skills in place, and by setting goals and objectives you will overcome adversity.³⁹

36 Western Desert Sports Council, *Submission 50*, p. 6.

37 S Phillips, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 21.

38 J Warren, AFL, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 25.

39 R Tanimu, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 4.

Committee comment

- 4.44 The Committee views the successful building of partnerships to be critical to the service delivery for all Indigenous services, sporting programs included. The evidence provided to the Committee highlighted some very successful partnerships that were achieving long-term results such as the Clontarf Foundation.
- 4.45 The Committee believes that establishing a relationship with the Indigenous community is essential for all sporting organisations delivering Indigenous sports programs. The evidence suggested that solid engagement with the community results in programs that get community members on board to participate and assist with the running of the program. As a result individuals within the community become involved in the delivery of the programs which nurtures a sense of commitment and success for the program.
- 4.46 The Committee strongly supports the need for communities to establish local champions for every Indigenous sports program. The value in finding a local advocate of the program is immeasurable and can assist with creating a willingness of locals to participate which has a flow on effect of community capacity building in terms of getting other people on board with the program. Having a local champion for a program in the community can achieve longevity for a program as well as increased participating rates and additional health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 4.47 Securing sponsorships in addition to Commonwealth Government funding can greatly assist in the delivery and longevity of Indigenous sporting programs. It was recognised by all partnerships how important the combination of non-government, government and the corporate sponsorship was for the successful delivery of Indigenous sporting services.
- 4.48 Increasing philanthropic support within the non-government sector is an area that should be encouraged. The Committee believes the Commonwealth Government should investigate strategies to encourage philanthropy through mechanisms such as tax deductions for sponsorship by corporate bodies of Indigenous sporting programs linked to Closing the Gap outcomes.
- 4.49 The Committee notes sport sponsorship is frequently linked to alcohol and alcohol consumption. This is of particular concern to the Committee as it reinforces a drinking culture which has had devastating consequences for many Indigenous communities. It is essential that sponsorship is sought from industries and companies that promote healthy living.

Recommendation 10 – Sponsorship towards Closing the Gap

- 4.50 **The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government investigate strategies to encourage philanthropy through mechanisms such as tax deductions for sponsorship by corporate bodies of Indigenous sporting programs linked to Closing the Gap outcomes.**

Mentoring and role models

- 4.51 A majority of the evidence indicated that most of the successful Indigenous sports programs relied on engagement from Indigenous mentors or role models.
- 4.52 The David Wirrpanda Foundation (DWF) exists to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by working together to empower and build capacity amongst Aboriginal individuals, their families and their communities.
- 4.53 The DWF emphasised the need to incorporate mentoring into successfully Indigenous sporting programs:
- Sport and mentoring programs must use Aboriginal people as role models and mentoring staff. This ensures that the programs are driven by Aboriginal people, and are culturally appropriate. All of our Aboriginal role models are either current or former elite athletes or high achieving positive role models in the community. Working with sports organisations as partners ensures a sustainable collaboration that will create a lasting legacy. Mentoring needs to be the key component of all programs, to really have an impact on a participant's life, and role model mentors must be trained appropriately.⁴⁰
- 4.54 The sporting codes informed the Committee that Indigenous mentors and role models they engaged in programs acted as the 'hook' to attract Indigenous people to participate in programs. At the same time they described the success that the mentors and role models had in engaging the participants in various programs and discussed the positive outcomes that resulted from the engagement and mentoring.
- 4.55 Mr Joshua Creamer, Chairman of Titans 4 Tomorrow shared with the Committee the following insight into the work of a mentor/role model:

40 David Wirrpanda Foundation, *Submission 4*, p. 2.

We see ourselves as a service provider which uses sport as a tool to engage people like Preston Campbell, Dean Widders and others who are part of our program who are essentially the hook for those young Indigenous people who have not necessarily grabbed onto these opportunities before. That hook is then supported by infrastructure. There are four of us here on the panel today who are people skilled in education and who can provide that assistance in mentoring and learning which is assisting our participants to go on and set higher aspirations and achieve greater outcomes in their lives.⁴¹

- 4.56 In its submission, Titans 4 Tomorrow provided examples of the personal success stories that the mentoring program has achieved. The submission discusses the power that the mentors have in terms of the ability to raise the sense of identity and confidence in participants to allow them to dream beyond the immediate and achieve success in ways they never thought possible. Two of the case studies are outlined below:

Twelve months ago Misty left home and was living on the streets and heading to dependency on drugs and alcohol. Through the intervention of her Indigenous Education Officer she decided to give the T4T program a chance and was inspired by Clinton Toopi's workshop where he shared some of his personal history. She describes T4T as her 'rock' and her family. She is now completing Year 12 and is confident of progressing to University to study Psychology and Criminology. She wants to be a Youth Worker who goes to the kids rather than have them come to her. Her long-term ambition is to establish a charity to help homeless kids as she understand their experiences.⁴²

Kieran is an 18 year old. In Year 12 by his own admission he was 'in a dark place' and contemplating self-harm. In his own words he thought he would become another statistic of an Indigenous kid not completing Year 12.: "Without that person to talk to I would have been out on the street at nights getting into trouble or being put into lock-up or even worse." A workshop with Preston Campbell was a turning point and he has not only completed Year 12 but is now a marketing trainee working at the Titans and is contemplating going to University.⁴³

41 J Creamer, Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 3.

42 Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Submission 22*, p. 8.

