



Australian Government
Department of Regional Australia,
Local Government, Arts and Sport

**Department of Regional Australia,
Local Government, Arts and Sport**

and

Australian Sports Commission

submission to the inquiry by the

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs**

into

**The contribution of sport to Indigenous
wellbeing and mentoring**

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The contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring

Submission by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport to the inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for Sport have asked the Committee to inquire into and report on the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring with a focus on:

- how sporting bodies can increase opportunities for Indigenous participation, including opportunities for Indigenous women;
- how non-government bodies can utilise sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people; and
- the contribution of Indigenous sporting programs to Closing the Gap targets as supported by:
 - sporting codes,
 - the private and NGO sectors, and
 - Federal government assistance.

Submission Overview

The Australian Government's support for the involvement of Indigenous Australians in sport and active recreation spans a number of portfolios within the Commonwealth, including Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Health and Ageing, Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Attorney-General's.

The involvement of multiple portfolios recognises the role sport and active recreation can play in improving Indigenous wellbeing and in achieving broader social policy outcomes, including:

- development of community cohesion;
- development of leadership skills;
- providing incentives for school attendance;
- health benefits;
- personal confidence, team-building and communication skills development; and
- addressing gender inequity.

This submission provides information on Indigenous programs from the sports portfolio including the linkages to the Closing the Gap targets. These portfolio programs include those administered by the Office for Sport in the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS) and those administered by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

Programs managed by the Office for Sport are:

- Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP) grants program which funds projects that increase the active participation of able and disabled Indigenous Australians in sport and recreation and subsidises employment of Indigenous Australians in the sports and recreation sector; and
- Indigenous Sport Development Officers Program (ISDOs) which provides funds to state and territory governments to employ ISDOs to coordinate the delivery of sport to Indigenous Australians in various regions.

Programs managed by the ASC are:

- Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP) grants program which assists Indigenous sportspeople to participate in official national championships and international sporting competitions; and
- participation funding grants to national sporting organisations.

Other portfolio support, such as the funding provided for sporting facilities and the Active After-school Communities (AASC) program, also assist in providing Indigenous Australians with the opportunity to participate in sport and active recreation.

Through increasing the involvement of Indigenous Australians in sport and active recreation all of these programs contribute to the Government's targets for Closing the Gap on the disadvantage suffered by Indigenous Australians.

Further information on matters addressed in the submission is available from Celia Street, Assistant Secretary, Sport Policy and Programs Branch, Office for Sport, Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport. Ms Street can be contacted via email at celia.street@pmc.gov.au.

Machinery of Government Changes

Primary administrative responsibility for sport has moved between departments during the period referred to below. Responsibility currently lies with the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.

The Office for Sport

At the start of 2004 administrative responsibility for sport was with the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). In December 2007, the sport function was transferred to the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) and transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) in October 2010.

Responsibility for sport transferred to DRALGAS in December 2011.

For simplicity of expression, the term Office for Sport will be used to refer to the administrative unit with responsibility for the sport function regardless of the Department it was in at the time or the name under which the unit operated.

The Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is a statutory authority within the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio. The ASC was established in 1985 and operates under the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* (ASC Act). The ASC is governed by a board of commissioners appointed by the Australian Government. The board determines the ASC's overall direction, decides on actual allocation of resources and policy for delegated decisions, and is accountable to the Minister for Sport and to Parliament.

The ASC Act provides that in connection with some of its roles the ASC will operate under the name Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). These roles relate to supporting elite performance of Australian athletes.

Portfolio responsibility for the Australian Sports Commission has moved with the sport function as set out above.

The benefits of physical activity and current challenges

There are significant benefits from physical activity as against a sedentary lifestyle. Regular physical activity can:

- help prevent heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure;
- reduce the risk of developing type II diabetes and some cancers;
- help build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints reducing the risk of injury; and
- promote psychological well-being.

In addition, a study by Medibank in 2008¹ estimated that:

- physical inactivity costed the Australian economy \$13.8 billion in 2008;
- 16,178 Australians die prematurely each year due to physical inactivity; and
- productivity loss due to physical inactivity equates to 1.8 working days per worker per year.

Recognising the benefits of physical activity and the financial and social cost of inactivity, the Australian Government developed the National Physical Activity Guidelines for all Australians which outline the minimum levels of physical activity required to gain a health benefit and ways to incorporate incidental physical activity into everyday life.

The Guidelines² set out recommendations for daily exercise:

- children 0 to 5 years - various, with at least three hours of physical activity for toddlers (1 to 3 years) and pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years);
- children 5 to 12 years - at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day;
- 12 to 18 year olds - at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day; and
- adults - at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, preferably all days.

Many people in Australia participate in less physical activity than is considered necessary for ongoing health and wellbeing. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicate the incidence of inactivity is considerably greater among Australia's Indigenous population.³

¹ *The cost of physical inactivity*, Medibank Private, October 2008
(http://www.medibank.com.au/Client/Documents/Pdfs/The_Cost_Of_Physical_Inactivity_08.pdf) Accessed 29 October 2012

² The Department of Health and Ageing website contains guidelines for all ages
(<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines>).

