

# **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

## **Eleventh Assembly**

### **Sessional Committee on Sport and Youth appointed for the life of the Tenth Assembly**

## **VOLUME 1: SYNOPSES OF EVIDENCE TO THE COMMITTEE**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

GPO Box 3721, Darwin NT 0801

Prepared by the Committee Secretariat pursuant to the following resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 9 September 2008:

That this Assembly authorise the Committee Secretariat of the Assembly to -

A. Produce and publish the minutes of proceedings, all evidentiary materials, submissions received, records and working documents developed for the former Sessional Committee on Sport and Youth Inquiry into Delivery of Sporting Programs for the Territory's Youth during the Tenth Assembly; and

B. Present copies of this documentation to -

The Speaker for tabling in the Legislative Assembly and transmission to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Education and Minister for Youth

by the first sitting day in October 2008.

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## Department of Employment, Education and Training 28 February 2006

### Witness:

#### **Mr John Dove, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Schools**

Mr Dove outlined the unique arrangement by which DEET and School Sport NT interact:

School Sport has worked to me, insofar as it works to the Department, for the past five or six years and the Executive Officer of School Sport reports directly to me.

...

School Sport is run by the Sports Council, and that Sports Council is an incorporated association. It's made up of membership from across the NT and across both government and non-government schools.

...

Part of the Constitution they have is that they provide advice to the Chief Executive of DEET on the way in which things operate, and I think it is fair to say that the line between School Sport and DEET is not as clear as it could be or should be and that goes back to the point I was making about them being an incorporated association. It's a little bit difficult for us to be too dictatorial in the way in which we deal with them. We do, however, provide the bulk of their funding, so those things all have an impact on each other.

School Sport NT is also member of School Sport Australia, and we have three representatives on that, and Schools Sport Australia comes under MCETYA in terms of its funding and governance arrangements.

DEET provides the following staffing to School Sport NT: 1 x Executive Teacher 2; 1 x AO2. Salaries/personnel costs are about \$150,000 per annum. DEET also provides operational funding of \$440,000 per annum of which 50% is for relief teachers, 35% for travel subsidies and 15% for administration.

Mr Dove explained some recent changes to School Sport:

We, in the past couple of years, have asked School Sport to restrict the number of sports in which they are participating at both the Territory and the national level. The reason we did that was because schools were finding that it was the same students all the time participating in these sports. They would no sooner get back from one and they would be off on another. I think it's reasonable to suggest that the amount of time out that some of these students were having...was also very disruptive to their progress at school.

So we needed to get a balance. In looking for that balance, we also asked that they ensure that they pick up on the indigenous students and they pick up on the remote students...as a general rule, we've tried to encourage them to identify and conduct sporting programs that pick up on a broad cross-section of NT students.

Mr Dove explained some problems with the delivery of 2.5 hours of physical education in schools each week:

We've signed off on an agreement that we will provide two to two-and-a-half hours of physical education a week. I think if you have a look at the teaching force, we are getting into some fairly difficult situations. The average age of teachers is on the increase...and the bulk of the teaching profession in that increasing age group are women, and they are not inclined to be taking students out into the school grounds and exercising.

The other problem that we have is that schools do have a degree of control over the way in which they put themselves together staffing wise...some schools have an emphasis on music, some on languages, some might use a position for a physical education teacher. It will depend to some degree on the nature of the community in which they are working and the flexibility they can build into their staffing arrangements.

...

One of the things that's becoming increasingly a problem is asking people to undertake activities for which they are not trained. So while we may, in the community, have someone of good will coaching a football, netball or basketball team, in terms of putting children through a teaching program, people are very nervous about doing it without the appropriate training, ie a Physical Education background.

Of the government's 100 Additional Teachers policy, seven positions were created across the Territory and these became known as the Physical Education Co-ordinators (PECs) who divided their time 50-50 between physical education and School Sport NT.

Asked by Mr Mills about the potential for duplication between School Sport NT activities and peak sporting organisation activities, Mr Dove said:

There is a huge amount of room for co-ordination. There is a huge amount of room for rationalisation across this, and it's a matter of how we go there. We have started thinking about a review of School Sport, but, again...coming back to the governance arrangements, that probably needs to be a little more clearly defined.

If I were expressing a personal view, and I have presented this view to School Sport, we do need to get a lot more happening down at the school level and at the inter-school level. We need to get these kids participating more fully.

...

I'm being incredibly simplistic, but in terms of the population base of students, it [SSNT] is a pyramid. In terms of the effort and funding, it's an inverted pyramid....that's the aspect that concerns me about it...hopefully these additional Phys Ed teachers can do something about getting a lot more activity going on at the grass roots level, and encouraging kids to participate in sports both in the school and across the board.

Asked by Ms McCarthy about participation of students with a disability, Mr Dove said:

There is some participation in School Sport programs. The PSG [Pacific School Games] is the classic example where a number of kids went away with the PSG team with multiple disabilities, and participated in swimming and in athletics. That is always the way.

**Department of Local Government Housing and Sport  
28 February 2006**

**Witnesses:**

**Mr Mike Dillon, Chief Executive  
Ms Sylvia Langford, Deputy Chief Executive  
Ms Julie Brimson, Acting Executive Director, Sport and Recreation**

This was essentially an expansion of the material the Department had provided in writing to the Committee by way of background briefing.

It entailed details of programs and funding but, given the date that the evidence was given, that information is unlikely to be still relevant.

**Department of Health & Community Services  
28 February 2006**

**Witness:**

**Ms Tamie Devine, Project Officer, Nutrition & Physical Activity Unit**

This was essentially an expansion of the material the Department had provided in writing to the Committee by way of background briefing.

It entailed details of programs and funding but, given the date that the evidence was given, that information is unlikely to be relevant at this time

**School Sport NT  
28 February 2006**

**Witnesses:**

**Mr Brian Deslandes, President  
Ms Helen Taylor, Executive Officer**

This was background information provided to the Committee on the role and responsibilities, structure and operations of School Sport NT. Given that School Sport NT addressed and updated the Committee on 04 May 2007, the February 2006 material is considered to be out of date.

## Department of Correctional Services 10 August 2006

### Witness:

#### **Ms Mary Culhane-Brown, Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre**

Sport is a tool in a wider strategy that leads to diversion from antisocial behaviour and, therefore, a reduction in it. Ms Culhane-Brown informed the Committee that:

...most of the research does indicate that sport would have some impact on antisocial behaviour when it forms part of a larger, broader strategy.

Research was conducted in 2002 in three separate remote communities in the Northern Territory. The report arising from that research is called: *Investigating Indicators for Measuring the Health and Social Impact of Sport and Recreation Programs in Indigenous Communities* by Mary Beneforti and Joan Cunningham, published by Ausport.

There are three categories of antisocial behaviour according to the DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Psychiatric Disorders*) and other studies, such as The Australian Temperament Study (1983). They are: Low and No Antisocial Behaviour, Experimental Antisocial Behaviour and Persistent Antisocial Behaviour.

In 1983, The Australian Temperament Project commenced and it was a study of 2443 infants. The study has identified the persistent group to be 10% more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour at an early age of five or six. They are 25% more likely than the Low and No antisocial behaviour group, at the age of nine or 10 to commit antisocial behaviour and 50% more likely at the age of 11 or 12. So the study is showing us that antisocial behaviour, if it is to be persistent, would more than likely start at age five or six.

Experimental antisocial behaviour typically begins at age 12 to 13:

By age 13 to 14 at the developmental stage when most adolescents are being tested by their boundaries and building their role identity, the same progression will occur with antisocial behaviour... The study also indicates that many or most juveniles at that age will be experimenting with some level of antisocial behaviour, whether it be graffiti or shop-lifting at some level. That group also peaked at 40% at age 15 to 16 and then the graph goes down when they are 17 to 18 and their antisocial behaviour starts to abate.

Ultimately, what the temperament study indicated was that intervention is required at a much earlier age than current policies and practices. Intervention is required in quite young children for the Persistent or 'Career' Antisocial practitioner. In the Experimental or 'Part-Time' category, the intervention is required before they reach age 11, although the report noted that by their late teens, they become far more conformist.

In 1982, researchers came up with *What Works Methodology*. Static and Dynamic risk factors were identified. The static risk factors are those on which intervention will have no impact. These are (a) the onset of crime, (b) offence history and (c) family structure. Dynamic principles, however, could give rise to behavioural change. These include (a) substance abuse, (b) peer relations, (c) involvement in education, (d) sport and (e) employment.

Mental health is a major factor in juvenile (and adult) offending:

There is quite a high level of mental health issues involved in the juvenile detention, as indeed there are in adult correctional centres.

Sustained and regular mentoring by sporting people would be beneficial and complementary to the programs and work being carried out at the Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre:

A mentoring program involving sports people in the community would be very helpful.

Some training would be required for those volunteering as mentors:

...it is really not in-depth training. If you look at the Big Brother/Little Brother or Big Sister/Little Sister program, I think there is a basic module that gives people an understanding of what mentoring is and allows them not to become too involved and give them professional guidelines to follow in what mentoring is about and not actually linking too closely with the child. Yes, that would be very helpful most certainly.

Mr Bonson requested data collection from Don Dale inmates about whether they had been participating in organised sport on a regular basis prior to their incarceration. There are no statistics at present, but they could be easily gathered:

**Mr BONSON:** Is there a possibility of gathering that? I wouldn't be surprised if the majority of them probably haven't been participating in organised sports.

**Ms CULHANE-BROWN:** Yes, and we have the means now within our Case Management Unit, because one of the areas of assessment is their hobbies, sport and interests. We have only just started to deliver those to every young person, so there could be a collection of data easily taken from that.

The recurrent theme: lack of services and activities in remote communities. In 2005, the proportion of remote inmates at Don Dale was 70%. This is vastly disproportionate to the population base of the Northern Territory:

**Ms CULHANE-BROWN:** I think a lack of services, like you were saying in remote areas; there is definitely a lack. When we are doing our case plans, we try and do some exit plans, but often there is nothing to actually refer them to in remote communities. So it means we just have to send them home safe, including sport programs, too.

These Exit Plans are bound to fail for remote community people. In Don Dale, 90% of the population is Indigenous (again, grossly disproportionate to the population) and the recidivism rate was 67% in 2005. Of the total inmate population, 70% are from remote communities. The Committee questioned the cultural appropriateness of the setting at Don Dale (ie the design and function of the building are very urban, which is at odds with the population base it is attempting to serve). Further, the typical profile of an inmate at Don Dale would indicate that the majority of inmates have not taken part in any structured sporting activity prior to their incarceration.

Asked how effective detention is, Ms Culhane-Brown was not positive:

Don't forget, all the research says detention doesn't work; incarceration has no effect.

There was discussion during this evidence about Work Camps. The witness cautioned that it would be difficult to accurately place a facility outside of Darwin because of the volatile nature of Don Dale statistics. For example, the figures quoted above are averages for a year. However, the day before she gave evidence, 30% of the Don Dale population was from Darwin. Further, most of the inmates are short-stay people and the average is 30-odd days. This potentially presents logistical challenges for something like a cattle station in a remote area (ie getting inmates to and from that facility, etc).

## Office of Crime Prevention 10 August 2006

### Witness:

**Mr Stephen Farrawell**

The Crime Prevention Grants Scheme receives applications for in excess of \$1m in any given financial year. In reality, the budget for projects under the scheme is \$290,000 which allows for approximately 25 projects to be funded in a year.

On the whole, funding is one-off and not recurrent. The exceptions to the rule are Deadly Treadlies and the ARM Tour. Whilst the focus is on remote communities, without recurrent funding, the life of a diversionary program is finite.

Whilst OCP does fund some sport and recreational activities, the priority is proof that the activity will result in crime prevention, so the focus is on crime prevention rather than delivery of sporting programs to youth. Youth is the target of most of the funding.

Of provisions for young girls:

One of the other issues that has been rising increasingly is the lack of programs for young Indigenous girls, and that is coming out more and more in a lot of communities. There are a lot of things for the boys but not so much for girls. It is not just Sport and Recreation, it is a whole range of things, particularly in Sport and Recreation; there are far fewer opportunities for young women than there are there are for young men.

And:

I would say that at least 90% of the applications that we get are to divert young people from petrol sniffing or crowning or any substance abuse. That is the theme that keeps coming is diverting young people from substance abuse and vandalism, but substance abuse is the number one.

In communities, supervision and delivery of the program the subject of OCP funding usually falls to one individual, and usually the Sport and Recreation Officer in communities where they exist. In communities without SROs, responsibility falls to whoever generated the application in the first instance. In most cases, these individuals burn out quickly because they are responsible for many other jobs within the community.

# Northern Territory Police

## 25 August 2006

### Witnesses:

**Snr Sgt John Emeny, Divisional Officer, Crime Prevention Division**  
**Snr Sgt Kym Davies, Officer in Charge, Alice Springs Police Station**  
**Sgt Angela Stringer, Juvenile Diversion Unit**  
**Sgt Mary Ann Skelton, Acting Officer in Charge, Juvenile Diversion Unit**  
**Snr Sgt Tony Fuller, Officer in Charge, Nhulunbuy Police Station**

Sgt Emeny outlined the development and implementation of the Mobile Activity Centre, which:

...is a concept used in a number of jurisdictions, Tasmania in particular, where the PCYC doesn't have establishments throughout the state. It is a trailer that is loaded with sporting gear, games and a whole range of things and the PCYC take it to different locations.

Last year the PCYC in partnership with the Police and AFL NT prepared a MAC trailer and as part of the pilot program based in Katherine with the intent of taking the trailer to the various communities conducting sporting activities. Obviously football is one of the main activities but we are very conscious of the fact that we had to engage females in these sporting activities so there is basketball and softball equipment in the trailer.

...

The trailer is not just sporting equipment they also include electronic games that there're leisure activities as well for kids because not every kid wants to go and play sport, that's a fact of life. So there were activities that were outside of sport as well.

Sgt Emeny discussed individuals who are posted to remote locations and who organise sporting activities in order to reduce antisocial behaviour:

I take my hat off to guys...who do things off their own bat in their own time. There have been a number of cases where we have got individuals that have run sporting carnivals. We had a guy at Groote Eylandt who was a footballer. He got all of the kids involved in a football carnival but you couldn't play if you didn't go to school. The trouble is that he then gets transferred out of Groote Eylandt and the scheme falls flat on its face.

Sgt Davies reiterated what many other witnesses have said:

I don't think you can isolate sport and education in the remote areas. The education system as it stands now in the Northern Territory of trying to get Indigenous kids to school on a regular basis to provide reading, writing, arithmetic is a waste of space. You are expecting these kids, who don't have any real idea of the Anglo-Saxon way of education, to sit in a class room for six to eight hours a day and that's not working. We know that's not working.

I worked with Mick Bowden for a while in relation to trying to look at ways of getting kids to school using sport as a bit of a carrot. I think we could do well to look at the American college system, the scholarship system for African American kids, where [they have to reach] the recommended literacy and numeracy in the first instance but it also encourages good sportsmanship and a whole range of other things - not just sport itself, but the things that surround that.

Sgt Davies acknowledged that there is a requirement to target activities for girls in remote communities, as other witnesses have:

We have an ideal contact with Kickstart football program. Where I see that falls down is that it is a boys program, even though it is not specifically targeted at boys... I ran Northern Territory Softball for a number of years and softball is played in almost every community I have been to...We tried with Kickstart a few years ago to hook up with netball and it was just a pain. The netball mob were fantastic - they really tried but it just didn't take off.

Sgt Davies referred to the many organisations that compete for funding and noted there is little co-ordination:

I think that is one of the things that part of the lateral thinking from this committee really needs to look at how we can ensure that things like sport, education, health, well being of young people both mental and physical is all encompassing rather than have competing interests all the time.

Sgt Fuller endorsed the view and cited the example of Groote Eylandt:

Most agencies are busy looking after their own facilities...and most work independently of each other and are competing for funds and clients. There are different sporting bodies having training on the same days, like on a Tuesday or Thursday, and then Monday, Wednesday and Friday there's nothing.

These competing groups include, but are not limited to: CDEP, Police, public education, Corrections, youth groups, Health, Catholic Education, Sports and Rec, the YMCA and external groups such as NORFORCE. Sgt Fuller continued:

[we need to] get these people talking to each other and get them working: Scouts, you run your thing on Monday; Football, you run your thing on Tuesday; Sport and Rec, you run your thing Wednesday [which means] the kids have got something every day. Come school holidays, give them a program saying this is what we are going to run. Don't everyone go away on the school holiday break and expect all these kids to sit here and do nothing. Have someone work out who is going to stay behind and look after the kids who are left behind.

Sgt Davies highlighted the problem of confidentiality between agencies which prohibited discussion of an at-risk individual because each agency (for example, Health, Education and Police), all of whom identified the same individual as being at-risk, couldn't discuss the child's case and therefore could not effect a co-ordinated method of addressing his needs. Sgt Fuller again cited to the Groote Eylandt case:

We did this on Groote Eylandt. The role of the Coordinator [was to] liaise with all youth services, identify and assist youth at risk and that's where we had this confidentiality issue going to the schools...which said: 'We want to help, but we can't'.

# Northern Territory Institute of Sport

## 20 February 2007

### Witnesses:

**Dr Ian Ford, Acting Director**  
**Mr Gordon Clarke, Manager, Sport & Business Programs**  
**Mr Sean Cooke, Manager Sports Programs**  
**Mr Steve Rossingh, Acting Executive Director, Sport & Recreation**

Clearly, the Institute caters for elite athletes in the Northern Territory.

NTIS was established in 1996 and provides a range of services to high performance and other athletes (for example, access to facilities). The Institute provides financial support to high performance athletes by way of scholarship and associate scholarship for potential elite athletes.

There is no doubt about the NTIS' success: from 1997 to 2007, the Institute has managed 850 scholarship holders, which has resulted in seven Olympians (3 medals), seven Paralympians (3 medals) eight Commonwealth Games athletes (11 medals), seven World Championship athletes, 17 National League club representatives and 273 national squad representatives.

The Institute provides services that are not readily available elsewhere in the Territory, develops role models and recognition of sport, provides full-time professional coaching, provides expertise in coaching and sports science/medicine, provides capacity building among sporting organisations and provides specialist facilities. It is the National Heat and Training Acclimatisation Centre, which was an initiative of NTIS and Charles Darwin University.

Services include:

- high performance management;
- professional coaching;
- sports physiotherapists;
- biomechanist & skill acquisition specialist;
- performance and health analysis;
- strength and conditioning;
- sports physiotherapy and sports medicine;
- nutrition;
- sports psychology;
- career and education advice; and
- research and development.

Facilities, which are not exclusively for high performance athletes and can be accessed by others by arrangement, include a modern weight training facilities, sports science laboratories including a climate chamber, sports medicine consulting, a treatment room, a recovery centre, conference and meeting rooms and administration and office accommodation.

Current sports in the program are: Australian football, cricket, hockey, netball, rugby league, rugby union, cycling, Olympic weight lifting, tennis and ten-pin bowling.

The current budget is \$2.2m of which \$2m comes from the NT Government and about \$178,000 from national and NT sporting organisations to support their sport/athletes. \$11,500 comes from the federal government and sponsorship of \$7500 from the Carbine Club and \$2500 from Centrebet to run the Southern Region Sports Awards annually.

The Australian Institute of Sport recently announced a \$20m talent identification package (with London Olympics in mind). Part of that will be used to fund an Indigenous Talent Identification Officer at NTIS.

Mr Clarke encapsulated the evidence of other witnesses in relation to the potential duplication between School Sport NT and peak sporting organisation at national age championship level:

Some NTIS sports choose not to participate at the NT School Sport level as their age group of competition does not fit that of the athlete pathway with the national sporting organisation.

The Institute has an Athlete Careers/Education Officer who arranges with individual schools for students to complete Year 12 over an extended period (two or three years) in order to accommodate both education and sporting commitments.

Asked about future challenges, Dr Ford said:

One of the major challenges is...to secure funding and continue at least current levels of funding in order to provide the current level of services. We are in the area of elite sport and it is really cutting edge stuff. New things are coming out and research is suggesting new ways of doing things, so being on top of those issues is a real challenge – that is, being able to have the resources to stay across those and deliver leading edge services.

Future initiatives of the NTIS (at that time) were:

- regional Academy system to provide talent identification and pathways (through schools, sporting orgs and local government bodies);
- role model programs;
- links with Asia (opportunities for NT athletes to compete in Asia under reciprocal Arafura Games arrangements); and
- additional purpose-built facilities to overcome demand and existing capacity.

Any expansion would require a corresponding increase in the NTIS operational budget.

## School Sport NT 4 May 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr John Cooper, President,  
Ms Helen Taylor, Executive Officer**

This is the second time SSNT has given evidence to the Committee and is about 12 months later than the first time. On the last occasion, Brian Deslandes was the President (and had been for many years) so there has been a changing of the guard.

At the outset, Mr Cooper talked about SSNT's Mission Statement which refers to 'all students' being involved in SSNT (meaning public and private schools, home-school kids, etc). The Committee has been made aware that this is not the case because (a) School Sport is not compulsory in schools; and (b) physical education is not compulsory in primary schools.

SSNT is still billeting children on SSNT trips, yet other evidence points to their trips being dearer than peak organisation trips which include motel accommodation and three meals per day. This is apparently because SSNT students also have to cover the cost of a relief teacher for the teachers accompanying the teams (who do stay in motels and who are not qualified coaches).

SSNT is part of a national program and it was Mr Cooper's evidence that MCEETYA is the approving body.

So we have got connections right through from School Sport Australia to MCEETYA and that is where a lot of the approvals happen at the MCEETYA level for School Sport Australia to take place.

That being the case, representations need to be made through MCEETYA about significant reforms to the School Sport program and attitude throughout the country.

This exchange is about where SSNT sits in relation to DEET within the government structure, how it is funded and what is funded:

**Mr KIELY:** But they are not answerable...

**Ms TAYLOR:** No, not to DEET. Because School Sport NT is an incorporated body, the members of that incorporated body, through their fund-raising and their components, run a parallel volunteer program alongside the Government DEET structure.

**Mr BONSON:** My understanding is one of the issues with School Sport NT is the special, maybe not the right word, but the relationship that you have with DEET in terms of not being inside DEET but the incorporated body and industry. Talking 'what was all that about' in terms of the fund-raising aspect of it. So no doubt we will get to that part...

**Mr COOPER:** The DEET model is not uncommon. It is across Australia and other states have the similar model and what you are asking questions about now, is really probably one of the areas this diagram might not define too well. If you took the yellow out of it, out of your thinking, they are the volunteer people in the yellow. The green people are the paid people. Above the line, they are the people paid by DEET and the one you asked about Len; the office is all it's own little framework and they are not all paid by DEET. There is only one person who gets paid by DEET plus Helen. They give us an annual grant which we then use for other purposes as best we can at the moment and that grant is accountable against goals that NT DEET sets us. So in fulfilling those goals we have employed other people to deliver the program and assist the program a little bit at the cluster level.

**Mr KIELY:** I have been looking at the office structure in regard to positions that are funded by DEET...

**Ms TAYLOR:** Well my position as Executive Officer and then there is an AO2 under that position.

**Mr KIELY:** So you are the ET2 are you?

**Ms TAYLOR:** I am an ET2.

**Mr KIELY:** And you are getting 'JES'ed.

**Ms TAYLOR:** That is what we are looking at 'JES'ing.

**Mr KIELY:** Just to an ET3?

**Mr COOPER:** We are thinking four or five, Len.

**Mr KIELY:** Are you? Well I would be interested to have a look at the change in roles and responsibilities from the additional you are doing now...

**Mr COOPER:** Our problem with that is it has never been measured. The duty statement goes back to the 90s. It hasn't been really evaluated for many years.

This suggests that (a) SSNT could well be seen as a law unto itself and considers the funding from DEET to be a 'grant'; and (b) that it is an aged and dated organisation, given that a Duty Statement sits in the 1990s. Again, the 'model' is Australia-wide, which implies that the matter should be addressed through MCEETYA.

Mr Cooper referred to 'qualifications' of volunteers:

The difficulty we have is explaining just that, because the volunteers while they are working in our area looking after students perhaps in Sydney. We have a duty of care to train them on how to look after kids; make sure they have got qualifications to take kids away ie. That it requires a set of qualifications when they apply for the position.

In later evidence, Mr Cooper said:

As for the training; volunteers can be teachers. They might be other public servants not just from DEET but they could be just mums, parents, shop assistants - anybody can apply to be on our program. Teachers usually get first option because they have already got a lot of knowledge of how to work with kids. Then before any of them take part in the program, the training program is organised. The officials have a training program. That is where Helen can oversee their preparation of those costs per kid. So there are workshops where they come and prepare that together as the team of officials and that is a fair amount of work. Also we expect those crew to have a number of qualifications between them. First aid and coaching options and so forth in that particular sport.

Evidence from peak sporting organisations consistently reiterated that such 'qualifications' do not include sporting knowledge or coaching qualifications.

Over the past 12 months, some changes have occurred. They are:

...where six positions were created for Phys Ed in schools and they were allocated to support clusters in primary school Phys Ed and those people have got a percentage of their job relates to supporting school sport at the cluster level.

Mr John Cooper

That is, PECs (Phys Ed Co-ordinators) have been appointed to each cluster (with two Central Australian clusters being merged and having only one PEC between Elliott and Alice Springs). The PEC job descriptions are 50% delivery of physical education advice/liaison and 50% SSNT delivery.

The role of SSNT is not clear, nor is it intuitive in the sense that it does something concrete from which results can be monitored. For example:

...we have no role, as in direct responsibility for; but our program certainly has an influence because people then go and do things at their school and inter-school sport locally, to make sure they are part of our development program.

Kids want to play for their cluster; kids want to play for the interstate program; so School Sport NT area itself does not have any responsibility at the school level. That is where these PE Coordinators that DEET has employed, their role to DEET is to increase physical education in the classroom

and to assist teachers; the errant ones or the recalcitrant ones or the ones who know what they are doing, whatever; in the physical education area...

Ms Helen Taylor

This is precisely the problem that peak sporting organisations identified with SSNT:

**Mr KIELY:** Does the Football Federation or the NTRL or the NT AFL or the Hockey Association come on board? As I understand it, you have got the teachers' representing their type of schools as part of the cluster. If one from this pops up in to the council board, they help formulate the program...do they have any representation from these clubs or sporting organisations which have high junior participation rates, so that you get some sort of dove tailing of - - -

**Ms TAYLOR:** No, not on our representative because we are an education group. They are teachers that make those decisions about what teaching program [that is, which sports are played] is within the School Sport NT program.

This is a bone of contention with the peak sporting organisations. Later in her evidence, Ms Taylor said:

Because we are an education program and our program is curriculum based, the type of sport is not the most important component. The delivery of a vehicle to allow kids a participation process is. So currently the sports that are on our program, these are the sports that are played by kids across the Territory and are run by teachers across the Territory. So therefore when we have an Australian football championship, every kid across the Territory can access that.

However, when selecting teams for competitions, the best athletes are selected, although some selections are linked to school attendance. Ultimately, it is an elite program from the ground up. Each cluster will select the best athletes to represent that cluster. From the NT championships, the best athletes are selected to represent the NT at interstate championships. This is exact replication of what the peak sporting organisations do in relation to their age-championships. The difference is that peak sporting organisations provide qualified coaches and have access to highly skilled professionals in various areas (from sports medicine to fitness testing and coaching, administration).

The range of sports offered by SSNT depends on facilities throughout the Territory. For example:

In November we set the calendar for the year ahead, that is one of the major bits of business. When we determine which sports we will have and we have reduced that number for this period of time. We ask those sports to give us a presentation on why their sport should be in our program. We also have a set of criteria why we should put a sport in the program. Last time it was how many clusters can run that sport for instance we wouldn't want to be running just in Alice Springs and Darwin because they have got great hockey grounds, so where there was no hockey grounds available we thought we can't really support hockey at this stage, because Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and other outlying areas would never have a chance to be playing hockey at that level. So hockey didn't get a guernsey with something as simple as that.

Mr John Cooper

Of costs and billeting:

**Mr KIELY:** So if a kid goes and pays \$1400 up front, they climb on the plane and fly off and they don't have to worry about anything else?

**Ms TAYLOR:** Nothing. They are billeted when they go away in some of our states. If the students are not billeted then you have to add accommodation on top of that and the food cost, which is the second part of our argument for billeting. Billeting, we believe, is crucial to our program. Not just for cost but for the value they get from it. But cost is a huge carrot when you are talking to a parent who is already paying \$1500 and then you have got to add another \$200 on that to be fed and watered and bedded for a week.

Note there is no mention of a fee or cost to cover relief teachers who are assuming the teaching role of those who travel with interstate teams.

Of club and peak sporting organisation involvement in School Sport NT, Mr Cooper said:

If a Brothers rugby league team has got a couple of Brothers youngsters involved in going away, then Brothers will support their youngsters. The same with netballers or tennis players. Often there is more sponsorship in the sense that the club or where the kids are also doing other sporting activities comes to the party. So not just knocking on the MLA's doors, but they go to their clubs and their sporting groups...

That is probably an honest interpretation on Mr Cooper's part, however the peak sporting organisations have made it clear that their people are involved to ensure a certain standard of coaching and quality in teams. Further, it was the evidence of NT Rugby League that they donate \$17,000 to SSNT on an annual basis and that money is never acquitted to Rugby League – they have no idea how the money is spent, and there is no guarantee that it is spent on Rugby League teams. It could, for example, be treated as 'sponsorship' and distributed between various sporting teams. Ms Taylor adds that money is received from the Australian Rugby League, but said nothing about the \$17,000 from NTRL:

...some of our sports are very supportive of the school sport program – so much so that some will provide direct funding. For example, the Australian Rugby League believes that junior development is so important to their game that in the school system, School Sport NT, the rugby league boys here are given \$6000 from the ARL through the NTRL for those guys to participate.

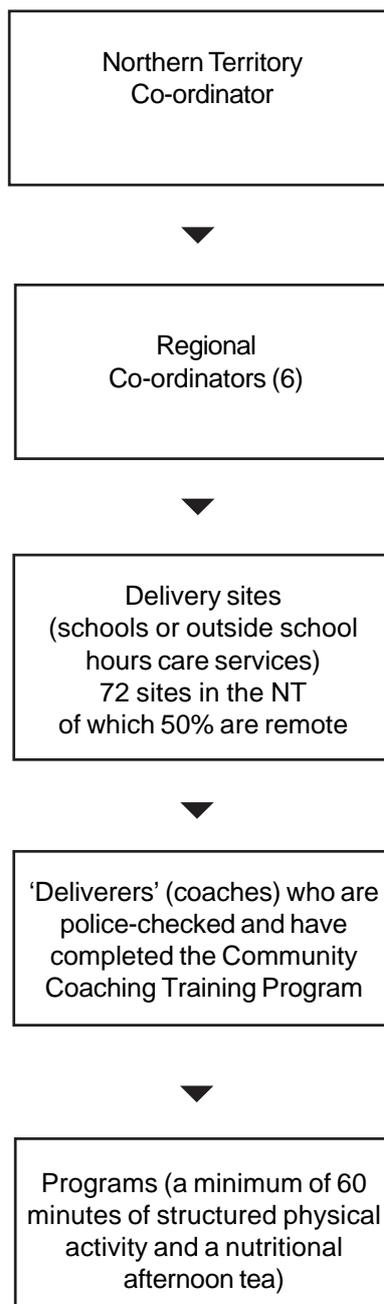
# Active After-School Community Program

## 31 July 2007

### Witness:

**Mr David Brabham, Active After-School Community Program**

The Active After-School Community Program is federally funded through the Australian Sports Commission and was extended to the year 2010 in the 2007 Federal Budget. It operates like this in the Northern Territory.