43 Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Submission 22*, p. 9.

- 4.57 At a public hearing Mr Scott Czislawski discussed the key message that the Brisbane Broncos mentoring program delivers in terms of achieving success despite having to overcome adversity.

Indigenous players in particular have become very positive role models for all students in the mentoring program – boys and girls. A key message that they take home with them from sessions spent with the players is one of pride in community, family and self, and desire to achieve greatness even through adversity. ...

We have been in the program for three years. Forty per cent of our staff are Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, which we feel is a very important part of grasping with the kids, getting that cultural background and being able to communicate with the families and the students involved in the program.⁴⁴

- 4.58 Ms Julie Warren acknowledged the success of Indigenous role models being employed by AFL and having a positive impact on increasing participation rates:

Three years ago, when we developed our Indigenous framework, we also developed our employment strategy, and we have gone from less than 10 people employed in the industry to over 70. That has had a massive impact on participation. When we first measured our participation rate, it was just under four per cent; now, it is close to seven per cent because of the Aboriginal staff involved in delivering our programs at a grassroots level.⁴⁵

- 4.59 Ms Belinda Duarte discussed the value of mentoring and provided an example from her time spent with the AFL SportReady program. AFL SportsReady works in partnership with over 700 premier sporting clubs and other organisations around the country, to ensure young trainees can access quality education and job opportunities. Ms Duarte commented:

During my time with AFL Sportsready, a really critical element, which is a focus of the inquiry around mentoring, in the evolution of the Indigenous employment program was for us to take time to invest in mentoring. What we found was that intensive mentoring by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the first 16-week period of a young person on a traineeship was a key element in the success, and the rate of completion was significantly increased.⁴⁶

44 S Czislawski, Brisbane Broncos Rugby League Club, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 4.

45 J Warren, AFL, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 10.

46 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 5.

- 4.60 Ms Warren praised the success of AFL SportsReady program.

In terms of mentoring, we have tried a number of ways of developing formal mentoring programs. They are very resource intensive, so our mentoring tends to be much more informal and focused on role modelling. Again, I acknowledge the work of SportsReady, because their mentoring program has been fantastic. They have had 1 000 trainees go through, which is probably one of the most successful Indigenous traineeship programs in the country. I am not aware of any program that has been more successful than that.⁴⁷

- 4.61 Mr David Sykes from ARU discussed the successful long-term partnership ARU has with the Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team (LMRDT). The LMRDT assists young Indigenous people in developing their rugby skills and then using those skills as a means of personal development to assist in securing a future for themselves as adults. Mr Sykes commented:

Originally the program was started to increase Indigenous participation in rugby, but it has become far more than that. It is a mentoring organisation giving a transformative experience to young men all around the place.⁴⁸

- 4.62 Ms Kate Malpass, a mentor for the DWF, currently works in Healesville at Worawa Aboriginal College. She informed the Committee of a program she runs there called the Deadly Sista Girlz, which is the only one the DWF has based in Victoria.

- 4.63 Ms Malpass explained to the Committee that as a mentor she is able to connect with the girls and explain many life skills in addition to playing sport as a result of her life experience.

I teach sexual health to the girls, which some people like and some people do not. I teach them about money. I teach them about drugs and alcohol. However, in saying that, we then go on to play sport, because that is where their passion is. That is where they can relate to you. They look up to you, so they listen to what you say on everything else.⁴⁹

- 4.64 She also spoke about mentors demonstrating pathways:

I think it is important to have role models in that position to go out there and show these girls that there are barriers – but none of the

47 J Warren, AFL, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 10.

48 D Sykes, ARU, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 38.

49 K Malpass, David Wirrpanda Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 8.

mentors in our program have ever sat around feeling sorry for themselves. We have got out there, we have made our own pathways and we talk. I do not just talk about my life experience; I talk about a lot of the other girls' life experiences as well, and that is where you relate to the girls. I think it is about showing them that there is that adversity but you can overcome it. I think that the women are in less of a position to do that – to have the self-belief.⁵⁰

- 4.65 A submission from the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club emphasised its commitment to mentoring:

By providing an environment where people can connect and learn from their community, the club taps into the strong culture of mentoring that is an intrinsic part of the community. It is something they have tried hard to build on.⁵¹