³ *FEATURE ARTICLE 1: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION ESTIMATES, 2011 - PRELIMINARY* 3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, Mar 2012 ABS
(<http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3101.0Feature%20Article1Mar%202012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3101.0&issue=Mar%202012&num=&view>) Accessed 31 October 2012

Information from the National Health Survey⁴ indicates that during the two weeks prior to interview in 2004-05 (latest data at this level currently available that addresses both Indigenous and the overall populations), half of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over living in non-remote areas participated in exercise (including low, moderate and high levels). Information is only available relating to people living in non-remote areas.

This was considerably lower than the 67 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians who participated. Indigenous participation was less than non-Indigenous participation for all three levels of exercise.⁵

When comparing the data for 2004-05 with that from 2001, any differences in non-Indigenous participation were relatively small. For Indigenous persons, however, the overall rate of participation in exercise dropped significantly from 58 per cent in 2001 to 49 per cent in 2004-05. This was mainly due to an increase in the proportion of Indigenous people falling into the sedentary category and a fall in the proportion of Indigenous people participating in sport and physical activity at a moderate level. The proportion of the Indigenous population included in the moderate participation category was 24 per cent in 2001 but fell by a third to 16 per cent in 2004-05.

Table 1 summarises the difference between the reported levels of activity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous adults and the change between 2000-01 and 2004-05.

⁴ *Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview*, Australia, ABS 4156.0, 2009, ABS figures quoted are age adjusted to allow comparison between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. ([http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/0EB56B94A3C69254CA25765700162698/\\$File/41560_2009.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/0EB56B94A3C69254CA25765700162698/$File/41560_2009.pdf)) Accessed 29 October 2012

⁵ *Sport and Recreation: A Statistical Overview*, Australia, ABS 4156.0, 2009, ABS Page 23-24. Reports used are the latest available that cover both Indigenous and whole of population for the bulk of Australia. Initial results from the Australian Health survey 2011-12 indicate 63.9% of Australians aged over 15 years had participated in some exercise. However, while the proportion engaging in exercise is lower, the proportion engaging in moderate or high levels of exercise has grown from 27.7% to 32.4%. Information on Indigenous Australians is not yet available. (<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.001Main+Features12011-12?OpenDocument>) accessed 8 November 2012

TABLE 1: Exercise Level by Indigenous status 2000-01 and 2004-05

	2000-01		2004-05	
	Indigenous %	Non-Indigenous %	Indigenous %	Non-Indigenous %
Sedentary	42.1	30.8	50.5	33.1
Low	29.2	37.7	27.4	36.2
Moderate	23.9	24.5	16.4	23.8
High	4.8	7.1	4.8	6.9
Total(d)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
a) Relates to persons aged 15 years and over during the two weeks prior to interview.				
b) Age standardisation techniques have been used to remove the effect of the differing age structures in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The age standardised estimate of prevalence is that which would have prevailed had the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations had the standard age composition (i.e. the total estimated resident population of Australia as at 30 June 2001).				
c) Data relates to persons in non-remote areas. Non-remote areas are those that lie within the 'Major cities of Australia', 'Inner Regional Australia' and 'Outer Regional Australia' categories of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), 2005 (cat. no. 1216.0) Remoteness Structure.				
d) For 2004-05, includes persons for whom level of exercise was not stated.				
Source: ABS data available on request, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.				

Table copied from SPORT AND RECREATION: A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW, AUSTRALIA, ABS 4156.0, 2009, Page 24, Table 3.9

([http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/0EB56B94A3C69254CA25765700162698/\\$File/41560_2009.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/0EB56B94A3C69254CA25765700162698/$File/41560_2009.pdf))
Accessed 29 October 2012

The ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008⁶ was conducted throughout Australia, including remote areas, from August 2008 to April 2009. It collected information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's (aged 15 years and over) participation in sport or physical activities during the 12 months prior to interview.

The Survey found that only 30.1 per cent of those aged 15 years and over had participated in sport and physical activities during the 12 months prior to interview. The participation rate for males was 37.7 per cent and for females 23.3 per cent.

Given the relatively low levels of activity of Indigenous Australians, it is clear that there is scope for the Indigenous community to benefit from programs that lead to increased involvement in sport and physical activity.

⁶ *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008* (cat. no. 4714.0) ABS quoted at page 17 of *Sport And Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia 2 1 December 2011* (cat. no. 4156.0) ([http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/E947E884D589DF99CA25796C00143810/\\$File/41560_2011.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/E947E884D589DF99CA25796C00143810/$File/41560_2011.pdf))
f) Accessed 29 October 2012

The Benefits of Sport and Active Recreation to Closing the Gap

In December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a partnership to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. Recognising that outcomes for Indigenous Australians remain well below those of other Australians, COAG is working towards six targets. These are:

- to close the life-expectancy gap within a generation;
- to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade;
- to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities within five years;
- to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade;
- to halve the gap in Indigenous Year 12 achievement by 2020;
- to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

COAG has also recognised that improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will require sustained commitment from all levels of government, with major effort directed to seven building blocks in order to achieve the Closing the Gap targets:

- early childhood;
- schooling;
- health;
- economic participation;
- healthy homes;
- safe communities; and
- governance and leadership.

The building blocks are linked as achieving the Closing the Gap targets requires progress in each and every one of these areas and strategies aimed at achieving improvements in any one area will not work in isolation.