It appears that each site operates an activity or program each school day afternoon (or morning, as is the case at Shepherdson College where it is held in conjunction with the Breakfast Program). Estimates are that there are 42 kids per site per afternoon, which equates to 2800-3000 children per week taking part.

Some 'deliverers' are Development Officers from the peak sporting organisations. Some are teachers who have undergone Community Coaching Training (AASC has provided funding to DEET for this purpose).

These appear to be very good programs, which tend to provide pathways to sports once the kids have found their niche through trying a range of sports.

...a local club, Anula Family Karate Club, we have had a young man deliver for us for well over 18 months; very popular, just through his involvement with the program, there has been a number of children that have gone and joined that particular karate club.

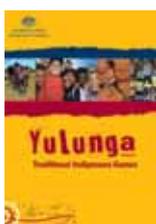
Participation is voluntary so the programs are most likely to attract kids who are confident about participating in physical activity rather than those who are not. However, AASC specifically asks teachers to identify children who are not physically active and then target them:

...our main aim at the start is to get kids who are traditionally inactive participating in our program. That is why we are relying on teachers in schools to try and identify those kids, but the program is available to all kids.

AASC has its Community Coaching Training Program, which all deliverers must undergo (along with criminal history checks, etc) before they are qualified to deliver programs. They have a variation of this program tailored for Indigenous communities and deliverers. This would be worth pursuing in more detail. It seems to have been quite successful, with Mr Brabham citing successes in Minyerri, Shepherdson College, Canteen Creek and communities west of Docker River.

Apropos the paragraph above, the Australian Sports Commission has developed an excellent resource, launched in July 2008:

### **Traditional Games**



Yulunga\* is a new online activity resource of over 100 traditional Indigenous games created to provide all Australians with an opportunity to learn about, appreciate and experience aspects of Indigenous culture.

Suitable for children and adults of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, Yulunga can be used in schools around Australia as an educational resource and as a guide to inclusive, structured sport within communities.

The link to the full Yulunga resource is available below (before printing, please note that *Yulunga* is a 260 page document), alternatively the individual games are also available on this page.

*\*Yulunga means playing in the language of the Kamilaroi (Gamori) people of northern-western New South Wales.*

The URL is: <http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all/indigenous/games>

Featured in *Yulunga* are the following categories of games: Bat and Ball (14), Hide and Seek (6), Inside (9), Other Games (16), Skipping Games (5), Spinning Games (5), Tag Games (9), Target Games (13), Water Games (15), Wrestling Games (8), Ball Games (32).

The passage below seems to go to one of the central problems in relation to all three Terms of Reference: there is no integrated or strategic approach to the delivery of programs in schools at all.

**Mr BONSON:** One last question, so there needs to be a closer relationship with the education structure in the mainstream urban areas and remote areas?

**Mr BRABHAM:** Yes, absolutely. Our program has a State Advisory Committee and we have representatives from DEET, from Sport and Recreation, from Commonwealth Departments of Health and Education as well so we do try and work our relationships. When we plan strategically, we try as much as possible to get buy in from different departments so that they are a part of the program as well. Then we are achieving our outcomes and they are achieving their outcomes. As you know with something like this, there is always more you can do.

Evidence tends to point to the issue of what happens in schools coming down to the *who you know* principle. This witness could have been talking about School Sport NT or he could have been representing a peak sporting organisation:

A lot of it comes down to who is in the school at the time, if there is interest from the principal or the school council, or the person who runs the after-school care.

...

In towns, it is usually up to the school council to decide, and that is certainly the view that DEET has taken. We try to make it spread across government schools and independent and Catholic schools as well so the spread is as equitable as what we can make it.

# Association of Children with a Disability NT

## 31 July 2007

### Witness:

**Mr Bruce Young-Smith**

Mr Young-Smith referred to a program called the Sports Ability Program:

Inclusion: youth with disability want to join in, most of them desperately. The NT should be commended for promotion, implementation and inclusion practises with NT sporting bodies such as the Sports Ability Program. Yet I do believe what is being done is not enough to change the status quo in any meaningful way.

This program is a product of the Australian Sports Commission, the details of which appear below (extracted from their web site): [http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all/disability/sports\\_ability](http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all/disability/sports_ability)

### **Sports Ability**

Creating sporting opportunities for people of all ages and abilities

Sports Ability is a national program designed to increase the participation levels in sport and physical activity of people with disabilities in a structured, safe, inclusive and fun environment. Initially, funded via the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund from 2004- 2007, Sports Ability is now an ongoing program managed nationally through the Disability Sport Unit.

Sports Ability has two main aims to provide:

- those working in a physical activity and sport setting with more ways of including people with disabilities
- a means for people with and without disabilities to interact in a sporting environment.

Sports Ability is appropriate for everyone, including:

- people with or without disabilities
- young people through to senior citizens.

What does Sports Ability consist of?

There are three elements of the Sports Ability inclusive games program including:

- equipment for five inclusive games (three of which are Paralympic sports)
- resource material, consisting of easy-to-use activity cards and instructional DVDs
- training, which is available in each state and territory via state departments of education or through the Disability Sport Network. Sports Ability training provides participants with an opportunity to learn about all the activities and how they promote inclusion. Workshops are easy to organise, not expensive and are practical and fun.

### **Sports Ability Games**

The Sports Ability program is based around five inclusive games, these games can be used developmentally or to provide new pathways in disability sport. These games include:

- **Boccia** - a bowls-type target game played at the Paralympics; suitable for all abilities, and provides an ideal vehicle for inclusion
- **Goalball** - a Paralympic sport developed for players who have a vision impairment. It is an exciting invasion game that introduces new challenges to both sighted and vision impaired players.
- **Sitting volleyball** - a Paralympic sport for players for whom standing volleyball may not be an option. As all players remain seated during play, sitting volleyball is an excellent inclusive game.
- **Polybat** - an accessible version of table tennis, particularly useful for young people who have coordination and control impairments. Polybat can also be used to introduce younger children to table tennis.
- **Table cricket** - a dynamic table version of cricket for players of all abilities, but specifically those with complex or higher support needs. It retains the three main elements of cricket - batting, bowling, and fielding - as well as most of the key rules.
- **Traditional Indigenous Games** - five traditional games have been included and can be adapted

and modified to suit all abilities. These games have their origins in the Torres Strait, Central Australia, Northern New South Wales and Southeast Queensland.

### **Schools Program**

Sports Ability is currently being delivered nationally in over 250 educational settings including special education schools, primary schools, secondary schools, TAFE and universities.

Sports Ability is very easy to use and flexible in its delivery and is currently used in the following ways:

- curriculum support to existing PE and sport programs
- out-of-school hours learning - AASC
- the basis for inclusive games festivals
- inter-school sports competitions and inclusive carnivals
- as a tool for developing leadership and mentoring programs.

### **Community Program**

Sports Ability can be used to develop community based inclusive club programs and is currently being delivered in some of the following areas:

- YMCAs and PCYCs
- local community centres
- respite care
- day option programs
- aged care facilities.

### **How can I purchase a Sports Ability Kit?**

Sports Ability equipment can now be purchased exclusively through [Modern Teaching Aids \(MTA\)](#). The cost of the kit is \$1999.90 (GST exclusive) and includes sports equipment for five inclusive activities, activity cards, instructional video and a boardmaker CD. Please click for a full list of [contents](#). To order please contact Modern Teaching Aids on 1800 251 497 (FREECALL) or [sales@teaching.com.au](mailto:sales@teaching.com.au)

Speaking about the program, Mr Young-Smith continued:

While these workshops may provide a level of leadership of the law and expectation of the overall community, practicalities get in the way - and this is the thrust of my paper, saying what is needed, as I see it, is that we need a lot more volunteers and funding towards disability and the volunteers are the key as I see it.

This is contrary to the general thrust of evidence. Volunteers are becoming hard for any organisation to find, never mind an army of them required to train in and conduct sporting activities for disabled children, either in a mainstream environment or out of it. Mr Young-Smith expanded on the requirement for volunteers:

Any organisation that did try and provide for specific requirements of disability would be right behind the eight ball, and I can understand that, being involved in Riding for the Disabled. If you run a horse riding class and there is a couple of clubs around, what do you need for six kids on ponies riding around the ring? One coach. Fine, there is an hour lesson. We have one organiser who runs the show. In Riding for the Disabled, you have six students, you would need 18 support workers - one on either side of the horse – this is not for everyone but for a good majority of the people with disability because they have got to stop the kids from falling off the horse, plus someone to help lead the horse.

In addition to that you have got the coach. By OH&S rules, the coach has to be on the paddock all the time so you need somebody to take the money from the parents and such to look after and administer things from behind the scenes.

With a pony club, the kids do the grooming. With physically or intellectually incapacitated kids,

kids with disability, they can't necessarily do the grooming so somebody has got to groom the horses, water them and put the saddles on and off so that means even more. For a class of six, you could be looking at 24 volunteers per hour for an hour class. That is a high consumption risk on participation.

Later in his evidence, Mr Young-Smith concedes that volunteers are very difficult to recruit and retain:

With incentives; how do you get volunteers? Sporting organisations nation wide have trouble recruiting and retaining skilled volunteers. Consequently they are premium in most organisations. To have much of their creative training capacity applied to youths with disability would send some of those organisations to wall. When I was involved in rugby league, I was pretty much a committee of one and it wasn't easy to get things done. I think you will find there are a lot of organisations around town, club organisations, where one person or maybe a couple will run the whole show. It has been that way for many, many years. This produces burn-out and it's quite a problem and people just move away all together.

He provides some suggestions for recruitment of volunteers:

A system needs to be adopted whereby those organisations implementing youth with disability aligned programs are given extra support in training and promoting volunteers to make volunteering more attractive to the new volunteers and the retention of new ones. This could include but not be restricted to organisations being funded for volunteer training courses in formal/informal and, as I say, not just what is the law, but this is how you really include someone, this is how you could change a skill set from bouncing the ball as you do in basketball to back-spinning it, so that it jumps back into your lap as you are up and down the basketball court in wheelchair basketball. Maybe car allowances to enable those people to provide support to get youth with disability to and from their sporting events and/or training. Uniforms: just to give them an incentive. These are all just a suggestions - special concessions for whatever.

On the subject of the Sports Ability Program, Mr Young-Smith said:

The workshops that have been provided, as I say, provide practical understanding of law and expectations, but more than that is needed and that is a cultural change through the sporting organisations that are around. A lot of it is because they just don't understand or expect that children with disabilities want to participate. That is the main thing.

It may be that a cultural change is required, however the Duty of Care for a disabled child in an able-bodied sporting competition vastly overshadows the Duty of Care for other participants. Further, it is not unreasonable to expect that a coach, manager, umpire, etc, where a disabled child is involved, should reasonably be expected to have some level of expertise in dealing with disabled children and this may not be a realistic expectation. There are potentially complicated legal issues associated with assuming care for a disabled child in any environment, much less a competitive sporting one that often involves body contact.

Mr Young-Smith said:

[my daughter's] school will often be approached by various sporting organisations who want to come in and advertise their sport. I will not go into the names of the organisations, but I have jumped up and down and I do realise it is not necessarily only the organisation, there are responsibilities of the educators to do various things, but when a sport comes along to a school and, yes, they want to teach most kids all about how to play cricket – excellent! What I would like to see is that when they have these kids batting in the nets or whatever, there is some sort of provision for kids with disabilities that would be able to provide for that, aside from the fact it is the law that they have got to do it.

The nub of Mr Young-Smith's position is:

I will re-emphasise my recommendation: there should be an active coordinated program for attraction of volunteers to assist sport and recreational organisations, include youths with disability in sport and recreation and not just in Riding for the Disabled, wheelchair basketball, and there are a couple of swimming clubs that have been developed with government funding, but in mainstream sporting activities, it would be good if that could be adopted. It would be my vision, and I have said to the people at the Department of Education on working with them on a disability policy, that there should be no need for a disability policy. It would be wonderful if there wasn't. Similarly, it would be wonderful if there wasn't a need for things like special clubs for riding and swimming for kids with disabilities if they were integrated into the mainstream community. To enable that sort of thing to happen, organisations that provide specifically for youths with disability should be encouraged to do so to the extent of appropriate extra funding to enable these things to happen.

Asked for his views on Mr Grace's suggestion for a dedicated Disabled Sports Officer within DEET, Mr Young-Smith didn't completely agree. He said:

...having somebody to go around, yes, it would be very good. I come from the point of view that I believe that depending on where the person came from, if it was based in Sport and Recreation, I would believe it much more appropriate. I would have concerns that such a person in the Department of Education would not necessarily retain all the funding that was required over a long period, yet because it is Sport and Recreation's mainstream bag to provide that, I would see it as a better place to be for such a person to be placed.

Later in his evidence, however, he appeared to welcome the notion:

As Paul [Grace] advocated, someone like an education disability person or a sports disability person would be excellent and not necessarily just as a general sports thing, but aimed directly at schools, would be excellent because that person would be able to go out and identify kids. Kids have got to go to school; so they are all at school, one school or another. So there might be only two or three kids in Wulagi School or maybe one dozen, for instance, where my daughter goes, that have a disability and some of those would be pretty marginal disabilities. But you might spend one day there and one day at each of the mainstream schools around town. Maybe you have to spend four days at Namarluk or Henbury or the annexes out at Palmerston, etcetera. They may have to spend more time there advocating with their parents; those kids trying to sell the product to those kids, getting them involved. That would be excellent.

Mr Bonson asked whether physical education was compulsory at Namarluk and Henbury Avenue Schools. Mr Young-Smith was unable to answer definitively but said he thought not.

Asked by Mr Mills about how to attract the volunteers so desperately needed, Mr Young-Smith suggested a payment regime such as reimbursement of fuel costs or perhaps even fuel vouchers.

## **Chronic Preventable Disease: Middle-Ear Infection**

### **31 July 2007**

#### **Witness:**

#### **Mr Damien Howard, Psychologist**

Mr Howard has been researching middle-ear disease, which he has found is an obstacle to children participating in sport and, therefore, a contributor to anti-social behaviour. He said:

Middle-ear disease is the most common reason that young children visit their doctor and around about 30% of children in mainstream Australia have middle-ear disease and hearing loss at any point in time, but that rises to around 90% amongst Indigenous students in remote communities.

...

Sometimes the ear drum perforates and that leads to runny ears. People who have been in remote communities would have seen lots of kids with runny ears. It is very much a disease of disadvantage. Approximately one-third of children in mainstream schools have it at any point in time amongst younger children; 90% of Indigenous kids and higher numbers amongst very young pre-school kids.

Mr Howard said the disease is communicable and there are specific reasons contributing to this:

In particular, crowded housing leads to the bacteria being passed around so more kids have it. It is very much associated with crowded housing, poor nutrition and limited access to health care. That is why all around the world in communities that have a high level of disadvantage, they have a high level of middle-ear disease. Indigenous communities in Australia, and particularly remote communities, have the highest incidence of anywhere in the world.

Note that Australia has the highest rates of this infection in the world. This is yet another example of chronic preventable disease which is easily treated. Loss of hearing for indigenous children is significantly higher than for non-Indigenous children:

...estimated that non-Indigenous kids in Australia up until age 19 on average experience about three months of conductive hearing loss related to middle-ear disease. The equivalent figure for Indigenous kids is 2.5 years.

There has been little attention paid to middle-ear disease as a contributory factor to anti-social behaviour, which arises from extended periods of inability to hear and, therefore, an inability to communicate effectively:

...generally, this is an invisible piece of the puzzle. People haven't really focused on how conductive hearing loss related to this middle-ear disease contributes to a whole range of areas of Indigenous disadvantage and it is particularly strongly associated with anti-social behaviour and contributes as an obstacle to participation in sport.

There is an ongoing cycle of disadvantage where you get poor ear health contributing to social outcomes of ear disease such as low educational outcomes, poor employment outcomes; which then contribute to the same factors that contribute to more ear disease. So you have got a cycle going on that is quite nasty in terms of it perpetuating the problems.

There is a behaviour profile of children who suffer from hearing loss:

The behaviour profile of kids with hearing loss which is: they often have low self-confidence, feel that they are dumb, are often very disruptive when they are unable to cope with verbal communication, use avoidance strategies when unsure of what to do or fear they may fail.

In reference to the previous witness' evidence, Mr Howard said:

I suspect one of the obstacles to Indigenous children participating in those sports programs is hearing loss, that their comfort in participating and knowing what to expect and knowing that they will succeed in participation probably means that the kids with hearing loss are more likely to avoid participation in those types of programs.

They may develop a very teasing social style which makes them unpopular with peers, they are often sensitive to anything that makes them feel shamed or socially excluded and those kids and adults who feel that shame and are very shy often have a hearing loss that they themselves are not aware of. They are often frustrated and feel that they are treated unfairly because they're not picking up when people are saying things to them and feel that the response that they get and judgements made about them not understanding what is said is unfair and personalised.

The same people:

...are very often involved in anti-social behaviour. The evidence of this is some work I did in the past in two NT remote schools where the students who were disruptive - and you will see there are behaviour problems with their teachers - were overwhelmingly the students with a current conductive hearing loss. They were also kids who participated least in classroom learning processes that are around verbal communication. They contributed less verbally, they discussed less in class and they were more isolated than other children in class. They were also more demanding of teacher time in providing one-to-one support. When you have a high proportion of kids in a classroom with hearing loss, it means that not only their education is affected but the whole classroom is affected by the disruptive behaviour and the demands and their need for one-to-one support.

...

Some work in the Northern Territory shows that 90% of Aboriginal inmates in Darwin failed hearing screening and that 60% of Aboriginal youth in detention have abnormal middle-ear function. In the few places where hearing tests have been carried out with the Indigenous people are schools and prisons. In both of those, it has been very clear that anti-social behaviour is strongly associated with conductive hearing loss.

Middle-ear disease and its effects have compounding effects which lead to a downward personal spiral:

There is some work from Western Australia that shows, too that middle-ear disease is associated with diminished social and emotional wellbeing. So those kids who are having difficulties don't feel good about themselves, who are often in trouble at school and outside of school, are very often kids who have hearing loss as one contributing factor to those problems.

Untreated, middle-ear disease then affects adults in the community, and the problem takes on a 'revolving door' characteristic:

Some work I have recently done shows that 60% of Aboriginal adults in remote communities have some degree of hearing loss and that this hearing loss contributes to diminished performance in employment, lower social and emotional wellbeing and increased levels of anti-social behaviour. So it is not only an issue for kids; it flows right through the community in terms of the impact of hearing loss on adults particularly in remote communities.

Specifically in relation to young people and sport, Mr Howard said:

The connection with sport is that the participation and performance in sport is affected by hearing loss. There is some work in Western Australia that showed that **Aboriginal children value themselves most positively when they played organised and competitive sport and that**

**was valued more than any other school activity.** However, there is evidence that shows that kids with hearing loss participate in sport less and perform less well.

[emphasis added]

Speaking of his own research carried out at Millner Primary School during the 1990s, Mr Howard said:

...one of the teachers got interested in hearing loss and when they were doing hearing tests throughout the whole school, he got the teachers to identify the kids who were average or above average in their sporting performance and then he compared the results with hearing test results. It turned out that 70% of the kids with no hearing loss were in the above average range in sporting abilities, but only 40% of the Indigenous kids with hearing loss were in that above average range. In terms of how it impacts on participation in sport, the infection is likely to impact on general health, but the **evidence from the work that I have done in schools shows that it is very much about communication**, that communication, especially during team sports, is affected by kids with hearing loss and they participate less and feel sometimes shamed when they do have difficulty hearing on the sports field or hearing during coaching sessions.

[emphasis added]

Mr Howard cited the case of a young Tiwi man whose AFL career was cut short because of hearing problems that were misinterpreted as lack of motivation and disinterest:

Middle-ear disease can influence motor abilities, but the strongest evidence is around social interaction and during team sports. In some recent work with adults on the Tiwi Islands, there was a young guy who had gone down to try out for the AFL and he had been bounced out of it because his coach felt that he wasn't motivated, because he wasn't interested enough during coaching sessions, but the coach didn't realise that he had quite a significant hearing loss that made it very difficult for him to be able to participate and listen during coaching. So those difficulties were interpreted as poor motivation and he was bounced out of the side, limiting his opportunities to participate at that level.

Effectively, Mr Howard's conclusion is:

...hearing loss is one important but invisible piece of the puzzle that contributes to anti-social behaviour in Indigenous communities and also involvement in sport as well as employment and education.

Mr Howard suggested the following strategies as being future directions that can almost immediately be put into effect:

...there are many important implications of hearing loss in terms of education, employment, participation in sports, but the immediate ones that come to mind are that it is really important to train coaches in these issues so that they understand who has a hearing loss and how to facilitate those kids' participation in sport so that they are not shamed and excluded as often happens now, that Youth, Sport and Recreation programs target and support kids with these communication difficulties to participate more fully in programs and address issues at school, particularly around behaviour and anti-social behaviour, which is the building ground for later anti-social behaviour.

Antisocial behaviour is not limited to things like criminal activity. It is linked to breakdown of communication within families, which leads to tension and confrontation:

...of the issues that comes through very strongly is the destruction of relationships at home between family members and kids with listening difficulties that contribute to breakdown of family placements and high levels of dispute and argument. Again, there are other factors that interact such as crowded housing: when you get lots of people together and high levels of background noise, you get more social problems and more communication problems happening.

As a very real example of how people are affected, Mr Howard said:

I was talking to a client recently. She is an Aboriginal woman living in a remote community who was highly suicidal. She described the point that it really became overwhelming for her, and she had a hearing loss, was when she had lots of family coming to visit because of some disruption in their homeland centres; so they came and visited and the high levels of background noise in the house at that point increased her stress levels, her frustration levels and it was a catalyst for her suicidal thoughts and drinking more.

Is the problem medical or social? Mr Howard says it is both and certain factors need to be addressed holistically:

There have been attempts to look at that narrow medical focus on looking for a magic bullet. That hasn't been forthcoming. What is known, though, is that it's the crowded housing, the poor hygiene, the limited access to nutrition resources - they are the ongoing disadvantages that are really behind the high levels of infection and in other parts of the world, until those factors have been successfully addressed, there has been no reduction in the level of infection.

Asked by Mr Bonson about the treatment for ear infections, Mr Howard explained that a visit to a GP would probably result in antibiotics and the infection may clear up, however:

...they may not have the **hearing loss identified** in the classroom.

[emphasis added]

which means that whilst the infection is being treated, the hearing loss is going unnoticed and therefore unaddressed which results in learning difficulties and, once again, a trend toward antisocial behaviour. Further, Mr Howard noted:

It is getting worse because the school screenings that can actually pick up that kids have a hearing loss at any point in time are happening less these days; they are being gradually stopped in most areas around Australia so the situation, rather than improving, is getting worse.

Asked by Mr Wood whether lack of parental supervision and care is an equally contributing factor, Mr Howard said:

Yes. There is very much an interaction in that if the kids have got these hearing problems and they have got lots of family support, they might not have as many social problems, but the kids who have got the hearing problems and they haven't got strong family support and involvement are going to have more anti-social behavioural outcomes.

The two are linked, too, because when kids are having these kinds of communication difficulties, it is much harder for the families to engage with them so they actually contribute to the family dysfunction that makes it very hard for people to communicate and get on well.

Further:

...we really don't understand a lot of what is happening in all of those processes because there is no research, no work being done on that aside from a lot of anecdotal information. Aboriginal Health Workers are amongst the few groups to have a clear idea because they see the kids' ears at the clinic and then they see the kids at the community and they can put two and two together.

There is an article that I wrote in conjunction with an Aboriginal Health Worker that talks about those family issues. I will email it through. You may be interested it, and it very much talked about that it is the kids whose parents are drinking lots and are playing cards - they are the ones that have the most chronic ear problems and also the most difficult behaviour problems.

## Senior Physical Education Co-ordinator, DEET

31 July 2007

### Witness:

Ms Jane Slater

Physical Education Co-ordinators (PECs) within DEET have to work within the School Sport NT cluster system. This is problematic in some respects:

There are seven of us at the moment. My position is classed as office-based and then the six PECs are school-based and they are actually based on the School Sport NT cluster framework, which is a little bit of a confusing situation in a sense because there are actually seven DEET clusters and School Sport NT actually put two of those together; Central Storm and Desert Oaks are combined from the School Sport NT view. So everything pretty much from Elliott downwards, south of Elliott, is part of one cluster as far as School Sport NT is concerned. But for logistics for someone working as a PEC in Alice Springs, that is just a massive area to cover and that is one aspect that we have and the difficulty with.

This evidence serves to trigger an examination of the structure of PECs. At first blush, seven PECs seems a miniscule number to cover the Northern Territory. It may be, however, that these PECs liaise with Physical Education teachers and provide more of a co-ordinating or networking role, but this needs to be clarified in a structural sense. Ms Slater's evidence confirmed that the number of PECs is insufficient:

There are actually six group schools, and within those group schools at the moment; there are 69 schools, and that is spread all the way across the Territory. So for me to actually try and reach all of those 69 schools in pretty much half of my job is just a huge ask and it is obviously quite a frustrating situation in many ways.

...

[our job includes] Promoting involvement in School Sport NT cluster events at both age groups and, again, once we start to talk about the remote schools that becomes logistically very difficult to deal with. I coordinate the work of the PECs and I assist whenever possible in the work that they do within their own clusters.

The idea of PECs is relatively new:

These [PECs] came into operation in late 2005; we really became active in schools at the start of January 2006 and the focus that we have is to increase levels of physical activity through the development of the school-based physical education, physical activity and sports programs.

Ms Slater referred to requirements of the *Schools Assistance Act*:

My position: pretty much half of my job initially was to work with the group schools planning and developing physical education in accordance with the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework and the requirement for a minimum of two hours physical activity under the terms of Schools Assistance Act. That policy has been written but it is still not out in schools at the moment; it is going through the sign-off process.

This is not Northern Territory legislation. The DEET web site says this about it:

Regulations under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together - Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* require the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training to report to parents using “plain English” and a new A to E system of reporting student achievement to parents. The new student reporting system will commence in Northern Territory Government schools for Years 1-10 in 2006. Frequently Asked Questions have been prepared to address questions from school staff and to assist schools address questions from parents and guardians.

Under the regulations, schools are required to make school performance information publicly available and provide it to parents in at least two formats. Information must be provided on professional engagement, key student outcomes and overall levels of satisfaction with the school. Primary and secondary exemplar newsletters have been drafted as one example of providing the required information in a hardcopy format.

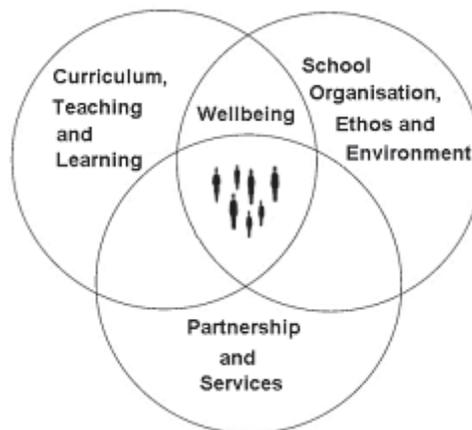
On the DEET web site, it appears that physical education and activity falls within the Health Promoting Schools NT area (which appears to be optional for individual schools). Details of that framework, again from the DEET web site, are:

### **Health Promoting Schools NT**

The Department of Education and Training (DET) recognises the strong links that exist between health and education to assist students to take full advantage of their opportunity to learn at school. In line with the views of the World Health Organisation, a Health Promoting School Framework has been developed for Australia.

A Health Promoting School (HPS) is a school where a way of thinking and working is adopted by the whole school, in order to make it the best possible place to learn, work and play.

The three components of National Health Promoting Schools Framework are:



Health Promoting Schools NT assists Northern Territory Schools to apply the principles set out in the National Framework through Professional Learning opportunities and Policy development in the following areas:

- Health (Nutrition and Sexuality Education) (pdf 100Kb)
- Physical Activities (pdf 98Kb)
- Drug Education (pdf 25Kb)
- Physical Education Coordination Unit (pdf 24Kb)
- Health Promoting Schools Professional Learning information (pdf 96Kb)

Ms Slater said:

There are actually six Group Schools, and within those Group Schools at the moment; there are 69 schools, and that is spread all the way across the Territory.

...

So they [PECs] do pretty much the same thing with the government primary schools and any remote schools within their cluster group. In terms of remote schools, that is the CECs and the bigger remote schools. All the smaller remote school are classed as Group Schools and they come under me.

The duties of the school-based PECs are:

So it is organising and promoting intra- and inter- plus the School Sport and working to increase participation in School Sport NT in cluster events at exchange and championship levels. I think when Helen spoke recently; she actually got well founded figures to prove that there actually has been a very positive aspect of our work and that the numbers involved at inter-school activity levels are definitely on the increase, which is great to see.

Of the experience and delivery in remote schools, Ms Slater said:

I have had 18 months now working in that area [remote schools] and the amount of talent and enthusiasm there is for sport out there is just absolutely huge. There is just so much potential that could be developed. Many of the small schools have mixed age ranged; so you might have in one class students from five years old going up to 12 or 13. So to actually try and deliver some form of effective physical education or sport that caters for that range is very difficult.

Again one or two teacher schools would have problems if they wanted to take six or seven students into a regional centre for a sporting competition. They might then have the problem having to close the school for the rest of the students for that date, to take them in or do they take the school in? That has happened. There are quite difficult situations I have to deal with in order to provide these opportunities. There is a great desire in the remote schools for this to happen, but, realistically, the logistics of it become quite off-putting at times.

Ms Slater explained what the PECs provide to schools:

What do we actually offer to the schools? Mentoring teachers, providing support, exemplar lessons. The support could be as simple as sitting down in a staff room for 20 minutes and just talking about how a teacher could actually go on to develop an aspect because I think a lot of people in education can be quite scared about physical education and sport. If you are not a sporty person as such and you haven't got that background, it can be one of those things that you back away from a little bit.

...

Are we effective? It is quite difficult to actually qualify in some ways. There has certainly been huge increases in the participation rates that Helen and School Sport NT have documented. I think if you were to actually talk to school principals and to go around to some of the schools; there is definitely an increase in activity and that has actually been passed on then to the next level.

Of impact on schools and students, Ms Slater said:

I can think of one particular example, Epinara in the Barkly Group School, where I managed to help them get some extra bikes and they had a cycling program at the start of the day and children starting to come to school and there was a big improvement in attendance and that was maintained.

Behaviour and readiness to learn in the classroom: there has been a huge amount of research done that actually confirms that they are very definitely links between a physically active child, particularly first thing in the morning, who becomes more attentive, is more active to listen and to learn so there are big spin-offs in terms of the rest of the education process and also in terms of

general behaviour. You can develop better discipline, tolerance, cooperation, reliability, all those sorts of things which are associated with sport.

What is the ideal for Northern Territory school children in relation to Physical Education?

Every student should have a minimum two hours of physical activity work a week. That is what has come out under the terms of Schools Assistance Act and that policy hasn't gone in, but it says 'recommended' is the terminology. There was no mandated agreement within that.