- 4.66 Ms Trish Crews, from the National Rugby League Commission highlighted some positive feedback about the role models they received from one of the programs:

We get countless emails, stories and phone calls from teachers and parents saying: 'Thank you. We had a player come into our school last week to talk about healthy living' – this is through our program Eat Well, Play Well, Stay Well – 'and all of a sudden my little boy has come home and asked for vegetables for the first time in his life. The next time you come back, can you get that player to tell him that he needs to clean his room?' They listen to their role models. If we can get our role models – which we are – delivering the appropriate messages at the appropriate levels for the children they are speaking to, it can have such a powerful effect.⁵²

- 4.67 As part of the Learn Earn Legend program, the NRL explained how they would like to develop the mentoring program. Ms Crews provided the following example of what they wanted to achieve in the future:

Earlier this month the NRL had the pleasure of hosting His Royal Highness Prince Charles at an All Stars demonstration and mentoring session for Indigenous students at Bondi Beach. His Royal Highness was introduced to rugby league Indigenous stars Greg Inglis, Greg Bird, Preston Campbell and George Rose and took part in our Dream, Believe, Achieve program. The mentoring session encourages students to build on their self-esteem,

50 K Malpass, David Wirrpanda Foundation, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 18.

51 Rumbalara Football Netball Club and The Kaiela Institute, *Submission 23*, p. 9.

52 T Crews, NRL, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 14.

resilience and positive ways to identify and achieve their future goals.

If one of the kids drops out in that first six months the opportunities of them re-engaging are very slim. We work with them for six months and then that is it. Our dream would be to almost create an alumni of kids that come through these programs. Prince Charles actually said it to the kids the other day: 'You guys need to come back in a year's time and you need to be the ones helping the NRL mentor the next wave of kids coming through.'⁵³

What makes a good mentor

- 4.68 During the Brisbane public hearing, the Committee was interested to find out what made a good mentor. Mr Preston Campbell, representing Titans 4 Tomorrow commented:

I guess a mentor is someone who is a good role model, who leads by example, basically does the right thing, leads in the right direction and offers a hand wherever they can.

That is what I do. That is what we do at the Titans. I know that Rod does it up there, and the FOGS, the Titans and the Cowboys. I guess it is a personal relationship—you have to get in depth with what these young ones are all about. Education is important and their health is important, but with these personal relationships a lot of personal issues come up. You need to be able to listen to these young ones about their personal problems.⁵⁴

- 4.69 Mr Rod Jensen, Manager of the Take Pride program, Learn Earn Legend commented:

As far as I understand how mentoring works, why it works for me and why I am so good at it, is that I have come from where those kids have come from. They want to see how I got out. They want to know what I have learnt.⁵⁵

- 4.70 Mr Preston Campbell summed up what it means to be a mentor. He said:

It is someone who wants to listen and who really cares about these young ones. It is not about going in and looking for the next Jonathan Thurston. It is about looking for the next leader in our community.⁵⁶

53 T Crews, NRL, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 17.

54 P Campbell, Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 8.

55 R Jensen, Northern Pride Rugby League Club, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 9.

56 P Campbell, Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 9.

- 4.71 vicsport highlighted the importance of developing role models and mentors at the community level:

It is important to recognise that role models play an important part in the successful delivery and ongoing sustainability of sporting programs. Role models at the community level are very important for the success of programs. Often strong leaders and role models within the community are the driving force behind successful programs. Sports have a role to play in developing and nurturing community leaders, this includes skills transfer to local residents so that they can carry on once the sport and development officer leaves the community.⁵⁷

- 4.72 Community role models was addressed in the submission from the Indigenous Marathon Project:

The Deadly Fun Run Series (DFRS) is a component of the Indigenous Marathon Program and is a series of fun runs operating within 15 communities. An objective of the DFRS is to create community champions and pave the way for future role models and stories of achievement and success from within communities.⁵⁸

- 4.73 In its submission the DWF shared some mentor stories with the Committee. Below is an example of what one of the Indigenous mentors wrote about the benefits of mentoring:

The contribution sport has had on the Indigenous community can sometimes be underestimated in terms of breaking down barriers of equality, the impressions that either side of each(the Indigenous cultures and the wider community cultures has of each other), the obvious health benefits through being active physically, and mentally through the social interaction of being a player, coach, administrator or just a supporter. So there has been some Indigenous legends created through the interaction of themselves and sport but more importantly its opened doors to education, about each other's cultures, and created pathways for our young to follow.⁵⁹

- 4.74 The Stride Foundation emphasised the point that sporting mentors can deliver skills and messages that can be transferred and used in everyday life. He commented:

57 vicsport, *Submission 34*, p. 6.