Sport and active recreation is not overtly listed among the targets or building blocks, however, sport and active recreation is indirectly relevant to many of the building blocks and targets. The Office for Sport provides regular updates on the progress of its programs in the context of the Closing the Gap reporting.

Sport and the various sport participation programs contribute to the building blocks and thus the targets in a number of ways. The *Prime Minister's Closing the Gap Report 2012*⁷ acknowledges the importance of the Indigenous sports programs to Closing the Gap through its contribution to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.

However, sport and active recreation have additional indirect benefits. Of the seven Building Blocks endorsed by COAG, the Indigenous sport programs contribute to:

- health - by encouraging a healthier lifestyle that includes physical activity;
- economic participation - through employment opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people such as sport and recreation officers;
- safe communities - by providing an alternative to anti-social behaviour; and
- governance and leadership - by funding initiatives to build capacity of Indigenous communities to deliver sport and recreation activities independently.

The sport programs, particularly in more remote areas, provide employment opportunities for Indigenous people to support and/or assist in the provision of sport and active recreation activities. In particular this includes entry level positions (most originally created under the Job Creation Package which is described on page 10) that can lead to being qualified for positions available more broadly in the sport and active recreation industry and other industries.

The Office for Sport's most recent Closing the Gap report (30 June 2012) noted that programs were proceeding as planned and all funding had been released as expected for the 2011-12 financial year. The report noted that sport and recreation projects had been delivered across all states and territories, and over the entire 12 month period. Additionally, programs provided funding for 27 Indigenous Sport Development Officers to coordinate sport and recreation activities, employment of individuals in 6 full and 144 part-time positions under the Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation program and 733 individuals to attend national and international events through the Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program.

⁷ Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report 2012.

(http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/closing_the_gap_2012.pdf) Accessed 14 November 2012.

Indigenous Sport Funding – Program History

The ASC's Indigenous Sport Program was established in the wake of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1993. The Commission emphasised the importance of access to sport and recreation for Indigenous people to help discourage anti-social and criminal behaviour and encourage community cohesion.

The ASC's program was designed to encourage Indigenous people to be more active and to play sport at all levels. It also works to increase opportunities for Indigenous people to learn the skills needed to organise, deliver and manage community-based sport, and to assist talented Indigenous sportspeople to access the support they need to reach their sporting goals.

On 1 July 2004, the responsibility for administering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services' (ATSIS') Sporting Opportunities for Indigenous People (SOIP) program was transferred to the Office for Sport. The program was funded at \$5.6 million per year, and has increased faster than CPI to \$13.5 million by 2012-13, plus \$4.6 million previously for the Jobs Creation Package which became part of the program in 2012-13.

In 2005, the name of the SOIP program was changed to the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program (ISRP) to reflect the inclusion of activities that are more of an "active recreation" nature, rather than only sporting activities. The ISRP name was first used for the 2005-06 funding round.

The ISRP was an annual funding round program designed to support community sport and active recreation activities for Indigenous Australians. A wide variety of organisations were eligible for the program, including non-profit community organisations, local government, and non-profit sporting organisations, both at a local and national level. Grants were offered under the Annual Funding Round element of the program for a one year period, with applications opening generally in December and closing around March, with funding for the following financial year. Since 2004, the program has been significantly oversubscribed, with applicants generally seeking three to four times the amount of funding available each year.

The ISRP also contained three other elements, a Flexible Funding Pool (FFP), and funding provided to the Australian Sports Commission to fund the Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP) and the Indigenous Sport Development Officers (ISDO) network. All elements were also funded on an annual basis.

The FFP has ranged in size, but in the last few years has been around \$300,000 per annum. The details for use of this funding have varied over time, but in general terms it has been intended to fund opportunities that arise outside the timeframe of the annual funding round and / or opportunities to fund sport or active recreation projects that support other government programs. An example of the latter is FFP funding in 2008-09 to support sport and recreation aspects of projects aimed at reducing petrol sniffing in the East Kimberley.

The Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation program (JCP), was introduced on 1 July 2009 to create real jobs providing services previously provided under the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). The JCP provided funds for local governments and sport and recreation organisations to employ, train and support people to deliver government sport and recreation services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2009-10 the program was funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and administered by the Office for Sport. The following year, the appropriation for the program moved to the Office for Sport.

In 2011-12, \$4.55 million was allocated by the Government to fund 176 part-time positions, equating to 92 full-time positions, under the JCP in the Northern Territory, Queensland (including the Torres Strait), New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia.

Up until 2011-12 both the ISRP and the JCP had operated as annual grant programs. This was to allow funding to be provided to the best proposals in various locations around the country from year to year. However, it had become apparent that the program largely supported either ongoing activities or annual events and created difficulties in ensuring employment certainty under both programs. As such, the annual funding round, requiring applications, assessments and agreement negotiations, was also an administrative burden on both the recipients and the Office for Sport.

In January 2011 the Minister for Sport approved merging the ISRP with the JCP and entering into funding agreements in 2012–13 for up to three years. For 2012-13, the ISRP and JCP were replaced with the single grant program, the Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP).

Indigenous Programs Administered by the Office for Sport

Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP)

The ISARP supports community participation in sport and active recreation activities that help to improve the health and physical wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and those that contribute to broader social benefits for participants and their communities.

