

**INQUIRY ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT TO INDIGENOUS WELLBEING AND MENTORING****OFFICE FOR RECREATION AND SPORT AND SA HEALTH RESPONSE****BACKGROUND**

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) is the lead agency for the Government's policy on sport and active recreation. DPTI, through its Office for Recreation and Sport (ORS) directorate, supports sport and recreation organisations through the development of policy, programs and resources, the provision of funding, recreation and sport planning, infrastructure development, elite sport pathways and the promotion of physical activity.

The Sport and Recreation Development division works to build strength, capacity and sustainability with industry clients. Through the development of programs and resources, the provision of funding assistance through grants programs, and working to engage with the broader community, this team works to support and enhance the efforts of sport and recreation organisations and clubs.

The Planning and Projects division provides a strategic and integrated approach towards the development and delivery of recreation and sport infrastructure development planning, construction project management, research and policy advice, facilities management, and recreation trails development and management. Major sporting venues such as Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide Super-Drome and Santos Stadium are managed on behalf of the Minister for Recreation and Sport.

The South Australian Sports Institute (SASI) provides specialist high performance sport services and talent identification programs to support South Australian athletes and sports to achieve national and international success.

The DPTI, on behalf of the South Australian Government, has a funding partnership with the Federal Government to provide sport and active recreation programs and services to Indigenous communities in South Australia. Both Federal and State Governments provide funding for this purpose. The funding contributes to salaries, Club Fee Subsidies and project costs for South Australia. The DPTI, through its ORS directorate, also makes grant funding available to eligible organisations and individuals (by way of scholarships) through a range of programs.

The delivery of sport and active recreation to Indigenous people in urban, regional and remote locations presents unique challenges and, with limited resources, ORS develops area-specific and often community-specific strategies to achieve outcomes.

Sport can provide a range of benefits for Indigenous people but it is not a panacea. There are multiple levels of disadvantage in urban, regional and remote areas and strategies using sport to achieve particular outcomes (whether they be sport related or other outcomes with regard to education, health, employment or crime prevention) need to be devised and delivered in a coordinated and comprehensive way.

This response has been structured to address the terms of reference by discussing current issues and potential solutions. It should be noted, however, that the timeframe for submissions is such that it is not possible to expand on these issues.

Ordinarily the DPTI would seek to consult with stakeholders in relation to such an important matter. As the Sport and Recreation Industry is largely run by volunteers with Boards meeting monthly at best, consultation in this instance has not been possible.

INTRODUCTION

It is the view of the DPTI that sport and recreation has the potential to contribute to all or some of the COAG Closing the Gap Building Blocks. Key links are:

- **Early Childhood** – through programs incorporating fundamental movement skills; a key component of child development.
- **Healthy Homes** – from active participation in community recreation and sport.
- **Health** – the prevention of chronic disease, increased lifespan through participation in sport and recreation.
- **Schooling** – attendance and retention increased through the use of sport to meet curriculum outcomes.
- **Governance and Leadership** – taking on responsibility for community based sport opportunities and roles and responsibilities in liaising with State sporting organisations and NGOs to meet community needs.
- **Safe Communities** – sport and recreation as a crime prevention tool. There is strong anecdotal evidence that communities will protect facilities that are important to them and that increased after-hours use of facilities for sport and recreation activity leads to lower levels of vandalism.
- **Economic Participation** – employment, traineeships and links to industry.

It should be noted that while organised sport is important for some Indigenous people and communities, there are a broad range of other physical activities that have been identified by Indigenous people as being important to them. Activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering may represent an opportunity to contribute to Closing the Gap in regional and remote communities. For a significant percentage of people in remote communities, these types of activities may be their only opportunity to be physically active.

DPTI is very conscious of sport in South Australia being used as a vehicle to achieve other outcomes in areas such as:

- health and life expectancy
- education
- employment
- crime prevention.

There is an overriding issue of coordination. Without support the largely volunteer based sport sector cannot be expected to resource the achievement of these broader outcomes.

There are issues that apply in some communities and not others and each community has its own unique make-up as would occur in any other area of society. Additional variations occur in relation to tribal origin; family factors; cultural norms i.e. funerals, hierarchy; political factors; men's business; women's business and nomadic lifestyle. These issues have a direct impact on sporting bodies and all other service providers seeking to increase opportunities for Indigenous participation, including opportunities for Indigenous women.