58 Indigenous Marathon Project, *Submission 49*, p. 5.

59 David Wirrpanda Foundation, *Submission 4*, p. 4.

Organisations that utilise sport as a vehicle for engagement need to be very clear in their messages to young people about achievement and success particularly with Indigenous youth. While sporting success is clearly an effective method of engagement for Indigenous young people, role models/sports players need to relay that sports is not the only avenue of success in the world and the underlying skills acquired in their career can be applied in any context.⁶⁰

- 4.75 The Adelaide Crows submission discussed a mentoring program recently developed by Andrew and Rachel McLeod. The McLeod's are passionate about a structured mentoring program that will assist in developing future role models in their local community. The submission commented that 'A Certificate 1V in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mentoring is in the final stages of being approved by the Australian Governing Body. The Certificate will be offered to all mentors, enabling them to become valuable assets to participants as well as people in their wider communities.'⁶¹

Women as role models

- 4.76 Increasing participation figures is important for Indigenous Australians and in particular for Indigenous women given the participation rate is so low. Ms Duarte provided the example of how her mother was a positive role model in her life:

From a female's perspective, to witness my mother being very physically active was critical and it was learnt behaviour that was carried on by the women in my family.⁶²

- 4.77 NASCA informed the Committee of its ARMtour program that uses athletes as role models. NASCA commented that it always provides an equal male to female role model/mentor ratio on the ARMtour program.⁶³

- 4.78 At a public hearing in Melbourne, Netball Australia Chief Executive Officer, Ms Kathryn Palmer commented:

We admire the achievements of the AFL and NRL and what they do in providing opportunities for Indigenous men and boys. They have wonderful role models at the top and incredible grassroots programs. We could just dream of having the same impact, and I think it is incredibly disappointing that there are so few female

60 Stride Foundation, *Submission 15*, p. 3.

61 Adelaide Crows, *Submission 6*, p. 3.

62 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 18.

63 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 18.

role models at the top and so few grassroots participation programs for Indigenous women and girls.⁶⁴

- 4.79 Hockey Queensland submitted the following point that a dedicated focus on Indigenous women in hockey resulted in many benefits including developing future role models:

The development of this Indigenous hockey team resulted in significant improvements to the player's self-esteem, confidence and self-worth. In addition to the benefits that the hockey program and the development of team provided, the players' self-worth was reinforced as they realised they had become effective and inspiring role models to Indigenous youth throughout the country.⁶⁵

- 4.80 vicsport suggested the media had a role to play in promoting female athletes in sport to encourage greater participation given the success to date of role models for men in sports such as NRL and AFL.

There is a distinction between community based role models and elite athletes role models. Often there is a great sense of pride with elite athlete role models who are promoted and celebrated within communities however whilst there are many male Indigenous athletes succeeding in National and International sport, female elite role models are not as prevalent. There is a greater role that media can play in supporting and promoting female athletes, especially female elite athletes in order to encourage the next generation of female participants.⁶⁶

Short term role models

- 4.81 The Committee received evidence that was critical of some Indigenous sporting programs using well known sports people to fly in and out of communities with the aim of motivating the community to get active and participate in the chosen sport that the role model represented.
- 4.82 Professor Colin Tatz raised his concerns about the fly in and out model stating that it was wasteful of resources and did not have a long lasting effect:

Role models I think are exaggerated. There have been a number of attempts to send people of repute and renown to remote communities and they have been a flop. I can remember Tony Mundine, Anthony's father, going up there. I can remember

64 K Palmer, Netball Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 9.

65 Hockey Queensland, *Submission 33*, p. 19.

66 vicsport, *Submission 34*, p. 6.

various footballers, including the late Artie Beetson, going up. Evonne did her share of travelling around, showing herself up there. They come one day on an aeroplane, they are there for half a day and they are gone. They leave behind some boxing gloves and that is the end of the matter. So role models in this sense are a kind of waste of money and waste of time. It all makes people feel good for a day.⁶⁷

4.83 He suggested that in reality the 'longer term role models basically are going to come from television, radio and magazines rather than from a visit of a particular star.'⁶⁸

4.84 Professor Bill Fogarty was a strong advocate of the grassroots development of sporting organisations as opposed to the fly in and out model:

What I was getting at is that there are two parts to getting Indigenous engagement. I was not saying that role models do not have a part at all; what I was getting at is that they are one part. Julie mentioned that you need both those things – the grassroots development and the role model elite athletes – happening at the same time.⁶⁹

4.85 One of the submissions argued that in terms of improving the general health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities, comprehensive participation programs were needed:

... not "talent spotting" by football codes or the government-funded Indigenous Marathon Project, wherein only a handful of athletes is supported (Adair, 2012). The idea that high profile Aboriginal and Islander athletes serve as exemplars for others to follow is alluring, but there is no evidence that this translates into sustained sport/physical activity patterns for their communities generally. Localised programs, with locals empowered to deliver them, is what is needed to produce real impacts; not "helicopter" initiatives by non-Indigenous people.⁷⁰