The 2012-13 funding round of the ISARP resulted in 123 activities being approved for funding. The last of the funding agreements are currently being finalised with the successful applicants. For the majority of organisations, these agreements will run for three years to the end of 2014-15. A small number of applicants, who either have had difficulty meeting reporting requirements in the past, or who have not had experience in running the projects funded, have been approved for funding for one year, with an option to reapply in 2013-14 with the possibility of a longer funding agreement period.

Organisations that receive multi-year funding agreements should benefit in a number of ways. Secure funding assists organisations to commit to ongoing programs that build commitment among the participants and in their communities. Similarly, staff attraction and retention should be assisted by the prospect of employment for a longer period.

In total 123 agreements are being entered into with organisations to fund projects approved for 2012-13. These organisations estimate their activities will involve over 150,000⁸ Indigenous participants. Of the total, the organisations anticipate over 100,000 of the participants will be aged under 18 years and over a third will be female.

The types of organisations being funded by the agreements can be summarised as follows:

Community Organisation	80
State Sporting Organisation	21
National Sporting Organisation	7
Local Government	12
State Government	3
Total	<u>123</u>

Of the agreements with community organisations, 49 are with Indigenous organisations.

⁸ Figures relating to numbers of participants are uncertain as some organisations refer to the number of individuals, while some refer to the number of attendances. So, if 25 people attend five events, some organisations will report 25 participants, while others would report 125. The 2012-13 Guidelines ask for participants to be counted only once per program, not once per attendance, and note that spectators should not be counted as participants.

Most (over 80 per cent) of the 2011-12 End of Financial Year reports have been received for projects funded under the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program. These reports indicate that there were close to 370,000 Indigenous participants in the various programs. There is some inconsistency in how organisations measure 'participants' with some measuring individuals who attend a program and others measuring the number of attendances.

An outline of selection criteria and process for the ISARP is at [Attachment A](#).

Indigenous Sport Development Officers (ISDOs)

To increase the opportunities and quality of sport at a grassroots level there is a national network of 50 Indigenous Sport Development Officers (ISDOs) employed by State and Territory departments of sport and recreation. Of these, 27 are funded by the Office for Sport under the ISDO program.

These officers liaise with Indigenous communities in their region to assess the sporting needs and priorities. The ISDOs then coordinate the delivery of programs, resources and services in partnership with the mainstream sporting industry and the relevant state/territory departments of sport and recreation.

The ISDOs aim to create sustainable programs by focusing on building the sporting capacity of Indigenous Australians. This can take the form of coordinating the delivery of accredited coaching and officiating courses, building links to existing sporting clubs or assisting in the creation of new clubs and where possible, linking individuals to mainstream sporting competitions.

In addition, the ISDOs create valuable sporting pathways for Indigenous Australians, particularly in the more sustainable mainstream sporting environment. At the base of these pathways is the experience of the community-based sport and physical activity programs that invariably lead to connections and engagement with sporting clubs and competitions. These networks have the potential to build greater opportunity for participants, athletes and teams to advance higher and to take the varied pathways that sport can offer.

Until 2012-13, the ISDOs were funded by a grant from the Office for Sport to the ASC which then entered into memorandums of understanding with the various state and territory departments. The Office for Sport has now entered into agreements directly with the state and territory departments.

The arrangement is intended to improve communication between the ISDO network and the Office for Sport while not diminishing the cooperation between the ASC, sporting organisations and the ISDOs. This change should assist in the effective administration of the program as it provides the opportunity for the ISDOs to act as 'eyes and ears on the ground' for the Office for Sport, and provides a firm link back to the state and territory departments responsible for sport and recreation, which often also provide their own indigenous sport and recreation funding.

ISDOs are located in all states and territories at the centres indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Location of Indigenous Sport Development Officers

Australian Capital Territory			
Canberra			
New South Wales			
Sydney	Lennox Head	Tamworth	Dubbo
Orange	Bateman's Bay	Borambola via Wagga Wagga	Newcastle
Queensland			
Brisbane	Toowoomba	Ipswich	Cairns
Townsville	Mt Isa	Caboolture	Rockhampton
South Australia			
Adelaide	Port Lincoln	Port Augusta	
Northern Territory			
Darwin	Alice Springs	Katherine	
Tasmania			
Hobart			
Victoria			
Melbourne	Traralgon		
Western Australia			
Perth	Geraldton	Mandurah	Kalgoorlie
Carnarvon	Karratha	Telfer	Sorrento
Kununurra	Derby	Broome	

Facilities projects

At various times the Government contributes funds for construction or upgrade of sports facilities around the country. The Office for Sport has managed the funding agreements for some of these contributions. However, most of the projects are managed through the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) and the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP) within DRALGAS.

Such facilities are generally for use by all participants in the relevant sports, and the extent of use by Indigenous Australians would depend upon their involvement in the relevant sport at the particular level and in the specific location. However, some facilities by virtue of their location or purpose are predominantly of benefit to Indigenous Australians.

Currently the Government is contributing funds to several projects that fall into this category. Four of these are:

- the construction of the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre for AFL in Darwin;
- redevelopment of the Prospect Oval incorporating the Indigenous Football School;

- construction and upgrading of lighting for Nickol West Skate Park and cricket field; and
- the construction of a skate park facility in Wagin.

The Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre for AFL in Darwin involves a \$15 million Government contribution and will provide first class facilities to support Indigenous children in the NT to attend school, develop leadership and job/community readiness skills, and keep active in sport. The Centre's facilities will be comparable with interstate facilities.

Indigenous Programs Administered by the Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) focuses on getting more Australians participating and excelling in sport, by:

- delivering key programs in line with the Australian Government's sport policy objectives;
- providing financial support and other assistance to national sporting organisations to deliver participation and high performance programs and to improve their capability, sustainability and effectiveness; and
- building collaboration, alignment and effectiveness within the Australian sport sector.

The ASC operates a number of programs specifically related to promoting sporting activities among Indigenous Australians. These programs are:

- the Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP) which provides grants for Indigenous sportspeople and their sponsoring organisations to meet certain travel and accommodation costs associated with participating in a state/territory or national team at a non-professional event; and
- funding and support provided to national sporting organisations to coordinate and deliver sport participation and development programs to increase the participation and quality of sport for Indigenous Australians. There are currently 14 national sporting organisations receiving such assistance.

Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP)

The EITAAP is funded by the Office for Sport and administered by the ASC to assist Indigenous sportspeople (athletes, coaches, officials and trainers) selected in mainstream (schools/clubs) representative sporting teams to attend national or international events and competition. In a given financial year, a successful applicant can receive grants for travel and accommodation expenses to a maximum of \$1,500 for eligible national championships; and / or \$4,000 for eligible international competitions. Total EITAAP grant funding is around \$600,000 annually.

This assistance is a practical means to support Indigenous people participating in mainstream sport at a high level. Feedback from recipients indicates that without the support of EITAAP few individuals, particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds, could afford the costs of representing their state/territory or Australia.

Participation funding to national sporting organisations (NSOs)

In 2011-12, the ASC allocated a total of \$20.5 million in ongoing and one-off funding to support participation initiatives in sports. This comprised:

- \$17.2 million for 51 national sporting organisations (including the Australian Paralympic Committee)
- \$1.1 million for eight national sporting organisations to assist people with disability, and

- \$2.2 million to support two year 'Participation Demonstration Projects' by eight sports.

The \$17.2 million includes \$11.4 million of 'new' funding provided under the Government's 'Pathway to Success' initiative. This was allocated to 30 national sporting organisations for activities to increase the numbers of Australians participating in sport.

Approximately 22 per cent of the new funding (about \$3 million) is specifically to support participation outcomes in targeted populations (Indigenous Australians, women, people with disability, and members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities).

Participation funding specifically for Indigenous Australians

Approximately \$850,000 of the 'new' participation funding is allocated to initiatives to support participation by Indigenous Australians. Many of these initiatives are part of a broader 'inclusive sport' approach being adopted by many of these sports.

Most of these sports also focus on and are conscious of the importance of increasing the participation of women and girls within their sport. Through the structure of each sport there is the opportunity for Indigenous women to develop as leaders through being on club committees or developing as coaches or officials.

The additional participation funding supports the following national sporting organisations with initiatives to support participation by Indigenous Australians:

TABLE 3: Participation funding to National Sporting Organisations

Sport	Brief description of participation initiatives targeted at Indigenous Australians
AFL	The AFL KickStart program uses Australian Football to promote healthy lifestyles in Indigenous communities. It includes Auskick and involves child, teenager and adult players as well as coaches and administrators. The AFL is enhancing community programs and regional carnivals with state affiliates including accredited training programs. The AFL will also develop a national U15 Carnival, and review the framework and location of the annual Qantas AFL KickStart Camp. The Club Partnership Program will engage a sixth AFL Club to partner the Katherine region in NT. The AFL also has a focus on women and girls participation in sport through creating programs and competition pathways. A number of Indigenous women and girls are involved as participants in these pathways.
APC	The Australian Paralympic Committee will develop specific classification information and resources for Indigenous Australians.
Athletics	Athletics Australia is implementing its 'Jump Start' and 'Athletics in the Outback' programs for Indigenous participants.

Sport	Brief description of participation initiatives targeted at Indigenous Australians
Basketball	Basketball Australia is providing opportunities for Indigenous Australians to participate in basketball at community level by: • connecting with Indigenous players, coaches and officials through community level opportunities, courses and tournaments; and • using basketball as a vehicle to advocate the importance of education, training and employment amongst Indigenous Australians primarily through the 'No School No Play' program and a planned MOU with Midnight Basketball Australia. Basketball is a popular sport for Indigenous females particularly in remote communities.
Cricket	Cricket Australia's Indigenous Cricket Strategy aims to have In2Cricket made accessible to regional and remote areas of Australia through more appropriate facilities and equipment. The Imparja Cup, which is a national Indigenous carnival conducted on an annual basis, has seen an increase in the number of female teams competing which suggests an increased interest in the sport for Indigenous women and girls.
Football	The Football Federation Australia's Indigenous Football Development concept has been significantly expanded to include a National Indigenous Football Festival focused on first time football players. FFA is involved in Implementing the Australian Government's 'No School No Play' program targeting Indigenous participants. Football is also a high participation sport for Indigenous women and girls.
Hockey	Hockey Australia plans to extend its Indigenous sport development initiative that began in 2002 with Queensland's remote and Indigenous/Islander communities. Delivery will extend across two additional states. The aim of the program is to increase the number of Indigenous participants involved in sustainable hockey programs. Hockey Australia is also working on a strategic approach for its Indigenous objectives.
Netball	Netball Australia aims to consolidate NetSetGO! as a sustainable introductory netball program nationally, and increase the number of people from diverse population groups in the program by 10 per cent. Netball Australia is also developing a national Indigenous participation strategy and the WA, SA, VIC and NSW state associations are introducing initiatives for Indigenous participants.
Rugby Union	Australian Rugby Union (ARU) aims to • grow engagement and involvement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in rugby at grassroots and representative levels; • leverage Indigenous leaders and heroes as role models and mentors to drive broader involvement of Indigenous youth and communities in rugby; • acknowledge and understand the cultural factors affecting Indigenous communities and provide opportunities to positively improve their life through rugby; and • implement other government Indigenous initiatives such as 'No School No Play' program; and 'Learn, Earn, Legend!'. Participation of Indigenous women and girls in the sport of rugby union has increased through the introduction of the Rugby 7's format. In the 2011 National Tournament 15 per cent of participants were female.
Rugby League	Australian Rugby League Development (ARLD) and Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council (ARLIC) are delivering participation programs that link to the overall participation strategy. Programs include the NRL All Stars concept, various programs under the 'Learn Earn Legend!', Parental and Community Engagement Programs and general participation promotion.