Asked by Mr Bonson whether she thought (a) physical education should be compulsory and (b) what would be the resourcing implications, Ms Slater said:

I think it should be compulsory all the way through education, right the way through until 18. That would be my feeling. I think for there not to be some form of physical activity for young people is very sad. I think, having worked in high schools for quite a lot of my career, the age that students drop off from their involvement is 13, 14, 15; a lot of them will really struggle to get that back again unless you are a committed sports person. Unless you are committed, by that stage you are already on that pathway, you are actually being involved, but a lot don't and then it becomes a real problem later on in life to redevelop that understanding and the acceptance of activity as part of their life.

...

Resources - it depends on the schools. If they have actually got physical education people there, then obviously that becomes a lot easier. A lot of the schools seem to have, in terms of resources on the ground, the facilities are pretty good, I would have said, certainly within Darwin and in town in terms of facilities that exist within the schools. You then have to have the people in there that can actually deliver programs. I think that becomes an issue for Middle Schools next year as to whether they all will have physical education specialist in there and I don't think that has been decided at this moment in time, as I understand it.

Asked about the practicalities of fitness testing in schools, Ms Slater said

It is not particularly difficult. Once you have actually set up the test that you are going to run, the actual work to develop that fitness can be done in different ways; it is not a case of setting up three or four tests that you are going to do week after week after week because that can be pretty negative in its own right, pretty boring, but there are lots of different ways you can actually develop fitness and re-test to show an improvement.

It appears that there has been some restructuring in relation to physical education and, in particular, the creation of the six PEC positions and the SPEC position. Initially, these were proposed as School Sport NT positions, but ended up as DEET positions:

**Mr KIELY:** You as the SPEC, who do you answer to?

**Ms SLATER:** Directly to Maria Mariner who is the Manager of the Health Promoting Schools in Student Services.

**Mr KIELY:** Your position is there. And with School Sport NT, how do they - - -

**Ms SLATER:** Helen and I basically sit side by side underneath Maria. That is of this year. That has changed this year.

**Mr KIELY:** You are [inaudible] Physical Education for kids. School Sport NT develop up the different competitive programs across the cluster. Would that be - - -

**Ms SLATER:** The PECs actually spend half of their time working to assist that process; sport in schools is what we are basically asked to work with, sport in schools which leads into School Sport NT. Does that make sense?

**Mr BONSON:** So you are not necessarily building up a curriculum to do with sport?

**Ms SLATER:** Yes.

**Mr BONSON:** You are?

**Ms SLATER:** Yes, we are building physical education curriculum within the school, which, if it is effective, would lead to progression into a more organised form of the sport which then leads up to a school team and a cluster team.

**Mr BONSON:** And so on. So it comes back to the crunch again about whether or not that school has a principal or teacher that is particularly motivated to make use of you, is that correct?

**Ms SLATER:** Yes, very much so.

Notwithstanding Ms Slater's evidence, there would appear to be greater advantage in developing a more structured approach to delivering quality programs in schools across the Northern Territory. It is clear that there are no programs at all in some schools.

## Industry Professional

31 July 2007

### Witness:

#### Mr Matthew Stephen

Mr Stephen is a PhD candidate at Charles Darwin University and his thesis is the history of sport in the Northern Territory with particular emphasis on race, identity and community. He pointed out that Indigenous communities are functionally different from Western communities and the reasons for this are cultural:

...often not recognised or completely overlooked is that community life on Aboriginal communities, rightly or wrongly, is largely a leisure economy. People are time rich. In terms of employment options, we tend to look in the wrong place. We should be looking in terms of leisure activities rather than what people would see as conventional employment outcomes. I worked on Workforce Development issues in the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) for some time and this was a point that was rarely acknowledged

He pointed to deficiencies in educational outcomes where there should be high achievement:

Something that always fascinated me as a physical education teacher is how extraordinarily gifted and talented many Aboriginal people are, yet those skills don't seem to be reflected and reflective in educational outcomes. They should. Motor-coordination skills are closely linked to reading, writing and other skills. So if you say people have very good hand-eye coordination skills; that should be reflected in educational outcomes. I don't think anyone would argue that many Aboriginal people have extraordinary hand-eye coordination skills, yet educational outcomes are still poor.

The role that sport should play in terms of education programs in remote area schools, I think, while many people might see the value, the way that curriculums are constructed and the way schools are operated, it's constantly being put to the periphery. You have got to spend time on English reading and writing, and I am not saying that that is not important; I just think that people should consider much more carefully how things are taught **so it is about methods, it is not about outcomes.**

[emphasis added]

Mr Stephen mentioned an idea of Ted Egan, which was to build grandstands on ovals in remote communities, which led him to the subject of infrastructure:

The issue of infrastructure and economic development in communities couldn't be more topical than it is at the moment, yet critical facilities and amenities that in any country town in Australia, in the smallest of country towns, you're going to see any one of these things: you are going to see a grand-stand at the race track, you are going to find the football-cricket ground and there is more than likely going to be a sports club associated with it and there could be nothing else except a silo that marks that town. If you go into any remote area community of the Northern Territory, you will find an oval of sorts and almost nothing else.

Noting that in most communities, the basketball ring – if it existed at all – is gone. The solution is to group facilities together:

The question is that if you did have such a facility - club rooms with a kitchen; I am talking about a social club as well as a sports club, an oval, a basketball court, a netball court, a softball diamond – this could actually be a hub for many things, not just sport, but it would provide an entertainment venue, a social venue, you could spin a lot of your education and training programs off that social sport centre. This is where I talk about a leisure economy and its possible importance: coaches, trainers, you have got hospitality industry involved with a social sporting club, you have got grounds and facilities management; there are very real jobs involved in this.

Mr Stephen quoted international research that indicates that minority groups tend to be ‘chan-nelled’ into sport when their talents lie in a range of areas and are not limited to sport, however by channelling, their opportunities are limited. As an example, he cited an over-representation of black athletes in the United States of America and noted that the same group is under-represented in other professional areas:

So there should be caution about channelling those who have extraordinary talents in many areas in to sport. You need a balanced approach. I guess that is the cautionary tale here.

He pointed out that sport and leisure activities are not a panacea to the myriad problems that exist, however they:

...are essential elements of any healthy sustainable community and sport could play a much greater role in individual and community capacity building than it does currently. I hope that the committee’s work may be able to reposition some of these activities as being an equal part of community development because currently sport is often talked about, but when the serious meetings happen, it is another group of people. It is economic development, it is building houses, it is doing all these things and I am not quite sure why you can’t have both.

There is a recurrent theme emerging – not as persistently as, say, the issue of obesity, but there is repetition of reference to the WAY children in remote communities are being taught and links to the curriculum. Mr Stephen said:

...whereas in so many other fields, people are not working to their strengths, and this is particularly so in schools. This is what I am saying: in school, sport could play a much more positive role than it is currently because this is people’s strengths and those skills and attributes that people display in sport should, in general terms, apply equally in the classroom. So the ability to teach these various skills - reading, writing - through other means, and again, you could talk out at length about this, the educational aspects of these things, but a lot of research has been done in this area and I am not sure that this is being integrated into current approaches to education and training.

The Committee has had submissions from people to advocate that the standard curriculum be delivered in a different WAY, and that either sport, music or art (which are areas in which Indig-enous people excel) be used as the vehicle for delivery of the curriculum. For example, maths is learnt by calculating the freight or framing expenses on an item of artwork or by calculating the sale price of a CD. The idea has a great deal of merit, particularly given Mr Stephen’s observation above that:

...very good hand-eye coordination skills... should be reflected in educational outcomes.

Mr Stephen reinforced this view later in his evidence:

We always considered that the most useful school curriculum should be based around those things [music, sport, art] and the local language and culture. Those aspects together could actually be the foundation for a very good and well-planned school curriculum.

Currently, I am not convinced that people that are designing curricula, and with the focus on testing in Maths and English, are able to have the flexibility that they'd really like to, to put together a **creative and meaningful school curriculum**. I think unfortunately, the barriers that Curriculum Development have placed on national levels and state levels are not able to be reflected on the ground.

[emphasis added]

Rather than the way that sport is treated at present:

...sport is used as a break from the classroom. You know: 'We let the kids run around for half an hour, we will kick the footy and then we will go back in and we will sit down and do this maths, or we will do this English' instead of actually making the sports lesson **the teaching of maths and English**, instead of using the art class as the main class of the day where you focus on all the skills that are developed during that time; those activities are too often pushed to the periphery as people keep flogging: 'We have got to learn English and maths'. Don't think that I think for a minute that learning English and maths isn't important. I think the question here is **in methods and the current curriculum and the way it is framed and structured**, I am not sure it allows the time to develop these other areas where people - this is the most important point - already have the skills.

[emphasis added]

The issue of sporting infrastructure and its condition in communities was addressed:

We need to look at how people respond to those facilities and who runs and owns them? I think that might be an important aspect as well. There are not too many community recreation programs that I know of that the community might feel as though they actually run and own themselves.

That led Mr Stephen into the area of resourcing, which has been repeatedly described as wholly inadequate:

I guess while this is going on record, the amount of money that the government provides for community recreation officers is nowhere near enough. They provide half the salary, unless things have changed, for a Recreation Officer.

Now this is a complex area. The money that is on the table for Recreation Officers is never going to get you the kind of experience and expertise you actually need to run good, effective programs.

Asked to expand on teaching delivery methods, Mr Stephen said:

I am thinking in particular on a remote community of language and culture programs as an integrated part of a community leisure program. I mean, people want to go out bush. They want to do these activities. That is where the learning occurs. **This is as much about learning styles as anything else.**

...

...if you are going to take a group of old people from the community to go and collect wood for making coolamons back in the art centre, you actually need to provide the provision for the school kids to be able to go with them, do the language and culture skills and people will both see that as a fantastic leisure outing, people will just love that, but the language and cultural learning that occurs there, possibly in a very good and integrated school in both English and in Aboriginal languages, is extraordinary. At the end of the day people will come back and they have had a

good day. They have probably collected some food, they have got their wood for the coolamons. This is what I mean about current programs tend to be very limited in their thinking and very often they have to be, because they are very limited in the resources that are available.

[emphasis added]

Mr Stephen cautioned against sport and leisure or recreation being considered 'soft' policy options and urged adoption of a wider, more holistic approach:

...what I am hoping will occur, and the committee might be able to get greater recognition of, is that sport and leisure activities really need to be thought of in terms of the **whole community development aspect** and that people shouldn't think that sport and leisure activities aren't an integral part of economic development.

[emphasis added]

Mr Mills was interested in Mr Stephen's claim that there are real jobs in the sport and leisure sector for remote communities and these should be considered as valuable as construction jobs or jobs at the health clinic. Mr Stephen was asked whether he had any research to add weight to the claim. He answered, as far as his own research is concerned, in the negative. However:

If it is possible, through the recommendations of the committee, to enable some greater focus for funds available for more research effort at CDU. There is the social science School of Policy Research there. There are people doing a lot of work on demographics and there are people doing a lot of work on economics. I am not sure to what extent they are considering sport and leisure as part of that research.

The issue of language (that is, English) arose in the context of remote communities and teaching methods:

**Mr BONSON:** You talked about language being used within teaching. The problem that I see is that if you are only using 10% of English in your own life skills, yet when you go to school it is 99% English, there is not an attraction to participate. Do you have any observations on that?

**Mr STEPHEN:** This is what I was saying. On the question about school curricula and methodology, one of the links between different lifestyles and learning is that generally, this is a sweeping generalisation, Aboriginal people respond to a particular learning style, which is learning through doing. It is very physical-orientated. So the football ground, the softball ground, is actually much more appropriate for the teaching of English than the classroom because of the disconnect that occurs in the classroom. What are we talking about, what are we learning about? The language skills that people could develop in playing sport, I think you could target that much better than possibly is occurring at the moment.

The same goes for maths skills and a lot of other things that people over-look. All sports are based on language and maths and a whole lot of other academic areas where currently the outcomes are very poor. So there is a connection there. Sport and leisure activities could be a much greater focus for developing all academic skills.

## Northern Territory Cricket 31 July 2007

### Witness:

#### **Mr Andrew Ramsay, CEO**

Like other sports, NT Cricket has become highly professional over the past decade and is now engaged in delivering programs from the grassroots to the elite level, including International level:

NT Cricket has to deliver a broad range of services ranging from international cricket commitments right through to junior development programs. Back in 2003, Cricket Australia reviewed its strategy and decided to start injecting significant funding into Northern Territory Cricket, funding that we hadn't received in the past, and with that came obligations in relation to delivering international cricket and growing the sport in the Territory.

We are actually funded through Cricket Australia's Game Development Department so our prime focus is actually to grow the sport of cricket and that is why I think it is particularly relevant to this particular committee because a strong focus of ours is to develop cricket in young people and just to basically get more people playing.

Cricket is not played in schools in the NT:

I was even more surprised, I must say, when I came up here and found that basically cricket is not played at schools at least not in an inter-school sense that I am aware of.

Mr Ramsay noted the decline of sports generally in schools across Australia and related it to teacher demographics, which is the position in primary schools in the Northern Territory (confirmed by DEET in background briefings of the Research Officer):

We do engage with School Sport NT, and that is a really important relationship and an important focus for us, but it is a concern for me certainly - and I know it is a concern at the national level the Cricket Australia level - that we are seeing less and less cricket in schools as part of a child's development and that applies to all sports, I am sure.

There have been many studies, and I am sure you are across all of them, pointing to a trend in teacher demographics and all the reasons why that perhaps sport isn't being pushed as hard as it could be at schools. Cricket certainly goes along with that.

Cricket NT runs come and try-type programs for schools and is involved with the Active After School Communities program. There is also a very strong indigenous development focus:

We have a very strong Indigenous development focus. We conduct the National Indigenous Cricket carnival each year; the Imparja Cup in Alice Springs, and a year ago we appointed a full-time Indigenous Cricket Officer who services the northern area of the Territory. We are currently working towards getting officers that can be based in Katherine and Alice Springs.

Coincidentally, this is extracted from the ABC News web site – 21 August 2008:

The chief executive of Northern Territory Cricket wants to forge relationships between the National Indigenous Cricket Championship and local non-Indigenous cricket organisations.

Andrew Ramsay says it is time to connect more meaningfully at a grassroots level.

Mr Ramsay is in talks with the Mayor of Alice Springs about ways to develop the championship. He says a festival atmosphere and attracting tourists in the off-season are two ideas in the pipeline.

"We're looking to grow the event in terms of the operations and have a big carnival atmosphere," he said.

“We’ve been working over the years on building more family friendly activities into it, so we tend to have a show ride and we have a fireworks display at the end of the grand final and put on activities of that nature.”

Mr Ramsay echoed what other peak sporting organisations have made clear in relation to School Sport NT:

My personal experiences with School Sport NT have been fine. I have a good relationship with the head people in there. However, the feedback I have received from my managers or the people at the coal face is that they have experienced frustration at times and perhaps encountered a lack of flexibility in relation to program delivery.

School Sport NT has set out some fairly stringent guidelines in an effort to engage all clusters and all children, but we feel in some ways perhaps that structure doesn’t recognise the limited resources that certainly NT Cricket has in terms of being able to deliver to each of the clusters.

We engage with the Under 13 primary school exchange, as it is referred to, down in Alice Springs. One hundred-odd kids play in that each year and that gets the nod from my Development Managers as a good program. The Under 15 cricket championships seem to be where the difficulties lie, and there is a sense amongst my people that we would like to have perhaps more control over the way that that program is run.

To tap into the school system, we have to go through School Sport NT. School Sport NT essentially looks to us for the majority of resourcing in both human and financial terms and yet most of the control and most of the agenda is structured and set out by School Sport NT and some of our stakeholders feel that perhaps we ought to look at shifting the balance a little more towards cricket.

Asked by Mr Kiely whether he would like specific representation on the School Sport NT Committee, Mr Ramsay said:

Precisely. The input in terms of the program structure so that we could at least provide feedback as to what we could realistically achieve in a program and also to have our people engaged on the tours that they undertake we think would also be important. We provide uniforms at our expense and structure the feeder tournaments into the major tournaments, but when it comes to actually touring, it is teachers that are heading off.

Asked by Mr Wood if there had been a survey undertaken of the number of schools that have cricket nets, Mr Ramsay responded:

There are pushes from Cricket Australia to have us engage in a new IT system which effectively maps demographics and primary schools and all sorts of information about the environment we are operating in and we are keen to get that data together, and schools with nets will be one of the areas that we’ll research.

This is illustrative of the professionalism of peak sporting organisations and the manner in which they are trying to address potential athletes and programming from grassroots through to elite. Evidence is mounting that School Sport NT is presently serving as a major impediment to peak sporting organisations and their ability to contact and engage with junior athletes, which ultimately build their participation numbers and lead to elite pathways for some of those athletes, which Mr Ramsay confirmed:

But the feedback I am getting from my people who are out there is that cricket has a minimal presence at school. If you want to play cricket, you really have to get involved with a club and leave pitch cricket to schools through activities like *Have a Go*.

Asked how inter-school competitions work in other states, Mr Ramsay said:

In Adelaide, the way the South Australian Cricket Association manages cricket is they set up what they call *Club is the Hub*, so the grade cricket club in Adelaide is responsible for all aspects of cricket within their given zone.

I grew up near the Sturt District Cricket Club. They were responsible for not only running grade cricket, but also a primary school competition. They talked to the Unley High and Scotch College and whoever else, Mercedes College, and they would actually coordinate and put together the draw and make all that happen. The club was actually responsible for making it happen, but the schools engaged with it.

...

...as a child, it just happens. It is laid out. You don't understand that the Sturt Cricket Club is making this happen and getting the schools together and talking and making it work. I could see in the northern suburbs, for example, Nightcliff or Tracy Village working with the local schools and pulling together that type of arrangement. Equally out at Palmerston and Southern Districts down at Fred's Pass. They could all contribute to that process but we just need to engage the schools. My understanding is that the sticking point is teacher availability and facilities, but primarily teacher availability.

The competition was played on Saturday mornings, with two training sessions per week at school. The coaches were teachers, which is what Mr Ramsay identified as a potential problem in schools in the Northern Territory.

## Northern Territory Rugby League 31 July 2007

### Witness:

#### Mr Barry Moore, General Manager

Mr Moore's evidence was of a highly professional and structured organisation that is part of the Australian Rugby League, has a Strategic Plan, considers that its sport is a 'product' and markets it accordingly.

Rugby League *IS* one of the School Sport NT sports so it has an entrée to schools:

That gives you an overview, a snapshot of the programs which come from School Sport and rugby league does feature in there on a number of occasions...So we do play a part in School Sport. We have been there for a number of years. We enjoy the opportunity to partake in it. It gives us a foot in the door in to the school network here in Darwin. We support School Sports financially. We are a non-profit organisation, and I assume so are they. We give them \$12,000 per year and that is to be divided between both the Under 13s and the Under 15s...we, as the state body, provide...the state playing strip; which is the jersey, shorts and socks free of charge.

Whilst this appears to express satisfaction with the arrangement, later in his evidence, Mr Moore was asked:

**Mr BONSON:** I have one question. Your relationship with School Sport NT, do you have any comments on how that is going or how it can be improved?

**Mr MOORE:** Yes. I would like to see the Northern Territory Rugby League have more representation when it comes to the selection of coaches and managers. We have no say in that. We support them financially, we provide the facility to them for their training camps and so forth and we help them as much as we possibly can, but I just feel as though we actually lose ownership of our game. This is not only our sport, it is a number of sports and it is across Australia.

**Mr BONSON:** So you would like to have your coaches come in and assist the teams that go away, is that what you are saying in terms of training?

**Mr MOORE:** Yes, yes. The coach that is going away, Brett Holmes, who coached the 15s and the 13s is going away to Sydney. He is an accredited coach, but we would like to be involved more so at that actual selection time of who the nominations are and so forth. ***We don't go to them and tell them how to teach kids. We want to retain the ownership of our sport.*** I don't think that is too hard.

[emphasis added]

Asked about how the money NTRL gives to School Sport NT is spent (ie whether it is used to subsidise travel for the athletes), Mr Moore said:

We provide \$12,000 per annum, but what I don't see is a financial statement of how that money is actually used.

Mr Moore tabled a report written by a coach (Brett Holmes, mentioned above) of the Under 13 team (2007) which included:

The team's written goal was to come second in the national championships and they achieved exactly that. This document is a very, very good document for myself and for people in rugby league in the fact that it gives a very, very good overview on what the plan was, how it was executed and what the outcomes were. It covers things like player performance, results, recommendations for the future and so forth. That, again, is a working document. It comes under the School Sport banner. School Sport will have a copy of this. As the parent body, because it is our game, this gives us an insight into the development of future representative teams.

Mr Moore is no longer with the Northern Territory Rugby League. His successor, Gary Launt, was contacted on 29 July 2008 to determine whether that report was a requirement of the NTRL/ARL or School Sport NT. He responded that it is a School Sport NT requirement. Asked about the qualifications of the Teacher/Coach of the team, Mr Launt said that the coach is a teacher who has Australian Rugby League coaching accreditation. This is not the norm in respect of SSNT coaches.

Even where peak organisations are involved in School Sport NT, they use it as a recruiting ground for their elite athletes:

Because it is the grand final doesn't mean to say it is the end of rugby league. We continue through the schools program through our Development Officers and that includes touching base with school teachers, identifying teachers who have an interest in rugby league who want to make a commitment to the game and who want to learn to become a coach. One of the main issues that we face here is the high turnover of teachers. It is transient, time is an issue and Development Officers in the off-season play a major role in identifying players. We have school competitions and so forth. ***The reason for that is to target players for next year's representative calendar.***

[emphasis added]

Mr Moore produced a press clipping from the *Northern Territory News*. This passage captures the dichotomy of grassroots vs elite sport where School Sport NT is concerned:

...the *NT News*, July 3, on the 2007 Under 15 team, so that was the 2006 team who went away and I guess we are talking about elite pathways here. The Under 15s of last year; their written goal was to come second; the Under 15s written goal this year, in 2007, was to come first. There they are there. They went through undefeated. There is an article on them, and there is a photograph of the three boys and they went through undefeated against the other affiliated states.

...

Now following that, because there are talent scouts there at these events, this document is from Easts Rugby League Club in Brisbane. Easts are the feeder club for South Sydney who play in the National Rugby League competition. On that document, Easts have targeted four Northern Territory boys to go to Easts to become part of their program to move further ahead.

...

We believe that our development program is actually working. These are results and it is open to the players. I mean, the players have only just received this of recent times so it is open to these boys as to whether they want to move up to the next level. If they want to stay in the game of rugby league, they would have to do it to progress their career. I hear people say that there is not much opportunity in the Northern Territory; I beg to differ.

The Northern Territory Rugby League is fully supportive of the Northern Territory Institute of Sport, which has a rugby league coach. The NTRL makes a contribution to the salary of that individual, but Mr Moore did not say to what level. The NTRL last year advertised a scholarship at the NTIS:

That is a copy of the advert which was in the *Northern Territory News* and also the *Centralian Advocate* calling for people who are interested in obtaining a scholarship in rugby league. So the opportunity for people to get involved is there.

Rugby league is working to redress its somewhat tarnished image arising from ugly incidents at the elite and club level over the years (this includes nationally). There is a National Code of Conduct for seniors – players, officials, spectators and parents. At the junior level, the equivalent document is the National Safe Playing Code (which applies to 15 years and under where the game is played under modified conditions). In addition:

Darwin Rugby League has been a strong advocate of the Purple Arm Band Campaign whereby arm bands are worn as a symbol of grief and respect – purple is the colour of women’s rights. By wearing purple arm bands, the teams will make a statement of respect for women; compassion to sexual assault survivors and leadership against violence to women.

**Mr Paul Grace, Private Citizen**  
**31 July 2007**

Mr Grace, 23, is a disabled person and had three recommendations for the Committee:

My recommendation would be to have a Disabled Sports Officer who could go around to the schools and let disabled students know what disabled sports are available both in and outside school. Ideally, this person should be either disabled themselves or have been involved with disabled sport people so they have a good understanding of the needs that may be required. Also having some sports background would be an added advantage. This sports officer could also help teachers and students to either participate in a disabled sport, for example wheelchair basketball, or help the whole class to modify a sport so the disabled student could participate. This could be a good project in problem solving and making the able-bodied students more aware of the difficulties a disabled person has to face.

Disabled students also need to be encouraged by parents, teachers and fellow students to try different things and participate as much as possible. I know how hard it is at times, but the disabled student must also be willing to give things a go. I have been involved over the last few years in a Primary School Wheelchair Basketball competition and it has been great to see some of the young disabled students' confidence grow and the sheer enjoyment of being able to play a game with their fellow students on an equal level. It would also be good for schools to have disabled sports guests visit the school to show all students that you can succeed even with a disability.

Because Darwin has a small minority of disabled students, another idea is for them to get together for a sporting afternoon every couple of months. This would be a good opportunity to meet other disabled students, hopefully creating friendships and support. It would also introduce them to disabled sports that they could continue playing together after completing school and into their adult life.

## Royal Life Saving Society 31 July 2007

### Witnesses:

**Ms Leah Cullen, Senior Training Officer**  
**Ms Carnie Broadbent, Development Officer**

This is different from Surf Life Saving NT in that it involves life saving in a *swimming pool* context. The skills appear to be largely the same, and the interesting problem of failing to meet the definition of 'sport' for funding purposes appears to be the same.

Royal Life Saving has made inroads with some schools – not through School Sport NT, but through their own efforts:

One thing that we started doing last year is to have teachers and sport coordinators throughout the NT do a session, as in a professional development session on pool life saving just to make them understand what is involved: what they need to know and whether they need to have all these skills to be able to do it. A lot of the school teachers involved in this already have their bronze medallion and senior first aid, so they had the basic skills that were required and it was just really putting them into the sporting context.

Ms Leah Cullen

This sport is in its infancy in Australia, and particularly in the Northern Territory, however there is a strong national and international body and the NT sits within that framework. To recruit athletes, RLSS has:

...gone to a couple of swim clubs because what we would really love to do is to add on a couple of our events onto the end of a normal swimming carnival program to start with, just to show people what our sport is about because there are a lot of children out there who really love their swimming and they really love swimming in clubs and we don't want to discourage that. What we want to do is say: 'There is something else you can do as well'.

Ms Leah Cullen

RLSS has an outreach program to remote areas, much like SLSNT, which has the potential for pathways up the line:

Our *Remote Pools* project is where we are trying to build community development with remote Aboriginal communities so that we can get Indigenous people running their own swimming pools, lifeguarding their own swimming pools, becoming swim teachers and teaching the children in their community and all this moves on right up to coaching pool life saving and officiating in those things. All we are trying to provide is basic support now; starting off with our basic training packages and building up so that at the end of the process, and it's going to take a few years, whichever community we are at that, the Indigenous people are running it; they are not hiring someone from down south to come up and just run their swimming pool.

Ms Leah Cullen

The *Remote Pools* program is exhibiting early success in the trial communities (communities where there are existing swimming pools):

The first community we did this in was Nauiyu down in Daly River as part of the Federal Government's *Building Healthier Communities* package. We are 18 months into that program and now have four Indigenous life guards down there who are trained. We are still working out how we are going to

get around payment and getting them to open the pool and working out all that sort of stuff now. So that is a new one.

We started operating in Maningrida from December last year and we now have two Indigenous Bronze Medallion Senior First-Aid Life Guards working at that pool mainly on a Saturday. They open the pool for the kids.

Ms Leah Cullen

Existing community pools and training in RLS skills occur at Nauiyu, Nguiu, Ngukurr and Maningrida. The *Swim and Survive* program is not compulsory in schools. Asked by Mr Bonson if she would like to see it as a compulsory component, Ms Cullen said:

I would love to see it compulsory for the simple fact that we are now starting to have quite a few high schools do a Bronze Star or Bronze Medallion for the Year 8s and 9s. In the last five years, I have seen that instead of having a competence rate of around 80% to 90% of children, that has dropped to somewhere like 5% to 10% of kids that can't swim, full stop - not even a little bit. Every class that we do in high school now, there are a good 10 or 12 children who can't put their face in the water.

...

I have got teenagers and I worry that when they are 16½ and 17 and getting their driver's licence and they decide to go to Berry Springs with all their mates and half of them can't swim; one starts drowning and the rest of them don't know what to do, so they all jump in and they all drown. That is what worries me.

This is an alarming statistic when considered in light of the *Water Safety Awareness* for Under 5s program, which is sponsored by the Northern Territory government:

We also thank the government for the *Water Safety Awareness* program for under 5s which has been extremely successful. If you have a look through your Drowning Report, we have not had an under 5 drowning since that fateful day [in 2003] before the under 5 program was introduced, which is a fantastic achievement.

Ms Leah Cullen

There are expense and logistical problems for schools:

...there have been quite a few schools in the last few years that have taken up swimming again and we love it. That is great; we are really happy with it...

What we have heard from schools is that the main problem is buses. It costs too much for them to get the buses to take the kids swimming. It is not us, it is not our prices; it is what the buses are charging. That is main thing we hear from them.

Ms Leah Cullen

# Kormilda College

## 1 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Ms Helen Spears, Deputy Principal**  
**Ms Elsabe Bott, Director of Studies**

Ms Bott presented evidence reinforcing the evidence of peak sporting organisations and others that the cluster system does not work well in the secondary sector and that students want to play for their school rather than a combined team whose identity is amorphous. The schools also want this:

From our perspective, the cluster structure that has been moved from the primary school system through to the secondary system has not necessarily been a positive move for the high schools involved in school sport. What it tends to mean for us, and I guess particularly for us as an independent school, is that our sporting teams have actually lost focus as a school team so they don't compete in our school jumpers; it is not a way that we can use sport to help us build leadership amongst our students and a way that we can use sport to build school spirit because we are in a cluster and there are students from other schools who form part of the team and you are there representing a cluster area, not your own school.

Later in her evidence, Ms Bott was asked to elaborate on this aspect:

**Mr MILLS:** Do you think of the system, as it exists, denies you an opportunity to utilise some of the really positive aspects of sporting competition as it could benefit the school?

**Ms BOTT:** Yes. I mean, we would in the past have taken students to watch if a team made it in to the grand final and to be there as students of our school in building a sense of spirit and team across the school. If there is a soccer team that has only got four of our students in it in a final, we are not going to take three or four classes to watch four, whereas we would take them for a whole team.

**Mr MILLS:** So that sense of community celebration is gone.

**Ms BOTT:** Is lost, yes - also the opportunity for those kids to shine in front of their peers. Often they are kids who don't particularly shine in the classroom, so it is their opportunity to be held up in front of the student body.

Another dimension was added to this argument later in Ms Bott's later evidence. It is the case that Kormilda has male boarders who play regular club sport – and particularly AFL – but the female boarders are not as inclined to engage with outside organisations. Having a *school* team in a competition would have better potential of engaging female boarders, particularly Indigenous students, because they would be more comfortable if they could play together and foster some school spirit.

Ms Bott reinforced the *ad hoc* and sporadic nature of the School Sport program at the secondary level because:

In terms of organisation, that can create difficulties in that there is not necessarily a natural connection between the schools involved in clusters. There is not necessarily, therefore, a natural flow of communication around the schools within the clusters.