Committee comment

4.86 The Committee was impressed with evidence of the success that the integration of mentoring and role model programs has had on the delivery of sporting programs. The Committee was very pleased to hear that

67 C Tatz, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 5.

68 C Tatz, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 5.

69 B Fogarty, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 24.

70 Dr Adair and Dr Stronach, *Submission 29*, p. 3.

mentors and role models not only support the engagement and participation in programs but often have further benefits such as participants becoming community leaders, increasing school attrition rates, gaining employment and improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

- 4.87 The Committee applauds the work of many of the sporting bodies who had well developed mentoring programs and could demonstrate highly successful outcomes such as the AFL SportsReady program, Titans 4 Tomorrow mentoring program and the Brisbane Broncos mentoring program.
- 4.88 The Committee commends the initiative of Andrew and Rachel McLeod from South Australia who have developed a Certificate 1V in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mentoring in South Australia which is soon to be approved. The Committee believes there is a great deal of value in running a structured Indigenous mentoring course that complements the current mentors and role models that deliver a wealth of life experience and hope for the younger generation of Indigenous Australians.
- 4.89 The Committee also applauds smaller sporting organisations such as the David Wirrpanda Foundation that supports the Deadly Sista Girlz program, directing efforts specifically at mentoring young Aboriginal girls and women. The Committee believes more funding should be focussed on programs that develop Indigenous female leaders in communities as the impact of such a program has many benefits.
- 4.90 The Committee agrees that female role models in sport should be elevated and given greater recognition within modern Australian society. The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government encourages sporting codes to focus their efforts in this area and work in partnerships with the corporate and government sector to create more visible female sports role models, including more Indigenous female sports role models.

Recommendation 11 – Promoting role models

- 4.91 **The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government support initiatives that increase the range of Indigenous sports role models at all levels, including and beyond the elite level.**

Culture, sport and reconciliation

4.92 The influence of culture on sport and sport on culture should not be under-estimated. The Committee received evidence recognising the positive influences that culture and sport have on each other, in particular for Indigenous run organisations.

4.93 One of the submissions received during the inquiry summed up the link between culture and sport:

Sports from my perspective is a 'vehicle' that has the potential to enhance cultural wellbeing, inclusiveness, unity and more importantly develop self esteem/determination and cultural empowerment.⁷¹

4.94 The Titans 4 Tomorrow submission described the additional benefits that sports programs can deliver to Indigenous communities:

It has been the experience of Titans 4 Tomorrow that this proper use of sport can not only deliver statistical outcomes but also allow participants to aspire to become generational leaders for their community and their culture.

What it cannot measure is the sense of cultural identity and connectedness engendered through the programs.

As well as connecting with individuals, sporting organisations also have the ability to engage a broader cross section of community than traditional service providers. Sport is often a major point of connection for families. Families will attend sporting events together, watch sport together on television, and discuss results.⁷²

4.95 Some of the evidence went as far as stating that sports carnivals and events held the cultural significance of a modern day corroboree:

Research on the Knockout highlights the significance of the Knockout carnival as a social event, as a 'modern day corroboree', the economic contribution of the Knockout including public and private sponsorship and stall holdings, and the development of the women's and junior competition.⁷³

4.96 Mr Jason Tamiru, Director of the Melbourne Aboriginal Youth, Sport and Recreation Centre made a similar comment about the cultural significance of a sporting carnival:

71 R Tanimu, *Submission 1 Attachment B*, p. 1.

72 Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Submission 22*, p. 1.

73 H Norman, *Submission 44*, p. 1.

It is all about history. I have said it before and I will say it again: we do follow our people's tracks. It is not a cliché; it is the reality. Belinda was talking about the footy carnival—it is a modern-day ceremony. We all come together, everyone looks forward to it. There are so many communities in Victoria, and here is an opportunity for all of us to come together, catch up, see what is going on...⁷⁴

- 4.97 Ms Belinda Duarte, Director of the Korin Gamadji Institute spoke about the importance of holding Indigenous sporting carnivals, highlighting the connection that is formed between sport, culture and community:

Going back to some of the grassroots activity and dialogue around why do we need our own teams, our own carnivals, our own activities, you cannot underestimate the ceremonial significance of getting our mob together. Traditional ceremony has a place, but culture continues to evolve over the years. All the evidence shows that events and activities that celebrate contribution or engage communities where they feel a sense of belonging, pride and a coming together on something that is positive and not another funeral, or are connected to come with family again for sorry business, or just the interpersonal challenges that families live with day to day, those gatherings are critical—they are critical because they give us a sense of belonging; they give us an opportunity to dip our toe in the water and say, 'Actually, I am not too bad at this.'⁷⁵

- 4.98 Mr Sebastian Kipman from Cricket Australia commented on the importance that Indigenous cricket carnivals such as the Imparja Cup has with the connection to culture:

The Imparja Cup is exactly what you have just talked about: the coming together of cricket teams from across the country. There are stories of people driving for 20 hours straight to get to the Imparja Cup. We talk about bragging rights. It is a competition that was started by a couple of guys bragging about the best cricket team. One of the two guys did not even have a cricket team, so that history is still strong there. When teams travel interstate, their team management require them to investigate the culture and interrogate who they are playing, so it is beyond just cricket.⁷⁶

74 J Tamiru, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 26.

75 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 26.

