



South Australian National Football League
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Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
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**South Australian National Football League Submission to the
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs**

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry, regarding the contribution of sport to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing.

The South Australian National Football League (SANFL), since 2007 have initiated, developed and implemented two 'sports based' programs for remote Aboriginal Anangu in the far north west of South Australia referred to as the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. The SANFL believes that both programs, the Senior Sports League (SSL) and the Junior Sports Program (JSP), have improved the health and well being of the vast majority of Anangu that live on the APY Lands.

The SSL is a football and softball competition that plays during the winter season on a 'home and away' basis for 20 weeks. It follows the traditional program of any affiliated country league or association in South Australia where officials receive education and are accredited, the communities meet regularly to develop a set of By-Laws to administer and play the games, uniforms are designed and purchased by communities, playing infrastructure is developed and renewed each year and sanctions occur for players, officials and spectators that behave poorly. The SSL, known as the Far North West Sports League boasts 9 football and 9 softball teams from the seven communities that form the APY Lands. Communities from Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA) have expressed interest in joining the competition in 2013.

The JSP follows a model of introducing 6 sports each year, via involvement with schools and communities. Football and softball occur each year, with the other four sports varying from netball, basketball, golf, volleyball, athletics, soccer, swimming and cricket. Development Officers from each of these sports visit the schools and coach / train the students and interested Anangu parents / friends. Once the Development Officers leave the Anangu parents / friends then take on the responsibility of conducting sessions for the school students. At the end of each term, some schools get involved in interschool competitions. The model is developing to the degree that on a number of occasions each winter season games of football and softball for the students occur before the SSL senior men and women play their football and softball. It is hoped that this component of the program will continue to grow over the next few years. The main aim is to have children play games before each SSL fixture.

The SANFL firmly believes that sport is universally loved by Aboriginal people, and the passion they have for sport will allow the possibility of the SANFL and other providers to relay positive messages and to underline the importance of education and schooling in their personal and community development. As a result of the two core programs (the SSL and JSP now in their 7th year), a number of programs have developed with a focus on school attendance, prevocational skills, employment opportunities as well as health and well being. This has resulted in new programs being developed that have an extensive education base – the sport is the carrot and the educational programs will help to develop the Anangu in many ways. As a consequence the following programs have been developed:

1. The Adelaide Football Club (AFC) Ear and Eye health program. The SANFL and AFC take 'my eye health' personnel onto the APY Lands to visit the students and talk about ear and eye health.

2. The AFC and SANFL have taken representatives from SA Health onto the APY Lands so they can discuss with communities relevant and specific APY Lands health issues.
3. The AFC selects 30 students in years 9 & 10 and conducts leadership and governance camp – 3 in each year to support the Anangu youth in developing leadership and governance skills.
4. The Rio Tinto Cup occurs each year where 30 selected SSL football players (and officials) play against the Maralinga Lands. Both teams are involved in a week of education sessions prior to the game that is played before an AFL game at AAMI Stadium.
5. In October a combined U18 APY Lands Softball team went to Adelaide to play in Softball SA's intrastate championships. Participants turned up 3 days early to participate in education sessions – this program will only grow over the next few years.
6. The SANFL was asked to be involved in a Parental & Community Engagement (PaCE) program where the Wati's or young men from the SSL football program are to act as mentors for the school children in participating in school or community projects.
7. Experienced players in both the softball and football competitions are now being sought to mentor the young children in a myriad of programs offered by different providers. Amos Frank, now playing for the Hawthorn Football Club (drafted from the APY Lands competition via the Woodville West Torrens FC in the SANFL) has been requested to be the promotional 'face' of a number of providers on the APY Lands.

Both the female softballers and male footballers are becoming heroes and people of status to the young males and females on the APY Lands. They are very good role models and are being used in a number of associated programs.

In June 2010 the Commonwealth Government agencies FaHCSIA and DEEWR facilitated a review of the SSL and JSP on the APY Lands. Please find a copy of the review included as an attachment to the email. The review firmly stated that the SSL and JSP were essential strategies in the health and well being of Anangu people on the APY Lands. Positive consequences were seen in the areas of logistics, facilities, social, health, economic and participation outcomes. Another has come of late and that is the development of a talented pathway for football and softball.

Two of the key risks associated with the continuation of the development and delivery of these programs is insufficient funding and or the cessation of funding. The SANFL has been fortunate in receiving funding for the next 3 financial years for the continuation of the JSP but only has funding until December 2012 (this December) for the SSL.

A deputation from the SANFL would be very interested in presenting to the Committee.

We have attached the 2010 review that will explain in further, the success and benefits to the Anangu of the programs.

Yours sincerely
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