



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER AFFAIRS

Contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2012

MELBOURNE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

Thursday, 22 November 2012

Members in attendance: Mr Neumann, Dr Stone.

Terms of Reference for the Inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring, with a particular focus on:

- sporting bodies increasing opportunities for Indigenous participation, including opportunities for Indigenous women,
- non-government organisations utilising sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes for Indigenous people, and
- the contribution of Indigenous sporting programs, as supplied by:
 - the sporting codes
 - the private and NGO sectors, and
 - federal government assistanceto Closing the Gap targets.

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TANIMU, Mr Ross Leonard, Private capacity

TAMIRU, Mr Jason, Private capacity

WARREN, Ms Julie Lynne, Manager, Indigenous Employment Program, Australian Football League

Committee met at 09:03

CHAIR (Mr Neumann): I now declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet and pay our respects to their elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal people who now reside in this area. Please note that these meetings are formal proceedings of the Parliament of Australia. Everything said should be factual and honest and it can be considered a serious matter to attempt to mislead the committee. This hearing is open to the public and a transcript of what is said will be placed on the committee's website.

CHAIR: We might go around and have you introduce yourselves. Then we will proceed to give everyone an opportunity to do a brief introductory statement.

Mr McGregor: I am from the Australian Drug Foundation. I am the community program manager. We run a program called the Good Sports program which exists in communities across the country.

Mr Kipman: I am from Cricket Australia. We manage the Indigenous programs along with the game development department of our organisation.

Ms Warren: I am from the Australian Football League. I am manager of the Indigenous employment program. I am manager of our football program and I am also in the game development department.

Ms Palmer: I am chief executive of Netball Australia.

Ms Cohen: I am Head, Strategy and Government Relations, Netball Australia.

Mr Bowd: I represent Vicsport and approximately 70 Victorian state sporting associations.

Miss Malpass: I represent the David Wirrpanda Foundation and I work as an Indigenous mentor.

Dr Bamblett: I am CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association and President of the Fitzroy Stars football club.

Ms Duarte: I am the director of the Korin Gamadji Institute based at Richmond Football Club and I am a board member of VicHealth.

Dr Hearn Mackinnon: I am an academic from Deakin University and also the author of the book *The Liam Jurrah Story*.

Mr Tanimu: I am just a simple man by name and by nature. I am a caseworker working predominantly with Indigenous youth and in sports. I am also a women's Rugby coach at a local community sports club.

Dr Dodson: I am the Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University.

Dr Fogarty: I am a researcher at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies with Mick.

CHAIR: We will now proceed to a brief introductory opening statement from people. Having gone to the left, as a Labor politician I will now be very bipartisan and go to the right! Bill, over to you to make the first introductory statement.

Dr Fogarty: Thanks.

CHAIR: We are pretty informal in this committee. We do not have airs and graces; we always go by first or given names.

Dr Fogarty: In that case, thanks, Shayne.

CHAIR: Good on you.

Dr Fogarty: I would like first to acknowledge the traditional owners on whose land we meet today and to thank the honourable members of the committee for the opportunity to be a part of today's round table. I would like to take the opportunity, while I have got you guys, to commend the committee members and the secretariat on the high quality of your previous inquiry's report into Indigenous language policy. For those of you who have not had a look, I think you should. I hope it has a major impact.

In addressing today's inquiry, I should begin by noting that I am not an expert in Indigenous sport, per se. Rather, my main research is focused on education, development and youth engagement, with a particular focus on the remote and very remote regions of the Northern Territory. However, in the course of the last 15 years or so, my work in these areas has increasingly come to recognise the power, or at least the potential power, of sport in engaging and re-engaging young Indigenous people in education, training and lifelong learning and, as per the terms of reference here, in improving their wellbeing.

The challenges facing remote education cannot be understated. In the very remote areas where I work, 80 per cent of students fail to meet basic literacy and numeracy benchmarks as measured by NAPLAN tests, and I leave my issues with those tests for another day. Less than five per cent of the students complete year 12, and on any given day 42 per cent of the students do not attend school. In one community where I work, out of a potential 800 students, fewer than 200 attend school. This leaves 600 kids per day at a loose end. Re-engaging these kids is a massive challenge, and it has a phenomenal bearing upon the inter-generational wellbeing and opportunities of remote Indigenous people in this country.