76 S Kipman, Cricket Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 27.

- 4.99 In its submission the Rumbalara Football Netball Club commented that its motto of 'proud, strong family' highlights the basis of its cultural connectedness, the club has every opportunity to build on that family focus, and that is a vital asset in fortifying the culture.⁷⁷
- 4.100 A community leader from Coober Pedy made the following observation to the Stride Foundation emphasising the importance of culture and community when sports programs are involved:
- I'm not interested in numbers in only sports program. Sport is good for our young people but it is not the amount of kids it attracts it is what it means later that matters. I'm interested in culture and how programs have anything to do with our culture. Everything comes back to culture even sport's so it must be relevant and lasting.⁷⁸

Reconciliation

- 4.101 Celebrating and recognising Indigenous participation in sport has helped to reduce racism in sport and has advanced reconciliation.
- During the past two decades the AFL has successfully positioned itself as the national sporting brand mostly closely associated with the process of 'Aboriginal' reconciliation and the non-tolerance of racism in sport. The AFL was the first professional sporting body in Australia to address on-field racism by adopting anti-racial vilification laws in 1995. At the same time, the AFL also became a strong public voice for reconciliation through events such as the annual 'Dreamtime' at the G match, recognition of an Indigenous Team of the Century and a tacit acknowledgement of the Indigenous football game marngrook as the precursor to the contemporary game.⁷⁹
- 4.102 Reconciliation Australia commented in its submission:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and achievement in sports provide a platform for reconciliation, and can contribute to improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sports people provide strong role models for all young people, and fight

77 Rumbalara Football Netball Club and The Kaiela Institute, *Submission 23*, p. 11.

78 Stride Foundation, *Submission 15*, p. 2.

79 C Hallinan and B Judd, 'Indigenous studies and race relations in Australian sports', *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, vol. 15, no. 7, 2012, p. 916.

against some of the negative stereotypes that exist about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.⁸⁰

- 4.103 The David Wirrpanda Foundation submission included this quote from one of its mentors Dale Kickett who commented:

The contribution sport has had on the Indigenous community can sometimes be underestimated in terms of breaking down barriers of equality, the impressions that either side of each(the Indigenous cultures and the wider community cultures has of each other),⁸¹

- 4.104 Ms Belinda Duarte commented on the benefits of holding Indigenous carnivals and celebrating in a way that is akin to Indigenous ceremonies. Inviting non-Indigenous people to join in such celebrations would be another step towards reconciliation through the medium of sport.

[Aboriginal sports carnivals] ... have a critical role to play in assisting us to evolve and to celebrate our identity and have non-Aboriginal people join us in feeling what that is and understanding what that is. It strengthens our country to be a part of those ceremonies. When a common religion in this country is sport, why can we not house that and allow others to be exposed to it and understand the cultural significance of it right here today?⁸²

Reconciliation Action Plans

- 4.105 Many sporting bodies are recognising the benefits of establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as part of their core business. A RAP is a business plan that turns good intentions into actions. A RAP publicly formalises an organisation's contribution to reconciliation by identifying clear actions with realistic targets and is developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and leaders.
- 4.106 The Committee discussed what this meant for sporting bodies and how it was engaging more Indigenous Australians to either participate in sport or engage in non-sporting outcomes.
- 4.107 In its submission to the inquiry Reconciliation Australia, the national organisation building and promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community,

80 Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 14*, p. 2.

81 David Wirrpanda Foundation, *Submission 4*, p. 4.

82 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 26.

highlighted the role that RAPs play in the delivery of Indigenous sporting programs. Reconciliation Australia stated:

Sport is an important part of Australian life. It can break down racial and socio-economic barriers and offers a unique opportunity for all Australians to participate as equals. Sport is based on the principles of teamwork, fairness and equality which are also fundamental principles of reconciliation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and achievement in sports provide a platform for reconciliation, and can contribute to improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sports people provide strong role models for all young people, and fight against some of the negative stereotypes that exist about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.⁸³

4.108 The following sporting organisations currently have endorsed RAPs registered with Reconciliation Australia:

- National Rugby League (NRL) and Australian Rugby League (ARL)
- Brisbane Broncos
- Melbourne Storm
- Ipswich Jets
- Northern Pride Rugby League Club
- Essendon Football Club
- Richmond Football Club
- Subiaco Football Club
- Cricketing Old Greats (COGS) Australia

The follow sporting organisations were in the process of developing a RAP:

- Australian Rugby Union
- Queensland Rugby Union Ltd (Including the Qld Reds)
- Gold Coast Titans
- Australian Sports Commission
- NT Cricket⁸⁴

4.109 Reconciliation Australia discussed in its submission the valuable contribution the corporate sector plays in promoting RAPs.