It is the view of the DPTI that it is not a lack of financial resources that is limiting development of sustainable sport but rather the lack of clarity around desired outcomes, limited coordination and communication, and significant duplication of effort across various levels of Government and NGOs. Anecdotal evidence in remote areas has pointed to an overwhelming number of organisations visiting communities to achieve the same or similar outcomes. Sport also falls into this category.

It is important to note that the capacity of the sport industry is limited. It is largely volunteer run and there are often expectations that because one sport has the funding to assist, other sports will have the same capacity. Most sports at a state level do not have specific funding for Indigenous participation.

There is little assistance available to support those who may be identified through Talent ID days through the sporting pathway. Support measures should be put in place until there is evidence that the individual indicates they no longer require it.

Barriers specific to Urban Communities:

- Cost of playing structured sport in general is higher than in regional areas.
- Insufficient financial support to allow individuals to access clubs. Many funded programs aim to introduce Indigenous people to sport but fail to consider the individual's capacity to pay club fees or the costs associated with elite sport pathways.
- Short term programs are offered through some sports and government funded projects but little attention is paid to linking or creating capacity for long term participation.
- Lack of awareness of sport opportunities that are available in any given location.

Barriers specific to Regional Communities:

- Lack of community consultation and engagement.
- Lack of multi-purpose facilities or access to existing facilities.
- Lack of leadership within the community.
- Lack of confidence and/or support networks to join local clubs rather than setting up specific Indigenous clubs.
- Insufficient financial support to allow individuals to access clubs. Many funded programs aim to introduce Indigenous people to sport but fail to consider the individual's capacity to pay club fees or the costs associated with elite sport pathways.
- Community priorities – other things are more important, e.g. family and culture.

Barriers specific to Remote SA Communities:

- Lack of trust and engagement between community and service providers
- Limited access to sporting clubs as well as little understanding of how structured sport works.
- Community priorities – other things are more important, e.g. family and culture.
- Fly in-fly out, random, unplanned and uncoordinated (across agencies) visits.
- People in communities are not willing to take the lead (because culturally it may not be the norm).
- Lack of a functional base to deliver sport from, lack of facilities and equipment.
- Expectations of travel to metropolitan areas for state or national Indigenous programs/events. This heightens existing levels of disadvantage.
- Lack of resources to deliver programs in remote locations.

No recognition or support of recreation as an important form of physical activity, Indigenous games and lifestyle activities.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BARRIERS**Urban Communities:**

Indigenous people in urban areas have access to sporting facilities, sports and pathways, clubs and recreational opportunities. Creating welcoming club environments and building links between sporting clubs and Indigenous community will create more opportunities for participation. Due to the volunteer-based nature of sporting clubs, training and support to create more inclusive environments is a clear need.

Catering for Indigenous specific clubs or groups (or any other minority group) tends to encourage reliance on government assistance and can lead to the creation of sport clubs that do not have the range of opportunities that are available through structured mainstream pathways. It should be noted there may be an inevitable long term reliance on government assistance to address the ongoing disadvantage of Indigenous communities.

Regional Communities:

A coordinated approach to community consultation and engagement across agencies to deliver the best outcomes for any particular community is vital, as is building relationships.

Strategies must be aligned with community priorities and appropriate structures and leadership models to build capacity and create ownership should be established.

Providing access to a Club Fee Subsidy Program will assist ongoing participation. This needs to incorporate strategies to reduce reliance on subsidies over time.

The Indigenous Sport Development Officers to play a vital role in liaising between the ORS and community. Other agencies could work with and through these officers.

Remote SA Communities:

Work in recent years has led DPTI to believe that achieving change in lifestyle habits and interest in structured sport and recreation activities in remote Indigenous communities may take a generation. These communities generally do not have access to structured sport, pathways or clubs.

Young people who leave the communities and experience structured sport and recreation as part of their education are unlikely to take this back to their communities. If they are successful in completing their education and finding employment, they are more likely to remain in urban or regional areas and as a result Governments can't rely on them as a means of capacity building in remote communities. Those who are not successful in completing their education are likely to remain in, or return to, remote communities and re-adapt to cultural norms.