The challenge in closing the gap is great, yet teachers and researchers know that there are some things that do engage these students. Music, art, learning in and from country, bilingual education programs and, of course, sport provide key vehicles through which to re-engage learners. However, we cannot just rely on schools. They really have their hands full. I see sport—and I mean all sports, not just football—as having an integral role in the development of leaders and the re-engagement of remote Indigenous youth in remote Australia. And I see that sporting bodies that represent and contribute so much to our social fabric have a fundamental role to play in tackling what is, frankly, a pretty bad situation in a First World country.

Yet in places I work, there are no local sports clubs which young people can join or go to to train. There are little or no sporting facilities available and there are no intercommunity competitions, with the exception of football.

All of these things can be rectified. These are materialities. More important than these things in building real engagement are platforms of shared understandings. One of the wonderful things about sport is that it brings together all parts of society—hence the term 'the level playing field'. In the process, these intercultural sporting engagements and individual interactions produce shared social histories. It is the sharing of social histories around sport that is such an important step in developing pathways forward. Sometimes these histories are painful and filled with stories of racism and discrimination. But equally there are stories of great acts of reconciliation and success against the odds. These stories create platforms through which people engage not only in the sport itself but in the wider discourses of history and social development. This is the platform that successful programs in sport are built upon.

First, I see a desperate need for sporting codes to honestly document and develop their social histories with Indigenous Australia. Second, I see a need for a far greater assessment and evaluation of programs that link youth

and sport with a view to adopting the very best practice nationally and internationally in tackling the disparities in education, particularly in remote Australia. It is not enough to say that we think sport is doing great things; we need to know in real terms where best to spend our efforts. Third, I see a critical shift in thinking that needs to occur at the highest levels of sports administration, both within the respective sports bodies in Australia and in government. This shift needs to move away from tokenism; away from an obsessive focus on role models and the cherry picking of talent for the elite level. It needs to move towards a real commitment to grassroots sporting infrastructure and skills development for males and females at the local level, from whence a wealth of talent will spring. In so doing, sports will not only contribute a great deal to youth development and education, but may find that they also grant access to a real two-way engagement with Australia's phenomenal Indigenous sportsmen and women.

Prof. Dodson: I also would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the people of the Kulin nation on whose ancestral lands we are meeting. I also would like to pay my respects to their elders past and present. I am here as a fourth Bill. I too am not an expert on Indigenous people in sport. There are two things that I really want to tell the committee. In 2009, when I was Australian of the Year, I visited over 50 schools around the country and I saw a lot of programs that were designed—with varying success—to try and not just get kids to school but to keep them there and get them to complete school. Many of those programs were run on shoestrings. I will not single out any particular state or territory, but they got very little support from the education department. Many of those initiatives were focused around one sport or another. What I came to appreciate is that if kids are not in bed asleep at night they can be at three other places. With too many Aboriginal kids, if they are at home they are copping grief from their parents; if they are at school they are copping grief from their teachers. Then there is another space when they are not at school and not at home. This is what I would refer to as the 'mischief space'. It is where they can get into trouble, and many do. Sadly, they finish up in the juvenile justice system. It is in that space that sport has a role to play if it can fill that gap and occupy the space. In some cases it may be necessary to make enjoying the space conditional on school performance, a bit like the Clontarf program.

I am not suggesting that is the way we should go. I am not sure if it can translate across jurisdictions and across sports. But getting that space filled ought to be a key objective, and sport has a role to play in that space.

Bill and I at the moment are working on an application for an ARC grant and are trying to have a look at cricket in particular in remote communities. Our preliminary investigations show that there is a dearth of research, a dearth of material. It is really hard to find stuff. You look back in some of these remote areas to the twenties and thirties when cricket proliferated in these remote communities. Around the war it disappeared and did not come back. Why was that? What happened? I am not singling out cricket particularly but why did it vanish from the scene? We need to know the answer to those sorts of questions and research can deliver, I think, potentially some of the answers. They are the two basic things that I wanted to talk about. I am looking forward to the discussion.

CHAIR: This current inquiry arises out of the *Doing Time - Time For Doing: Indigenous youth in the criminal justice system* report we did a few years ago and from the *Our Land Our Languages* report as well. We found that sport was a way to deflect youth away from mischief making and getting in that space you talked about.

Mr Tanimu: First of all, I would like to acknowledge my creator. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri of the Kulin Nation, and their spiritual connection to the land. I acknowledge the dignitaries, the elders and the audience. With my journey, I am fortunate and humbled to be here. You do not realise after you have done something in the community for so long that it has been recognised in different areas. It is a wonderful opportunity to come and speak about it.

