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Welcome to the second edition of the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC's) community sport biannual newsletter, where we keep you up to date with programs, projects and news from community pools, schoolyards, and sporting ovals all over Australia.

Inside this issue you will learn techniques to make sport more inclusive and find ten tips for developing your club. You will also find out how to access free ASC resources and discover how kids in the Active After-school Communities program will complete 1.5 million sporting passes for every Australian with diabetes.

Sign up to the quarterly Community Sport e-newsletter at ausport.gov.au/site_tools/subscribe

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION CEO

I am pleased and privileged to be the new CEO of the Australian Sports Commission. Sport holds such a unique place in the hearts and minds of people across Australia. One needs to look no further than our local ovals, pools and fields on any given day to understand that community sport is a vital part of the Australian sports system and our culture.

It is imperative that grassroots sport is accessible to everyone and I am proud of the work the ASC does to make this happen across the nation.

In these challenging and somewhat uncertain times, sport has an even greater importance because of its ability to bring people together and its enormous social and health benefits.

In the coming months, the ASC will be taking a lead role in gathering the most current research available and commissioning further work to

understand the true value of sport. Sharing and disseminating this information will be a priority for us.

We are seeing great achievements in the area of community sport, which is highlighted by the initiatives and stories in this newsletter. For example, the Active After-school Communities program is coordinating the Turning to Sport for Good Health campaign in partnership with Diabetes Australia. This campaign has the dual purpose of encouraging kids to get active and raising awareness of diabetes.

I would like to thank Diabetes Australia for working with us in using sport to send a very important health message across the nation.

We look forward to developing more partnerships with sports and the community to achieve a healthier, happier and more active Australia.



Australian Sports Commission
CEO Matt Miller

SUPER STARS TAKE TO THE WAVES TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS SPORT

The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation has announced it will double its current contribution to the ASC's Indigenous Sport Program (ISP) and extend its involvement for three years.

Laureus uses the positive influence of sport to tackle societal challenges. The international charitable foundation will partner with the ASC and the University of Queensland to better gauge the positive benefits of being involved in sporting programs at the grassroots level through evidence-based research.

The funding boost was announced during a recent ISP surfing project at Jan Juc, Victoria when five Laureus World Sports Academy members joined children from the Wathaurong community in activities on the beach.

Stars of the surf Layne Beachley and American Robby Naish, along with cricketer Steve Waugh and track stars Cathy Freeman and Britain's Daley Thompson, took part in traditional Indigenous games, surfing technique lessons, water safety and ocean awareness.



Cathy Freeman and Layne Beachley give surfing tips to children from Wathaurong Indigenous surfing project.

SPORT UNITES TO AID THE VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Australian sport has been quick to lend a hand to the Victorian bushfire appeal.

After the fires, Minister for Sport, the Hon. Kate Ellis MP, spoke of the role of sport in the community and the long list of sporting organisations and individuals who had reacted quickly to support the bushfire appeal.

'Sportspeople have been standing up and sending a very clear message that they want to be an important part of this community and to do what they can in times of hardship and tragedy,' said the Minister.

The ASC's Active After-school Communities (AASC) program has helped put a smile back on the faces of children in Victorian bushfire-affected towns.

AASC gala days have been held in Traralgon and Kinglake to help community rebuilding by encouraging children and local clubs to resume sporting activities in the region. Some AASC programs had been deferred after the bushfires swept through the region.

EXPLORE THE 'MIND, BODY AND SOUL' AT FLORIADE FESTIVAL

With its theme of 'mind, body and soul', the 2009 Floriade spring festival is proving a natural partner for the ASC, which will sponsor this year's event.

Annually, more than 400 000 people visit the southern hemisphere's largest spring festival in the Australian Capital Territory, and this year the ASC will have a strong presence throughout the 30-day event.

Between 12 September and 11 October, the ASC's Community Sport programs will showcase a number of activities, with structured games and sports being delivered almost every day.