In addition, co-ordination and responsibility can be and are issues for secondary schools. For example:

There can be difficulties at times across the schools, in terms of staff supervision of the students on the teams and who is going to actually be the coach. We had a situation where a school was going to send a staff member on a team down to Katherine and then pulled out their teacher a couple of days before because the bulk of the team actually came from our school and we then had to quickly find someone who would go. So it has been a structure that came in a few years ago. My understanding is that it works really well for the primary schools, but I am not sure that it works so well for secondary schools.

There is an inherent difficulty for schools, whose outcomes from sport are very different from those stated by School Sport NT. Once again, the *ad hoc* nature of the organisation is frustrating and difficult for schools, which much work across clusters, already identified as being cumbersome and difficult:

That tends to flow through to some of the other points that Malcolm made in terms of the quality of learning experience and so on. When you are running a team that goes across several schools - for us, we are in a cluster with Palmerston, Taminmin so it is quite a big stretch of area geographically to get the students together - the time for coaching, the time for skill building is perhaps not as effective as it could be. So I think a good learning experience for students in sport means that there is plenty of lead-up time to the competition that gives the students the chance to develop their skills in the sport, gives the students a chance to develop a sense of team and leadership across the team. At times, the notice about sports is very short so there might then be a week or two weeks that you have to get a team together, then you have got to pull a team together that is actually across several schools, which kind of slows everything down as well. So there is not that preparation time that would really be ideal.

Ms Bott raised the issue of duplication – not at state level, but at the School Sport and club level – and suggested a *range* of sports be provided to allow students to develop skills in other areas:

Some of the other issues for us are the range of sports, particularly a lot of the sports that are offered are sports that our students already participate in so they may very well play in a team on a Saturday or a Sunday in a club and then come and play that same sport again representing the cluster. Whether there is an opportunity through school sport to actually broaden the range of sports that students are exposed to and have the opportunity to participate in, rather than just kind of replicating very popular club sports that most of the same students participate in already around town.

Seasonality is a factor affecting the present regime of sporting programming which gives rise to frequent absences by students engaging in competitions:

Another issue for us is that due to the climate, most of the sports get compacted in to Term 2 and Term 3 so it is not necessarily unusual to have a student who is absent for three days in this week participating in a sport, then they are absent three days in the next week and then they might be back at school for a week and then they are absent again. The sports tend to have a long period of time, say three or four days or a week, rather than a quick round robin in one day. When you get students participating in a multiple number of sports, their time out of school, particularly because it is all truncated down to two terms and not spread over the year, it can have quite an impact. I think those are the main issues for us.

This passage implies that there is a lack of planning and foresight in respect of the more humid times of the year. This could be addressed by tailoring sports to the season. For example, during the Wet Season, engage in sports where air-conditioned facilities are available – indoor hockey, indoor soccer, volleyball, basketball and squash, for example. In the alternative, schools could work on sports such as swimming, water polo, underwater hockey and some of the SLSNT Wet

Season training programs. Further, some sports can be undertaken in covered or shaded areas during the Wet Season – gymnastics, basketball and volleyball come to mind, but there is also potential for using covered courts or Assembly areas for five-aside competitions.

Participation of girls in School Sport was raised by the Principal in his submission. Madam Chair invited Ms Bott to expand on that and she identified lack of the range of sports offered as a problem:

I think part of that is related to the range of sports that are available. It tends to be the more traditional netball, basketball, soccer. If the range of sports was perhaps varied and not that repetition again of the club sports, there may be the opportunity to open up other sports for the girls. We have a number of girls who have started to get very interested in Australian Football, but they are playing at the moment in a competition that we have set up and organised amongst a few schools. They haven't participated in an official School Sport competition for that.

Later in her evidence, Ms Bott referred specifically to boarders at Kormilda and their participation in club sport outside of school hours. This is a particular success where male boarders are concerned, but is not so successful in respect of female boarders:

Football certainly dominates during football season and we have got kids who play for a number of teams so they are quite busy during football season ferrying the boys. It has been an issue for us with the girls. During football season, probably half to more of our boarders are involved in club sport, and for boarders that is great. It gets them out of the school, mixing with other kids and making new friends. We have had goes at trying to involve girls in basketball competition and in netball competitions outside of the school. That hasn't been so successful.

Asked by Mr Wood whether there is any particular reason for that, Ms Bott said:

I think probably they are not as attached to those sports. Trying to stop the boys playing football would be impossible, whereas trying to encourage the girls to play netball, basketball, particularly netball, which isn't such a big sport for our Indigenous students, is more difficult. So it is a matter of building that culture, I think, amongst the girls.

There is further difficulty created by the Independent schools running their own inter-school competitions because it has the potential to deny elite athletes from being selected to represent the Northern Territory:

It is quite common for the independent sector down south that they sort of run their own sport. The difficulty here is that if we ran our own sport, then our students would be ineligible for selection for NT. Particularly for students who want to represent the NT and who are elite, we have to make sure we provide that opportunity for them to be involved in the School Sport competition. So any competition that we facilitate with other schools is on top of and outside of that.

This problem would be eliminated if there was a standard inter-school competition and that selection of Northern Territory representative teams at the secondary level was left to the peak sporting organisations. This would also prevent duplication that is presently happening whereby a student is selected in the NT School Sport team and again in the peak sporting organisation's team to contest the Australian championships.

Asked by Mr Kiely about her view of the role of School Sport NT, Ms Bott responded:

I see it as a learning opportunity. I see it as a great opportunity for kids to learn to work with each other, to learn to work as a team. I see it as an opportunity for students who may not necessarily in a classroom situation show leadership to have the opportunity to develop in to leaders and to show leadership on a sporting field. I think there is opportunity for students to learn a sense of fairness, a sense of fair play and to develop confidence. A student could develop the confidence to learn umpiring skills perhaps, or that sort of thing.

This is consistent with the views of other witnesses that SSNT should be taken right back to the grassroots level, providing an opportunity for school students to learn a range of skills from a range of sports, and leave the elite selection of secondary school athletes to the peak sporting organisations. This would provide an excellent gateway for the peak sporting organisations to get into schools and promote their sport, which could be done on an organised rotational basis, taking into account seasonality factors.

At Kormilda, Physical Education is compulsory until Year 10 (that is, to the end of Year 9). It involves three 50-minute periods over the school week and lessons are focussed on the school's other internal sporting activities – for example, an athletics carnival in Term 3 and a general inter-house sporting carnival earlier in the year.

Kormilda has a school Code of Conduct. Students who do not comply with that code suffer sanctions such as not being allowed to represent the school at any level (similar to the Clontarf model). This encourages academic achievement in order to secure sporting prowess by representing the school.

As part of Kormilda's Health program, students undergo fitness testing, although Ms Bott thought this is not reported to parents. They also have to monitor diet and nutrition over a given time.

Kormilda's difficulty when having a teacher go away with a team is not the compensatory money available, but finding a replacement relief teacher. The difficulty is with finding a body rather than the money.

# Palmerston City Council

## 1 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr Mark Blackburn, Director Community Services, Palmerston City Council**  
**Mr David King, Community Development Officer, Palmerston City Council**  
**Mr Kin Leong, Youth Co-ordinator, Palmerston City Council**  
**Ms Jess McCarty, YMCA**  
**Ms Helen Clarke, YMCA**

There is a potentially looming crisis in Palmerston where population growth is outstripping community facilities for sport and recreation:

Service benchmarks for a population of this size indicate that there is a need to improve social infrastructure across the municipality. The development of the new suburbs of Rosebury and Ballamack provides an opportunity for government to address this situation.

The dearth of social infrastructure demonstrates a need for these developments to foster close school community links. Current infrastructure in Palmerston is proving insufficient in catering for the needs of grassroots, community recreation and with limited opportunities for elite sports.

Meeting the infrastructure needs for the community can be addressed through upgrading existing facilities, undertaking new infrastructure developments and allocating sufficient resources to manage and maintain facilities effectively.

Mr Mark Blackburn

The NT Government has recently provided the City of Palmerston with a Recreation Centre that will support grassroots sports, community recreation and elite sports. In addition, the NT Government has provided funding to support renovations at the Palmerston Aquatic facility.

There appears to be a major problem associated with the Archer Sporting Complex:

There is now a growing need to plan for the replacement of the Archer Sporting Complex, as there is no guaranteed solution to the midge problem at this complex.

Mr Mark Blackburn

Mr Blackburn made a statement which has applicability across the Territory:

Utilising sport recreation to improve social conditions as a whole, rather than solely on crime prevention, is a strategy that has much to offer the Northern Territory. It is readily accepted that sports play a crucial role in the development of our young people. The physical and health benefits of sport are obvious, yet the social and personal benefits are equally as important. In an era of commercialisation in sport, one should not lose sight of the fact that the very essence of sport is its capacity to provide achievement, skill development, fun, enjoyment and recreation for all, irrespective of the level at which they participate.

Mr Blackburn appears to be quoting research (but doesn't say what that research is). This supports submissions made by David King in his evidence.

Can sport and physical activity be used as strategies for anti-social behaviour prevention? The research evidence is encouraging; it suggests that with careful planning, sport and physical activity have crime prevention potential. For some young people, sport and physical activity is plain fun, a fantasy that allows one to escape from the day to day reality of family conflict, homelessness or the temptation to use alcohol and drugs. Sport and physical activity can give

young people a sense of belonging, loyalty and support, which means that suicide, truancy and illegal drug use are no longer viewed as an option.

Case studies demonstrate opportunities for young people to engage in behaviours that are valued by our society. They also suggest that it is possible to reduce the supply of motivated offenders by diverting young people from offending behaviour to engage in sport and recreational activities, and shows how environment in infrastructure in communities can help make pro-social choice easier than anti-social choice.

Mr Blackburn reinforces what was overwhelming evidence from people in remote communities:

To maximise the benefits of sport and physical activity programs in reducing anti-social behaviour, it is important that administrators of these programs seek to integrate them with health, welfare and other support services.

The Palmerston City Council submission specifically addresses the Committee's Terms of Reference in these terms:

The submission contains the following suggestions for consideration by the Sessional Committee to supporting: planning and development of a replacement sporting complex with the Archer Complex; a whole-of-NT-Government approach to the planning and development of social infrastructure for the new developments of the Rosebury Community Hub and the Bellamack development. An example may be a rectangle sports at one location, oval sports at another, and alternative venue for diamond or possibly court sports. . . .

A whole-of-NT-Government approach to planning and access to social infrastructure for grassroots and community recreation providers, including: after hours operation needs such as access to lighting, change rooms, storage and parking, etcetera; shared multi-purpose facility agreements; expansion of community recreation satellite training venues – for example staging some of the organised sports such as netball or basketball at the Recreation Facility in Palmerston. . . .

Other considerations for the committee include: advocating for the re-introduction by the NT Government funding for sport and recreation officers in local government. That was cut out 30 June 2006. The system was that the NT Government provided \$27 000 and local government matched that. That position was vital to actually provide support and advice to recreation groups, which includes assistance in management and operations, grant writing, partnership building, facility sharing and facility planning and development.

To promote inclusive activities for disadvantaged groups and becoming involved in activities such as after-school programs, including people with disabilities, to provide planning and development support to ensure local community recreation needs are met. Most importantly, to continually monitor and evaluate recreation programs, services and facilities.

Mr Blackburn suggested to the Committee in relation to School Sport NT a system of Clontarf-like programs for schools with Indigenous populations, among other things:

In terms of the Sessional Committee's reference about the NT School Sport programs, we will indicate promoting an independent evaluation of the School Sport NT program, with clearly defined terms of reference relating to participation and ongoing linkages. It was obvious from the former submission that there are some issues there and some challenges to deal with.

Promoting the linkages to the Australian Sports Commission, after school recreation programs for all schools, and encouraging schools to provide broader opportunities for participating in sport through their compulsory two hours per week Physical Education opportunities.

We also suggest that the Sessional Committee, which will be reporting back to the Legislative Assembly, may consider the following suggestion: that the NT Government continue to use sport and recreation to improve social conditions as a whole for youth in the Palmerston community; that programs such as the Clontarf Academy are introduced across the Territory, including Palmerston High, to support the development of Indigenous young people where in excess of 20% of the school population is Indigenous.

That the Northern Territory Government fund non-government organisations such as ReLink and the YMCA to provide sport and recreation programs for homeless youth that assist them to reintegrate in to the community themselves. I think just the presence of the YMCA here and the

program that Magic runs in Palmerston shows the benefits of such a program; and that the Northern Territory Government considers the importance of cultural, passive, recreation for non-traditional activity as well as a vital component to a holistic approach to engaging young people in sport.

Mr Blackburn highlighted a trend away from duplications of facilities in a community – for example, a school oval and a community oval, one the domain of the NT Government and the other the domain of the local government body – to arrangements of Partnership Agreements whereby the NT government installs an oval and the local government body undertakes to maintain the asset. This has implications for both urban and remote communities and underscores one example of duplication, and therefore waste of resources. There are cases in remote communities where neither asset is maintained by any entity.

Palmerston City Council has surveyed young people about sport and recreation activities. Mr Blackburn said the result was:

...not only do they want sporting opportunities, but they also want other social fabric such as a youth café, for instance, whereas those who aren't sporting minded can go along and play a guitar or try to act.

Responding to a question from Mr Wood about lack of planning for open spaces for activities such as motocross, Mr Blackburn raised the issue of a whole-of-government and structured approach. This has been central to the arguments of those involved in obesity research: obesity is not simply about food and exercise; it is about urban planning, having proper walking routes, having safe walking routes, planning suburbs so that there are open spaces that encourage people to be active in those spaces, etc:

Definitely they are the areas. I think that what you are alluding to is that when the planning for a new suburb takes place, you need a range of players sitting around the table to provide that level of input. Whereas traditionally in the past, it may have been just the planners developing something and traditionally you had a standard school and you had two ovals and that is what you put in place as far as community infrastructure, but you need to be thinking a little bit more laterally and looking at what the opportunities are, especially for interface councils. Palmerston is sitting on that urban-rural cusp and a lot of kids like those activities that you are describing. They are the things that need to be looked at as the municipality rapidly [expands].

On the matter of the loss of funding for an SRO or, in this case a Community Recreation Officer, Mr Blackburn said:

...without harping on it too much, the City of Palmerston didn't accept the cost shifting that occurred when 50% of the funding was taken away from the Sport and Recreation Officer. Certainly, Council's direct involvement in sport and recreation diminished. There was an indication by the government that the Department of Sport and Recreation would pick up that role, so I still think that there is a major gap there to be performed very much at a local level and that really is an important hole to actually fill at present.

This suggestion could be a simple and inexpensive way of reducing antisocial behaviour in schools over weekends (ie vandalism). It may also serve to build a sense of school community and pride as an unexpected outcome:

The lessons that have been learnt elsewhere are that if you put activity there on the weekends and the school is open of a weekend, then there is less anti-social behaviour taking place at the schools. That is what we hope to do and we are working with that.

There is a range of Federal Government funding available for the provision of programs (Fed funds secured NT Government departments). Palmerston City Council has taken advantage of that. This was Mr King's evidence of how it was achieved:

The Department of Health and Community Services received funding from the Australian Sports Commission; which was then given out to conduct an after-school sports program targeting individuals at risk and disengaged with the education system. That project ran overtime due to the difficulty in finding service providers. We were fortunate that we struck up a good deal with the YMCA and within their capacity we were able to execute that program over an 18-month period.

The YMCA is very active in Palmerston in the provision of after-school inter-school competitions (which is supposed to be the domain of School Sport NT, only that is usually during school time). The YMCA is funded by Palmerston City Council to run these programs and some funds are sourced by the Council through Federal Government grants secured by NT departments:

We are also going to look at trying to get going an after-school basketball competition for primary schools. There is quite a number of schools within the vicinity so it's now a matter of getting together with all the schools and having a discussion on how they want to do it and basically having the schools as their own club as such and they organise the age groups and players.

Ms Jess McCarty

Asked by Madam Chair whether there was a recurrent theme of demand from young people, the response was:

With the three-on-three competition that we had, the thing that the kids kept on saying was: 'This is a lot of fun. We want to keep on doing it', like they want competitions for the sports, a regular competition to be involved in, not just somewhere where they can come along and use the facilities, but they want something that they can regularly be involved in as well. So it is an ongoing thing and it is quite a social thing for them as well. I think that is more what they want out of the sports.

Ms Helen Clarke

This is an important point and applies across the board. Young people want to be involved and they want to be playing and doing. It is the organisation of competitions that appears to be lacking. The competitions referred to above are provided out of school hours and are very well attended.

The Aquatic Centre at Palmerston is an outdoor swimming pool, the temperature of which drops to 17 degrees during the Dry Season, putting all swimming, recovery training, aquaerobics, etc, programs out of commission for three to four months. Palmerston City Council is looking at the problem and is investigating whether the pool might be solar heated so it can be used all-year round. This is potentially an issue for other pools around the Territory.

# Nhulunbuy Public Hearing

## 9 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr Stewart McGill, Department of Education, Arnhem PEC**  
**Mr Chris Putland, Nhulunbuy Surf Life Saving Club**  
**Ms Nicky Mayer, Gove Tennis Association**  
**Mr Eddie Mulholland, Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the NT and East Arnhem Rugby Union**  
**Mr Gus David, Indigenous Sports Program (Aust Sports Commission)**  
**Mr Derek Scanlan, Sport & Recreation Officer, Milingimbi**  
**Ms Stacey Dwyer, Sport & Recreation Officer, Yirrkala**  
**Mr Craig Edwards, Nutritionist**  
**Ms Angela Colbey, Nutritionist**

Mr McGill's job is 50% physical education support for schools in the Arnhem cluster, and 50% School Sport NT. His 'patch' runs from Milingimbi to Numbulwar. Mr McGill said it was 'pretty tough' to cover all the schools:

In his physical education capacity, Mr McGill works on the NT Curriculum Framework with teachers (not necessarily phys ed teachers because not all primary and/or middle schools have them).

Of facilities for both phys ed and School Sport, Mr McGill said:

...if you have been out in Yirrkala it is pretty sad out there at the moment; they have got an oval that has just been graded and there is no shade over the basketball court or tennis court - but that is one of the good schools in the area, some of them have no areas for physical activity or anything like that. A lot of the places around the joint are in disrepair; it is not like Sanderson High School or Millner.... people try and do the best they can. They would do much better if they had the infrastructure there, without a doubt.

Of School Sport NT, Mr McGill said:

I think you guys should continue the support of School Sport NT, because if that is dismantled there would be a big hole in the program for school kids. If that was gone there would be nothing else; it would be either Eddie doing his rugby or Gus might do his touch football, but there is nothing coordinated. There is no structure.

I reckon try and get some Development Officers out here. Richard is here. We have got a tennis person but there is not much else...but the infrastructure is real important.

Of facilities and infrastructure, Mr Mulholland said:

...the facilities in Nhulunbuy in the greater area are very good, if there is anything lacking it is the volunteers to help out with the sports. But generally speaking there is a high level of sport participation in this area.

As soon as you step out into Yirrkala or the rest of Arnhem Land you have got a massive gap and the bottom line is that you don't have any structured form of sport outside from Under 16s down.

That is, there is no organised junior sport, which appears to lend weight to the argument put to the Committee of compulsory physical education at the primary and middle school levels. Mr Mulholland went on:

Whether it is touch football, AFL, soccer – you name them, there is nothing! That is the essential part of growth of a human being is from about the age of six to about 16. That is where you learn life skills, your body development, motor skills, all of those things to lead to better quality of life and better health as you get older there is nothing there, never has been.

So I think there is going to have to be an injecting of dollars into paying people to get out there, Development Officers and set up structures so people can compete week in, week out in sport, training two or three days a week. This is what is leading to half of the social problems and health problems we have on Aboriginal communities and I think there is enough evidence around public health journals to tell you that.

...there is adequate sport in Nhulunbuy; what we are lacking here is people to volunteer and help us out on the committees...but I think you need a major focus in the outlying areas, it is almost criminal that there is no activity going on out there

Mr Muholland stressed the importance of sport in life generally:

Most Aboriginal people don't go to school because they don't feel confident there; our sport superstars, the Michael Longs, etcetera – it was the sport that got them to where they are.

...

You look at most of the Aboriginal people that have made it; they have a very good sporting background and the education came later, myself included. I only went to school as a child and it was because I was pretty good at sport that I actually had the confidence to take on education at a later point in life.

He also addressed the issue of school attendance and the importance of sport in the school curriculum:

...there is also a multitude of other reasons [for lack of school attendance]; infrastructure, dollars, all that kind of stuff and social problems at home which contributes to not going to school and it does limit the ability for sport. But I think if you have a main emphasis on sport out in the regions; you will find improvement in all the other things, because you do learn the basics of team work; leadership – someone takes the lead as a captain - self discipline, to train when you have to; you learn all the basic qualities you need for life out of sport.

Mr Putland talked about his experience in some communities:

In the communities, I went to Borroloola about 10 years for a soccer trip; it was a School Sport NT exchange and their attendance then was much higher, because they had introduced soccer; they brought a few soccer stars up there. Those kids were kicking the ball – you have got a kid this high kicking the ball six feet off the ground that way and he is running that way! They were into it big time.

I was back there last year and I went to the school at Borroloola and they have still got a really good attendance and it might not be soccer, it might be AFL...I think if they can get the kids into something, it helps them attend the school and I think it does help them after school as well.

Ms Mayer talked about Galiwinku where Shepherdson College runs programs under the Active After School Community Program (an Australian Sports Commission initiative):

I have just been to Galiwinku recently and they have an interesting program where they have active sport before school; so those kids are at school at seven o'clock in the morning, which is like unheard of in most communities or even our local school; and then they have breakfast and then they go into the classroom. It is like: 'I have got to be at school at 7 o'clock'.

They have got a school population of anything from 200 to 250 kids and there would have been 60 to 100 kids running around at 7 o'clock in the morning at the school, participating in whatever activities they are running. So that was an interesting concept instead of it happening after school when they do other stuff; this was actually before school. I haven't come across that before with all my community visits.

Mr Mulholland cited a great success story:

...we had a guy called Markus...from Ramingining and we have taken him away for the last six years to the NT Championships. We have trained him, we have gone and gotten him support over the years, but they had a couple of really good school teachers out there at the time that were working with those kids.

Markus went on last year to become the first Yolngu person to play in an international Rugby Union Sevens overseas....His English is really good, he graduated Year 12 and his school teacher in Ramingining was up in Malaysia somewhere and flew down to watch him play in Singapore to show that much interest in this individual's development...and it has lifted him and all of his confidence and he is just flying at the moment.

Asked about peak sporting organisations servicing remote communities, Mr David explained:

My job is to deliver sports throughout this whole region and probably in the last 12, maybe even 16 months we have had hardly any Development Officers come out our way. Through the Indigenous Sports Program, we actually fund some of the peak sporting bodies - I think there are 14 sports that we fund in the budget. We give them their travel budget. A lot of them work around 100m outside of the Stuart Highway because they can drive to Katherine or to Alice Springs or to Tennant Creek at their leisure, but it has just sort of died off.

We used to have regular athletics, touch football was the best one – the Development Officer for touch football was right throughout the whole region - rugby union we also had a really good Development Officer; Jacko. The AFL, we were fortunate; we have got a Development Officer who actually lives here in Nhulunbuy, but the Development Officer is more junior development so there is no assistance or development for senior football.

We had hockey, but now we just don't get that any more mainly because once upon a time, we used to have regular flights out to communities [but] now you have to charter.

...

...even with the AFL guy based in Darwin; it is probably cheaper for him to service Ramingining, Milingimbi and Galiwinku flying via Maningrida. If they flew here [Nhulunbuy] and then flew back to Galiwinku, even that trip is about \$1600 to \$1800.

Mr Mulholland explained funding difficulties for peak sporting organisations to deliver services in remote communities:

One of the oldest problems is because you are given X amount of dollars to provide Y amount of services so you are going to go where you can...get the cheapest way of delivering that service to get your statistics up because that is how you get your funding. It is all evidence-based reporting today, so it is not worth paying \$3000 to go and do one session in Numbulwar when you can get

20 sessions down the road in Katherine...because that is how you are going to report and that is how you are going to get funding.

...

So the whole structure has got to be looked at, particularly from government and who we deliver these services and the cost factor... the reality is it is cheaper to fly from Darwin to London return than it is from Nhulunbuy to Milingimbi and that is 20 minutes away – and that is a fact!

Cost affects Nhulunbuy during the Wet Season because of accessibility problems. Ms Mayer explained:

...even if you bring it back to Nhulunbuy for kids to participate in School Sport NT, even if we don't bring in kids from the communities, what it costs us to participate in School Sport NT, it all happens in the wet season before we can even drive out on the track. So we are flying everywhere just to participate in School Sport NT events.

Mr Mulholland talked about the funding shortfalls:

I have got seven boys in the Northern Territory Under 16 representative side; that is half the Northern Territory Rugby Union side coming out of Nhulunbuy; I have got three boys in the Indigenous side that just went to the Gold Coast. These boys have got to have a run in Katherine on 1 September. I have got to jump in my car and drive them there, put them up in a hotel at my expense and bring them back!....That is a disgrace.

Mr Scanlan from Milingimbi talked about Sport and Recreation Officers (he has been one for many years) in remote communities in the Top End:

...retention of sport and recreation officers in communities has been a challenge over the years. There have been many changes of staff, sport and recreation officers in communities for different reasons.

...

...the real challenge, especially for younger ones coming in who haven't been on communities before who might be just out of university or some sort of college, or having done sport stuff and wanting to become a sport and recreation officer; I think they need to be given some background before they come to a community about what it is like to be on a community...one of the things that needs to be realised is that it can be a very, very isolated situation especially if you are single. There is no local government or association of the Northern Territory type organisation of sport and recreation officers in communities who belong to.

...

Another way...of trying to retain your sport and recreation officers in communities is the report or networking system which you develop with say, people like in the sport and recreation, Gus and I have been working quite well over the period that I was in the Department of Sport and Recreation.

The lack of networking point has been raised in other evidence by SROs. Mr Scanlan also mentioned the burn-out factor:

There has been a very big turn-over rate of sport and recreation officers; they have been, on average, I believe every two or three years. Then of course they might opt to get out of the sport and recreation all together and you have lost them to some other type of activity of employment.

Mr Scanlan talked about career paths and exposing SROs to larger events for work experience and networking purposes:

Another thing to look at might be a career path in the sense that if they have got a proven record on the community, invite them to come in and do some substantial assistance with something like the Arafura Games. I have been knocking on the door of Arafura Games and the Department of Sport and Recreation for 12 years or more and it has just got to the stage in the last 12 months or two years that Sport and Recreation and the Arafura Games are actually talking to each other about this possibility.

Mr Scanlan said SROs should be similarly involved in the Masters Games in Alice Springs, which provides a nice split between the Top End and the Centre for work experience and greater exposure for SROs every two years.

Asked about peak sporting organisations and School Sport NT, Ms Mayer repeated what other peak organisations have said:

A few years ago Tennis NT dropped School Sport NT off their agenda because it just became too difficult; they didn't want to listen, they wanted to go their own way, do their own thing.

I know from talking with Loraine Mischlewski, a lot of the peak bodies have their own ideas how they want the competition to be run within School Sport NT. So a lot of the other peak bodies have dropped off from School Sport NT.

Ms Mayer reported that there is little flexibility out of the School Sport NT office in Darwin and that it does not take into account prevailing factors in communities. For example:

...what comes of the Darwin office - how they want remote areas to participate - just doesn't fit our criteria. It is always difficult to get a team to participate, just to get from Gove to Darwin or Gove to Alice Springs. Gove kids have to go to Alice Springs or they want you to fly to Darwin and stay overnight, but they are not prepared to put the kids up anywhere, whereas if we fly via Cairns we are there at 3 p.m. but they don't like you to do that. It is what comes out of the office over there, it doesn't fit with everybody's area.

Mr McGill appeared to be the only person in the Nhulunbuy hearing who supported School Sport NT (perhaps because he is a teacher). He said:

I think to get [a sport] on the [School Sport NT] calendar it is like a three year program and after three years, you reapply to get back on the go with it. [Rugby] Union used to be on there years and years ago, but they are not interested in it any more. They tried to get soccer, but there was a breakdown in there.

In terms of School Sport NT, it is your only solid organisation that supports sport at a primary and secondary level. So in terms of you guys [representatives of sporting organisations] supporting us, I think you should continue to do that because if it is dismantled, there will not be anything there for the school kids.

It could be argued that Mr McGill's statement does not reflect the reality of what happens on the ground. School Sport NT is not mandated. Physical education in primary schools is not mandated. Coaches of School Sport NT teams 'qualify' as coaches usually under one criterion, which is they must be a teacher. Programs offered by School Sport NT attract those children who are good athletes or at least comfortable with their skill level. There is nothing to address children in school who are less confident about their sporting ability, so there is an entire group of children that are going without any sort of sport or physical education at school. Ms Mayer raised exactly this point when she asked:

Is it the norm throughout schools in the Territory or across Australia that primary schools don't have a PE teacher as such to run PE programs?

...

I have been in Gove for 17 years and I have had two kids go through the primary school and I have got a third one there now. We have had teachers come and go that are PE teachers number one and maybe English or Maths as a backup subject that they teach. Now at the primary school we don't have a full-time PE teacher, but we have got four at the high school.

Mr Putland, speaking as a parent, mused about whether physical education should be accorded the same status in the curriculum as English or Maths. He said:

I have had four kids go through the school here... which would be over 10 years. I think there was only a formal physical education process in place for two years. Over at the high school, we have got PE teachers and Outdoor Education teachers and a far more active program, but you are getting kids who haven't been introduced, who haven't gone with the whole sporting thing. They may come to high school and find it hard to fit in because they haven't got a whole lot of the finer motor skills that can be developed through sports at primary school. I can remember going to a meeting about this at the primary school. They didn't bring it [physical education] in and it was because not all kids are good at sport. Not all kids are good at art [the focus of optional teaching at the primary school], either.

Mr McGill commented on the 'old days' of Friday afternoon school sport:

...there used to be Friday afternoon sport where people wandered off and either did softball or soccer or footy or whatever. I like that idea. Whether the principals are prepared to endorse that it is up to the Department of Education, but I am a big fan of that.

The Member Chairing, Ms Sacilotto, sought clarification:

**Madam CHAIR:** So as a teacher, you think that would get kids interested from a young age and then be able to take that physical aspect and their skills into high school and into later life; that it would be a good grounding as a teacher to start getting them interested and they would be more comfortable all of the way?

**Mr MCGILL:** A fantastic learning environment; they are learning so much through competitive sport and it doesn't necessarily have to be competitive, it can be modified games where the result is just participation.

...

That is the purpose of education, isn't it, to have a full and healthy life with all the curriculum areas? Physical activity and physical education are a really important part of their primary school level so when they do go to high school, they can move on; they can make healthy choices.

Ms Mayer, who is a Development Officer with Tennis NT, said the primary school welcomes her into the school for a five-week teaching block of modified tennis, which is suited for all skill levels. This works well for her because she can recruit both for School Sport NT teams and Tennis NT teams.

Mr David reinforced the fact that teachers who are not qualified in physical or outdoor education are not comfortable delivering programs because of their own sense of inadequacy. For example:

Of teachers coming into our remote schools, a lot of them are academics, damn good teachers, and a lot of them have a sporting background. Speaking to some of them, they say to me: 'Gus I would run your program, but last week we were playing basketball and I can't dribble a ball. I am uncoordinated and for a whole week the kids in the community teased me'. This is an adult being teased by community kids.