I come to this inquiry on three different levels, I suppose: firstly, to a certain extent, as an academic from my research thesis that was referenced in the last parliamentary inquiry, *Doing Time*. Secondly, I come as a person from an NGO that works with Indigenous youth or Aboriginal youth who may be at risk of leaving education and of homelessness. Thirdly, I come to this committee as a local rugby coach that has seen a wonderful growth in women playing rugby.

From my perspective, I do not use sport as a generic physical thing. I use it as a vehicle for engagement. More importantly, from where I am, it is about inclusiveness in the community. It is about advocacy and it is also about the recognition of the first nation of this land. As an NGO, I was very fortunate to have a mentor from Samoa who was very strong in his identity. We applied a model from New Zealand, which I think is used in a lot of social services areas. The core elements of that are the four cornerstones: spirituality, physical, mental and family. That is the model we used to address some of these young fellows. It has worked out really well for us. That process is about building relationships. Once I have a relationship I have respect—that is, mutual respect. Once we have that then we can start working towards goals and agendas for the young fellows and for the women. With this

particular program we have seen a growth since 2008. We started off with seven high schools and 70 students. That was with myself and my mentor. My mentor left in 2010 to follow his journey with his son to Queensland. He asked me whether I thought I could keep it going. I had to ring him up in 2011 and say that I had actually increased it. From 2011 to 2012 it has increased to 21 high schools with 270 kids playing touch football as our vehicle of engagement.

I was approached to coach a women's rugby team, with initially three Aboriginal women. Now I have close to 17 on the books. Within three years we won the grand final. What it says to me is that sport is setting life skills in place, and by setting goals and objectives you will overcome adversity. It is wonderful that I can come down here, learn from other people and see how things are done. It is my pleasure to sit next to Michael, because he was been a role model for me when I was doing my academic learning.

Dr Dodson: You haven't set your heights very high then!

Mr Tanimu: When you start off education as an adult you look for role models in your life. It is my pleasure. That is about it for me. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ross, and congratulations on the win in the rugby.

Mr Tanimu: Thank you very much.

Dr Mackinnon: I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and elders past and present, the committee and the other representatives here. I want to thank you for the opportunity. I have to make a bit of an apology—my initial submission was a very rushed job. I only actually became aware of it the day before the submission date, so it was not much more than a few scattered thoughts.

CHAIR: Bruce, if you want to add anything more, we are quite happy to take anything you might want to provide.

Dr Mackinnon: Great. They were just some general thoughts. I am an academic at Deakin University in the School of Management and Marketing. By major interest in this area comes from being part of an organisation called the Collingwood Industrial Magpies, which is a group of football supporters in Melbourne who decided to use sport and the love of football for a vehicle for practical reconciliation. Back in 2003 we adopted a community in Central Australia—Yuendumu. I have had about a decade-long relationship with this community.

Each year we tend to bring a group of young people from the community down to Melbourne. They usually stay at my place, because I live close to the MCG, and we take them to the football and watch teams train et cetera. It is more as a confidence building exercise. The purpose of that was never about identifying talent or recruiting players. But, as some people would know, one of these young blokes ended up being Liam Jurrah, who became an AFL player—the first of his kind. My book, *The Liam Jurrah Story: From Yuendumu to the MCG*, was about his journey.

It was really from my connections with the community of Yuendumu, to which I have been several times, and other remote communities around Central Australia, that I was struck with—and I am not an expert on Indigenous issues or affairs at all; I do not myself up there; this is just based on my first-hand observations and from what I have learned from the people in the communities—the issue of what I call listlessness. Just sitting around doing nothing is the biggest problem more than anything. I see that as being the root cause of the alcoholism, violence, mental health issues, being locked up et cetera. It predominantly comes down to people not being active and sitting around with nothing to do. Sport in general but I think football in particular in Central Australia, the area that I am most familiar with, the main sport that people are passionate about is Australian rules football. It is an activity which seems to have the ability to grip the whole community. They get passionate about it and interested in it. It is something which can activate people.