For more information, visit the Floriade website at floriadeaustralia.com

BE A LOCAL CHAMPION TO YOUR COMMUNITY!

A new round of applications opens on 1 July 2009 for young athletes to seek funding through the ASC's Local Sporting Champions grants program.

The program helps athletes aged between 12 and 18 who are competing in a state or national sporting competition that requires travelling more than 250 kilometres to meet the cost of attending the competition. Grants of \$500 per individual and \$3000 per team are available to help meet costs such as travel, equipment, uniforms and accommodation.

Apply now at ausport.gov.au/champions



Local Sporting Champion Patrick Keir, 18, received a grant to represent ACT Hockey at an under-21 competition in Perth.



A passion for football inspires refugees to become football coaches.

YOUNG REFUGEES GET A KICK OUT OF FOOTBALL

Coaching football is proving to be an effective way for refugees to make new friends while contributing to the health and wellbeing of their new communities in Blacktown, Sydney.

Ten refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Ghana recently completed the ASC's Community Coach Training Program (CCTP) delivered by the AASC program. The CCTP was part of a broader Football United program run by the University of New South Wales which uses sport to promote belonging, racial harmony and community integration.

ASC Director of Community Sport, Judy Flanagan, said the AASC program was committed to 'the training and development of these aspiring refugee coaches, which contributes to the strength and growth of community-based sport in Blacktown'.

For more information about becoming a community coach, visit ausport.gov.au/aasc

FREE INDIGENOUS GAMES CD

The free *Yulunga: Traditional Indigenous Games* resource is now available on CD-ROM, giving children a chance to learn about and participate in more than 100 traditional games and sporting activities.

To get your copy, contact the Indigenous Sport Program at isp@ausport.gov.au. The free resource can also be downloaded at ausport.gov.au/isp

JOIN YOUR LOCAL SPORTS ABILITY HUB TODAY!

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.

What is a Sports Ability HUB?

'Sports Ability HUBs provide a community venue for people of all ages and abilities to participate in sport and structured physical activities in a safe, inclusive and fun environment,' said Richard Nicholson, four-time Paralympian.

Why you should join your local Sports Ability HUB

- > HUBs offer inclusive competitive or non-competitive games.
- > You can make new friends and connect with your community.
- > HUBs have adapted sports equipment.
- > HUBs have trained staff who deliver Sports Ability activities.
- > All HUBs are accessible venues.
- > And it's fun!

To find out more about Sports Ability, visit ausport.gov.au/disability

TECHNIQUES TO MAKE YOUR SPORT MORE INCLUSIVE

The twin themes of ‘active communication’ and ‘internal buy-in’ are essential elements for success that resonate across all of the ASC’s Community Sport programs – from Indigenous Sport and Disability Sport to All Cultures and Women and Sport – which work with sports to make them accessible and increase participation.

Manager of Women and Sport, Linda Muir, said the importance of quality communication with stakeholders is a recurring theme, particularly in managing the ASC’s ‘Building a Better Sport: better management practices’ project, which aims to get more women into leadership and decision-making roles in sporting organisations.

‘For Bowls Australia to effect change to dress regulations [an identified barrier to new female memberships] across all state and territory bodies and individual clubs, they needed to have clear, well-constructed and widely distributed communications,’ said Muir. ‘Stakeholders resistant to change are more flexible if the reasons for the change have been communicated.’

At its heart, Building a Better Sport centres on the need for research, particularly with stakeholders, to help sports identify planning gaps, areas for improvement, trends, and opportunities in relation to the involvement of women.

Bowls Australia and Golf Australia are two national sporting organisations being funded over three years to help develop a better management framework.

The success of this project will greatly depend on the quality and quantity of the organisations’ communication. Organisations that can effectively communicate their policies, current news and events to all levels of stakeholders can expect greater understanding and ‘buy in’ from all involved.