The corporate sector plays a leading role in promoting, encouraging and facilitating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in sports, and delivering sporting programs. A

83 Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 14*, p. 2.

84 Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 14*, p. 4.

number of Reconciliation Australia's corporate RAP partners have partnered with, or have committed to partner with, sporting codes and non-government organisations to deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sporting programs.⁸⁵

- 4.110 Professor Michael Dodson discussed the purpose of RAPs with the Committee and explained that he was co-chair of Reconciliation Australia at a time when RAPs were first being developed. He made the point that everyone from the top of the organisation has to be willing to change and consider working with Indigenous Australians differently. He commented:

This is the way we do things around here. We actually spend some of our budget on encouraging participation of Aboriginal people. We spend some of our budget in raising awareness and educating people about Aboriginal history and Aborigines' place in society. We spend money on paying people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to be lecturers, professors and researchers; to be undergraduates, postgraduates and general staff workers. We actually spend our money on that; we are not waiting for the government to come.⁸⁶

- 4.111 Most RAPs encourage organisations to develop partnerships with local Indigenous Advisory Councils to discuss ways to engage with the local community. Ms Belinda Duarte discussed the benefits of Indigenous Advisory Councils:

Given that we are talking about governance roles, capacity and getting Indigenous people into decision-making roles, ... – and a couple of people made reference to it – is an Indigenous advisory group or an Indigenous advisory council. I am interested in how we get more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across decision-making roles but particularly how those advisory groups influence governance and the implementation of programs on the ground. Some people are doing great jobs; other people need some work.⁸⁷

- 4.112 Mr Shane Mattiske, Chief Executive Officer of the ARLC, discussed with the Committee the benefit of delivering a RAP. He commented that in 2008 the NRL was:

the first national sporting organisation to commit to a reconciliation action plan, and I believe we remain the only major

85 Reconciliation Australia, *Submission 14*, p. 4.

86 M Dodson, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 14.

87 B Duarte, NASCA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 21.

sporting organisation to do so. We are now in the third year of our second iteration of that plan, and we are continuing to drive that message of reconciliation across our game.⁸⁸

4.113 Mr Mattiske explained that ‘the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council was formed in 2008 to fulfil the role of the RAP Working Group to provide independent direction and advice on Indigenous matters.’⁸⁹

4.114 The NRL RAP has led to:

specific strategies around our programs – our engagement with Indigenous development officers, for example, and specific strategies to fund and support programs to support social change in Indigenous communities. It also includes a range of measures that are aimed at increasing Indigenous participation in our sport.⁹⁰

4.115 Ms Nadine Cohen from Netball Australia stated that whilst they did not have a RAP at this stage they would like to develop one:

A key priority for us would be for our community engagement manager to develop a national reconciliation action plan for us. ... We need to get our strategic positioning right and provide tools to the community to understand and deliver sport in a non-Anglo-Saxon manner. It is a long way of saying that we are going to develop one but we need to understand what we want to achieve first and how we are going to achieve it.⁹¹

4.116 Ms Julie Lawson from the ARU told the Committee the ARU is in the process of developing a RAP:

Part of my role this year has been flying out to the different state unions to run some programs at schools, and then I have been meeting with people at those state unions. We have been talking about their Indigenous programs overall and what they are up to, and then I have been encouraging all the state unions to develop a RAP. Reconciliation Australia has guidelines of what a first-year RAP should look like, so some of the things in that document have to be there – something like culture awareness training for staff or not necessarily planning an event around NAIDOC Week but encouraging staff to maybe get involved in local events that are already happening.⁹²

88 S Mattiske, ARLC, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 10.

89 NRLC, *Submission 16*, p. 4.

90 S Mattiske, ARLC, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 12.

91 N Cohen, Netball Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 13.

92 J Lawson, ARU, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 40.

- 4.117 The ARU currently has established an Indigenous reference group. Ms Lawson commented:

Yes, we already do have a reference group, which is made up of individuals from ARU and also members of the Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team. There is Gary Ella, Glen Ella, Tom, Lloyd Walker and a few of us. We are, I guess, part of the core members of that group, and also as part of the meetings we have looked at identifying other key people in the community to come in and talk to us to make our events better.⁹³

- 4.118 Mr Matthew Francis from Titans 4 Tomorrow told the Committee they are currently developing a RAP:

At the moment we are developing our Reconciliation Action Plan, but we have an Indigenous advisory council for our programs. Josh, as well as being the chair of T4T which is our not-for-profit organisation, has a group that meets on at least a quarterly basis and involves parents, the GUMURRII Unit at Griffith University, Education Queensland and some of the local elders and representatives. As we are moving out to the Surat Basin we are developing that as well. We bring parents onto the residentials with the kids, so not only are the kids actively involved in the program themselves but we also involve the parents in that process, which is really important in an area which does not have much Indigenous infrastructure.⁹⁴

- 4.119 Ms Julie Warren from AFL explained to the Committee why AFL did not have a RAP in place:

... given the work that it takes to prepare a RAP, we instead produced our own Indigenous framework, which was our version of a RAP. RAPs make organisations accountable for delivering on their agreed actions. As the AFL is constantly in the media spotlight, we are accountable always. We used a lot of the principles of the RAPs in our Indigenous framework but did something slightly different.⁹⁵

- 4.120 However, Ms Warren did explain that two AFL clubs, Essendon and Richmond had developed RAPs of their own.⁹⁶

93 J Lawson, ARU, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 21 November 2012, p. 42.

94 M Francis, Titans 4 Tomorrow, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 6 December 2012, p. 14.

95 J Warren, AFL, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 12.

96 J Warren, AFL, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 22 November 2012, p. 13.

Committee comment

- 4.121 The Committee recognises the many benefits that sport delivers to Indigenous communities. Sport has been described as being the 'hook' for engaging Indigenous Australians in education programs. Similarly, sport has been described as the 'glue' that assists in building relationships and community cohesion and reinforces the importance of Indigenous culture.
- 4.122 Many Aboriginal run/owned organisations commented on the important link that exists between sport and culture. The Committee understands the importance of maintaining strong culture for Indigenous communities and recognises the reciprocal benefits that sport and culture have on one another. The Committee congratulates the various Aboriginal Institutes and organisations that host Indigenous sporting carnival and events that help to celebrate and nurture Indigenous cultures throughout Australia.
- 4.123 The Committee congratulates the AFL for being the first professional sporting body in Australia to address on-field racism by adopting AFL Player Rules in 1995. As discussed in chapter 3, given the high level of support and status that many Australians attribute to sport, the Committee believes that all sporting organisations, local, regional and national, should sign up to the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'RACISM. IT STOPS WITH ME' Campaign.
- 4.124 The Committee strongly supports the positive messages of cultural celebration and pride at big sporting events, that can assist in developing a positive pathway to Close the Gap outcomes and promote reconciliation. National events such as the AFL's 'Dreamtime at the G' and the NRL's 'All Stars' matches should continue to be televised live, on free to air television across Australia as a continuing step towards reconciliation.
- 4.125 As Reconciliation Australia has discovered through its RAP program, corporate Australia is a willing contributor to Indigenous programs and in doing so is able to establish strong connections throughout Australia at various levels.
- 4.126 The Committee congratulates the NRL for being the first national sporting body to develop a RAP. The Committee believes that all sporting bodies and organisations should develop a RAP which would greatly assist in increasing the participation rates of all Indigenous Australians into a variety of sports and recreation programs. The Committee considers sport to be a great leveller and that it can assist in bringing about reconciliation for all Australians.
- 4.127 The value in developing RAPs should not be underestimated and the significant progress that is being made in terms of increasing Indigenous awareness in sporting codes and individual organisations will have

significant benefits in the long-term for Indigenous participation in sport. The Committee is of the belief that by encouraging sporting organisations at all levels to develop RAPs, it will improve the understanding and awareness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures that will ultimately lead to improvements in reconciliation and a reduction of racism in sport.

Concluding remarks

- 4.128 This report identifies the enormous potential of sport to improve Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring. Throughout Australia in urban, regional and remote settings Indigenous Australians are passionate about sport. Sport is more than just playing a game. Rather, the Committee found sport to be the hook that leads to many aspirations and achievements for Indigenous Australians.
- 4.129 The Committee has set out a plan of action for the Commonwealth Government to review what is being done in the area of Indigenous sport programs and what needs to be improved. To ensure the contribution of sport will continue to improve Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring the Committee has recommended that the Commonwealth Government develop an overarching framework of service delivery and evaluation for Commonwealth agencies which fund sport programs. Outcomes should be aligned with Close the Gap targets in health, education and employment.
- 4.130 The Committee has called for an increase in the focus on programs to address the low participation of Indigenous women in sport, including as role models for young Indigenous Australians. The Committee congratulates the sporting and other non-government bodies which have developed role modelling and mentoring programs which assist young Indigenous Australians to develop positive aspirations for their future.
- 4.131 The Committee views the successful building of partnerships to be critical to the service delivery for all Indigenous sporting programs. Effective partnerships involve solid engagement with Indigenous communities. The Committee challenges the non-government sector, including sporting bodies, the corporate sector and Indigenous communities, to continue the great work being done in this area and invest in sporting programs which link to Close the Gap outcomes.

Janelle Saffin MP
Chair