Therefore it just strikes me that if we are looking at how to close the gaps and all the other targets governments and society talks about, we should be building on an activity which already has the passion and interest of the communities. This is not just in terms of participation in playing football. I see sports as being an opportunity to be leveraged in broader capacity building. Sporting teams need administrators, coaches, physios, bus drivers, cooks, timekeepers. Using sport as a model, I can see it as having the opportunity to become the centre for growth in community development. My interest and what I have learned is predominantly in the remote communities. Obviously those issues are going to be very different in other communities. That is a passion and something that I feel very strongly about.

Like Mick, I am part of a group of researchers putting together an ARC application. We are hopefully going to get a grant to undertake a serious study examining the opportunities for using sport—mainly football because in Central Australia it is the main sport—in general as a wider vehicle for capacity building. I think it is an area that

perhaps as policymakers and society we have undervalued or have not really seen the full potential. They are a few of my thoughts.

CHAIR: Having read your submission, I do want to know whether any of these AFL teams in Central Australia call themselves by any other mascot other than a magpie?

Dr Mackinnon: My strongest connection is with Yuendumu and the football team there is the Yuendumu magpies.

CHAIR: I was waiting for the swifts or the tigers or the lions.

Ms Duarte: I would like to commence by acknowledging country and pay my respects to the traditional owners here and elders past and present, who in their own right have led a lot of change in this space. I am an Aboriginal woman born and raised in Wathaurong country. My traditional origins are to the area of north-west Victoria. That area in its own right has a history around athletics, particularly the Stawell gift. My great uncle was the very first Aboriginal man to win a Stawell gift. I think a part of his life has influenced where I ended up today.

Before I talk about some roles I have been engaged in, I am surprised that VicHealth were not provided with a formal invitation to present here today. I do also want to say thank you and I appreciate the opportunity to sit in. I will make a few comments in relation to the submission from VicHealth because it is consistent with a range of different things from my perspective. I was a former elite athlete for many years in track and field and a phys-ed teacher. Currently I hold a sports administration position on the VicHealth board and have done so for a number of terms now.

I am currently the director of the Korin Gamadji Institute at the Richmond Football Club. There is no other facility that houses an Indigenous education and training institute in the country like this. I want to mention a former role with an organisation called AFL Sportsready. AFL Sportsready was a group training organisation, now an RTO, which uses the brand of the AFL to engage young people from across the country into pathways of education and training.

During my time with AFL Sportsready, a really critical element, which is a focus of the inquiry around mentoring, in the evolution of the Indigenous employment program was for us to take time to invest in mentoring. What we found was that intensive mentoring by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the first 16-week period of a young person on a traineeship was a key element in the success, and the rate of completion was significantly increased.

From VicHealth's perspective, long-term investment and support is critical. Again, I affirm how important it is to directly support Indigenous sporting organisations to assist them to build bridges with communities and to increase participation across sport and active participation frameworks whether that is through state sporting organisations or through active recreation. It is also important to continue to look at how we build capacity in those state sporting organisations, the regional sports assemblies and the national sporting organisations, and consider the context around the community needs as a priority. We are a sporting nation that is passionate about elite sport but I too affirm how critical it is to really look at how we build that engagement from a grassroots level and clearly from a health outcomes perspective.

We should be collaborating with peak organisations and institutions that really ensure and assist us to bridge pathways to effect change around the social determinants of health. That may be pathways of retaining young people at school, whether it is pathways into the higher education system or into employment, and we should be continuing to invest in those structures, which are not as established as they could be. There are a lot of organisations doing great things. How we continue to build a robust interface between those organisations is going to be critical for our mob, particularly from life force pathways and how they transition from being young children into school, then from school into higher education pathways, training or directly into employment. That is a piece of work that I am personally very interested in.

The Korin Gamadji Institute is a very new facility. The priority has been about maximising the pathways. We are not in any way set to do that alone. It is about working with a range of different key leaders, key Aboriginal organisations, to see how we can use the power of sport to maximise a pathway for our young people and also provide visibility and strong messages to the broader community. Dreamtime at the G is one—and, Julie, I hope I am not stealing your thunder on that one—and that has been on the calendar for a number of years now. That affects the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation by seeing those participating in the game and attending the match. The feedback that we get from community members is always about celebration and cultural pride. You cannot underestimate the visibility of that and the message that that sends to our country.

In addition, we have had somebody do some recent research on the impact of the Dreamtime Game more broadly. Within the Richmond Football Club, we have had an example of a non-Aboriginal man coming to us with a cheer squad, saying, 'We really want to think about how, from a Richmond perspective, our cheer squad is actually more culturally aware.' I think that is a piece of work that is outside our community that will help influence a society that needs to be more culturally safe and appropriate.

