



House of Representatives Inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring.

*This submission outlines how Non-government organisations can
utilise sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people*





OVERVIEW:

Sport is a powerful vehicle for community engagement in Indigenous communities where profile athletes are seen as heroes and role models for youth.

This creates opportunities to deliver real outcomes in the areas of health, education and training, employment and economic independence for both individuals and communities.

To maximise these opportunities the focus should not be on sport as an activity when these outcomes are the key deliverables.

Rather, sport should be seen as a means to engage with an audience to deliver a message. In addition to high profile athletes, sporting organisations have expertise in relevant fields and are able to relate to an audience on many issues such as health, nutrition, team work, leadership, goal setting and other key skills and messages.

The focus should be on sports, or organisations utilising sport, developing a service delivery model that delivers real outcomes in these areas.

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.

The results outlined below indicate that the building of such aspirations can lead to measureable changes such as 19% of a cohort of 262 Indigenous School Leavers enrolling in University studies.

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. Titans 4 Tomorrow has been able to demonstrate the ability to deliver tailored messages to young people and their families through their common interest in sport. This in turn leads to improved communication and family support and wellbeing.

High profile sporting organisations are also able to engage with the corporate sector in ways that traditional service providers can not. Through brand recognition in the community, sponsors, game attendance etc. Titans 4 Tomorrow have been able to increase awareness and subsequent support for Indigenous programs. A culturally aware community also contributes to Indigenous wellbeing.

The case studies included will hopefully provide a sense of this as will the attached clip used at a recent Business Breakfast to promote corporate involvement:

http://woo-cdn220-is-3.se.bptvpd.ngcdn.telstra.com/pd_nrltitans0/T4T_Promo_2012.3.mp4



It is the strong recommendation of the Board and Management of Titans 4 Tomorrow that government funding of programs in this area should focus on those providers who deliver integrated programs with appropriate case management.

There remains a place for game development as a positive activity that contributes to the wellbeing of individuals and communities but these should be funded discretely or be an identified additional activity.

The full potential of sport in this area is yet to be realised.



INTRODUCTION:

This paper will focus on the second area of interest for the House of Representative's Inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring; namely:

- Non-government organisations utilising sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people

It will provide an overview of the activities of Titans 4 Tomorrow in this space and as well as recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

Titans 4 Tomorrow Ltd (T4T) is a not-for-profit entity specifically established to harness the power of sport to make a real difference to youth in the communities it serves.

T4T has the following primary guiding principles for all its programs:

- Inclusiveness
- Gender Equity
- Respect and
- Empowerment of Youth

It has a special commitment to Indigenous communities and playing an active part in Closing the Gap of Indigenous disadvantage. This commitment is evidenced by the current employment of seven Indigenous staff in the delivery of its programs as well as the placement of nine Indigenous trainees across the related Titans NRL Club.

As this paper will demonstrate T4T is in effect a specialist service provider rather than simply a sport in the programs it delivers.

It is a provider with a unique delivery model that trains current and former athletes as part of its delivery team to fully utilise their power of engagement.

It focuses on issues of identity through workshops that assist participants either connect or reconnect to culture in a meaningful fashion.

It builds relationships with participants through personalised case management and mentoring.

It creates pathways to employment, further education and training.

It engages with parents and the broader community.

It builds partnerships with local small businesses through to large corporate entities such as Origin Energy and Santos.

In the words of Preston Campbell

"It is by helping one child achieve his or her personal dream that we come one step closer to our shared dream for the future of all our children."



THE PROGRAMS

Titans 4 Tomorrow Ltd (T4T) has been operating since 2008 and has demonstrated experience in developing, delivering and managing a range of programs for young people. Programs we have developed and delivered include: school retention, career aspiration, mentoring and case management for disengaged youth and youth who have experienced the justice system.

T4T Indigenous programs aim to support economic development for Indigenous individuals and communities through improved health, education and employment outcomes. Through our existing Indigenous programs T4T is committed to:

- Contribute to activities that enhance school attendance and retention of young people,
- Contribute to improved employability of young people,
- Contribute to training and skills development activities for young people,
- Providing young people with life skills that transcend many areas
- Contribute to activities that improve parental and community engagement in the education of young people.

Over fifty per cent of all program participants have been female.

T4T has been involved in the delivery of programs across the following key areas:

Learn Earn Legend! School to Work Transition:

Titans 4 Tomorrow currently support 230 male and female Indigenous youth through their final year of high school and their transition into a career post school. More than 50 per cent of our participants since 2010 have been female. In 2011 we supported 262 students. We are pleased to report that, despite supporting students in poor labour market and low socio economic areas, 82% of the 2011 participants are in a stable post school career pathway. An impressive 41% of these school leavers are pursuing further education with 19% at university.

The program is funded by the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Workplace relations with additional funding provided by the NRL All Stars game.

The program is run in partnership with Education Queensland.

Disengaged Youth in Remote Communities:

The Titans Achievement Program (TAP) was funded by The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) through local organisations in the communities of Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Cherbourg.

The program was a combination of workshops and activities run in the communities with three residential runs on the Gold Coast for participants who achieved agreed goals.



The program had particular success in the Gulf communities where enrolment in CDEP activities, return to school statistics and employment outcomes continue to rise.

Many of these participants have now been identified as potential leaders in their communities.

Juvenile Justice Intervention Programs:

The strategies in the above program have also been modelled on participants under Juvenile Justice orders and are funded by the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs as a Learning Earning Active Places initiative.