Mr Scanlan mentioned a collaborative idea between a community, NTAFL and the university whereby a DVD was made in local language which explained the rules of the game. The rationale for this idea was that most conflict during football games came from the crowd rather than the players and the reason for the conflict was a lack of understanding of the rules.

Ms Dwyer, the SRO from Yirrkala, explained the problems with trying to deliver a structured program in a community:

When you have 50-odd young people turn up at the sport and recreation office from age five to 20; there is no structured activity that you can do to suit everyone. So it is very much: 'Here are the basketballs, let's all go and run around on the basketball court, let's go hunting, let's play volley ball', but as far as skills development goes, I am concerned that there is not much of that happening. It would be a lot easier if there were parents helping out, but there are none around to help out, so there is no sport.

The after school activities are after hours, everyone has gone home so it is just basically me around. I have been trying to get some of the older kids to help out and maybe if these kids, who are young leaders in the community, could possibly be paid to help run these programs, that would be a big help for me.

I am not sure how we are going to get the parents involved. I have talked to a lot of people about it and everyone has got the same problems with it, so it just seems to be non-existent.

...

We need more help on the ground.

Ms Dwyer may not be aware that she is referring to the model at Mt Theo and the *Jaru Pirrjirdi* workers who are youth leaders and who are paid for organising various sport and recreation activities at Yuendumu. This program has taken 13 years to develop and is an outstanding model for other communities, although it requires a great deal of funding.

Mr Mulholland elaborated on the difficulty of an SROs job:

Clearly, the community is under resourced. People are kidding themselves if you think you can have one Sport and Recreation Officer to run a community of about 1000 people like Yirrkala, when we know that something like 60% of Aboriginal kids are under the age of 15, so you have got one person trying to organise something like 60% of the community. It seriously is a joke.

Mr Scanlan pointed out the importance of a handover period between an outgoing and an incoming SRO. He related his experience at Elcho Island:

I literally became a projects officer at Elcho Island over a period of 5 years helping that community to get its oval from what it was a dust bucket to a fully grassed, fully irrigated, fenced school oval.

He said that CDEP took it over and failed to budget appropriately, and it returned to the 'dust bucket' he inherited in the first instance.

Ms Dwyer mentioned one of her successes:

The one thing that has really worked is with Craig and Angela, they are the public health nutritionists; we run a weekly program at the beach where they have a healthy recipe that the kids all prepare and cook on the beach and then after that we do some physical activity like volleyball. Again, it is not structured it is more getting people involved. That has worked really well and is something that was passed on from the previous Sport and Recreation Officer to me and it is growing still.

Ms Mayer raised an interesting question about the focus of all concerned with sport and recreation:

The course that Gus [Indigenous Sports Program] ran a couple of weeks ago, bringing all the Sport and Recreation Officers in, [I made the observation that] there is no sporting culture coming from the parents to the kids; the kids are not seeing their parents as role models in sport or in that type of situation.

I asked the question: are we focusing on the wrong people? Are we trying to turn the kids in to something that it is not happening at the top with their parents? Should we be putting some more focus back on the parents and make them become responsible role models for their kids?

It was quite interesting. A lot of them sat there and nodded and thought: 'Yes, maybe there is too much focus on the kids and not enough focus on the adults there who are bad role models' with substance abuse and things like that.

Speaking about the lack of co-ordination and co-operation at a variety of levels, Mr Scanlan said:

I think the hierarchy of the Education Department and the Sport and Recreation and Local Government should be talking at that level and that would filter down a natural force or create an environment whereby people in communities, the principal and the council, would be encouraged to work closer together.

This idea was supported by Ms Mayer because, citing two communities in the Arnhem region:

...in some areas you are double-funding one community through Sport and Recreation or through Education. If you pooled your resources and built one lot of decent facilities that everybody can use and share, you are going to get better things happening.

There were similar sentiments expressed at the Palmerston meeting where school sporting facilities (oval, tennis courts, etc) were made accessible to sport and recreation groups out of school time, thus having the potential to reduce antisocial behaviour (break-ins, graffiti, etc) and engendering a sense of ownership of and pride in the school as a community facility.

Mr Edwards shared the earlier view that more resources, both financial and human, are required:

...more Sport and Recreation Officers for every community; not just one Sport and Recreation Officer to clean floors, drive the bus, do the shopping, look after the kids and be the baby-sitter. You have to be serious about funding sport and recreation positions: don't just leave it to one person; that is why they are leaving.

Mr David succinctly summarised the views of all present:

I work with Sport and Recreation Officers and one Sport and Recreation Officer cannot do all the work. You need at least three or four full-time Sport and Recreation Officers in these communities. You have your health clinic where you have maybe one nurse but at least five or six good support. In the workshop, you might have one Supervisor and seven or eight good workers. It is the same with Sport and Recreation Officers; they need full-time support.

In her summary, Ms Mayer said:

I would hate to see it go but I do think School Sport NT needs a huge shake-up.

...

There are two situations at the moment within Gove: our high school principal doesn't think that the school has anything to do with School Sport NT and School Sport NT is a separate entity. To me, that is...double Dutch.

...

...any team officials, whether they are parents or teachers, every member of every team should have a police check. I have brought it up at many School Sport NT meetings within our cluster, but that is as far as it goes.

The last issue was raised during the second appearance of School Sport NT, the representatives of which considered Criminal History Checks to be unnecessary.

Ms Mayer returned to the issue of physical education in primary schools:

...you should start within the primary school. There should be proper PE teachers working with those kids because if an English teacher has no idea how to do a sporting activity, there are safety issues. That person is not really qualified to do that.

I thought a couple of years ago that the government was bringing in; because of obesity, proper sporting programs for kids at primary school level. I don't know where that has gone.

## Tennant Creek Public Hearing 13 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr Colin Baker, Representing DEET Regional Director Michelle Brown**  
**Mr Gavin Mahoney, Sport & Recreation Manager, Anyinginyi Congress**  
**Mr Randall Gould, AFL Barkly**  
**Mr John Hunter, CEO, Tennant Creek Town Council**  
**Mr Jack Favilla, Principal, Tennant Creek Primary School**  
**Mr Ken Millar, Teacher, Tennant Creek High School**  
**Ms Carolyn Ashton, Tennant Creek Town Council**  
**Mr Stuart Wiley, Manager, Youth Development Unit**  
**Mr Alan Kassman and Mr Paul Florence, Tennant Creek Baseball**  
**Mr Eric [inaudible], President, Tennant Creek Athletics**

Mr Baker had three issues to raise on behalf of Ms Brown who was attending meetings in Darwin. They were:

- an increase in after-hours availability of sport and other recreational activities in Tennant Creek;
- more coordination of what is on offer and for targeting that a bit more tightly towards educational outcomes (it is not clear from the transcript, but it appears this comment is in relation to School Sport NT);
- Ms Brown is most concerned that we devise some way of providing organised sport and organised sporting opportunities for children in remote places.

Mr Baker related the story of being the teacher at Warrego at the time the Normandy Mine closed. He tried to keep the school open, but there was very poor to no attendance. Riding a horse one day, he was approached by an Elder who asked if he could teach the children to ride. He said he could. The Elder undertook to have the children at school every day, and he was true to his word. Mr Baker built the curriculum around pony (for the very young ones) and horse riding. It was successful and the plan of the community was to reinvigorate stockman skills so they could work cattle. There is a smaller program running in Tennant Creek as after-school, but it is nowhere near as successful as when it was the centrepiece of the curriculum. This is very similar to the theme of some witnesses who suggested sport, art or music be the at the centre of the curriculum for remote schools.

Mr Baker was also involved in teaching swimming at Warrego and taking kids to carnivals in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs where they did extremely well. Of this experience, he said:

I tried to teach minutes and seconds for ages in that classroom and had no luck and then we were in Mt Isa at the swimming carnival where you were just racing against the clock; it was all time and by the end of the afternoon, even my 7 year olds could work out who was winning and who wasn't; they could work out what the times were and they were proud about watching the numbers go up.

This goes to the point of making the curriculum *relevant* to the lives of remote children.

Executing these programs (horses and swimming) was no easy matter and Mr Baker:

...found that I was constantly misunderstood by people within DEET. The people who involved in the sporting side said: 'What you are doing is curriculum, so don't come looking to us for funding',

and the people on the curriculum side would say: 'Don't come looking to us. That is sport and belongs to after-school'. That is a problem. There is a culture of separating the two and I personally believe that there is an advantage in integrating the two so you can win.

Of parental involvement and support, Mr Baker said there was outstanding parental support for the riding program because the parents understood it and the community had the goal of running a cattle enterprise. With swimming, however, there was not the same level of support because it was 'from Mars'.

Asked by Mr Bonson whether the riding program would work in areas such as Kalkarindji and Daly River, where there is a cattle culture, Mr Baker was confident that it could be done successfully and would be welcomed by the communities.

Mr Baker is presently [this was August 2007] writing a doctoral thesis dealing with this approach to teaching. It would be a very useful document for the Committee.

Asked by Mr Wood if Warrego School should be re-opened as a dedicated horse-based training centre, Mr Baker said:

...the experience of Warrego was that you can use sporting and recreational type activities to drive them in to the mainstream education program....A lot of people think that I am a cowboy, horse, fanatic, lunatic. I am not; I am a school teacher. So if I thought unloading railway wagons would give me the leverage to teach what I wanted to teach I would unload railway wagons... In answer to the question, I think what I would say is that I think you would need to do the analysis and work out how you fit that program in to achieving what are the outcomes in the NT Curriculum. It is a document that I don't have any quarrel with.

Mr Mahoney explained that Anyinginyi has an Active Lifestyles Sport and Recreation Unit which promotes healthy lifestyles, cooking, nutrition, exercise and providing recreational activities mainly for social interaction and just general well-being. The rationale of the unit and its programs is to avoid chronic preventable disease. He outlined a number of sporting and recreational activities run by Congress and reported good participation. However:

One of the problems I see with mainly youth and sport activities within Tennant Creek is that there is way too many people doing too many different things and not enough of that is really coordinated and put in one streamlined direction.

Then...trying to distinguish between participating and recreational sport from power and competition activities; where the real focus is on winning compared to more so participation inclusive aspect of sport.

Speaking of sporting infrastructure in Tennant Creek, Mr Mahony said:

The football ground is probably the thing that is in the best condition, but in terms of things like the baseball and softball, through lack of use it has started to wear down. The basketball court needs an upgrade pretty soon as well. They do get a lot of use and it will be really good if the facilities can be upgraded.

Mr Mahony said Tennant Creek suffers from a lack of qualified coaches in a range of sports and is rarely visited by peak sporting organisations. In addition, there is a lack of co-ordination between the major service providers, which include his own Congress, the town council, CentreCare, schools, YDU and the ICC Indigenous Coordinator:

Everyone is going off and doing their own thing and everyone is doing it with the best intention and doing their job to capacity, but what is happening is there are all different programs running. For such a small town, we have got six service providers...for only 2500 to 3000 people. Wires are getting crossed, people are double-booking and it really is just not effective in that service delivery.

The organisations do have informal liaison arrangements, but there is no formal co-ordination of activities. Mr Mahony suggested that after the new shire arrangements take effect next year, perhaps the shire could assume a co-ordinating role [see, however, Mr Hunter's evidence in relation to non-core activities below]. Further, as with elsewhere in the Territory, there is a lack of volunteers to support sport programs.

Mr Gould explained the history of AFL in the Barkly region:

1991 was the first year in AFL Barkly where there is 5 teams including Elliot and Ali Curung plus three of the town based teams.

...

Over the years there has been between five teams and eight teams in a season

There is an Under 17 competition and a new nine to 13 year-old competition. There are 500 registered senior players.

There are no alcohol sales at matches in Tennant Creek and the AFL Barkly is solvent, turning over about \$110,000 per annum. They receive a \$5000 grant from the NTAFL and sponsorship from BP Tennant Creek in the amount of \$5000.

AFL Barkly secured \$60,000 sponsorship from a mining company for a Development Officer in Tennant Creek. AFL NT took that money and sent a Development Officer, who was unsuitable and lasted for seven months. There has been no replacement. Mr Gould said:

...we think that the AFL should be supplying [a Development Officer]. They are supplying one at Gove, they supply one in Katherine, there are several in Alice Springs and certainly several in Darwin and also the Tiwi Islands.

The result of this is that there are no development pathways for talented juniors or seniors. Of School Sport NT, Mr Gould said:

In School Sports NT there is and has only been in the last couple of years where the School Sports program has invited Tennant Creek teams to go to Darwin to play in the carnivals and they have been quite successful in those carnivals.

AFL Barkly is working to develop its players. For example:

We went to the extreme last year when we struck up a relationship with the Ainslie Football Club in Canberra. We sent down a contingent of five players - one being a senior player, one chaperone and three under-age players. The senior player played half of this season down there and we have still got a junior player down there. His father relocated down there to further his football, but that is only through the relationship that we have struck up ourselves with [Ainslie] because, like I said, there are no clear pathways for our young players. So that is very frustrating from a football player's perspective.

Mr Gould agreed that volunteers and officials, etc, are difficult to find, but acknowledged that AFLNT had sent the Umpires Development Officer to Tennant Creek to deliver basic umpiring courses and they were attended by 12-15 predominantly Indigenous kids of whom 10 remain involved on a weekly basis doing goal and boundary umpiring for which they are paid.

Asked by Mr Bonson about AFL Barkly's relationship with School Sport NT, Mr Gould said:

We don't really have a huge relationship with them except that whenever a team goes away, we will throw money at the shorts or socks and things like that. We don't have anything to do with the coaching or anything like that, but we try and supply some equipment or some help. I think last year they gave us money for fuel because it wasn't completely funded.

Mr Hunter distinguished between core and non-core council business in the lead-up to the new shire arrangements:

In the long list of non-core activities, one of which is sport and recreation, the department has made it very clear to us that they intend that local government will only use its funds, its discretion funds if you like, for core activity. Given we are about to inherit some hundreds of kilometres of rural roads out there and seeing the roads are a core activity, I don't personally see much money getting past core activities.

...

However, councils will be able to conduct those [non-core] activities... provided they are neutrally funded from a local government point of view, which means that agencies which fund activities such as child care, aged care and so forth, local government can conduct those activities.

...

What we provide in dollar terms is about \$0.25m and that is not counting lots of smaller things that we do like provide buildings and rent-free facilities and so forth... you get funded about \$50,000 [in grants from various organisations]... I would like to do a lot more because I understand that sport and recreation and youth activities are extremely important for a community such as this one.

If we are to at least maintain a level; then we would have to be funded by at least \$200,000 from somewhere... It is not that the council doesn't want to do it; it is clear that we do because we see it as an important social function and it should be done and coordinated in an organised fashion. Clearly, a shire council would be in the best position to deliver a service like that; however if it is being delivered it has to be funded

Mr Hunter explained that under the existing regime, programs are funded from rates paid by home owners but pointed out that under the new shire regime, the income stream will not be the same so funding for programs in the shires will have to be considered.

Mr Hunter said it costs the Council \$50,000 per annum just to water the oval.

Mr Hunter observed that school facilities (gyms, basketball and tennis courts, ovals, etc) appeared not to be used by community groups after school hours, and this appeared to be a practice throughout the Territory, whereas in the Eastern states, community use of school facilities was a given. This also came up during evidence taken at the Palmerston public hearing. Joint use could produce some financial efficiencies (eg if the school oval is the same size as the town oval, watering of one only could save \$50,000 per annum if one oval could support all the community sporting activities in the town).

Mr Favilla spoke of his involvement in School Sport NT:

I have been involved in School Sport NT since about 1986... A few years, if you will excuse my language, we were sand-bagged in our little community because they changed the way that School Sport worked... We always represented Barkly and... when they set up the cluster system, we became part of Desert Storm cluster and for us to get the best representation from our kids, we had to take our kids to Alice Springs for trials. Now, in a community where you don't have a lot of money, taking kids down to trial uses up the money we could use to send kids away.

We are really pushing to go back to the system where we can represent just the Barkly; and we can use some School Sport NT money, if there is any available, to bring kids in from Ali Curung and Elliott - not Borroloola so much any more because it is a long drive... We have got our own uniforms, we have had them for years. It annoyed me and a few other people, too, because we didn't actually get much say in to the change to clusters. We didn't realise for about a year just how much it affected us. This community is really amazing; we probably send *per capita* more teams to championships than any other school in the Territory and have done for years.

Mr Millar of Tennant Creek High School added:

We were instructed last year by the cluster in Alice Springs that we had to use their transport - there were no ifs or buts. The bus came through at three o'clock in the morning, we had to get kids in to school, feed them, bed them down, get them up and get them ready – that happened quite often last year until the school decided that they would use their own school buses and the school council could pay for fuel and costs like that.

Mr Millar was supportive of Mr Favilla's comments on SSNT:

From what Jack [Favilla] was saying; I can only reiterate what he said. The cluster system is not working for Tennant Creek, for the Barkly region. Not only the kids here in that they have to make a choice to go to Alice Springs to participate and that is where all their funding goes, it also limits the students from the outlying communities from coming in.

Mr Millar reported that sporting infrastructure at the high school is in need of repair and in its present condition is a safety hazard: Further, Mr Millar said:

I think there is a crying need for the community to have a covered multi-purpose sports stadium, whether that be situated at the high school [or elsewhere].

He referred to this in the context of very hot summer days (ie 45 degrees).

It appears that a very few people run the majority of programs in Tennant Creek:

If it wasn't for a couple of people in Sport and Recreation and your high-school teachers and primary school teachers, there would be no real after-hours community or junior sport.

Ms Ashford reported that positive discrimination in funding for Indigenous groups has resulted in a lack of integration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in Tennant Creek:

Local Government funding in Tennant Creek is used to offer sport and recreation programs to all members of the community and not specific populations. Non- Indigenous communities are missing out on  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the funding. Sport and Recreation funding is coming in to Tennant Creek basically to Indigenous organisations so there is a rift existing between Indigenous and non Indigenous youth that seems to discourage them from playing sport together from a young age.

Mr Wiley spoke of the Youth Development Unit's work in re-engaging young people who have been identified as being at risk of dropping out of the education system. He uses sport as a teaching tool to teach numeracy and literacy and cited an example of taking kids to the football oval and taking photographs of them at various angles, thus teaching them geometry.

Mr Florence explained that baseball was extremely popular in Tennant Creek and, indeed, throughout the Territory, in the 1970s and 1980s, but participation has dropped off right across the board, particularly in Tennant Creek, and that the baseball diamond has fallen into disrepair. He said cost is a factor:

The problem directly arises when there is not a great deal of money around, but if there is something there that can be presented by way of, as I said; registration fees, equipment, facilities within the diamond itself, then I think that we could probably reignite something back to the formidable days of what Tennant Creek used to be like in regards to baseball.

Mr Eric [inaudible] of Tennant Creek Athletics explained that he was unable to mark the town oval for an athletics track, but entered into a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding with the primary school to mark out that oval for athletics.

Most organisations in Tennant Creek agreed that there is a need for administrative assistance to run the finances and meetings necessary for the operation of associations/organisations.

## Alice Springs Open Forum 14 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Ms Sara Bonneywell, SRO Numbulwar**  
**Ms Danielle Steinhardt, SRO Alice Springs Town Council**  
**Mr Jonathan Pilbrow, Private Citizen**  
**Ms Suzi Lowe, Mt Theo Program**

This forum was attended by the SRO from Numbulwar, Sara Bonneywell, who does not have the resources to attend regional meetings in Katherine, but was in Alice Springs on holiday and attended the Committee hearings. Her story well illustrates the situation of other SROs in remote communities. On the issue of funding, Ms Bonneywell said:

...there is a massive need. It is great that NT Sport and Recreation provide a small amount of money – I think \$28,000. I work for it through the Council. That \$28,000 is better than nothing. I also am funded through DCITA. They have upgraded it to \$38,000 for the next financial year. So basically beyond my wage, office costs, accounting costs, I think there is about \$7000 for me to run my program for the next year. I spend about 80 to 90% of my time finding funding, which means that I don't deliver the best program that I can deliver. There is a massive need and I don't think that I would be the only person saying that.

I heard earlier - I think it was you, Matthew - say something about choosing between housing or facilities. I live in a community with 1200 people. It is accessible by road for six months of the year due to the Wet Season. There is one what you could possibly call an all-weather facility. It is a rec hall; it has massive holes in the roof, it is about to fall apart. If a cyclone came through, I don't necessarily know that it would stand.

On the surface, an operational budget of \$7000 per annum appears to be grossly inadequate. Other witnesses have cited this figure for delivery of a 12-month program in communities of varying sizes. This inadequacy leads to time spent (in the case above, the majority of the SRO's time) applying for grants – usually small (\$1000-\$2000).

This woman thinks she is Numbulwar's first and only SRO because there is, once again, no housing for an SRO. Her partner is employed at the secondary school and that position comes with housing. Without that accommodation (or a replacement couple of teacher and SRO), Numbulwar would again be without an SRO.

SROs are working in professional isolation. Evidence put to the Committee indicates that there is no overarching body, no annual conference and no networking. At the very minimum it should be possible to put in place networking opportunities via E-mail and the Internet. The issue of a dedicated organisation auspiced through either Local Government or Sport and Rec to facilitate regional and NT-wide meetings of SROs should be considered. Ms Danielle Steinhardt, the SRO for Alice Springs Town Council said:

Certainly, what I am hearing from everyone is if every one is under-resourced it would be great to have that network where we can all help each other, but I don't know that that exists at this point in time.

Sport and recreation are part of a much wider concept of community health and welfare. For example:

...you can't increase kids' development in sport in a longitudinal way necessarily because of their lack of health and their lack of nutrition.

I work with the clinic, with the youth nurse. Once a week we do a nutrition program with kids between the ages of eight and 14, just because a lot of those kids are becoming quite independent from their families and in Numbulwar, basically kids that age only eat from the takeaway. Some days we do that nutrition program and maybe three kids out of 14 kids have eaten something up until we have cooked that day. Other days, most kids have eaten something but it is all takeaway. It's all fried, it has got no vegetables in it. So we see a massive, massive issue with kids' health and nutrition being an inhibiting factor in their early teens to them being involved in sport or to better themselves in sport.

The following exchange took place in relation to funding, funding shortfalls and funding reliability:

**Mr BONSON:** So if you were to have similar funding to the Mt Theo program; an extra couple of million, would that be effective?

**Ms BONNYWELL:** Far out, yeah! I have so many community members who could run - how amazing would it be to run six things at one time? That is my dream: to be able to employ local people who have the skills, who have done bits and pieces of sport and recreation before for when there hasn't been an officer because there is no housing and they have been unable to continue that stuff because they haven't had the support that they've needed or the training that they've needed. It would be just a beautiful thing.

**Mr PILBROW:** So I think there is an issue around sustainable funding and funding that you don't have to keep applying for. If you had a pool of funding, you are not spending 90% of your time doing funding applications because it is secure.

Further, it was submitted, and accepted by the Committee, that infrastructure is lacking:

The school has one building which is called the cyclone shelter. It is probably half the size of a tennis court. It is roofed, it is cement and they play indoor soccer and stuff like indoor hockey in that space. There is no outside field. There is pretty much no play equipment. There is one oval in the community. It is sand. It gets flooded in the Wet Season and it doesn't have proper posts. There is a really old basketball court from the 1950s that I have just put new posts on and dug out from a sand dune near the beach. There is another basketball court as well, but that is for the whole community.

The SRO's job is supposed to be about creating pathways for local people to take over from them:

Definitely it is about engaging young people. The job is massive, but, yes, it is about taking it to the future and hopefully getting to a point where you do have local Indigenous people who are supported in a better way, whether they do it as a group like Jaru Pirrjirdi and they have got a large sport network. Yes, but you definitely want to get it to a point where, if you can, you are not there.

Ms Steinhardt

This goal appears to be neither achievable nor realistic given the poor attendance at school, poor education levels, ability of local people to take on senior training as an SRO in order to secure a better salary or the poor funding available for communities to provide SRO programs.

Suzi Lowe from Mount Theo point out that SROs are much more than providers of sport and recreation:

...in the general context, that basically it is about **really slow and steady community development**. That is what it is. *Jaru Pirrjirdi* has only been going for the last three years, so it took us that long to actually get to a point where people were taking so much control or maybe it was about they were already taking control and we didn't acknowledge it, I don't know. None of this going to happen over night and that comprehensive nature has just really grown and it is possible because we pretty much have a hand on everyone in the community through *Jaru Pirrjirdi*. That mentoring thing that means no one is falling through cracks because we have got those mentors who are our eyes and ears in every family group and skin group. They come to us

when there are issues and we know who is doing what because of that, but I think in Alice Springs that sort of thing is probably going to be a little bit difficult.

Ms Bonneywell agreed:

...part of Mount Theo and *Jaru Pirrjirdi* and their sport and recreation role is it is a holistic picture. I think it is much harder when you get a sport and recreation specified position, but in fact it needs to be beyond that; it needs to incorporate health and nutrition, it needs to incorporate that whole youth worker perspective, there needs to be focusing people in to training and work place stuff and real jobs. Something like Mount Theo has been to see the bigger picture and support a whole lot of facets, but I think it is a bit more limited when it is just a sport and recreation officer from a council but they are still needed in all those different areas.

As did Ms Steinhardt:

I think that is probably one of the big challenges of being in Alice Springs and having it recognised that sport and recreation officers are not just providing a one off opportunity to come and do some physical activity, there is so much more lasting community benefit from really putting importance on these sorts of programs. I think the skills you are talking about and the ability of someone to be employed and things like that are natural flow-ons from being involved in structured programs and self-esteem and discipline and all the things that have come up before.

So I think there is that mind set, that sport and recreation is in isolation where it really should be working, as you said, in slow community development and really recognising the importance that sport and recreation as a vehicle to achieve all those other things that you alluded to.

## Mr Ben Balmer, Alice Springs Physical Education Teacher

### 14 August 2007

- Mr Balmer's evidence was about an inter-school sports competition in Alice Springs every Wednesday afternoon of school terms in school time.
- The idea came from the School Sport NT Co-ordinator but has been implemented by Physical Education teachers from each of the schools.
- There are limited places in teams, and at ANZAC Hill High School, teams are 'selected' on a first-come, first-serve basis rather than skill level.
- The emphasis is on fun and participation.
- It fits within the HPE curriculum framework.
- Has been operating at primary school level very well for several years.
- At Yirara, ASHS and Anzac, students who don't compete at the inter-school level (and Yirara isn't in the competition) MUST undertake physical activity at the school on the Wednesday afternoon. In other words, ALL students participate in sport programs on Wednesday afternoons. Students are closely monitored to ensure they are participating.
- Note that for the less athletically inclined, 'sports activity' also includes chess.
- Participating schools are St Phillips College, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, ANZAC Hill High School and Alice Springs High School.
- Competitions are (rotated over terms):

| Year 7 Girls | Year 8-9 Girls | Year 7 Boys | Year 8-9 Boys |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Volleyball   | Volleyball     | Volleyball  | Volleyball    |
| Basketball   | Basketball     | Basketball  | Basketball    |
| AFL          | AFL            | AFL         | AFL           |
| Touch        | Touch          | Touch       | Touch         |

- It has been very successful with sporting organisations in Alice Springs providing umpires and facilities where possible.
- Outcomes include:

Behaviour wise, you do see a bit of a difference, but I think it is mainly attributed to the relationships that are gained by being in that smaller group with the teachers and with those students. You get to see a different side of them out in their sports and you do see a difference in behaviour even if it is just for the 1½ hours that they're out of the school.

In-school culture, this year, we have seen a change in culture between the attitudes that the schools have towards one another. That has changed and that has become a lot more positive than it has been previously, so there is definitely change happening there.

- ANZAC Hill has a system of monitoring students' fitness and levels are measured twice per year. The results go into the student's portfolio and parents can check this progress twice per year (Parent-Teacher night, presumably).
- In Mr Balmer's experience, there is a problem with obesity:

I believe personally that at the moment, we need to do more in the way of working on the obesity level. Whether it is through stricter testing or anything like that, I can't really say, but we certainly need to do a lot more about it.

## Central Australian Youth Link Up Service 14 August 2007

### Witness:

#### **Mr Tristan Ray, Co-ordinator, CAYLUS**

The Central Australia Youth Link Up Service, CAYLUS, is located within the Tangentyere Council and is a petrol-sniffing prevention project which commenced in 2003 when the Federal Government allocated \$1m to the Northern Territory to combat petrol sniffing.

CAYLUS made a submission to the committee in 2006 which recommended that the NT Sport and Recreation Policy be amended so that regional bodies are able to apply for funding on behalf of multiple communities:

Willowra is an example where they certainly could have used NT Sport and Recreation funds but simply were not able to because the Mount Theo program already had its own sport and recreation funds for Yuendumu. Willowra is de-funded through NT Local Government and so it didn't have that local capacity to administer sport and recreation funds.

Regular, positive activities are required in communities to take young people away from antisocial behaviour such as petrol sniffing.

Some communities lack the capacity to make a submission for funding to Sport and Recreation. Willowra was again cited as an example of where this had happened.

The second recommendation made by CAYLUS was in respect of accountability and funding acquittal. This may have been overtaken by the local government reforms, but the history is:

...outcomes of sport and recreation programs run by local governing bodies should be measured through evaluation and more extensive reporting and the same range of performance measures that non-local government bodies are subject to.

Our experience to date is that, particularly local government councils -I guess with the new regionalisation process – keep in mind this was written a year ago; this might change but when sport and recreation funds went to local government bodies, the services were very patchy. They were often \$27,000 a year, which is pretty hard to do anything meaningful with in a remote community of any size.

The quality of programs is not monitored or reported against. Communities are required to acquit grants but do not have to prove what was delivered with the funding provided. Mr Ray cited examples of when the funds granted for Sport and Recreation programs were spent by councils on other items:

So often we would be told: 'There is a sport and recreation officer in that community' or 'There is a sport and recreation program in that community' when there wouldn't be. There might be someone being paid who is not working or there might be funding going to that council and being spent on a community bus.

Clear evidence has been put to the Committee that there is insufficient auditing of programs and funding. Mr Ray gave an example of a community that continued to receive Sport and Recreation grant monies for 12 months or two years after its Sport and Recreation Officer left and no programs were being delivered. However, mere auditing is a financial measurement. Mr Ray stressed that any programs delivered must be evaluated.

Funding appears to be required at two levels: operational funding and appropriate wages for people delivering sport and recreation programs:

Some other examples of it working well are where there are other Commonwealth funds available and these sport and recreation allocations combined with Commonwealth funds to pay a worker properly and give them an operational budget.

In addition to these elements, a third tier is infrastructure and equipment, which is separate from operational budgeting. Mr Ray endorsed the notion of strong regional departmental representatives to support Sport and Recreation Officers in the communities not only with program delivery but also with writing funding submissions:

...our experience...was that those officers were really not out there supporting the development and implementation of good sport and recreation services. There were some good people working in the department, but with big regions not necessarily resourced in the right way and some of the wrong people working there.

This, obviously, has resourcing implications, but it is apparent that procedures presently in place are inadequate and that these officers are spread too thinly to make a real impact in any community. The CAYLUS submission also carried recommendations in relation to the qualifications necessary for these positions. In his evidence, Mr Ray said:

The final recommendation is that the regional support officer positions are staffed by capable workers with community development experience. Likewise, the positions on communities.

Mr Ray identified housing as a major issue in communities. Many communities do not have housing for Sport and Recreation Officers/Youth Workers. This means that positions cannot be filled by qualified people and leaves the community without any program delivery.