Sport	Brief description of participation initiatives targeted at Indigenous Australians
Softball	The Indigenous Softball Program is targeting a 15 per cent increase in the active participation of Indigenous Australians. Softball is a very high female participation sport for Indigenous women and girls. Through this sport women are able to take on leadership roles as competition coordinators, coaches and managers.
Surfing	Surfing Australia is working with its Member Associations to deliver sustainable programs and events for Indigenous communities. Surfing Australia is funding its state bodies to conduct five Indigenous participation programs nationally, with a minimum of 500 Indigenous participants.
Swimming	Swimming Australia has employed a National Indigenous Coordinator, based in Alice Springs, to drive and expand existing and new Swimming Australia Indigenous programs that will include Urban Swim Programs.
Tennis	Tennis Australia is: - delivering Coach Education intended to remove barriers to Indigenous participants participating in the new Tennis Programs 'Hot Shots' and 'Cardio Tennis'; and - implementing the Australian Government's 'Learn, Earn, Legend!' Program.
Touch Football	Touch Football provided grants to State Associations to implement programs to increase participation in targeted populations, including Indigenous Australians in 2011-12. Touch has a focus on increasing women and girls participation in the sport and has a number of Indigenous women involved as coaches and mentors.

Sport Demonstration Project

Through funding from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), a two-year Sport Demonstration Project (SDP) was completed in the Northern Territory in five Remote Service Delivery (RSD) communities (Nguiu, Gapuwiyak, Wadeye, Yuendumu and Gunbalanya). In 2010, the ASC provided \$550,000 to the Northern Territory Government to deliver the project in 2011- 2012.

Each of the five sites had a Community Working Party (CWP) identify its sporting needs. CWPs included Indigenous community and service providers (e.g. FaHCSIA Government Business Managers (GBMs), Active After-school Communities (AASC), schools, police, health services, NT Sporting Organisations and other government funded community organisations.)

Some of the key activities that occurred within each of the five regions are outlined in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Activities at Sport Demonstration Project sites

Area	Key activities	Funding
Nguiu (Wurrumiyanga)	Utilising the CWP, competitions in AFL, softball, basketball and cricket were established. These included coach and official education for identified community members and targeted women's competition opportunities.	\$85,000
Gapuwiyak	Utilising the CWP, competition opportunities were established in AFL, touch, softball, basketball, netball and rugby union. This community also identified opportunities to explore how sport can be promoted through social media to increase participation. This was also used as a reporting mechanism.	\$70,000

Area	Key activities	Funding
Wadeye	The Wadeye CWP identified AFL, softball and basketball as priorities. 'In school delivery' was trialled and the Community Sport & Recreation Officers used social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) to promote festivals and activities as this is how youth interact with each other. The CWP engaged providers to run: • courses where youth received qualified certificates to be able to use the gym; and • inclusive activities (Sports Ability) to engage more of the community.	\$70,000
Yuendumu	The Yuendumu CWP identified AFL, soccer, basketball and softball as priorities and focused on: • providing coaching courses utilising the AASC - Community Coach Training Program (CCTP); and • activities directed toward people with disability, making physical activity more fun and involving those not engaged. Sports Ability kits were delivered to Yuendumu.	\$70,000
Gunbalanya	AFL, softball and basketball were all priorities for the Gunbalanya CWP. The CWP engaged the state sports organisation and relevant providers to run competitions and provide opportunities for community members to develop coaching, officiating and sport administration skills. Gunbalanya used social media to promote festivals and activities which assisted communication during wet season.	\$70,000

Active After-school Communities (AASC) program

The AASC is a national initiative that provides primary school children with access to free sport and other structured physical activity programs in the after-school time slot of 3.00 pm to 5.30 pm.

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is not specifically an Indigenous sport program. However, it can have a substantial impact on Indigenous communities where it is operating. For example, the Carlton Aboriginal School in Port Augusta, South Australia, reports that it has approximately 20 per cent higher attendance on days when the AASC operates.