As a consequence, governments need to be clear about what they are trying to achieve through the delivery of sport and recreation in remote communities. Achieving sustainable outcomes in relation to structured sport and recreation is likely to be more difficult to achieve than simply providing opportunities for people to be active.

Sport organised through a youth shed or family centre with a resource attached, perhaps a sports officer who can make the equipment and the facility available and support community members is something to be considered. Ideally this facility would be joint funded and resourced by government and the community.

DPTI, through its ORS directorate, is soon to pilot a structured sport approach with a group of remote communities in the north west of South Australia. This pilot aims to build capacity within the communities such that with support, they can deliver sport activities within their own communities. If this pilot is successful, we will then determine whether the model can be transferred or adapted for other remote communities. We recognise, however, that each community and region is unique and situational factors will play a significant role in achieving successful outcomes.

DPTI would advocate the following principles be considered in program delivery:

- A coordinated long term approach.
- Place-based strategies.
- Extensive community consultation.
- Alternative accountability/acquittal methods for government funding or services.
- Capacity building to enable sustainable outcomes – to find out what communities want, what are they prepared to contribute to financially and help run.
- Recognition of the impact of cultural and political norms in community.
- Understanding that people in communities need support to take responsibility.
- Communities need a functional base; a facility – for example sport organised through a youth shed or family centre with a resource attached, a sports officer who can make the equipment and the facility available and support community members.
- Offering specific support for people in regional or remote areas who are identified through talent ID programs – costs, physical move, adjustment, mentoring etc.

SA Health Response to the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Inquiry on the Contribution of Sport to Indigenous Well-being and Mentoring

SA Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of all South Australians by providing leadership in health reform, public health services, health and medical research, policy development and planning, with an increased focus on well being, illness prevention, early intervention and quality care.

SA Health is the brand name for the health portfolio of services and agencies responsible to the Minister for Health and Ageing and the Minister for Mental Health & Substance Abuse.

The portfolio consists of:

- the Department for Health and Ageing
- Central Adelaide Local Health Network
- Northern Adelaide Local Health Network
- Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
- Women's and Children's Health Network
- Country Health SA Local Health Network; and
- SA Ambulance Service.

SA Health provides many important services to the South Australian community including:

- public hospitals
- metropolitan and country health service delivery
- environmental health
- communicable disease control
- epidemiology
- health promotion
- pathology services
- drug and alcohol services
- emergency and ambulance; and
- organ donation.

SA Health supports the terms of reference of the inquiry and recognises the positive contribution the results of the inquiry will have on supporting and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Indigenous South Australians.

SA Health recognises the importance of sport in engaging communities to improve a range of social determinants of health and supports the promotion of physical activity to improve all realms of health including mental, social and physical health.

Nationally, the SA Government is recognised for its 'Health in All Policies' approach to improving health outcomes in collaboration with other government agencies. Health in All Policies has been successfully implemented across government agencies in South Australia for the past five years. South Australia is recognised internationally as leading the way in cross government action on the social determinants of health and wellbeing, which are shaped by broad societal factors that lie outside the influence of the health sector. SA Health will continue to identify opportunities to apply a Health in All Policies approach that supports the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring.

In Country Health SA, established Aboriginal Advisory mechanisms could be used as a means for consultation to ensure future initiatives consider local cultural issues, therefore maximising and enhancing engagement and implementation.

The Eat Well Be Active Strategy for South Australia 2011-2016 identifies a cross government commitment to supporting Aboriginal communities to increase participation in physical activity (including sport). The strategy acknowledges that it is important to build capacity of organisations already having success in connecting with communities. In support of this, using and building on funding from the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health, the Health Promotion Branch has funded the Aboriginal Health Council to appoint a project officer who works with existing service providers connected with Aboriginal communities across the state to encourage staff to integrate healthy living messages into organisational practice and programs.

It is recognised that participation in sport is more than just those playing a sport or physically undertaking an activity but also includes the involvement of coaches, instructors, administrators, officials and volunteers. These roles in sport are considered important influences on mental health and social inclusion, as well as physical health.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

That agencies note the SA Government Health in All Policies initiative on improving health outcomes and adopt a similar approach to encourage and increase partnerships and collaborations to engage communities in improving a range of social determinants of health.

Hon Tom Kenyon MP

MINISTER FOR RECREATION AND SPORT

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