The ideal target for remote communities is:

...two youth workers or Sport and Rec Officers running recreation programs, a male and a female per community, with dedicated separate housing so workers are not having to live together as well as work together, two cars so that gender-separated activities can be conducted and an operational budget so that you can do things. Most of our communities are a long way from having anything like that.

The Commonwealth is funding the *NT Integrated Youth Service* in the southern region, meaning Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Apatula. Whilst it is early days, there is cause for hope because:

That model is kind of based on the experience at Yuendumu and the experience at Docker River where sport and recreation as well as youth activities have led to some really significant improvements in health for young people, in school attendance for young people, in reduction in levels of substance misuse and in safety for young people.

The cost of care for a brain-injured petrol sniffer was quoted by Mr Ray as being \$300,000 per patient per year for the rest of their lives. When CAYLUS commenced operations, it was estimated that there were 500 sniffers in the region. Potentially, that represented an annual health bill of \$150m.

Mt Theo is the model program with the best results over the most enduring time. Docker River is also a good model, but it is 11 years younger than the Mt Theo program which has resulted in (a) elimination of petrol sniffing from Yuendumu, (b) meaningful and enduring program delivery; and (c) permanent local employment in the community.

## **Alice Springs Sporting Shooters 14 August 2007**

### **Witness:**

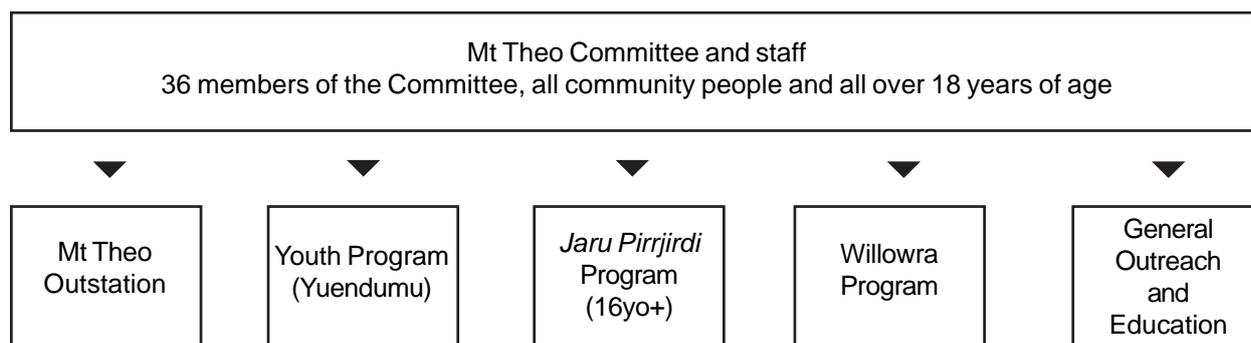
#### **Mr Robert Kittle**

- The Alice Springs Sporting Shooters Branch runs programs for two schools in Alice Springs: St Phillips College and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
- Firearm safety is the aim of the exercise, as well as long-term recruitment of sporting shooters.
- Two groups per week – Wednesday and Friday afternoons.
- They could take on more schools, but they would need more volunteers because the program has to be conducted during school hours and most of their members work.
- They use 22 calibre rifles and 12 gauge shot guns
- Students pay \$5 each per session, which covers about half of the ammunition used on the range. The club subsidises the remainder of the cost.
- Schools incur only the cost of transporting the students to the range.
- Can feed in to local competition and there is scope for intensive training in youth camps plus Commonwealth and Olympic team training.

## Mt Theo Program 14 August 2007

### Witnesses:

Ms Suzi Lowe  
Ms Bethany Langden  
Mr Lawrence White



Total funding of \$2m per annum of which \$135,000 is contributed by Northern Territory Government. The balance is Commonwealth.

### **Mt Theo Outstation**

- has been running for 13 years
- has resulted in elimination of petrol sniffing from Yuendumu
- services only Warlpiri or Warlpiri Nation people
- provides cultural rehabilitation and treatment
- usual initial period is one month, but varies (with Court Orders, etc)
- clients are under the influence of something at the time of their arrest (usually alcohol)
- on completion, they return to Yuendumu to go into the Youth Program, which runs seven days per week. This is viewed as integral to the ongoing recovery of the client and is considered crucial after-care. Without it, clients lapse back into the behaviour that put them at Mt Theo in the first place.
- is used as the diversion for antisocial behaviour:

...it could be a young person doing a break-in and police will say to them: 'Either you go to Mount Theo or you get charged'. So it is a carrot stick approach; there is a constant stick there that is very important to have as a diversionary option as well.

Ms Suzi Lowe

## Youth Program

- Runs at Yuendumu seven days a week and provides 160-180 hours of activities
- attracts an average of 784 people per week, which is an average of 112 per day in a community with a population of about 800 of whom 450 are under 25 years old
- not operational during school hours. This does not impact on school attendance, which is extremely low (six students attended school the week before Ms Lowe's evidence. 60 attended on the first day of school).
- provides sport and recreational activities
- there is no rule in the program of 'No school, no sport and recreation participation' although the new swimming pool will have a 'Yes school, yes pool' policy
- is wholly delivered by *Jaru Pirrjirdi* workers (casual rate of \$10/hour)
- annual funding of \$35,000 from Office of Sport and Recreation. \$28,000 of this is used to pay *Jaru* workers the casual rate, which leaves \$7000 per annum for vehicle costs, repairs and maintenance to buildings or equipment. In 2007, they paid \$90,000 to *Jaru* workers, all of which went back into the community. The level of NT funding:

...is just not sufficient. Most of our funding for that particular area for our youth program; which is sport and recreation, has to come from Commonwealth FACSIA for the outside school hours funding.

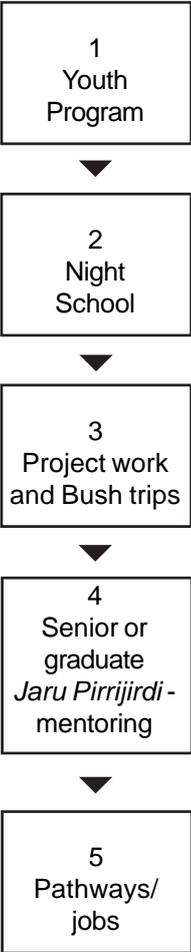
Ms Suzi Lowe

- provides two workers to run a program in Willowra, which attracts no support from local council or Office of Sport and Recreation (there seems to be a rule against 'double dipping' which does not recognise that one organisation can represent several different communities. This was also raised by Mr Ray of CAYLUS).

## *Jaru Pirrjirdi*

- This is a stepped program for young people in Yuendumu, which creates ambition, pathways and jobs
- open to 16 year-olds and over
- young people who have responded well to Mt Theo and the after-care of the Youth Program are invited to become *Jaru Pirrjirdi* (although Ms Lowe noted that many of them 'humbug' to be invited because it carries some status in the community)
- *Jaru* then become workers in the Youth Program and have responsibility for setting up and down activities, for keeping scores, maintaining order, etc.
- incrementalism within *Jaru Pirrjirdi* is directly linked to trust, which is based on that person's performance as a responsible worker (see overleaf) delivering sport and recreation programs
- young kids aspire to become *Jaru Pirrjirdi*

**Incremental Levels of *Jaru Pirrijirdi***



**Youth Program Worker**

All workers in the program are Aboriginal. There is one non-Aboriginal person involved, and that is the Youth Program Co-ordinator, but it is *Jaru Pirrijirdi* who are responsible for the activities in the program. If they fail to turn up or open a room, they will be ‘humbled’ by others in the community who want to take part in the activity concerned. Youth Program workers are paid a casual rate of \$10 per hour. Importantly:

Our people out there do not want to be responsible for funds or for vehicles because of the obligations involved in that; they would rather a non-Aboriginal person be boss for that.

Ms Suzi Lowe

**Night School**

*Jaru* who are proving to be good Youth Program workers are invited to attend night school. This runs three nights per week and they can study the topic of their choice. The night school program was attracting some 30 people from the community each evening. Night school is designed as a pathway to re-engage with the secondary school system:

Night school, it opened about 8:00 o'clock at night and I became very interested. I bring the kids and nephews and partners as well, bring them along and do activities inside the library; read books, do mathematics and learn English as well.

Ms Bethany Langdon

### **Project Work and Bush Trips**

This is the most sought-after work within the *Jaru*. Those who organise bush trips and larger projects (ie making videos) are highly trusted and responsible members of the community. The bush trips themselves are highly sought after by younger children and there is always more demand than supply:

Bush trips are the core of *Jaru Pirrjirdi*, absolute core. It is a chance for young people to get out of the humbug of the community... Elders take them all around the country and tell a story about each piece of country. They record that on video and they take photographs and sometimes the old man that goes, who belongs to that country, will sing songs from that country and it is all recorded. Then we bring it back and we put it on our website and we keep it in our own archives as well. That is without a doubt the most popular event for young people. It is not true that young people don't want to know about culture today; we usually don't have enough vehicles for people to go on that. It is very important.

Ms Suzi Lowe

### **Mentoring**

This was almost an accident within the program and was not anticipated, but it happened as a matter of evolution. The more senior *Jaru* naturally assume mentoring roles, particularly within their skin or family group. It is logical that the seniors take care of the juniors, so it is not uncommon to see a 19 or 20 year old with his or her seven year-old cousin.

### **Pathways/Jobs**

Improved skills arising from the *Jaru* program have led to real jobs and created meaningful pathways for people. There were several examples cited:

We have had this opportunity to get to know people and develop specific skills and, from here, we then assist them to get in to those jobs. For example, the policeman. We assisted in doing the application for that and then he passed the training and he is on his way. That is considered a job.

Ms Suzi Lowe

Another example cited was young women who opted to stay home and be good mothers to their babies. They tended to take advantage of the night school. Further:

There are other people working in Warlpiri Media who have come through Jaru Pirrjirdi program. There are people working at the shop, night patrol - and not CDEP, these ones, old peoples' program; child-care; clinic – one of them has just started as a trainee Aboriginal Health Worker on an apprenticeship. There are real jobs in communities if they are just recognised as real jobs. Four of them came across to work full-time; some of those casual workers, full-time for the Mount Theo program on different areas – two are working within Yuendumu helping out with mentoring and running activities and to support the outstation side of it. So they have real jobs. They are expected to work 40 hours per week and they get paid for that.

Ms Suzi Lowe

## Problems

- housing for both community people and externally recruited people
- accountability of local government for acquitting grants (there appears to be little)
- level of funding from NT Government
- at the time of this evidence, there had been a breakdown in the relationship with the school, which is where Night School had been taking place. Ms Lowe was working to re-establish a good relationship with the Principal of the school so that Night School could again take place.

## Conclusion

**Mr KIELY:** So do you think it is fair to say that youth participation in sport can lead to better employment outcomes?

**Ms LOWE:** Totally. It is part of developing responsibility; starting off as a worker, and if you don't work, everyone is going to humbug you because you should be opening those doors. Just developing that sense of responsibility of: 'Okay, if I am not going to do this, there is going to be no activity'.

And of the Youth Program, which Ms Lowe described as 'sport and recreation specifically', she said:

...the participants become *Jaru Pirrjirdi*; that is what they long to be. They want to be workers in that program.

Ms Suzi Lowe

## **Mr Jonathan Pilbrow, Private Citizen**

### **14 August 2007**

#### **Efforts to have Alice Springs Town Camp children involved in regular sporting activities, including local Alice Springs weekend sporting competitions:**

Funding is required for workers to be available on a Saturday to arrange transport, uniforms and general preparedness for children to be taken from town camps to a sporting fixture so they can participate.

Presently, organisations that engage in this sort of work are not resourced to work on weekends, which is when most sporting fixtures take place.

It provides children with structure and discipline, as well as allowing them to interact with other kids who are not from town camps. It exposes them to the notion of teamwork and fitting in with a group whilst keeping them away from antisocial activities.

It has been working with Aussie Rules for boys. Girls' sport and recreation activities need to be addressed.

#### **Upgrade and ongoing maintenance of sporting facilities in communities**

This would allow for more games/activities to take place on the community oval (including home and away football matches), which would stem the flow of people into Alice Springs, which can lead to antisocial behaviour.

It would also provide employment by way of a groundsman or someone to be responsible for keeping the oval in good condition.

Again, this does not address sport for girls, but the same oval could be used for soccer or softball matches.

#### **Introduction of RecLink into Alice Springs**

Mr Pilbrow reported that RecLink was established in Alice Springs in December 2006 and has been working well and growing steadily. RecLink (based in Melbourne) provides sporting and recreation activities for disadvantaged groups. *The Choir of Hard Knocks* is a RecLink program.

In Alice Springs, a number of organisations came together to form the RecLink Committee. Each of them will volunteer to put on an activity or sporting event to which the others can take their clients. Examples have been football competitions, disco nights, film days, eight-ball competitions, and there is talk of activities such as basket weaving and pottery for older disadvantaged clients.

## Tangentyere Council 14 August 2007

### Witness:

#### **Mr Peter Lowson, Co-ordinator, Youth Services**

The ability and effectiveness of existing structures are driven by the community; the volunteers, the mums, the dads, wanting to see participation for their kids.

Ongoing and increased funding from the government is vital to the health and social fabric of communities.

Antisocial behaviour often comes about when kids are alienated socially and have no say in their lives or their community: frustration breeds contempt.

Sports and activities, especially team-oriented ones, give participants much-needed instruction; boundaries that are clear and defined, allowing them to make strong decisions through mentoring and inclusion in their community

By giving kids positive authority and a voice towards leadership as well as a safe environment to exercise this; real change can occur. However, programs must be on a long-term basis to create strong and ongoing foundations and encourage inter-generational inclusion in these programs.

Mr Lowson is satisfied with the level of funding Tangentyere receives from both the NT and Federal governments. A higher level of funding would mean they would have to recruit more staff, and good staff members are difficult to recruit and retain.

Some places really struggle, and that was the point I made about the lifeblood community thing is the volunteers and the mums and dads who put in to those things to give the kids the opportunities. Without that, those things fall away and there are probably some sports that do struggle in Alice Springs for general funding; that they would like to see more.  
I mean the mums and dads are always going to be there and the volunteers will always be there because it is something that they love doing.

The Tangentyere sport and recreation program is 'a healing method' for both the kids who engage and for the families of those kids. The program encourages an 'inter-generational approach' which means they encourage family members of the kids to become involved either as spectators or volunteers in some capacity.

This program involves staff members (or teachers) going around the 19 Town Camps in buses and collecting the kids (and any family members or volunteers) and getting them to their sporting fixtures in a timely manner on a regular basis. This goes directly to Term of Reference (a):

the ability and effectiveness of existing structures and programs, from grassroots to elite, to deliver in urban, regional and remote areas, and recommendations for improvement;

Here, Tangentyere is performing an invaluable service by ensuring that children can participate in regular structured programs in Alice Springs by the provision of transport to sporting fixtures on a regular basis. This is in addition to the pastoral roles of mentoring and family intervention where it is identified.

Tangentyere's programs have, in the opinion of Mr Lowson, a definite positive impact on school attendance by children in Town Camps. Failure to attend school without a valid reason results in the child concerned not being allowed to play in the next performance of *Drum Atwerne* or Aussie Rules (AusKick), basketball – whatever the activity is. This is made clear to both the children and their families and is enforced so has resulted in much better school attendance. This is also the policy for Clontarf with which Tangentyere works closely.

Of Town Camp conditions, Mr Lawson said:

... the biggest destroyer on the communities is grog.

He went on to say:

- Typically, town camp conditions expose children to alcohol and excessive drinking by people visiting those town camps.
- Visitors to town camps can swell the numbers in a household.
- Visitors engaging in excessive drinking then take food, which means carers and children go without.
- Children who do not have enough to eat are readily identifiable during sporting activities because they are the first to fatigue.
- Visitors engaging in excessive drinking create a lot of noise and children (and others) are sleep-deprived, which impacts on school attendance.
- Mr Lawson stressed that not everyone engages in antisocial alcohol-related behaviour and there are a number of extremely good carers in the town camps, however they are intimidated by loutish drunken behaviour and potentially violent reactions in the event that food is refused when demanded by a drunk.
- This type of behaviour has the potential to be regarded as role model behaviour, which is highly undesirable.

On the issue of grog:

This generation that is coming through now is the generation we have to really put a lot of effort in to and really help them through. There are amazing changes happening.

Mr Lawson's unit services between 400 and 600 young people aged between six and 24. At the time of his evidence, he had two staff: one Circus Trainer and one Sport and Recreation Officer. Lawson is the Co-ordinator and he teaches the drum classes and arranges for *Drum Atwerne's* appearances (they also busk in the Todd Mall). They are assisted with transport by teachers who are willing to drive buses, etc. They provide after-school programs and vacation programs. Duty of Care means that there is ideally one adult to no more than 12 children undertaking any given activity.

Mr Lawson is of the view that School Sport NT provides good opportunities for Town Camp kids in Alice Springs.

Tangentyere has good working relationships with peak sporting organisations in Alice Springs and is constantly in touch with them to see whether any of their activities would be suitable for Town Camp kids, or whether a child has been identified as being talented in a particular area so they can ensure the child participates in that sport.

Short-term programs and funding arrangements are highly undesirable because there is no sustainability and, therefore, little chance of reasonable or enduring outcomes:

To change peoples' lives requires a long-term thing. People say it requires buckets of money. I don't believe it requires buckets and buckets of money; it just requires it to be spent and managed really, really well.

Changing the life of one child has the potential to change the lives of others:

If you can affect a few people's lives, great change! It is like the domino effect. If you can get one kid through who becomes a champion runner, imagine how that young girl or that young fella is going to affect a whole bunch of other kids.

# Alice Springs Basketball Association

## 15 August 2007

### Witness:

#### **Mr Ian Gum, President**

- Not all of Mr Gum's evidence was recorded owing to technical difficulties.
- It appears that Mr Gum was pleading for funding for a Development Officer for basketball in Alice Springs to prevent the loss of players because age divisions jump from Under 16 to Senior or Open. There is a desperate need for a competitive Under 18 division, which is critical to the transition from junior to senior ranks.
- Basketball NT employs two Development Officers, both based in Darwin. They have offered Alice Springs \$10,000, which Alice Springs can probably match, but a salary of \$20,000 will not attract anyone to the position, let alone the town. As a base salary, Mr Gum said he would be looking at \$40,000-plus.
- Mr Gum said Basketball would be amendable to sharing a Development Officer on a part-time basis with another sport that also needed a Development Officer (this would require a particular and rare skill set in the individual concerned).
- The Development Officer's duties would include satellite visits to communities around Alice Springs where basketball is played (most communities have courts and very talented players).
- Mr Gum's evidence in relation to antisocial behaviour was by way of anecdote:

Four years ago, I took 23 kids off the streets and put them in to a basketball program, made three teams out of them. They were Under 18 boys' teams. Two of those lads went on to play basketball for the NT, and yet all they were doing when myself and Mick Cornford, who is a Sergeant here in the police force, all they were doing then was jumping up and smashing signs going down the mall. That is what they were doing. We thought: 'Well, if you can jump that high, we can make some use out of it'.

**Sport and Recreation Division, Dept of Local Government, Housing and Sport**  
**30 August 2007**

**Witnesses:**

**Mr David Alexander, Director of Policy and Coordination**  
**Ms Benieka Lythgo, Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Coordination**  
**Ms Nicola Jackson, Executive Officer Sport and Recreation division.**

Of funding, Mr Alexander said:

In 2007-08, 46 local government councils will receive grants from the Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport to employ community sport and recreation officers. The total grants for 2007/08 of \$1.35m will enable the employment of 39 full-time and seven-time sport and recreation officers. Grants for full-time positions of \$25k and council will use their operational funding or CDEP funding to contribute towards the full cost of these positions.

It had been \$27,000 for a full-time SRO, which appears to have been abolished in 2006-07. That money is nowhere near enough and some communities cannot fill positions because they have no housing for SROs. The \$25,000 salary for a remote region is seriously insignificant and will not attract a well trained person. Mr Alexander concedes that point later in his evidence:

The grants provide \$25,000 for the position, which is clearly not sufficient, but that is topped up by local government funding and some CDEP support.

Of the Australian Government's Indigenous Sports Program, Mr Alexander said:

The Department is funded through the Indigenous sports program to order seven Indigenous sports officers which were one per each of the old ATSIC regions; nominate sport and recreation activities and programs throughout those regions. The ISP officers work with local government recreation officers to provided sport and recreation activities.

The federal government also has a Pools in Remote Communities (PIRC) program about which Mr Alexander said:

Another program; the pools in remote communities (PIRC) program has delivered a pool to Maningrida with pools currently being constructed at Yuendumu and Borroloola. There are currently no plans to extend this program, but there is certainly on-going discussion with the Australian Government and these pools are considered an important part of community recreational options.

The *Closing the Gap* initiative resulted in extra funding for Local Government, Housing and Sport. Mr Alexander said:

...with the announcement of Closing the Gap this year, the government approved conditional \$4m over five years; which is \$900,000 per annum starting this year...initially to be included in the pool of funds available for Local Government, sport and recreation programs.

...

...government grants for community infrastructure - \$5m over five years and some of this funding can be directed into new and upgraded sport and recreation facilities. This should provide for systematic improvement in arrangements and of recreational infrastructure as available throughout remote communities.

Mr Alexander explained what would happen under the new local government regime when the Territory was divided into nine shire areas:

Each shire can expect around \$230,000 per annum which is planned to be invested in...additional community sport and recreation officers and infrastructure...Shire councils will also be expected to direct a portion of their own sports revenue to invest in some sport and recreation programs and facilities.

...

There are some future aspirations that require additional funding to be achieved. The Department and the NT Government is discussing with the Australian government the Indigenous Sports Program funding. At the moment, it only funds six AO4 officers and one AO5 manager and that AO5 manager is also responsible for one of the regions as well as all the staff in other regions. So the optimal staffing will be an AO7 program manager with nine AO5 officers; being one for each shire. Under this model, the ISP officers would be responsible for coordination of sport and recreation throughout their shires and are likely to become located with the shire office.

Mr Alexander mentioned developing career paths for Indigenous people to be Sport and Recreation Officers in their own communities, and mentioned the demise of CDEP funding:

Through the removal of CDEP... the NTG has announced an intention to transition 600 people into real employment in local government. A number of these positions are likely to be involved in delivering sport and recreation activities.

We only go up to 100 Indigenous Community Recreation Officer positions... within that 600 real jobs with these employees forming a network supported by the ISP officers and support in the delivery of the work of the activities on the ground by 'work for the dole' participants. This may provide activities for up to 10 additional 'work for the dole' participants per community.

To increase the number of Indigenous sport and recreation officers in the communities to 100; you will require a significant investment on the part of the Australian Government in addition to the funding provided by the NT Government and local government. This may come from cashing in on CDEP program funding as part of the program to create 600 government jobs.

Both CDU and Batchelor Institute currently offer certificate courses in sport, fitness training and sport and recreation and it is planned that these courses will become increasingly available for developing skills in the community recreation officers for on the job training. So the plan is that the Indigenous Sport Program officers would provide the coordination and skill for the development of the community recreation officers to increase their capacity to deliver programs in remote communities.

Mr Alexander said later in his evidence, following a question from Mr Wood, that the pay rates for these officers was expected to be AO2 level, which does not imply a great level of skill, but does put bodies on the ground to work under the supervision of a shire SRO or ISPO to set up and run games and events in communities.

## Mr David King, Industry Professional 31 August 2007

Mr King is studying a Bachelor of Behavioural Science and has been involved in sport in the Northern Territory in a playing and professional capacity since the 1970s. His submission is a well considered and researched document. It reinforces evidence put to the committee by representatives of peak sporting organisations and other witnesses about the importance of professional delivery of programs by appropriately qualified personnel:

[poor service delivery] can result in increased instances of anti-social behaviour from participants if services are not delivered by appropriately trained personnel. Whitney, 2006, supports this theory.

Extracted from Mr King's submission (No 29)

During his evidence, Mr King said:

...if sport is provided in a poor environment, then the positive aspects may be lost and the negative aspects that come with that may come, such as using illicit substances, etcetera.

Mr King cited the Tracy Village Sports and Social Club as a very successful club because it has control over its land, for which it pays a peppercorn rent. He said that other clubs can pay in the order of \$600,000 per annum in rent, which is effectively dead money that could, if the clubs had Crown land on a peppercorn lease, be spent on developing sporting infrastructure on that land for community benefit:

What I am drawing your attention to is if we had a look at that structure and there was a way that we could support a club along the lines of the model of the Tracy Village Club, maybe clubs such as the PINT Club, for example, could get some tenure over the land around it and then become responsible for developing the infrastructure on that land, adding to their value and their appeal to people within the community to become members, so increasing participation, but also alleviating the burden of the government to actually have to commit more and more funds to the development of facilities.

He stressed, however, that strong management must be applied, as is the case with Tracy Village, for this model to succeed. Mr Kiely questioned the risk involved in a voluntary sporting organisation converting to a commercial enterprise whereby it could lose its assets as a result of poor management, fraud committed by employees, etc. Mr King's response was:

It is not about underpinning a business, but it is about setting up a business so it can concentrate on its core focus group, which is a commercial identity, but it is commercially providing health and fitness.

Mr Kiely then cited the examples of the Waratahs Club and the Arafura Bowls Club, both of which were failed commercial ventures.

Mr King said the advantages of structural change along the lines of the Tracy Village model will give rise to the clubs being able to focus on their core business, which is the delivery of sport:

The reason I am talking about the structure is because we are talking about getting young people engaged in sport and how we can alleviate some of the issues that come with anti-social behaviour and boredom. If clubs are struggling to survive, their core business, which is the delivery of sport through their associate clubs; such as cricket, netball, etcetera, then their core business has got to suffer because they can't put all their energy and effort into that delivery.

If their core business isn't getting all its attention then it is possible that the outcomes for the people being engaged in sport won't be as positive as they could be. If the service provision was of a higher standard of quality, then the benefit to the participants will be greater, meaning that they will be learning more about the sport and possibly learning more pro-social behaviour as opposed to anti-social behaviour. So the advantages of trying to support sports and social clubs more will have a roll-on benefit.

The Tracy Village model would then allow proactive recruitment of young people into sport in after-school competitions because:

...if they are able to generate the appropriate revenue and they had the appropriate membership, then potentially they could then start going out and actually promote young people into sport. So these issues with after school sport, linkages might be able to be created with schools about after school sport competitions, which won't require teacher participation, although I am sure they would always be welcome. Of course, that is an ideal situation and you need profit to get there, but the system needs to be looked at.

Mr King raised a highly relevant issue in relation to alcohol licensing associated with a sports and social club such as Tracy Village or the PINT Club which would give rise to flexibility for management and cost-benefits by way of savings:

One of the unusual things here is that one of the key agencies involved is Licensing. If someone has a licence, they are required to have a full licence. So they need to be open until midnight or two...Can't we look at that and say: 'This is a sports and social club' and give them the right to close at nine if there is no one in their door so they can make savings, which will come back to the community in health and other benefits? The question of the licensing is one of the things that I think would make the difference to sports and social clubs in how we set that up - and let's think about the outcomes we want from our sports and social clubs: it is not really about generating money to go somewhere; it is about providing services or providing health for the community and for individuals to participate and engage in sports and pro-social behaviour and socialisation.

Mr King suggested that Sport and Recreation employ Community Recreation Officers who are multi-skilled and can deliver a range of sporting activities in parks across urban areas:

...if we can create linkages or a greater commitment of funds maybe through sharing some of the agencies charters and outcomes desires, such as health and diversionary programs, and bucket that money together and create community recreation, then we will be able to get grassroots level activity happening in parks with Development Officers that aren't there just for football, just for rugby, just for Royal Life Saving; but are there with a multitude of skills delivering a multitude of activity, providing all of those choices in the local park, as opposed to the need for getting cricket, football, etcetera, one person can deliver them all, and that can be done and that is a Community Recreation Officer.

In respect of school sport, Mr King repeated the views of many other witnesses:

...looking at sporting-based programs back into the curriculum, which I think has been discussed a number of times, and the appropriate resources for them to be managed.

Mr King made some interesting observations in relation to a pilot after-school sport program in Palmerston last year:

Recent programs in the after-school recreation area have shown that the majority of young people, if not all of them, that participated in the after school recreation pilots in the Palmerston region would love to be able to play sport and represent their school on weekends and those types of things. They want more of it. So there is some evidence there suggesting that they want to engage in activities and connecting them, again, to their school. We have these issues of schools and vandalism and those things around our community. The connecting of these young people through sport or other activities such as dance or theatre may connect them to the group that they feel they are a part of it and therefore want to protect it and grow with it rather than destroy it.

The above passage addresses Terms of Reference 1 and 3 and has considerable merit.

Mr King highlighted the benefit of investing now in order to reduce the chances of earlier onset of chronic preventable disease and, therefore, an increased burden on the health system:

...the thing that is interesting is if we increase sport and recreation, we can reduce health bills. So we have got one or the other. We can reduce our commitment to engaging people in physical activity and healthy life behaviours and then we will end up with a bigger health bill, or if we make an investment now that might reduce or at least maintain current levels of health support.

Mr King reiterated a now common theme from a variety of witnesses, which goes to qualifications and professionalism in respect of delivering sport programs:

Smith and Smoll did a test with baseball coaches where they put a group through training on how to deal with young people and left another group un-trained. There was no difference between the two groups in respect to performance, but participants under the trained coaches, as in the trained coaches on how to deal with young people, came out with higher self-efficacy, higher self-esteem and greater levels of enjoyment than the other group purely because these people knew how to deal with them. When we look at that, if core business is being there and participants work with those things, they are going to keep playing, so they are going to be fitter and mentally they are in a better condition because they are more confident, they have got higher self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, they are going to become better achievers, hopefully, as time goes on because their experience has been positive.

**Mr KIELY:** I think the point you just mentioned there was also the one that Bill Miller and his offsider were making as well that: 'You might have good teachers, but they are no good as coaches'. So it goes to that.

# Football Federation of the Northern Territory

## 31 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr Bill Miller, CEO**  
**Mr Richard Beasley, Operations Manager**

Since the Socceroos World Cup success in 2006, Football (soccer) in the Northern Territory has experienced a 15% growth rate.

Borroloola is FFNT's Indigenous Program success story, which, as other sports have reported, is wholly dependant upon a teacher who has lived there for 30 years.

FFNT has a community outreach program, and they are beginning to crank up their community visits.

FFNT is well resourced, with two Development Officers in the Top End and one in Alice Springs. The DO in Alice Springs is also a specialist goalkeeping coach.

FFNT has a graduated pathway program ranging from Under 6 to Under 18s for both boys and girls. They also have Open divisions. In addition to regular competition, they have the NAB Rising Stars program for 9 and 10 year-olds and a Football Academy for 11 to 18 year-olds. These programs provide specialised training for individual athletes who are identified as being talented.

There is no soccer program at the NT Institute of Sport, but FFNT has commenced an elite athlete training program:

Next year [2008], we are looking at a Centre of Excellence. We don't currently have an NT Institute of Sport program; so we are looking at setting up one ourselves to cater for the elite players that we do find through the underlying processes and programs.