Targeted at Indigenous participants on the Gold Coast, the program is voluntary and has a high attendance rate with final outcomes yet to be measured.

Participation and Retention:

This program is a partnership with Origin Energy and is run in the Surat Basin communities of Roma, Tara, Chinchilla, Dalby and Miles. The program aims to increase school attendance and year 12 retention for Indigenous high school students in these communities.

It has the support of Education Queensland and additional funding in the area of school to work transition provided by DEEWR.

The focus of the program is achievement-based with nominated students and their parents having participated in two residential camps on the Gold Coast.

The program is completing its implementation phase and has a three year commitment from Origin.

Parent and Community Engagement:

The PaCE program is funded by DEEWR and had a focus on involving and educating parents around issues relevant to their child's education. This holistic involvement has been incorporated into all Titans Indigenous programs and expands to also involve traditional owners and elders wherever possible. The involvement of parents in workshops involving their children has been a particular success of this program.

Corporate Engagement:

An additional powerful impact of the involvement of sport in this space is the capacity to engage corporate partners in the delivery of programs and the provision of opportunities otherwise unattainable. Sport can also provide leveraging opportunities to promote key issues and success stories to a wider audience through its involvement with the media. T4T has run a number of corporate events and functions to promote these programs including business breakfasts , graduation ceremonies and regional career markets across all the regions where it delivers programs. As a result we have gained the support of companies such as Santos to expand the delivery of programs as well as engaging with small businesses to promote opportunities for our participants. Companies who attended our recent event included ;

ACPA, ANZ, Arrow Energy, Ashurst Lawyers, Ausenco, Baulderstone, BDO, Bechtel Oil, Gas and Chemical Inc, BHP Billiton, Bluestar Electrical, CCIQ, Clayton Utz, Coca Cola Amatil, Construction Skills



Qld, Downer EDI Mining Education QLD, ETC, Ferguson Cannon Lawyers, Gadens Lawyers, Ganbina, Gilimbaa, Gilkerson Legal, Griffith Uni, James Frizelle's, Jupiters Hotel & Casino, Justice and Attorney General's Department, Kooga, KPMG, Leicon, Leighton Contractors, Minter Ellison Lawyers, NAB, Nyst Lawyers, Origin Energy, Queensland and Aboriginal Islander Health Council, Queensland Government, Queensland South Native Title Services Ltd, Rio Tinto, Santos, Shadforth Financial Group Limited, Strategic Legal and Consulting, Thiess, Transfields Services, University of NSW, Virgin Australia and Westpac Banking Corporation.



CASE STUDIES:

Statistics are important as they provide a measureable indication of a program's success.

But statistics alone do not always capture the qualitative outcomes or the unintended by-products of a program's success.

Examples of this include uncontracted events such as dinners for elders hosted by participants and the development of a group dynamic that has led to the youth of Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Cherbourg developing projects to improve their communities. It has seen parents from the Surat Basin develop an informal network to become more involved in their children's education.

But by far the most important impact has seen a large number of participants develop aspirations beyond the immediate as the programs do not simply focus on minimum outcomes that can lead to minimal quality.

The real power of the involvement of former and current players in the delivery of tailored workshops has been to raise the sense of identity and confidence in participants to allow them to dream beyond the immediate.

The following case studies are powerful and unique.

At the same time they are not uncommon.

Misty:

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.

Jade 1:

Jade is a 23 year old male who lives in a remote community. He left school before he was 10 and was functionally illiterate and disengaged when he ventured into the T4T program. He has since entered the CEDP program, entered the Duke of Edinburgh program, become a community volunteer at events and as a result has gained employment on a cattle station. He has also committed himself to learning how to read and write. On a residential at the Gold Coast he completed a short course in Building and Construction and for the first time in his life received a piece of paper that said he was successful.

**Jade 2:**

Jade is a Year 11 student in the regional town of Chinchilla. After reaching agreed goals she came to a residential on the Gold Coast that focused on connection to culture and leadership. During the debrief she made the powerful statement: “Before I came here I used to look at myself but I didn’t really see myself. I used to think ‘Yeah I was Aboriginal.’ After this experience I know that it is far more than that and I’m proud to be me.” Since her return to school and continuation of the program she has won a traineeship award and has just been announced as vice-captain of her school for next year.

Kieran:

Kieran is an 18 years 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.

Dylan:

Dylan is a passionate member of the Tweed-Byron Indigenous community, and is currently completing a Bachelor of Medicine, Surgery and Science at the University of Queensland in a bid to further improve the education and health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. With the support of his family and his school he was always going to be successful. He does attribute the T4T program as not only helping him to maintain focus and assist him but to also develop his sense of identikit where he saw himself as a leader and a role model for others following him. He described his experience at the Titans Youth Summit as increasing his confidence in himself and his chosen career path. He was a joint recipient of the NRL Learn Earn Legend scholarship.

Recommendations:

The Board and Management of Titans 4 Tomorrow would strongly recommend that the Committee endorse the power and potential of sport to improve outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

In doing so it would ask that the following be considered:

- That funding be directed to programs where sport is the tool of engagement rather than the major program focus,
- That all programs address issues of gender equity,
- That qualitative outcomes are assessed in addition to quantitative results,
- That funding for successful programs be for a minimum of three years to ensure initial set-up investment is not lost,
- That all programs have cultural integrity and promote the individual participant’s sense of identity and connection to culture,
- That the employment of appropriately qualified Indigenous staff be a priority for all programs.



Contact:

The following submission is made on behalf of the Board and Management by:

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