Similarly, the ASC’s network of Indigenous Sport Development Officers in the Indigenous Sport Program are using communication with Indigenous communities as their chief method of identifying sporting needs and then developing programs – often in partnership with mainstream sporting organisations such as AFL, Softball Australia and Netball Australia – to deliver community-based sporting opportunities and services.

Active communication is also essential for any sport organisation working with people from multicultural backgrounds. A greater understanding and awareness of diverse lifestyles, experiences, attitudes and cultures is paramount.

Conveying the importance and value of being inclusive to everyone in a club or community group encourages participation and supports positive sporting and social experiences for all.

For more information on how to make your sport more inclusive, visit ausport.gov.au/participating



Direct communication with Indigenous communities is a great way to identify their sporting needs.



Cleveland Bowls Club in Queensland have adapted their dress regulations to be more inclusive of women.

CASE STUDY

AFL BUILDS A MORE INCLUSIVE CULTURE

The Australian Football League (AFL) is working to build a sports culture more inclusive of young people and people with a disability, and has found that purposeful and patient communication with participants, stakeholders and communities is crucial to make sport more accessible for everyone.

Manager of the ASC's Disability Sport unit, Peter Downs, said the AFL has gone ahead in 'leaps and bounds' over the past 12 months, using its specially developed Disability Action Plan to roll out strategies for inclusion across Australia.

The AFL celebrated its progress at a recent Collingwood–Geelong match with a half-time competition between two teams of players with intellectual disabilities who are part of the Football Integration Development Association.

'Of course, it's not just about the players on the field,' Downs said. 'Inclusion is about having a spectrum of opportunity for people to be involved in every aspect of the sport, from coaching and officiating to volunteering.'

Volunteer AFL Project Coordinator Andrew Hughes believes a slow, strategic and sustainable approach built on two-way communication is the best way for organisations to increase inclusiveness in any sport. Not including everyone when developing an action plan can be disastrous.

'You can have the best intentions in the world, but until you have ownership and buy-in ... until people understand the benefits, and you have the resources and strategies in place, then it is in danger of falling over,' said Hughes.

The AFL is just one of 25 sports working with the ASC as part of its national Sports CONNECT initiative to address barriers that prevent people with a disability from fully participating in sport.

The AFL has also been strengthening its junior sport policy and programs, basing its modifications on the ASC's national Junior Sport framework, which guides sporting organisations in building safe, fun, quality and inclusive environments for delivering junior sport.

The ASC collaborated closely with the AFL to encourage consultation with its stakeholders, development of modified games consistent with contemporary research on junior sport, and distribution of appropriate equipment. It was through the process of consulting with grassroots stakeholders that the AFL discovered a gap in its delivery pathway.

Stakeholders highlighted that there was a drop off when children reached the age limit for the AFL's modified junior Auskick program. 'There was nowhere for these kids to go,' said Manager of Junior Sport, Lara Hayes.

'Based on this feedback, the AFL decided to split their junior sport programs into two: one catering to kids between five and 12 years and the other for youth between 13 and 18 years. What really drove this was the AFL seeking feedback from its clubs and state bodies. It's being driven from the bottom up,' said Hayes.



Above: AFL players from the Football Integration Development Association (FIDA), an AFL competition for people with an intellectual disability.

Below: Minister for Youth and Sport Kate Ellis with Steve Georganas, Bob Hammond and AFL juniors. Picture courtesy of AFL.



1.5 MILLION SPORTING PASSES TOWARDS GOOD HEALTH

In August this year, children participating in the ASC's Active After-school Communities (AASC) program will be raising awareness of diabetes while improving their own fitness levels. Diabetes is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease.

From 17 to 28 August, AASC participants will be passing balls, frisbees and relay batons – and engaging in other physical activities – up to 1.5 million times (one 'pass' for every Australian with diabetes*) as part of the national Turning to Sport for Good Health campaign.

Turning to Sport for Good Health is a joint initiative between the AASC program and Diabetes Australia that aims to raise the awareness of the risk of diabetes and educate children that sport plays a major role in a healthy and active lifestyle.