Mr Bill Miller

FFNT expressed extreme frustration with School Sport NT:

The opportunity is for players to represent the Northern Territory is where we do have some conflict with School Sport NT. We do have cross-overs and we do have gaps in our programs. At Under 11 boys and girls, we provide opportunities for players to represent us and we are looking at overseas travel opportunities for those age groups. They can also represent the Northern Territory at School Sport NT level at the Primary exchange. The Under 13 boys and girls, we provide representative opportunities, but they are generally too old to be part of the School Sport NT program, which means basically there is a gap there for all 11, 14 and 15 year-olds.

At Under 16 Girls level, we provide opportunities to go to Nationals and they can also then represent School Sport NT. Now, that does cause us a problem in terms of we are trying to select squads from the same player base. Obviously we have a limited number of players in those age groups, particularly on the girls' side of things, so we do tend to have a cross-over effect. That does mean that some players pull out of one to go to the other, which may actually be detrimental to their opportunities of being selected in the right pathways further down the track.

...

We do a lot of work with School Sport NT, but we are finding it is incredibly hard to get through the brick wall sometimes, and that is being brutally honest. I apologise to anyone who may get upset at that.

Mr Richard Beasley

FFNT is further frustrated that teachers running School Sport NT soccer programs are not qualified coaches. They have offered to provide coaching training programs to SSNT, but have had no success:

School Sport NT's theories are if they are appropriately qualified, then they can go and coach a team and the appropriate qualification is a teaching qualification. Now, I understand that they can then manage groups of students because they have had the training to be able to do that, but when you are talking about sport-specific training, you need sport-specific qualifications to be able to do that side of the exercise. The question I have often been asked is: 'Would you allow a professional coach to teach a secondary chemistry class?' The obvious answer is no because there are qualifications for teachers and qualifications for coaches, but their ideology is that teachers can coach teams, and this is at national level as well.

Mr Richard Beasley

FFNT is of the view, as have been other witnesses, that the School Sport NT cluster system works well for primary school competitions but is inadequate for high school competitions, and that there should be Inter-School rather than Inter-Cluster competitions at the high school level because students have identity with and pride in playing for their high school. FFNT has worked with Darwin high schools to establish an Inter-School competition separate and discrete from School Sport NT, which is supported by Principals of the high schools.

FFNT pointed out an interesting cost differential between FFNT state representative teams and School Sport NT teams:

With School Sports for example, they billet and they charge the kids something like; it was over \$1900 last year to go away to the national championships. Our kids went away to Coffs Harbour, both teams, boys and girls, in June-July and we had the 14s and 15s in September; it worked out to not quite \$1500 each and they all stayed in hotel accommodation with three meals per day, the whole gamut. A lot of it with the School Sports is because these teachers that are going away - and I will say they are mostly junkets they are going away on - the kids have got to pay for a relief teacher for them in the school where those teachers come from. That is one of the things that is really hard to put up with, especially with our sport where most of them are not qualified to be going away as the coach.

Mr Bill Miller

On the evidence provided by SSNT in 2006, the objective of SSNT interstate trips is not particularly sporting, but educational and social. That being the case, it seems that FFNT (and other peak sporting organisations) have a very good point about the quality of coaching and the double-whammy that some parents have to foot if a child is selected in, for example, a secondary SSNT sporting team and the peak sporting organisations Under 16 or Under 18 Northern Territory team to compete at national championships. It tends to indicate that an overhaul is required of the SSNT structure, purpose and method of delivery.

## Northern Territory Rugby Union 31 August 2007

### Witnesses:

**Mr Greg O'Mullane, President of NT School Boys Rugby Union**  
**Mr Dale Roberson, Development Manager, NTRU.**

Rugby Union is not one of School Sport NT's selected sports, so school competitions are run outside of school hours by NTRU. They have difficulty recruiting from schools because they are on the 'outer'. This was not always the case, but it is at present:

**Mr ROBerson:** ...we try to host our school sport after school. It makes it quite hard because teachers are somewhat less willing to participate after school from some certain schools. So therefore if it were able to become part of School Sport NT and host rugby union during the school day, we feel it might be a bit easier to get more schools involved with the willingness of the teachers.

From speaking to some students that already play rugby union in the club scene, they say there are more than enough kids willing to play at the school, but they can't get anyone to coach them from the teaching perspective. I believe part of the school ethos is that a teacher must accompany all school teams. If we can't get a teacher to coach, then they can't come and play and it really hurts us from that angle.

I guess from our perspective, if we were able to become part of School Sport, we can add value such as we have across curriculum programs. We have educational programs that can be used in the classroom as well as lesson plans that can be used outside, so we can provide both of those.

Cross-gender; we have males and females. At the moment, we are finishing off a school girl Year 9 and 10 competition that we run after school. It is probably one of the few times we have had schools girls' rugby union going in the NT.

Lack of access to schools directly impacts on local competition:

Of course, as your school numbers drop in participation, then the viability of any competition drops off very quickly.

Mr Greg O'Mullane

With school age people, the idea is to expose them to grassroots experiences so they can choose which sports they wish to pursue:

For the sports that have recognition at the moment, they can run their competitions during school time and there is no issue in getting kids to come out and participate. I suppose the carrot is obviously three days off school, but I think we also need to remember that for a lot of students, excelling in sport would probably be one of the few things that will stand out during their period of schooling and to give them that opportunity to be involved is an important part of their education as well. I know that if we had the opportunity to run competitions during school time, we would actually be able to develop a broader base of students, expose more students to the sport and give more students an opportunity to participate in sport.

Mr Greg O'Mullane

Northern Territory School Boy rugby teams are extremely competitive at the national level:

We go down south and we compete against Western Australia, Victoria, South Australian and they are choosing representative teams from anything up to 100 players. We are often choosing representative teams from about 25 to 30 players; but even within that small base, our teams have gone well. We have won the competition on a number of occasions and they select players for what use to be called the Australian Division Two Competition and now it is the Australian Combined States Team and we consistently had players that make that particular team and then can go on to further representation.

As an example, last year; our team were runners up in that competition. We had six players that went on and played in the Australian Combined States Team, which allowed those players to play against New South Wales, Queensland, ACT; which are obviously the stronger states in Union. So there are pathways available and opportunities, and it is about trying to expand the base of the game to give players more opportunity.

Mr Greg O'Mullane

Local NTRU players have extraordinary international exposure to visiting teams:

...for about 20 years now, we have visiting teams coming in...from around the world, mainly your Five Nations countries, so we have schools coming in from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland...we have anything up to two or three teams a year. So the players that are participating in the sport have that exposure of being able to play against students and teams that come in from overseas. In 1997, we actually had England Schools come through the Northern Territory as well; so for a limited base in a small sport...they have a lot of opportunity, but our focus would be on expanding that opportunity, which we do also through the Coaching Development Group.

Mr Greg O'Mullane

NTRU has extensive resources available to run inter-school competitions professionally and safely:

**Mr KIELY:** [in the event that] the secondary schools got together and said: 'Okay, we will have a seven school competition game here in the greater Darwin area', would the NTRU support it in some way?

**Mr ROBERSON:** Oh, NTRU would be prepared to run it - - -

**Mr KIELY:** That's not bad support, then.

**Mr ROBERSON:** - - - administratively and on the field as well as provide the referees. We actually now provide coaching to the schools, so we will actually come in and help the teachers to train them up to coach the kids we well. We also offer, as I said; the cross education so we will come in and run a Level One Coaching course or a Level One Refereeing course for the students and the teachers as well; so there is plenty of opportunity there.

The ideal for rugby – and this would also suit other peak sporting organisations – is to have a six-week season during school sport time for students to try the sport:

With the six or eight weeks or whatever it might be, that is an opportunity for them to trial rugby union; get a taste for it. If they really enjoy it then we provide them with club contacts so that then if they want to join a club, and I suppose that links back to your possibility of reduce anti-social behaviour; they would have a sense of belonging to a club, training two night a week, turning up on Saturdays, volunteering to do all the different bits and pieces.

Mr Dale Roberson

NTRU has a modest outreach program and runs programs in other centres:

Our rugby program in Alice Springs revolves around one gala day when we invite all the schools in and on that day, we select an Alice Springs representative team that we then fund to come to participate in the NT Junior Championships against the other school teams from Darwin and that is where we pick out our school base. We do the same thing in Katherine. We don't do it in Jabiru because they only have the one high school. We also bring the team over from Gove as well.

We don't have any development staff in Alice Springs, so it makes it a little bit harder, but if we were able to get something up and running like that, we would definitely go down and try to start it and train people up to be able to run it.

Mr Dale Roberson

Asked about programs or participation for disabled children, the witnesses said they run a program with Namarluk School, which is skills based, but because of the contact nature of the game, their Duty of Care in respect of player safety could preclude participation by some disabled people. That notwithstanding, there are skills programs that could be run as they do for Namarluk. Further, most sporting codes have modified games designed for juniors (Kanga Cricket and Minkey Hockey, etc) which could be appropriate for kids with disabilities.

## **Ms Simone Drury, Industry Professional**

### **31 August 2007**

In five pages of evidence, this young woman encapsulated a number of issues that have come up in other evidence. She fully endorsed what the Football Federation of the NT said about School Sport NT and said it needs a total restructure to fund Physical Education Teachers in primary schools to provide regular physical activity for children:

I think there may be some benefit in either funding or looking at restructuring School Sport in terms of putting PE teachers or something like that within primary schools, in particular. There is not generally PE or any sort of structured activity promoted within primary schools. High schools do normally have PE teachers.

The delivery of School Sport programs is sporadic and unreliable:

School Sport programs tend to be reliant on the schools' and teachers' desire to participate so if a school or teachers are not interested in particular sports, children don't necessarily get the chance to participate or don't get the information so they don't know what is going on.

She supported the peak sporting organisations having their Development Officers and Coaches involved with the high schools to organise inter-school competitions rather than the cluster system that applies under the School Sport model:

I also believe that schools need to be encouraged to develop regular sporting competition or activities because, again, as Bill Miller was saying, students relate to their school. They feel a lot of pride within their school so the cluster system doesn't necessarily work. They like to compete against other schools. I have also looked at some research which shows that participating is correlated with a number of other outcomes such as high levels of self-esteem, feeling of control and higher education aspirations. So being connected to their school, they feel like they want to put more in to every aspect of what they do within their school. If students are engaged in school-based activities on an ongoing basis rather than once-off tournaments, it brings about a sense of school spirit and pride within their school and encourages students to remain active on a regular basis, which provides a good base for the rest of their life as well.

She made observations about School Sport *not* being inclusive:

...while the local level style of competition may be open to all students, there is a selection process, whether it is within clusters or schools or whatever, for those children to go to so it is not an all inclusive program, really. It tends to deter those people who may doubt their abilities or may not be interested in competing. Again, that is not really inclusive.

She queried the motivation for some students in relation to School Sport NT teams:

I am also concerned about the motivation of some students who do choose to participate. Are they participating because they want to play that sport or are they participating to get out of school for three to five days? I know a lot of kids that participate in range of sports and it is not because they want to be selected; it is because they don't want to go to school.

Peak sporting organisations should have Development Officers working closely with schools, particularly primary schools:

...look at a program of placing the various sports development officers within the schools. I know that when I was with basketball, our Development Officer regularly visit schools and worked within schools to coach, but it was normally primary schools, which was very good. Again, that tended to fall back on the Development Officer to make that contact with the school. Maybe there could be some sort of structured program there where it was offered.

She agreed that School Sport NT and peak organisation Northern Territory teams are duplications and, therefore, a waste of resources:

I would maybe like to look at money and time being devoted to looking at grassroots level. I honestly feel that, especially in the Northern Territory, the students that are chosen to go away with School Sport generally are the same children that go away on a national level as well. So not only is that a problem in terms of finance for their parents, it also means that it is limited for those grassroots players, the players that just want to come and play for the fun of it or just want to be active. They are the children we need to keep interested in playing sport or being involved in any active recreation, not just sport.

She had some suggestions about increased networking and sharing of resources between peak sporting organisations and the Department of Sport and Recreation:

I believe there needs to be a more uniform approach to developing appropriate job descriptions [for peak sporting organisations] and that a relationship between the Department of Sport and Recreation, peak bodies and local associations needs to be formed. I see a lot of peak bodies and local associations within a lot of sports don't always work well together. There is always a lot of politics between them. I think there needs to be some way of drawing them together so that those resources are shared. Obviously we are very limited up here. We need to look at sharing whatever resources we have got available.

## Surf Life Saving NT 31 August 2007

### Witness:

#### **Mr Bob Creek, President**

SLSNT is a dynamic organisation and differs slightly from other peak sporting organisations in that it is not recognised by Sport and Recreation as a 'sporting' organisation:

One of the things that we often have some challenge in doing when we are speaking to government is our role balanced between the sport and surf life saving and for us they are very much integrated. It is a bit of a challenge for us when we go to funding because we talk about sport, but probably one of our primary focuses is surf life saving.

So if we go to Sport and Recreation and say: 'Listen we are a life saving organisation', and they say: 'Well, you are not a sport, you'd better go somewhere else'. If you go to Emergency Services, they probably recognise that we are more of a sport and so we sit in the middle somewhere, but I think we are developing a better understanding at a territory and national level in that area.

Notwithstanding this distinction, SLSA is:

...a member of the Australian Sports Commission and I made that dot point because we are often quizzed as to whether or not we are a sport; we are a strong member of the Australian Sports Commission and we are currently trying to get surf life saving taken on as a member of the Olympic menu of sports. Now that is a long way off, but at a national level and international level, we are starting to push.

SLSNT has 1000 members, some 500-odd of whom reside in Gove.

A major area of focus nationally is reconciliation and cross-culturalism:

One of the areas where the organisation nationally is very focused is in the area of cultural reconciliation. You will recall the riots at Cronulla Beach. That was a bit of a wake up call for surf life saving. We have long recognised that we are sort of monocultural, if you like. We are a white Caucasian breed generally and so that put the organisation on notice that it needed to do more. So one of the things that has developed over the last couple of years was how [inaudible] actually developed a costume; a patrolling costume, that is acceptable by our Muslim members and that is now starting to be not only presented at Australian level, but also people like the Singaporeans and people on the international stage are pretty interested in that. So we are doing a fair bit in that regard and I will explain later that one of activities that we have currently got going, and we have got four of our members at Yirrkala present running a program over there; so we will be looking to do more in that area and it is probably very topical at this point in time regarding the intervention.

Like other peak sporting organisations, there is a structured, incremental program for creating pathways:

The three primary areas of our activity are sport, life saving and member development and I will speak more about member development later on, but we think that is one of the successes of our organisation and that is why we are continuing to grow, what we do with kids from Nippers right the way through to Young Leaders. So member and leadership development is a strong focus for us. We turn out some pretty good kids, I guess like all the sports, but there is a lot of structure in there for kids' development. We also are involved with the accreditation for coaches and officials.

...

Youth development, I think that that is probably our strength. We have weekly sport competitions; we run Nipper programs for the five to 13 years every Sunday morning both in Darwin and Gove. Then you have that 14 years up to the Seniors, plus we have got quite a strong Masters squad as well. We have a current Youth Development Squad of 50 kids, which we are [inaudible] up so they can go to the interstate competition. I have spoken previously about the coaching and our other programs.

We select kids every year to go away to Youth Leadership camps and development programs. We also have a life saver exchange for those people who have really done a good job, we send them down the Gold Coast and we exchange with the programs down there.

Like other peak sporting organisations, SLSNT experiences some difficulty in accessing schools:

We look to run a school sports program and we see that as an opportunity for us to do more. On 12 September, we will run a surf sports league in Gove and we have run them in Darwin in other years. This year, we have just been dealing with some individual high schools but we would like to see the sport surf league as a part of the annual calendar for schools, so we are looking at ways in which we can work in a more formal sense rather than just having individual schools approach us so it can become one of the sporting activities.

...

We haven't got a structured coordinated program with the middle years and high schools. That is all starting to roll out, but I would hope that something that might come out of your deliberations is a more structured program for sports like ours. We don't really compete with too many; it is more of something that they can do in conjunction with the mainstream sports.

SLSNT has been making inroads with contact in Asia for regional competitions and exchanges:

International life saving: 80 countries. We are trying to develop, from a Northern Territory perspective, more and more in that area because of the strong links with the Asian countries. At Arafura Games, we had eight teams come down, we had four from Singapore, I think, one from China, a couple from Hong Kong and so we want to develop that. We see a lot of potential there.

...

We hold regular sports coaching at clinics and camps and now with the Arafura Games and international life saving, which is a little bit different, we will do more and more on the international front. We keep inviting Indonesians and people in the Asian region down to see us, but we never go up there. So we are trying to get our national body and we will make sure that we send kids up there to Singapore, it is cheaper than going to the other states.

Accreditation and training form a substantial basis of SLSNT's work:

Because of our patrolling and life saving activities, everything we do, we have to be accredited because we are in the area of public safety. A lot of what we do is about training our members up to a certain standard that fits in with the Australian Standards in terms of water safety, driving jet skis, driving jet boats, all of which are nationally accredited. A lot of our local effort is involved in training and accrediting.

There are additional services provided by SLSNT:

Another activity we also provide is Beach Safety Audits and we were contracted to provide the water safety audit for the waterfront Convention Centre in terms of the safe swimming requirements for the wave pool and the other areas.

SLSNT runs an impressive sponsored outreach program:

We run a *Beach to Bush* program. Telstra give us funding every year and we go down to places like Tennant Creek. Last year we went to East Arnhem. This year will be going down to Mutitjulu and around the Yulara area because statistics show that people who drown live at least 50km away from the beach. So there is no point speaking to the converted. We spend a week or week

and a half presenting for schools and we might put through anything up to 100 to 200 kids just in a Water Safety Awareness program, which is pretty good stuff.

...

I have spoken to you about the Yirrkala program. We want to develop this. We think that with the opening up of the communities and activities, what we are doing in Yirrkala, and we put about 100 community members through this, and we will also look to train some of the people up to a level where they can then become trainers themselves so it is an exploratory program for us, but it is something that we are doing in conjunction with the Indigenous Coordination Centre in the East Arnhem area. With the abolishment of CDEP, something has got to replace it. We see that there are probably possibilities there where we could either recruit or develop more trainers in those community areas. We do life saver training. We did a few things at the Garma Festival in Nhulunbuy a couple of weeks ago.

SLSNT runs regular competitions and programs, and training continues in the Wet Season (using swimming pools, but also at the beach using boards and boats). They patrol Casuarina and Mindil Beaches (the latter with financial assistance from Darwin City Council).

SLSNT has received Federal funding to establish an Academy, which will provide valuable services and expertise:

The Federal Government last year [2006] allocated \$10m to surf life saving to set up a Surf Life Saving Academy that would be regionally based. The NT received \$.25m for three years in which we have got to establish ourselves as a training service provider in the areas of water safety, first aid, life saving, those types of things. We have got three years, from my perspective, to set it up as a commercial operation.

## **Total Recreation 31 August 2007**

### **Witness:**

**Ms Eileen Farrell, Manager**

Total Recreation is a community-based organisation whose objective is to provide pathways for people, including youth, with disabilities into sport and recreation activities. Young people comprise the majority of their clients.

Often, these children are excluded during school sporting activities because teachers lack the expertise to include them in the activities.

So going back to the source, as it were, we went into schools and found that a lot of the children with a disability, in particular intellectual disability, were just not being involved and included in the regular sporting days.

Total Recreation goes into schools and sets up activities for disabled children and then teaches the teachers how to run them with the aim that teachers will have the necessary skill and confidence to run them on their own within a couple of years.

There is a critical issue of involvement and inclusion from an early age:

We have started the program now to involve youth with disability in sport at the early age because it became apparent that if children are not involved in school, they are not going to go out the other end and want to do sport when they grow to be older or when they leave school.

These activities occur during school time, and the kids love it. They then wish to participate in after-school activities where they exist (not a great many options).

The kids are very keen to become involved in mainstream sport. The difficulty has been for Total Recreation to get peak sporting organisations to embrace disabled athletes playing in regular competition (at any level):

Dealing with sporting organisations, we have found it has been really quite difficult to encourage the sporting organisations to facilitate inclusion of people with disability at any level.

There has been some progress, however:

We have worked with basketball, we have worked with table tennis, tennis, indoor cricket just to name a few. They have been quite responsive, but it always seems that when the person we are working with leaves, then the whole thing falls to bits and we have to go back in again. Total Recreation is not there to run football for people with disability or for anybody, we are just there to link people to the mainstream sports. That is really the issue that we would like to have placed on the agenda.

## **Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport**

### **3 September 2007**

#### **Witnesses:**

**Mr Steve Rossingh, Executive Director, Sport and Recreation**

**Ms Nicola Jackson, Executive Officer, Sport and Recreation**

**Ms Beneika Lythgo, Senior Policy Officer, Sport and Recreation**

**Mr David Alexander, Director, Policy and Coordination, Local Government, Housing and Sport**

Mr Rossingh explained that Sport and Recreation is a Division of the Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport. When outlining the Department's programs, said:

We know there is a very strong link between the effectiveness of the governance of any organisation and performance; but that is particularly so in the sporting and recreational arena.

Mr Rossingh mentioned funding that goes into high profile events for the Northern Territory such as AFL games, NRL games, international Cricket and Women's Rose Bowl events and National Basketball League games. He noted that:

There are economic spin-offs. There are opportunities for coaching, officials and players to receive mentoring and support from high achieving players.

The Division plays a major role in the development of facilities:

Facilities is a very big role and it has been a very big role over the last few years; we provide a major role in the provision of sporting facilities and we either do that through constructing facilities ourselves in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure or we outsource generally to local governments by way of grants to do that. A recent example is the \$1m grant to the Alice Springs Town Council to construct an indoor aquatic centre.

I think it's also very important to acknowledge the role of Local Government in providing sporting facilities as well and people not only play in them, but managing and maintaining them.

There are several methods of managing facilities that have been constructed:

On some occasions it is gifted to Local Government bodies, which was the case with the Palmerston Recreation Centre. On some occasions government manages facilities itself through our department. Two examples of that are Marrara Indoor Stadium complex and the Hidden Valley Raceway, which came to the department to manage at the start of last financial year. Others are leased to sporting organisations and so we have a role in being a good landlord by managing the leases of those facilities. An example of that is TIO Stadium which is leased to the AFLNT.

Mr Rossingh explained the grants budget:

The Sports Development area is a critical area and it is one of the more long-term strategic areas of the division. We have had a grants program worth just over \$6m across six categories.

There are six programs offered with assistance from the Australian Sports Commission, including the Active After-School Communities program. Another of these is the Indigenous Sports Program:

It is funded at the moment through the Australian Sports Commission and has a partnership with DCITA. The funding at the moment provides for seven Indigenous Sports Program officers across the Territory. Those seven officers work in the seven former ATSIC regions. One of those positions as well as doing the operational work, but in one of those regions also manages the program. Those positions support the community Sport and Recreation Officers who are funded through the Local Governing Bodies Grants Program. The Local Governing Bodies fund comprises just under \$1.2m at the moment and it resources 40 community Sport and Recreation Officers across the Territory. It grants to major local governing bodies and those staff are employed by the local governing bodies.

Evidence to the Committee from other witnesses was that the amount paid to local governing authorities for SROs is \$25,000 to \$27,000 per annum per SRO. To bring the pay rate to a reasonable level, this is topped up by CDEP money, although it was conceded in evidence that even then, well qualified people were not attracted to these positions. Further, the Committee heard evidence that in a community of 1000 people in which 75% of the population is under the age of 25 years, one SRO is wholly inadequate to provide sport and recreational activities for the entire community. This situation is further compounded in some communities where there is no housing for an SRO so the position cannot be filled at all. An example of that is Numbulwar where the SRO who gave evidence to the Committee (in Alice Springs whilst she was on holiday) said she thought she was the first SRO in that community and she did not require independent housing because her partner was a teacher who did receive housing.

Mr Rossingh said:

We are also seeking...funding from the Commonwealth to increase the number of Indigenous Sports Program officers so that there will be one per shire for the new local government arrangements

Mr Rossingh informed the Committee that he was undertaking a review of the Division to identify duplication and shortfalls:

The policy that we develop has to be research-based as far as possible rather than anecdotal or intuitive. We need better measures. Within my Division, I need better planning processes, which is going hand in hand with the policy development and part of that plan is defining objectives and measuring them.

...

The objective of the policy is to develop a Territory-wide sport and recreation policy that supports the aspirations of Territorians in sport and encourages participation in a broad range of physical activities.

...

Part of the process will be the starting point [which is] establishing an internal NT Government reference group and on that reference group would be DEET, Health and Community Services and the Department of the Chief Minister to make sure we get input from departments at a basic level.

This is critical in respect of budgeting and co-ordination of delivery of programs. Basically, Mr Rossingh's explanation of his review and policy development addresses some of this Committee's Terms of Reference (excluding the School Sport NT reference).

Mr Rossingh acknowledged what many witnesses told the Committee in their evidence:

If our sporting infrastructure is based upon volunteers providing the work, you have got a decreasing number of volunteers and you have got a problem so we have got to work out strategies to address that.

He further advised of the need to address particular areas of the community:

Then we have got a number of special interest groups that we need to specifically develop policy for Indigenous people, youth, older Territorians and disabled. They are community sectors that require special policy initiatives if we were to have a focus.

This evidence goes some way to addressing the concerns of many witnesses about each of these sectors, with the exception of older Territorians because they are outside this Committee's terms of reference.

Mr Rossingh said he hoped to release a strategic policy by June. This evidence was taken in September 2007, so this presumably means June 2008. No public statement on the matter has been made since that time.

Mr Rossingh noted that there has been an increase of funds of late:

There is an increase, now that we are Closing the Gap there is \$4.5m allocated to Local Government Bodies program over five years, so \$90,000 a year, roughly \$100,000 per shire. We are now trying to work out recommendations as to how that should be spent and applied.

## **Batchelor Public Hearing 18 September 2007**

### **Witnesses:**

**Mr Jason Scott, Community Recreation Officer, Coomalie Community Government Council**

**Mr Paul Marconi, NT Police**

**Ms Lisa Wain, Town Clerk, Coomalie Community Government Council**

**Mr Reggae Joe, Rum Jungle Radio**

**Mr Gavin Chambers, Chairman, Livingstone Recreational Reserve**

**Mr Randall Cook, Batchelor Area School**

Asked by Mr Kiely about competitions in the Coomalie area, Mr Scott reported that there is no formal competition, but that on occasions, Batchelor Area School and Adelaide River School will have a competitive event. Mr Scott further reported that he is negotiating with NTAFL to establish an Under 13 team from the Coomalie region. Ultimately, Mr Scott would like to see competition games played in Batchelor and/or Adelaide River because that would encourage families to come out and support their local teams in their own community environment.

Asked by Mr Kiely about families who commute to Darwin so children can participate in sport, Mr Scott said:

Not that I am aware of. I know there are a couple of girls whose father takes them to Darwin each Tuesday and on a Saturday for ballet, but...nothing for sporting competitions that I know of.

Asked by Mr Wood about a relationship and/or competition with Daly River, Ms Wain said:

We did have a very big [football] competition with them. It was very successful, but it cost us \$800 for the bus. Now that we have funding for our own bus, we really do hope for a competition that is ongoing. Because those people play very good sport there, we will need a bit more bringing up to speed. We did have very successful four games in Batchelor, Adelaide River, Daly River and then Daly River came back for the final game. So it was excellent and we really want to do it again.

Asked to summarise facilities in the Coomalie region, Mr Scott said there are tennis courts, a swimming pool, football fields, lawn bowls facilities and basketball courts.

An Active After-School Community program is run which consists of:

...tennis being run in Adelaide River and there is rugby, netball being run here in Batchelor on alternative days. Then they are part of the Active After School Community Program and then I run an Auskick centre on Wednesday in Batchelor as well.

Mr Scott

Ms Wain added that Coomalie Community Government Council has always supported these programs and that:

The council always ran after-school care and vacation care programs and would like to have continued them, but when I apply for funding, I was told that because BIITE already has [child care] places, even though they may not use them, they would not allow a second after-school or vacation care program in our area, which was disappointing.

Ms Wain said that whilst BIITE may have the capacity to run holiday care programs, they close during holiday periods because the students are not on campus. So BIITE's ability to run programs rather than actually running them seems to impact on Active After-School Community program funding success for the Coomalie Community Government Council.

Mr Marconi reported that Guides NT was interested in establishing an active branch in the Coomalie region.

Mr Scott reported that there was interest in establishing a social swimming club for adults at Batchelor and that a junior swimming program was run in the last term.

Coomalie Community Government Council received \$28,000 towards Mr Scott's salary.

Of facilities at Adelaide River, Mr Scott said:

There is a community access shed in Adelaide River for sporting equipment. A lot of it, unfortunately, was damaged when the river flooded this year.

Mr Chambers explained the operation of Livingstone Recreational Reserve:

Livingstone Recreational Reserve is part of the Litchfield Shire which will eventually be amalgamated. The reserve itself is run by a committee of around about eight people...and we spend a hell of a lot of money every year just maintaining the grounds and the oval. Unfortunately, the oval just doesn't get used, which is a pity because probably about \$15,000 to \$16,000 a year goes in mowing and watering the oval for it to be looked at on a Friday afternoon.

To give you a bit of an idea that the history of the Livingstone Recreational Reserve, the Committee was put together by a few young mothers in the area about 12 years ago. The idea behind that was so that their kids could interact with other kids in the area.

They started a sausage sizzle, then about two years later they got a small liquor licence just to complement the Friday afternoon get-togethers and all the money raised from that was put back into the reserve for playgrounds, sand pits, etcetera. It has grown from there and still going strong. We are open every Friday night. We have a bar and kitchen, which is all run by volunteers and supported by local people and it is still pushed along as a family venue. It is not a Noonamah or a Litchfield-type venue; it is more for the kids.

...

So I would like to see it go to the next stage...[which is] to get some sporting bodies in there and help us grow.

There is certainly a need to promote the facility; Mr Scott admitted that he had no idea it was there, which Mr Chambers said is a common response. Perhaps it could be promoted through the Department of Sport and Recreation to peak sporting organisations.

Mr Chambers said he was unsure of how to go about promoting the reserve, given that there is no school close by and that they were really looking to promote the reserve to sporting and community groups. He said they were approached by a pony club, to which they responded enthusiastically, however the club ended up leasing premises elsewhere.

Mr Chambers said Litchfield Shire Council provides grants to the Reserve Committee for grounds maintenance.

In the past, the reserve has been better utilised. For example:

One of the ladies on the committee was holding a sports afternoon on Tuesdays and the school buses were dropping everybody off; we had 50 kids up there for one Dry Season and then it sort of died off a little bit. We had a kitchen where we were making sandwiches and everything for them – all free of charge of course, just so that we were not sending them home starving hungry.

Mr Cook, from Batchelor Area School, has not long been in that community, but made general observations about sport being a diversion from antisocial behaviour:

Obviously it can. There are a couple of aspects; one is the kids have got something else to do and it is less likely they will get involved in the anti-social behaviour, but I think it is also a really good medium for teaching attitudes and skills to kids to allow them to work positively in this society; teamwork and having respect for one another, and those sorts of things.

Batchelor Area School does not have a regular sports afternoon or day, however they do have a teacher and assistant who run the Active After-School Communities program, which is well attended. They do engage in mini-community competitions from time to time. For example:

Yesterday there was a mini-carnival involving [inaudible], Peppi, Adelaide River and us. So those sorts of things are happening fairly regularly. We have a group of kids who just went up and had a rugby afternoon at Taminmin High School. So there certainly is plenty of sport happening through the school.

