
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Sport – More Than Just A Game

Contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

June 2013
Canberra

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Foreword

This inquiry focussed on two issues – firstly increasing Indigenous participation in sport and secondly utilising sport to improve Indigenous wellbeing and support the Close the Gap targets. Sport can be the ‘hook’ or ‘vehicle’ to provide opportunities for communities to come together, to encourage Indigenous participation in education and employment, and to demonstrate positive behaviours through local and elite sporting role models

Overall the evidence from the inquiry supported the theory that sport has a positive impact on Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring and can contribute positively to achieving the Close the Gap targets in areas such as health, education and employment. The role of Indigenous mentors was regarded as a critical element to the success of these programs.

The Committee was impressed with many of the sports programs currently operating throughout Australia, including the Commonwealth Government funded ‘Learn Earn Legend’ program being facilitated by numerous sporting bodies that focuses on school to work transitions. The Committee was pleased to hear about the number of Indigenous students engaging in this program with commitment and passion, resulting in better outcomes for school attrition and attainment and furthering their education pathways and employment prospects.

The success of sports programs can be reliant upon strong partnerships fostered between Government, sporting bodies and the corporate sector. The Committee recognised that the benefits gained from sport was more than about simply increasing Indigenous participation in sport – it was about engaging the local community as a whole. Community involvement included encouraging Indigenous people to become involved in the administration, umpiring and coaching positions in addition to playing sport. The participation rates of Indigenous females are lower than the participation rates for males in a majority of the sporting codes and organisations and the Committee has made recommendations to Government to prioritise sports programs to Indigenous women.

Increasing participation of Indigenous boys and girls, men and women in sport was an area where the Committee believed sporting bodies could improve. The Committee hopes that all sporting bodies at local, state and national levels will continue to acknowledge the influential role they have in ensuring that Indigenous Australians are encouraged to participate in sport with culturally supportive policies and programs.

Positive messages of cultural celebration and pride at all sporting events can help in the path to Close the Gap and reconciliation. Several sporting organisations have adopted Reconciliation Action Plans, which is making progress in areas of reconciliation and increasing the understanding and respect for Indigenous Australians through the medium of sport.

The Committee found that sport is much more than just a game – it can be a pathway to stronger communities and better opportunities.

I would like to thank everyone who put submissions into the inquiry and made the time to attend the public hearings. I pass on my gratitude to the former Chair, the Hon. Shayne Neumann MP, the Deputy Chair, Dr Sharman Stone MP and all the members of the Committee for their work during this inquiry.

Ms Janelle Saffin MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Ms Janelle Saffin MP (from 23/4/13)

Deputy Chair The Hon. Dr Sharman Stone MP

Members Ms Sharon Grierson MP

Mrs Natasha Griggs MP

Mr Barry Haase MP

Mr Ed Husic MP

The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP (to 23/4/13)

Mr Graham Perrett MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Dr Anna Dacre
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Terms of reference

The Committee will inquire into and report on the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring, with a particular focus on:

- sporting bodies increasing opportunities for Indigenous participation, including opportunities for Indigenous women
- non-government organisations utilising sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people, and
- the contribution of Indigenous sporting programs, as supplied by:
 - ⇒ the sporting codes
 - ⇒ the private and NGO sectors, and
 - ⇒ federal government assistanceto Closing the Gap targets.

x



List of acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFL	Australian Football League
AICCHS	Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
ARLC	Australian Rugby League Commission
ARTIE	Achieving Results Through Indigenous Education
ARU	Australian Rugby Union
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DRALGAS	Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
DWF	David Wirrpanda Foundation
EITAAP	Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FOGs	Former Origin Greats

IMP	Indigenous Marathon Project
ISARP	Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program
ISDOs	Indigenous Sport Development Officers
ISDOP	Indigenous Sport Development Officers Program
LMRDT	Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team
NASCA	National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCIE	National Centre of Indigenous Excellence
NIRA	National Indigenous Reform Agreement
NGO	Non-government organisation
NRL	National Rugby League
QAIHC	Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
RA	Reconciliation Australia
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SANFL	South Australian National Football League
SRG	Sport and Recreation Group
WDSC	Western Desert Sports Council



List of recommendations

2 Sport as a vehicle to Close the Gap

Recommendation 1 - Framework for sport programs and Close the Gap outcomes

The Committee recommends the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, in consultation with the Minister for Sport, develop an overarching framework of service delivery and evaluation for Commonwealth agencies which fund sport programs to clearly identify outcomes that align with Close the Gap targets.

Commonwealth agencies, such as the Australian Sports Commission, which predominantly fund programs for sports-specific outcomes, should be exempt from the framework.

Recommendation 2 - Evaluating outcomes of sports programs

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government develop evaluation mechanisms for sports programs that include the collection of data on sport participation outcomes as well as non-sport outcomes such as the Close the Gap targets.

The Committee recommends that all Commonwealth funded sports programs should collect comprehensive data on Indigenous participation. The data should be collected at the start and finish of each program and should be analysed as part of an evaluation process for individual programs.

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government incorporate results of evaluations of sports programs and their contribution to Indigenous wellbeing into the annual Close the Gap reporting to Parliament.

Recommendation 3 - Learn Earn Legend

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government extend the funding of the Learn Earn Legend program to target Indigenous students in the high school years.

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government assess in 2016 the effectiveness of further funding the Learn Earn Legend program to target Indigenous students in the primary school years.

Recommendation 4 - Indigenous sporting carnivals

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government provide base funding and coordinated assistance to Indigenous regional and state sporting carnivals which draw together governments, sporting codes and clubs, mentors and role models, corporates and businesses to address health, education and employment Close the Gap targets.

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government ensure that funding is provided to sport and recreation carnivals and events in particular those which support high participation by Indigenous females.

Recommendation 5 - Three year funding

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government should fund Indigenous sports programs over a longer term preferably a three year cycle.

3 Participation in sport for Indigenous Australians**Recommendation 6 - Research the impact of sport**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government conduct a comprehensive project to measure and compare the range of outcomes across gender and age from Indigenous participation in sport and cultural activities.

Recommendation 7- Sport participation roles

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government acknowledge and develop Indigenous participation in the supporting roles around sport, such as coaches, umpires, health workers and administrators.

Recommendation 8 - Indigenous female participation

The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government prioritise strategies within its sports programs to increase opportunities for Indigenous female participation in physical activity.

Recommendation 9 – Prioritise funding for Indigenous women and girls

The Committee recommends the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport ensure that funding for sport and active recreation for Indigenous women and girls is prioritised.

4 Partnerships, mentoring and culture**Recommendation 10 – Sponsorship towards Closing the Gap**

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.

Recommendation 11 – Promoting role models

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.