Contribution of Indigenous sporting programs to Closing the Gap targets

As noted above, the rate of Indigenous Australians participating in sport and physical activity is much lower than other Australians, which may be contributing to the differences in health status and life expectancy. Programs which increase access to sport and physical activities by Indigenous Australians will be beneficial therefore to Closing the Health Gap. The ISARP projects contribute with about two thirds of participants for 2012-13 expected to be aged under 18 and about one third expected to be female. These proportions are similar to those reported to date for projects undertaken in 2011-12.

The Australian Government's physical activity guidelines, *Active kids are healthy kids* for the 5 to 12 year age group and *Get out and get active* for the 12 to 18 year old age group, advise that children need at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the scientific evidence supports the overall conclusion that physical activity provides fundamental health benefits for children and youth. Appropriate levels of physical activity contribute to the physical development of children; their coordination; and the maintenance of a healthy body weight.

Moreover, physical activity has been associated with positive psychological benefits in children and young people⁹ by improving their control of symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as assisting in social development by providing opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, social interaction and integration.

There is also growing evidence that physical activity assists with learning and academic achievement. In May 2010, The University of Western Australia published a research paper *Brain boost: Sport and physical activity enhance children's learning*¹⁰ which reported that the large majority of university based, internationally published research in the field shows a positive association between children's physical activity participation and improved academic achievement.

The paper states that there is increasing evidence that replacing academic learning sessions with physical activity and sport does not have a detrimental effect on children's academic success or school grades. On the contrary, increased participation in sport and other forms of physical activity may optimise learning through enhanced cognitive function, memory, concentration and behaviour.

⁹ See for example, *Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, January 2012, article detailing a review of 14 academic studies on this issue.

¹⁰ Available from: <http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/brain-boost-sport-and-physical-activity-enhance-childrens-learning> Other papers referenced/available from: <http://www.achper.vic.edu.au/resources/research-reports-and-articles>.

Further to this, research results published in 2011¹¹, following a two-year longitudinal study conducted in Australian primary schools found that physical education taught by specialists in the school environment contributed to improvements in academic development, specifically for both numeracy and writing outcomes, and prevention of obesity in primary school children.

In this context, it is noteworthy that around two thirds of participants in ISARP funded sporting activities are reported to be children aged under 18 years. Another relevant program is the AASC. A report regarding the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School (which has 38 primary school students) illustrates the impact of this program.

As there is no structured club sport accessible in Oodnadatta, the Principal of the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School contributes funding out of his school budget to ensure the AASC program is delivered all year round, including the holiday periods. This illustrates the value of the AASC program and how it contributes to providing structure and stability to the community. Quite often, after an AASC session, you will find locals still playing basketball at the school up until 9:00 pm at night.

“This is a really important strategy (AASC program) in providing structured sport and regular exercise, team work and decision-making skills, whilst also preventing the youth from being involved in social issues, such as alcohol and substance abuse” said Oodnadatta Principal, Ned Loades.

Community members and high school students are being utilised as AASC trained Community Coaches, which in turn provides employment opportunities, leadership skills and empowers them to be positive role models within the community. The reliance on community members to take ownership over the program is an important approach taken by the locals and the Principal. Teaching staff have been trained in the past; however, with a high turnover rate this leaves the school in a vulnerable position when they leave. Therefore having local Indigenous community members and high school students deliver the AASC program is advantageous for all involved.

Sport has other, more indirect benefits in terms of increasing social inclusion, providing diversionary activities for young Australians, and helping develop teamwork and other personal skills, which can assist with long term success in employment and other aspects of life. All of these benefits contribute to achieving the Closing the Gap targets through improving the health and social inclusion of Indigenous Australians.

A recently completed report titled *The Impact of Indigenous Community Sports Programs: The Case of Surfing* investigated the social impact of sport and physical activity on the lives of Indigenous Australians and their communities. The report was the output of a three year research project conducted jointly by the ASC, the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation and the University of Queensland. Surfing Australia and some of its affiliates were consulted on the project.

¹¹ Richard D. Telford, PhD, Ross B. Cunningham, MS, Robert Fitzgerald, PhD, Lisa S. Olive, BS(Hons), Laurence Prosser, PhD, Xiaoli Jiang, PhD, and Rohan M. Telford, BS. Physical Education, Obesity, and Academic Achievement: A 2-Year Longitudinal Investigation of Australian Elementary School Children American Journal of Public Health <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300220>

The research project focused on five existing Indigenous surfing programs in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. It involved 98 participants who were involved in various capacities including as surfing participants, program providers and community members. Methodologies included face-to-face questionnaires, field notes, photographs, video footage, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (referred to as 'group yarns').

The key finding of this study was that surfing programs offer substantial potential for Indigenous people and their communities to form connections that may positively shape and influence their lives within and beyond surfing.

Further improvements in Sport and Active Recreation Programs for Indigenous Australians

The Office for Sport and the ASC continue to look for ways to enhance the effectiveness of Indigenous sport and active recreation programs.

As mentioned, the Office for Sport and the ASC are seeking to build relationships with state and territory sport and recreation departments to facilitate coordination, where possible, in various communities and regions.

It is also likely that the next funding round of the ISARP will prioritise applications promoting sport and active recreation for Indigenous women and girls. Available statistics indicate that the level of involvement in sport and physical activity is lower among Indigenous females than males and yet, notwithstanding the efforts of various organisations, at present the majority of Indigenous people assisted by sport participation programs are male.

Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP)

Assessment of applications

Each year the Office for Sport receives applications for grants totalling around four times the value of funds available. In the most recent round, the Office for Sport received 219 applications seeking funds totalling \$41.5 million for 2012-13.

In order to ensure that all information available about a proposal is considered, the assessment process includes referring the general details of grant applications to other Australian, state and territory government agencies that provide grants of a similar type.

There could be scope for increased efficiency if all government agencies adopted a similar approach so that information on grant applications for sport and active recreation activities, and grant approvals were shared.

The guidelines also provide scope for the Office for Sport to contact any applicant and seek further information if needed to facilitate the assessment process.

The guidelines provide that “Any person or organisation with a current Australian Business Number (ABN) can apply for funding. This includes community-based, not-for-profit organisations that can enter into a legally binding funding agreement with the Australian Government.” Applications from government bodies will only be considered if there is a clearly identified need for the project and there is evidence of the community consultation and support.

Entities funded under the ISARP include community organisations, national sporting organisations, state sporting organisations, privately owned organisations and local, state and territory governments.

The ISARP supports a whole range of activities from high participation sports (including cricket, football, netball, basketball, and athletics) through to traditional Indigenous games. The activities can include, but are not limited to regular training sessions and competing in regular (weekly) competitions. Activities that include lead up preparation and training and culminate in the attendance at carnivals, and competitions will be considered a higher priority than those activities that are, for example, one/two day carnival based.

Activities that are eligible for support include:

- sport and active recreation camps, including training camps, which focus on skill acquisition and development of coaching and/or officiating staff and participants
- one day or part-day sport and active recreation outreach activities that do not require accommodation for participants and are designed to increase participation of a target group which would otherwise not have access to such opportunities

- sport and active recreation competitions/carnivals, with priority given carnivals/competitions that could run annually or bi-annually and those that can demonstrate significant effort in raising funds from sources other than the ISARP. Such competitions/carnivals could be part of a broader program that aims to increase participation in sport on a regular basis rather than just provide a one-off event, and
- competitions / carnivals that incorporate capability building in lead-up activities - like accredited coaching and officiating / umpiring courses as well as volunteer management activities – are preferred. For example, an annual regional netball carnival that brings together Indigenous players from across a region and incorporates training and accreditation of coaches and officials would be considered a higher priority than an equivalent one-off carnival associated with a festival or other non-sporting event.

Projects attract stronger support if they:

- encourage wide community involvement and active participation in group sport and active recreation activities;
- build the skills of community members to participate in, organise and promote community sport and active recreation activities over the long term; and
- encourage alcohol and drug-free participation and respect for players, officials and spectators.

Subsidies for employment are available under the ISARP on the basis that the positions are directly involved in the support and or delivery of ISARP funded activities or projects or are entry level positions for those previously supported under the former Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation program or the Community Development Employment Program.

The ISARP may subsidise a range of positions including managers, coordinators, sport and recreation officers, team leaders, program and administrative support personnel to support specific ISARP funded project(s) and/or the delivery of sport and recreation activities and programs that are consistent with ISARP aims and objectives. Supported positions include entry level positions intended to assist people who would have been eligible under the CDEP to gain employment in the sport and active recreation industry.

Projects are assessed against the following criteria:

- extent to which they meet the aims and objectives of the ISARP;
- consistency between proposed outcomes and the Government's national and regional priorities
- effectiveness of the project in engaging and meeting the needs of the target group
- value for money
- ability to attract financial and other support from other sources
- strength relative to other proposals targeting the same or similar groups
- extent to which the proposal duplicates other activities
- the organisation's demonstrated ability to deliver activities of this type, including monitoring, recording and reporting on outcomes, and

- organisational commitment to long term sustainability and partnerships to support the on-going delivery of the activities.

Issues such as remoteness are not specifically mentioned in the criteria, but are intrinsically included through consideration of the aims and objectives of the ISARP and matters such as duplication of other activities since, in general, the needs in remote communities tend to be great and the availability of alternative activities is minimal.

Other criteria may be included to address emerging or topical government priorities, for example, projects that target Indigenous youth or Indigenous women. Organisations are alerted to such priority or target groups in documentation provided at the opening of the Annual Funding Round.

Assessments are undertaken throughout March to May with the aim of advising applicants of the outcome before the start of the financial year.

Where considered appropriate, multi-year funding agreements are considered for organisations that demonstrate financial viability and the capacity to sustain a high standard of service delivery for the period. Priority is given to organisations with a history of high quality performance. The Program Manager retains discretion to withdraw or vary a multi-year funding agreement if an organisation does not meet performance and / or financial reporting requirements.

Following assessment of all grant applications a considerable proportion of the applications are accepted. However, it is not unusual for the amount approved to be less than the amount applied for by the organisation. In these cases there is a period of negotiation with the organisation following approval in principle before the funding agreement is developed. The reduced funding can reflect acceptance of only some proposed activities or a judgement that, given available funds and competing applications, the organisation will be required to undertake activities at less cost or on a smaller scale.

Applications may also be assessed as suitable against all of the selection criteria yet not receive any funding due to the competitive nature of the program. In some cases, such applications may later receive some funding from the Flexible Funding Pool (FFP).