Mr Cook

There is no participation in School Sport NT programs from the school:

For a while now Batchelor Area School hasn't been very involved in School Sport NT stuff, but that has started to move into a more elite group where it doesn't involve everyone. The focus in schools is on participation.

Mr Cook

Asked whether Development Officers from peak sporting organisations have been approached or are involved in activities in the area, Mr Cook said that AFLNT Development Officer for the region delivered Auskick programs on Wednesday afternoons. Mr Scott added that he also runs umpiring and coaching clinics in the community for older kids so that they can become coaches or officials for younger ones.

Mr Cook had interesting observations about Physical Education Co-ordinators and how effective they are:

You see, Batchelor is part of the PARCs [Palmerston and Rural Cluster] so our PEC is based in Palmerston. We have not seen much of them. [inaudible] because the school belongs in the PARCs cluster, they've given up.

In Katherine, the PEC was very good and we did afternoon inter-school sport every Friday and most schools also did sport with the kids on Friday afternoons.

This indicates that either the distance or the number of schools in the cluster is prohibitive for the PEC to effectively deliver programs, which, in a way, mirrors the evidence of Tennant Creek stakeholders, except that Tennant Creek falls into the unfortunate category of being within two merged clusters.

Batchelor Area School does not have a Physical Education teacher owing to lack of resources. Mr Cook said:

When I started here I did have an opportunity to put someone in a specialist position by manipulating some other resources, but we chose to go for a teacher/librarian because that is over establishment. So instead of physical education, music or art we used the resource for a teacher/librarian.

In respect of antisocial behaviour in the school, Mr Cook said:

We have just started running a semi-regular Friday evening trip to Casuarina for the secondary kids at school. It is really a reward-type thing for kids who don't get into strife during the week or fortnight leading up to that day. If the parents give them permission, then they can jump in the bus and I take them to Casuarina to shop or go to the flicks or meet some friends from Darwin.

He explained that at the moment, there is no criteria of attendance related to the Casuarina trips; it is based on behaviour at school.

Mr Cook was very supportive of School Sport NT and again drew on his experience in Katherine:

School Sport NT is very effective. It provides a very good pathway for students who have skills in various sports to shine and to get opportunities that go beyond their local community.

An area that could be better is providing those pathways to the remote students. That is still problematic. However, I know, for example, again using the Katherine scenario, in the School Sport Strategic Plan for the Rivers Cluster is positive discrimination aimed at making sure that the kids from outlying communities get the opportunity to be put in the teams that go off and represent the cluster in various sports.

These days, through the PEC program, there is much more recognition of the importance of sport at the grassroots level.

I think School Sport NT is an excellent program.

Asked by Madam Chair about his reference to School Sport being elite and whether peak sporting organisations were better placed to deliver interstate competition, Mr Cook said:

I think more remote students have opportunities through School Sport NT than if it was run by the peak bodies. A classic example is soccer.

Up until recently, soccer was not part of the School Sport setup for boys. It was for girls and that was because you can't do every sport. Because soccer for boys was catered for through Soccer NT... the star soccer player from Areyonga never got a look in.

...

The main goal of School Sport NT is not to send a team away to represent the Northern Territory, but that pathway is what provides the incentives and the reasons for everyone else to do the stuff that they do.

...

The other thing we need to remember about School Sport regarding that pyramid, the students that are being considered are not doing the right thing at school, they don't get to go.

...

The best boy touch football player in the Northern Territory was not selected because he swore at the umpire. If that was Touch football NT, he would be selected and he would be going. So that is another factor about school sport. Sure, it is about sport, but it is not just about sport.

...

One of the things that really hit School Sport hard in terms of getting remote kids involved was the demise of ATSIC because that was the funding that people usually used to get their kids into the sports, the zone carnival or cluster. They also used it for kids going away if they got selected. Of course, that's all gone and the new process that exists, you can't get funding for that sort of stuff.

## Physical Education Coordinator, Northern Suburbs Cluster (DEET) 22 February 2008

### Witness:

#### Ms Jenny Verrall, PEC

Ms Verrall defined terms that are often confused:

Physical education is the learning of skills and fitness where physical activity is actually complying with those two hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity that is mandated by the Federal Government and as now mandated by the NT Government. Policy actually came out towards the end of last year.

So rather than saying 'physical education', we say 'physical activity' because a lot of teachers are not capable of teaching physical education, the skills side of it.

Ms Verrall explained one of her success stories:

Bakewell Health and PE Forum was a huge success where we got a lot of health and sport organisations based in the Palmerston area and they put on an expo where the children rotated around, collected information about sport, other health organisations in Palmerston that they could access; so it was based at a child level rather than at an adult level. The feedback from that was fantastic but it did take a lot of work to put that sort of thing together.

Of the situation in the Northern Territory, Ms Verrall said:

All senior and middle schools supposedly have qualified PE teachers; primary schools however are able to choose an area to provide release for class room teachers; it could be music, IT, language, performing arts, visual arts or health or PE. This requires primary school teachers to have skills in all areas; because at some time during their teaching careers, teachers will be required to teach all areas.

...

Schools in the NT need access to more qualified PE teachers. Some schools do have teachers taking all classes for PE, but these teachers are not qualified as PE specialists although they do have an interest in sport. My first suggestion is that Charles Darwin University could provide additional courses for training specialist PE teachers and I think if we are going to address the issue of physical activity in schools, we have to get down to having qualified PE teachers in the primary schools.

Ms Verrall's last statement is borne out by the evidence of other witnesses. Clarification was sought:

**Ms McCARTHY:** With the PE side of it, are you saying that we have drawn too far away from having PE teachers in schools, full stop? Have we gone too far to the other side?

**Ms VERRALL:** It is starting to come around the corner now in northern suburbs. When I was chairperson of our City Cluster area, which was because I was at Parap Primary School, I think we had two PE teachers in all those schools.

...

I am now in Northern Suburbs [Cluster] and I did some quick data last week and there is about 50%, but of those people in those roles, they are not qualified. I think there are two qualified PE teachers. The rest are classroom-based teachers who have an interest in sport and are doing it from their perspective.

Ms Verrall pointed out deficiencies in the training of Physical Education teachers locally:

Terry Wright is Lecturer at CDU. When I approached him and asked: 'If somebody wants to be a specialist PE teacher, what program do they do?', he said: 'I suggest they go south'.

She explained developmental capacity of children:

Studies show that the optimum age of development of physical sport skills - and I am talking about the skills themselves: the throwing, catching, hitting, kicking – is between eight to 12 years. Students need to have the basic skills taught by Year 5 or 6. If students have poor physical skills by this age, most are embarrassed and don't want to participate in games. Therefore sedentary students are more likely to be sedentary adults and suffer the health issues related to sedentary lifestyle in their later life.

Therefore, it is the primary schools that need teachers to provide the opportunities for students to learn the basic physical skills, but, more importantly, to help students develop a positive attitude to physical education, so providing a platform for physical activity for life. We are educating for life, not just for the immediate future.

Ms Verrall mentioned the value of Development Officers from peak sporting organisations visiting schools:

Sport development officers are available to go into schools, but they have a limited time available to cover all schools and many schools miss out on visits.

As most of the sport development officers are stationed in Darwin, remote schools are usually only visited once a year.

The excellent part of the sport development officers visiting schools is the mentoring that they provide to teachers so the teachers learn those little station games [which are] modified skills that allow them to practise a skill and sometimes it is in a competitive environment because that is what the kids like.

Rural areas do not have the same access to sport development officers as Darwin does. Therefore their development needs come through the grassroots program. Coaches of the grassroots programs are employed in full-time positions, normally working outside of school, and for them to provide support to schools, they need to take time away from their regular employment or present on the weekends.

She mentioned Physical Education Co-ordinators [one per cluster with time divided 50-50 between physical education and School Sport NT] and said:

Perhaps a third solution is to increase the number of PECs so instead of having one per cluster, we could have two per cluster and that way one could work on just the mentoring side of the teachers and one could work on developing sports programs for the schools.

This idea has merit. The two Central Australian clusters have been merged into one, so there is one PEC who is supposed to deliver services between Elliott and Alice Springs. Four PECs might be able to adequately service the area.

Ms Verrall pointed out that not all schools participate:

Sport within schools is sometimes the only sport opportunity that students receive. Although all clusters offer third tier events – that is, gala days, inter-school sport - not all schools in a cluster have the opportunity to participate. Cost of these events may prohibit some schools from being involved...hire of venues and bus transport are the two big ones.

She mentioned an experience in Queensland when she was recalled to a school and told by the Principal:

'We want you there Friday afternoon' because they did their sports half Friday afternoon, 'but you will not take any School Sport teams away; you will stay there and work with those children who are back at school who don't want to be involved with School Sport and make a program of physical activity that is more inviting for them'.

That is very important and is something we need to consider as well.

Ms Verrall addressed the issue of the cost of venue hire:

Perhaps these sporting facilities could be priced within the reach of schools and my idea was that they are not being used during the day. I have got no objection to paying for the air-conditioning and I have got no objection to paying for a small amount, but it is those big amounts that really hit the pocket and make it expensive for you.

She addressed the issue of facilities in primary schools:

All middle and senior schools have undercover games areas, usually air-conditioned. How many primary schools have air-conditioned gyms – I don't know of any in the Northern Territory.

...

Primary schools need to have a large shaded area that can be used throughout the day; more schools are seeing this as a priority and fund-raising to orchestrate this facility in their schools. I think it is not dollar for dollar anymore, but they do get a government grant that they have to add to it.

...

Last year, I received a request from a remote school: 'How do I do a physical activity program in 40° degree heat with no grass on the ground and no shade?' I suppose the kids weren't suffering as much as the teacher at that stage, but he was desperately trying to run a physical activity program in those conditions and I think that impacts more on our remote schools than it does our urban schools.

In relation to costs for schools to participate in various programs, Ms Verrall ran through some figures:

Costs for schools to hire a bus are extremely high. A quote of \$140 from Wulagi Primary School to the netball courts at Parap was the cheapest I could find. This then restricts schools to participating in all events on offer. Some schools have their own buses and these schools are able to participate in more activities.

Anula Primary School is prepared to pay...\$22 000 a year for their bus to transport students. To recoup part of this expense every year, every time a student travels on the bus they pay \$2.

At the recent Come and Try days, many schools said they could not attend due to the bus costs and that worked out at about \$7 per student. It was very evident when we ran the Come and Try days. The students that came and were able to participate in that were from the schools that had their own buses.

Ms Verrall confirmed what many peak sporting organisations had experienced with School Sport NT:

The links between education and sporting organisations need to continue to be forged. Sport is an essential element of education for the lifelong benefit. Over the years, I have worked with many sporting groups for both the benefit of DEET and the organisation and that is something that we really have to forge, communication between the sporting organisations and other government departments.

I went to a meeting and somebody said they were trying to get into the schools to do a boating program. They were going to School Sport NT. Because boating wasn't one of the sports on School Sport NT's calendar, they were just pushed away. Really, that needed to come back probably through another avenue to get back into the schools because those people just do not have an avenue to get into the schools.

Ms Verrall addressed the issue of health and capacity to learn:

In England there has been research done between the correlation of academic achievement and physical fitness...Health Promoting Schools NT...recently purchased the Australian Fitness Award for each of the PECs and the SPECs so each of those six clusters now has an education pack. By using this resource, we should be able to collect some data from some of the schools in the NT. It would be great if every school in the NT could be provided with a kit so as data could be collected over a period of time.

A comparison of fitness, literacy and numeracy result could possibly justify more resources being added to the physical education, physical activity and sport areas.

I think your physical well-being is so important to your academic achievement.

This is a critical point. There is anecdotal evidence throughout the Territory to suggest all manner of things, yet there appear to be no statistics about childhood obesity levels, the number of children who participate in sport at schools (as opposed to School Sport NT), levels of fitness in children at school, etc.

## **Katherine Public Hearing 4 March 2008**

### **Witnesses:**

**Mr Fred Murphy, Katherine High School and NT AFL  
Mr Daryl Grahek, Teacher, Former Rivers PEC and  
Casuarina Street Primary School teacher  
Mr Rod Gregg, Casuarina Street Primary School teacher  
Mr Caleb Johnston, YMCA  
Ms Julie Cook, Katherine Horse & Pony Club and  
DHCS Preventable Chronic Disease Program  
Mr Geoff Brooks, CEO, Katherine Town Council  
Ms Deborah Gillard, Katherine Town Council  
Mr Matthew Smith, Regional Development Manager, AFL NT  
Ms Tara Brennan, Programs Manager, Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional  
Council  
Mr Alan Morrow, Private Citizen  
Ms Anne Sheales, Katherine Athletics Club  
Ms Diane Krepp, Manager, Students with a Disability, Pacific School Games**

[NB there were some technical difficulties with this transcript]

Mr Smith services Katherine and 19 regional communities. He outlined what had been the position in Katherine in 2007:

Last year, there wasn't much junior football for anywhere for 12 to 18 year-olds, so I am going to address that issue this year by introducing a couple of junior leagues, Under 14 and Under 16 age groups which will also include community teams in the Under 16 competition [boys and girls].

...

The 13 to 15 year-olds, or even 16 year olds, are starting to make some silly choices, but if you have got some diversion in terms of football, which is very popular, most people in town might be heading in the right direction.

...

But I guess one thing that I really want to address is: how we can engage teenagers from outlying areas such as Binjari, Wallace Rockhole and Kalano?

Mr Smith referred to the high turnover of Sport and Recreation Officers, which has been identified as a problem by a number of witnesses over the life of the Committee:

The problem is that sport and recreation officers come and go. You develop a relationship with a sport and recreation officer and...a month later they can be gone.

Mr Smith is looking at establishing a Clontarf Academy through the high school in Katherine. Further to his difficulties with Sport and Recreation Officers, Mr Smith said he was reduced to working directly with schools, however:

You just learn who the best people are in the community, but also there are certain instances where the parents don't seem to be very interested in doing anything for the kids. It is all about the senior sport in town. A perfect example of that is when I went to Lajamanu last year. I organised it about two months in advance I was emailing and calling them to say that I was coming and would run clinics. When I got there, the kids had not been brought back into town by their parents because they went down to the Yuendumu Sports Festival, which finished on the Sunday. The children actually didn't get back to school until about the Wednesday or Thursday, which means that for a weekend festival, the children were missing about a week of school, which I find a bit difficult to deal with when I organised my visit so far in advance.

Also, there are some communities that will not embrace the program at all, which is very rare for

me. There is a community, Amanbidji, and the principal has flatly refused to let me go to the school. He said: 'Don't bring footballs because they'll be turned into sling shots'.... Most of the communities are absolutely rapt to have someone come out at all.

Remaining on the issue of Sport and Recreation Officers in communities:

**Mrs MILLER:** Would your life be made a lot easier if you had a consistent recreation officer?

**Mr SMITH:** Yes, definitely. Also it would be good to see some more communities have a decent oval as well as some good facilities. I have gone to some communities - I know they are a bit better than what they are further south in the Alice Springs region - but Minyerri's...oval and facilities are terrible.

...

**Mr WOOD:** Of the 19 communities, how many would have a reasonable facility to play football?

**Mr SMITH:** I have been to 16 of them - about three of four.

Mr Smith noted that Ngukurr's oval had been started and not completed and the project seems to have fallen away, which means programs cannot be delivered in that community [1000 people].

Ms Brennan pointed out that ovals tend to serve only the requirements of boys and facilities on communities for girls (netball, basketball, softball) are similarly in disrepair or non-existent.

Mr Smith outlined a partnership arrangement:

The AFL is looking at a joint initiative with Netball Australia to have someone come out to communities with me when I visit them. That is something that is probably going to happen at some stage this year.

Ms Brennan addressed the issue of funding under the new local government regime:

I have looked at the budget for sports and rec for the new shire, and it works out to be \$382 spent on each person under 'sports and recreation training'. That's not enough...That is not even going to get someone from Ngukurr to Katherine to do any training.

Mr Smith described the experiences of some Sport and Recreation Officers:

They have to be remunerated appropriately. There has to be a decent wage to even get them to go there and then to keep them there for a significant amount of time. I have spoken to a few that have been from south...they have got a completely different perception on what it is going to be like when they go there. Sadly, three months in they absolutely loathe being there and they just go.

Asked by Mrs Miller whether that was attributable to the lack of facilities in communities, Mr Smith responded in the affirmative and added that living conditions are also a major factor.

Ms Brennan stressed the need to recruit and train local people:

The other thing is that with all those people that will be on the ground for the new shire is to train them up so you are not necessarily importing people. If we skill these people up from the ground, that live in the community and would love to see activities happening every Wednesday...that is going to benefit all of the community plus the night patrol plus all those diversionary tactics that we try and mesh all together to keep young people on the straight and narrow, plus employment locally.

That is why I was having a go at the figure for training. If we have to employ three young people that are about 18 years of age, you are allowed to spend \$382 on them per year to get them trained up to give them skills to - I know you don't think it is very hard to get someone to organise a basketball game or something, but there is the administration, there are the rules. So there is all this involved.

A significant factor in remote communities is the lack of participation by parents, which makes

the job of a Sport and Recreation Officer even more difficult because there are no volunteers to take on various roles.

Ms Anderson asked whether any sporting programs were linked to school attendance. Mr Smith explained his program:

The primary school program I run is called KickStart and I make sure that the program is run during school hours so only students at school get to do the program and they are rewarded with back packs at the end based on 80 per cent or more school attendance.

In the junior competitions that we are going to run and were run last year, the sole reward of playing football was based on school attendance. So...sometimes there might be 20 boys that came in for a game and sometimes there might be 10 because attendance wasn't good enough.

Mr Grahek, at the invitation of the Chair, described his involvement in School Sport in Katherine:

Although it is aligned with School Sport NT calendar, we don't request that the children must do it as School Sports NT [inaudible]. We ask purely that they participate. For example, for the rest of this term will be cricket and tennis so we simply say to the children: 'If you want to have a go, have a go at it. You don't need to know how to play it and you don't have to aspire to be on the Rivers team, just have a go; participate and try something new'. We encourage the schools to do the same.

...

I have seen a lot of children play for their first time...We're from Victoria, and my son had a go at rugby league – never played it before and really enjoyed it and is hoping to do it again this year.

Mr Grahek was also responsible for delivering programs in communities:

I went out to Lajamanu and did some lessons with teachers and students on athletics...and then supported them in running a sports day, which they said had not been on their calendar for several years. I woke up in the morning to hear lots of wailing going on. Sorry Business had just started, but the parents looked at me and said: 'Go on with the sports day. We want you to do that because it will keep the children focused'. It was a fantastic day. It ran until about one o'clock and the children had an absolute ball. They all had to participate in all the different events...and they really enjoyed it. They would certainly like to keep that on the calendar, so hopefully that will take place again this year.

Asked by Ms McCarthy whether the Committee should be focussing on Physical Education teachers in schools or Sport and Recreation Officers in communities, Mr Grahek responded:

In an ideal world, it would be great to have a PE teacher in every school but, I have worked in three states and you will still find that every school wants to have a PE teacher. When you look at the curriculum, all the subject areas we need to teach, something has to give. So for one school, languages might be the focus and another school may look at art.

My effort as a PEC last year was to try and upskill those teachers. I guess sport is one of those things that people believe they can do or they can't do or they feel that if they can't do a good job of it, then they won't do it. As a teacher, if you teach an English lesson, you want to do a good job of it. You don't really know your PE...which is unfortunate for the children.

In response to the same question, Mr Smith said:

I reckon a person who is both. You might not necessarily be able to get a qualified teacher, but someone who can work with students and act as a sport and recreation officer is the ideal position. That means it might be able to be funded through the Education Department and through the Local Council who could meet half way on it.

That is essentially what it is. If the Sport and Recreation Officer is working during school hours, then he is going to capture more kids in the community than he would after school when they can just disperse anywhere. If you are working with them during school hours and you have got their respect, they are going to do more with you after school hours.

On the same issue, Mr Morrow said:

I worked out at Beswick community for half a year or so and worked with the school. You will probably find that to promote sport is best done outside the schools. I would say a Sport and Recreation Officer independent of the school is probably more effective than a teacher in the school that has been told to be the PE teacher. I just find that something has to happen after hours and that best come from somebody who is not staffing the school.

Mr Gregg's view was:

You could treat sport like a normal subject. It is not regarded as a subject so we don't have PE teachers. It is almost as if sport at a school level is an after thought.

...

From an educational point of view, sport - we only have to pick up any paper to know that we are getting fatter and lazier - we don't treat it as a subject. If it was treated like literacy and numeracy...we would have PE teachers. We would have dedicated staff that would focus in on the school level. If every school had a PE teacher and not someone who just did it on a Thursday afternoon, there is a flow-on effect.

...

The flow-on effect is that if the kids are doing something active every day and are meeting the requirements as set down by the department, the flow-on effect is the kids are healthier. It is proven that a healthy body and a healthy mind go together so they can concentrate more. The flow-on effect of what I am saying is that a regular fitness program or a coordinated sport activity means that they will want to learn more; they are stimulating the brain as well.

Mr Smith mentioned that two positions – the Indigenous Sports Program Officer and the Active After-School Co-ordinator – had been vacant for several months and had not been filled because of the lack of suitable applicants.

Mr Brooks expressed disappointment over the department's decision not to fund Sport and Recreation Officers:

Katherine Town Council... took the view that this is still a very, very important function...The split up between concentrating on the physical assets, which is very important, and actually helping sporting organisations – in our case, a reasonably high level to be organised, but also running things like the Come and Try day as we had the other weekend and Family Fun days.

I would have to say from a council's point of view, that was a disappointing decision. I think it was \$28,000, so it is not a huge amount of money, but it was a disappointing decision and I am not sure it is heading in the right direction. It is a great loss.

Asked by Mrs Miller about the relationship between sport and antisocial behaviour, Mr Murphy said:

What we have been trying to do in the last couple of years is use sport as a vehicle to promote a healthy lifestyle and a positive attitude for young kids because no matter what we do, the young kids are our future. If we don't look after them now, what future are we going to have?

Mr Murphy raised the matter of exposing different sports to the people of Katherine by, for example, having a fixture played in the town. During his evidence, he mentioned soccer and hockey as examples of sports which could use regular fixtures to provide exhibition matches in Katherine. Following on from that, Mr Grahek suggested home and away games for Katherine-based sport competitions – for example, playing in communities such as Lajamanu as an away game, thereby exposing that community to a sport.

Asked by Ms McCarthy about sport for students with disabilities, Mr Gregg said:

We have got some really vibrant people in Katherine who are going out on to community school trips with students with disabilities. I don't know if there are in other sports as well, but I definitely know that in athletics and swimming, they are welcomed. They are not an add on, but they are an integral part of the program.

Asked about School Sport NT, Mr Murphy said:

Katherine or Rivers is hosting some sport this year, but once again, there are issues with that. If it is in Alice Springs, we hop on a bus for 12 hours. Darwin is three more hours if they choose not to fly. It is rotating around the Territory, but there is still the problem of getting kids there and then there are issues with billeting and there are issues with being away from school for four or five days at a time.

Ms Shields and Mr Gregg discussed the funding difficulties associated with participating in the Pacific School Games:

**Ms SHIELDS:** I have just been elected as one of the officials to take about 250 children to PSG in Canberra. One thing that really worries me is...at this stage, the costing has come back at around \$2500 to \$3000 per child...I guarantee, just looking at the number that was selected to go to Tasmania last year, and we ended up with 15...because the parents just couldn't afford it.

**Mr GREGG:** Can I just follow on from Anne, just to put people in perspective? Pacific School Games is basically the schools equivalent to an Olympic Games. It comes around every four years. Anne has just mentioned that she is one of the officials. I am one of the officials as well. One of the things that frustrates us is that...in 2000, to celebrate the Olympics, we took a team down and the government funded something like \$280,000 in support. Three years ago, when the same thing happened, the government gave \$20,000. It has gone backwards.

An urgent funding application was being prepared by the School Sport NT Executive to put to government.

# WITNESSES APPEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

## **Department of Employment, Education and Training**

28 February 2006

Mr John Dove, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Schools

## **Department of Local Government Housing and Sport**

28 February 2006

Mr Mike Dillon, Chief Executive

Ms Sylvia Langford, Deputy Chief Executive

Ms Julie Brimson, Acting Executive Director, Sport and Recreation

30 August 2007

Mr David Alexander, Director of Policy and Coordination

Ms Benieka Lythgo, Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Coordination

Ms Nicola Jackson, Executive Officer Sport and Recreation Division.

3 September 2007

Mr Steve Rossingh, Executive Director, Sport and Recreation

Ms Nicola Jackson, Executive Officer, Sport and Recreation

Ms Beneika Lythgo, Senior Policy Officer, Sport and Recreation

Mr David Alexander, Director, Policy and Coordination, Local Government, Housing and Sport

## **Department of Health & Community Services**

28 February 2006

Ms Tamie Devine, Project Officer, Nutrition & Physical Activity Unit

## **School Sport NT**

28 February 2006

Mr Brian Deslandes, President

Ms Helen Taylor, Executive Officer

4 May 2007

Mr John Cooper, President,

Ms Helen Taylor, Executive Officer

## **Correctional Services**

10 August 2006

Ms Mary Culhane-Brown, Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre

## **Office of Crime Prevention**

10 August 2006

Mr Stephen Farrarwell

**Northern Territory Police**

25 August 2006

Snr Sgt Kym Davies, Officer in Charge, Alice Springs Police Station  
Sgt Angela Stringer, Juvenile Diversion Unit  
Sgt Mary Ann Skelton, Acting Officer in Charge, Juvenile Diversion Unit  
Snr Sgt Tony Fuller, Officer in Charge, Nhulunbuy Police Station

**Northern Territory Institute of Sport**

20 February 2007

Dr Ian Ford, Acting Director  
Mr Gordon Clarke, Manager, Sport & Business Programs  
Mr Sean Cooke, Manager Sports Programs  
Mr Steve Rossingh, Acting Executive Director, Sport & Recreation

**Active After-School Community Program**

31 July 2007

Mr David Brabham

**Association of Children with a Disability NT**

31 July 2007

Mr Bruce Young-Smith

**Chronic Preventable Disease: Middle-Ear Infection**

31 July 2007

Mr Damien Howard, Psychologist

**Senior Physical Education Co-ordinator, DEET**

**31 July 2007**

Ms Jane Slater

**Industry Professional**

31 July 2007

Mr Matthew Stephen

**Northern Territory Cricket**

31 July 2007

Mr Andrew Ramsay, CEO

**Northern Territory Rugby League**

31 July 2007

Mr Barry Moore, General Manager

**Mr Paul Grace, Private Citizen**

31 July 2007

**Royal Life Saving Society**

31 July 2007

Ms Leah Cullen, Senior Training Officer  
Ms Carnie Broadbent, Development Officer

**Kormilda College**

1 August 2007

Ms Helen Spears, Deputy Principal  
Ms Elsabe Bott, Director of Studies

**Palmerston City Council**

1 August 2007

Mr Mark Blackburn, Director Community Services, Palmerston City Council  
Mr David King, Community Development Officer, Palmerston City Council  
Mr Kin Leong, Youth Co-ordinator, Palmerston City Council  
Ms Jess McCarty, YMCA  
Ms Helen Clarke, YMCA

**Nhulunbuy Public Hearing**

9 August 2007

Mr Stewart McGill, Department of Education, Arnhem PEC  
Mr Chris Putland, Nhulunbuy Surf Life Saving Club  
Ms Nicky Mayer, Gove Tennis Association  
Mr Eddie Mulholland, Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the NT & East Arnhem Rugby Union  
Mr Gus David, Indigenous Sports Program (Aust Sports Commission)  
Mr Derek Scanlan, Sport & Recreation Officer, Milingimbi  
Ms Stacey Dwyer, Sport & Recreation Officer, Yirrkala  
Mr Craig Edwards, Nutritionist  
Ms Angela Colbey, Nutritionist

**Tennant Creek Public Hearing**

13 August 2007

Mr Colin Baker, Representing DEET Regional Director Michelle Brown  
Mr Gavin Mahoney, Sport & Recreation Manager, Anyinginyi Congress  
Mr Randall Gould, AFL Barkly  
Mr John Hunter, CEO, Tennant Creek Town Council  
Mr Jack Favilla, Principal, Tennant Creek Primary School  
Mr Ken Millar, Teacher, Tennant Creek High School  
Ms Carolyn Ashton, Tennant Creek Town Council  
Mr Stuart Wiley, Manager, Youth Development Unit  
Mr Alan Kassman and Mr Paul Florence, Tennant Creek Baseball  
Mr Eric [inaudible], President, Tennant Creek Athletics

**Alice Springs Open Forum**

14 August 2007

Ms Sara Bonneywell, SRO Numbulwar  
Ms Danielle Steinhardt, SRO Alice Springs Town Council  
Mr Jonathan Pilbrow, Private Citizen  
Ms Suzi Lowe, Mt Theo Program

**Mr Ben Balmer, Alice Springs Physical Education Teacher**

14 August 2007

**Central Australian Youth Link Up Service**

14 August 2007

Mr Tristan Ray, Co-ordinator, CAYLUS

**Alice Springs Sporting Shooters**

14 August 2007

Mr Robert Kittle

**Mt Theo Program**

14 August 2007

Ms Suzi Lowe

Ms Bethany Langden

Mr Lawrence White

**Mr Jonathan Pilbrow, Private Citizen**

14 August 2007

**Tangetyere Council**

14 August 2007

Mr Peter Lowson, Co-ordinator, Youth Services

**Alice Springs Basketball Association**

15 August 2007

Mr Ian Gum, President

**Mr David King, Industry Professional**

31 August 2007

**Football Federation of the Northern Territory**

31 August 2007

Mr Bill Miller, CEO

Mr Richard Beasley, Operations Manager

Northern Territory Rugby Union

31 August 2007

Mr Greg O'Mullane, President of NT School Boys Rugby Union

Mr Dale Roberson, Development Manager, NTRU

**Ms Simone Drury, Industry Professional**

31 August 2007

**Surf Life Saving NT**

31 August 2007

Mr Bob Creek, President

**Total Recreation**

31 August 2007

Ms Eileen Farrell, Manager

**Batchelor Public Hearing**

18 September 2007

Mr Jason Scott, Community Recreation Officer, Coomalie Community Government Council

Mr Paul Marconi, NT Police

Ms Lisa Wain, Town Clerk, Coomalie Community Government Council

Mr Reggae Joe , Rum Jungle Radio

Mr Gavin Chambers, Chairman, Livingstone Recreational Reserve

Mr Randall Cook, Batchelor Area School

**Physical Education Coordinator, Northern Suburbs Cluster (DEET)**

22 February 2008

Ms Jenny Verrall, PEC

**Katherine Public Hearing**

4 March 2008

Mr Fred Murphy, Katherine High School and NT AFL

Mr Daryl Grahek, Teacher, Former Rivers PEC and

Casuarina Street Primary School teacher

Mr Rod Gregg, Casuarina Street Primary School teacher

Mr Caleb Johnston, YMCA

Ms Julie Cook, Katherine Horse & Pony Club and

DHCS Preventable Chronic Disease Program

Mr Geoff Brooks, CEO, Katherine Town Council

Ms Deborah Gillard, Katherine Town Council

Mr Matthew Smith, Regional Development Manager, AFL NT

Ms Tara Brennan, Programs Manager, Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council

Mr Alan Morrow, Private Citizen

Ms Anne Sheales, Katherine Athletics Club

Ms Diane Krepp, Manager, Students with a Disability, Pacific School Games



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