Around 275 people develop diabetes each day in Australia (enough to fill the MCG every year!) but research shows us if we increase activity levels, such as by playing sport regularly, and change our eating habits, we can lower our risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

'While there is no cure for type 2 diabetes, research shows that up to 60 per cent of cases can be prevented through healthy diet and regular exercise,' said Diabetes Australia CEO Matt O'Brien.

The AASC program plays a big part in increasing the activity levels and health of primary school children by providing early exposure to fun, safe and inclusive sport, which helps children develop a lifelong love of sport. Each week 150 000 children in the AASC program around Australia are encouraged to lead



Children in the Active After-school Communities program with their 'bonus pass' cards.



Children in the AASC program performing the 'Turn to sport and play for life' song and dance, choreographed by Gymnastics Australia.

healthy lifestyles by playing after-school sport and eating nutritious food.

'Healthy eating and physical activity habits start young, so the Turning to Sport for Good Health campaign is a terrific step in helping educate children about the health benefits of sport,' said O'Brien.

The campaign is also about creativity: finding fun ways to make 'sporting passes'. As well as being part of traditional games, such as netball, basketball, football and hockey, a sporting pass might also be collecting 'treasures' at the bottom of a pool, running and skipping between markers or throwing juggling balls in circus sessions.

While brainstorming their own ideas for sporting passes, children will also be encouraged to make 'bonus' passes during their lunch breaks and at home, which they can record on a special bonus pass card.

'Maintaining that sense of fun, creativity and having the opportunity to try many different activities is what keeps children interested and enthusiastic about sport and physical activity,' O'Brien said.

The strength of the Turning to Sport for Good Health campaign is due in a large part to the opportunities created through the partnership between the ASC and Diabetes Australia.

'Just as you can't make a sporting pass without a partner, the Turning to Sport for Good Health campaign would not be successful without a strong partnership,' said ASC Director of Community Sport, Judy Flanagan.

'Working together provides a practical way for both organisations to increase our capacity to address this growing health problem.'

AASC schools and after-school care centres will initially celebrate National Diabetes Week (12-18 July) and then, from 17 August, children will be attempting to make one sporting pass for each of the 1.5 million Australians with diabetes.

To support the campaign, all participating schools and after-school centres have been sent a CD and DVD with choreographed actions and music for the 'Turn to sport and play for life' campaign theme song.

AASC children are also being encouraged to have fun creating their own music video using the 'Turn to sport and play for life' song, which will give a school or after-school care centre in each state and territory the chance to win \$1000 worth of sporting equipment.

For more information or to get involved, visit ausport.gov.au/aasc

* Estimate provided by Diabetes Australia.

GET MOVING TO THE 'TURN TO SPORT AND PLAY FOR LIFE' SONG AND DANCE

Dance and sing along to the 'Turn to sport and play for life' song at ausport.gov.au/aasc

CLUBS SWELL WITH NEW ACTIVE AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITIES MEMBERS

Clubs involved in delivering activities as part of the AASC program are reporting a surge in new junior members.

Prior to the introduction of the AASC program there were no club-based basketball teams in Sheffield, Tasmania. Now a community coach reports that five junior teams are regularly playing in the primary school roster.

A major objective of the AASC program is to ensure it acts as a springboard for growth of local sporting clubs. Recent research shows that half of the people from sporting clubs who deliver AASC program activities reported an increase in the number of children participating at their club as a result of the program.

The research also indicates that two out of three parents of children participating in the AASC program say their child would like to join a new sporting club or organisation.

The AASC program is run at more than 3250 schools and after-school care centres across Australia. It introduces primary school-aged children to sport in a fun and free way and makes it easy for clubs to promote themselves and gain direct access to tomorrow's players.

Clubs are becoming involved in the program in many ways, such as directly delivering activities, making facilities available or hosting 'come and try' days.

For more information on how to become involved, visit ausport.gov.au/aasc or email infoaasc@ausport.gov.au

ACTIVE AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM: HELPING AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN STAY ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

A recent report on the progress of the AASC program reveals that children in the program are almost doubling their average structured physical activity hours per week.

'Helping Kids and Communities Get Active: an interim report of the evaluation of the Active After-school Communities program 2005-07' presents the latest findings of an ongoing evaluation of the AASC program against its objectives.

The report indicates that AASC children have grown to love structured physical activity and want to continue their involvement, and that participating schools and after-school care centres are increasing their capacity to deliver structured physical activity outside of the AASC program.

Local clubs and structured physical activity organisations have experienced an increase in membership as a result of their involvement in the AASC program, and local communities are being strengthened through the program being delivered in their area.

The AASC program achieved exceptionally high stakeholder satisfaction ratings and was considered by those surveyed as safe, fun and inclusive.

To read the full report, visit ausport.gov.au/aasc/



TEN TIPS FOR BOOSTING CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Beyond blanket statements along the lines of ‘a healthy membership leads to a vital organisation’, there are concrete reasons why sports clubs need a robust membership base.

With more people joining in, it becomes easier to find committee members and volunteers to help with special projects. There is also less pressure on members to be involved in too many activities, and a broader range of skills becomes available, which better equips a club to respond to societal changes. These changes can include decreasing numbers of children, increasing numbers of older people, the competition between clubs and commercial providers, and the rise of new activities for health and wellbeing.

Investing time and energy in club development and building membership can only help a club’s long-term viability, yet knowing where to start can be daunting. The ASC’s Club Development unit is working to make this easier with ten top tips to help clubs move with the times:

- 1** Be flexible to your members’ needs. If your club has declining membership, it might be time to listen to what members and potential members want and start providing it. One way to achieve this is through a survey of current and potential members. It may mean changing how and when a sport is played. You could try running a midnight competition for teenagers or playing games with reduced sides so players are more involved.
- 2** Check with state or national sporting organisations to see what club development information they have, or look at other sports’ resources. The Australian Football League has good resources available in their club management program, many of which are available online at afl.com.au
- 3** Utilise the ASC’s Club Development resource library, a collection of around 350 resources on many topics related to club management and membership at ausport.gov.au/supporting/clubs/about



Boosting memberships helps a club’s long-term viability.

- 4** Research any workshops run by state departments of sport and recreation that are held throughout the year as they can be very helpful. Topics can range from club administration to applying for grants.
- 5** Look out for the free online course for first-time committee members in local sporting clubs, which is currently being developed by the ASC’s Club Development unit. The unit is also developing a club check list – a quick health check to help clubs evaluate their procedures.
- 6** The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program provides primary school children with access to sport and structured physical activity after school. It runs in more than 3200 schools and after-school care centres across Australia. As a club, you can link with the AASC program in many ways. For example, you can run activity sessions in your sport at AASC sites. Research shows children involved in AASC activities are often motivated to join a sports club. For more information see ausport.gov.au/aasc
- 7** Run a ‘come and try’ day – this allows your club to provide a quick taste of your sport. These can be held in conjunction with AASC program providers or local schools, but need to be promoted widely and it is important that people are then able to immediately join a club or start a competitive season.
- 8** Your club should have a strong community presence so people are aware of what you have to offer. You can raise awareness by promoting fundraisers, writing articles for local newspapers or running clinics at schools.
- 9** Since club members will only keep coming back if they are enjoying what they are doing, it is important that accredited, experienced coaches are delivering activities. Each sport has its own suite of coaching courses, but if a course is not being run in your club’s area, it is worth considering the ASC’s Beginning Coaching General Principles course or the AASC program’s introductory coaching course: the Community Coach Training Program. Both courses are the first step towards becoming an accredited coach.
- 10** Any club serious about building membership will need to have enough volunteers to cope with the increased workload. You should have plans in place to recruit volunteers, assign their roles, ensure they are not overloaded and to recognise and reward their input.

For more information and resources to assist with club development, visit ausport.gov.au/clubs