Dr Bamblett: My mother's people are Yorta Yorta and my father's people are Wiradjuri, which means that sometimes I am related to half of New South Wales and half of Victoria. It is important that we acknowledge the country we are on and the people of the land. Everyone who has heard me has heard the fact that wherever you walk on this land mass called Australia you are on Aboriginal land. That is important that that is seen and known, and absorbed as a fact. The people from here are the Wiradjuri people. This is their area. We respect them and the fact that they are continuing to do what they can to resurrect their cultural base. You will see on the road out towards the airport there is a spot where they found the remains of a man over 35,000 years old. Being there 35,000 years ago, you would have thought there would have been some security of tenure, but obviously it has never happened. It is really important to acknowledge the people and the things that they are doing. I also pay my respects to the people who fought long and hard to establish a base where our people can go forth and say, 'This is our country.' I think it is important that we do that.

Having done that, I need to talk a little bit about what we do. Our organisation is a community development organisation and I have had the undoubted privilege of working with them for some time. We have had some influence across a spectrum of activities. We are involved in partnerships with justice, education and health, and our name is on their agreements. It is important to state, with all those things, if we were in the place where we should be, there would not be any need for us to have separate clubs. There would not be any need for us to be chasing the rainbows we see. It is important to recognise that a place like this, a great facility, is struggling to stay alive. There is a need for us to consider how in fact we can make a better place for the people who use this facility.

We are a community development agency engaged in youth justice. We have, as I said, been a part of the state agreement with the Aboriginal community and the justice department. This is something that I have been involved with for some time and it produces a picture that is not good.

In the northern part of this metropolitan area, you can see it with the increase in the numbers of people within the juvenile justice system. We can see the increase in young women who are becoming more involved in that, and in the seriousness of the crimes that are taking place. The basis on which we do things is that we have to try to provide an alternative to that. It was stated earlier regarding the north part of the country, but we have the same sorts of issues here that we have to deal with. It is important to have whatever programs that we can do.

We operate on the basis that you have got five key circles of respect. They are respect for self, family, extended family, Aboriginal community and larger community. I see that as pretty much a pebble in the pond: you throw a pebble in the pond and it ripples through. If we can get our kids to be in a place where there is respect for themselves, the impact will spread. It is really important for us to be able to do things.

There is a lot of interest in the sporting arena. We have been engaged in a couple of Closing the Gap programs where we have run football and netball carnivals for young people and kids in schools. The idea was to get them to come along so we can do some preliminary health checks—that was to satisfy the funding bodies. Of course, the kids are not interested in the health check; they are really interested in football, netball and getting together. These sorts of things are part of making it happen. It adds benefit. We have had kids who have had to get glasses and kids who have had to have their hearing attended to. We have started a preliminary family health base, which is good for them.

We expected to have 20 kids in one day, and we finished up with 600 kids. Just recently we had one in Ballarat and 1,000 people came through the thing: 500-600 kids and their entourage—the supporting parents et cetera. It is all about health and wellbeing and the approach to the fact that we will do something, and get some messages across to promote a healthier lifestyle and a better way of doing business.

We have to try and counterbalance the way in which it is done. We have a report from a series of work that we did and basically the theme of this work is: participants not recipients. It is a statement saying very clearly: if you want to do anything in the area of Aboriginal issues, we have to be participants, not recipients of goodwill; not recipients of nice feelings; not recipients of just the money that you give, but in fact that we are actually able to participate and set a direction. There are other reports that we have that say clearly: we have got five groups in our community—one group actually exists on \$18,000 a year in household income; we have got the next group that are on \$54,000; we have got the next group that are at \$75,000 or thereabouts; and the next group that is on \$100,000-plus. It is the sort of thing that is saying you can imagine at the bottom of the scale the ability for

families to be able to exist and to provide a healthy lifestyle and to provide participation in sport and to provide participation in all the sorts of things that we need to do to provide a better benefit.

It is interesting that we have actually seen the development of a middle class in Aboriginal communities, or the Aboriginal arena across the nation. Nonetheless, there are benefits that come from that—increased income and better school results. You can see the sorts of things. All of those things are a part of the way in which we see that we need to go into things that we need to do. The most important thing is to make sure that we have got Aboriginal community. Fitzroy Stars football club is very much a community club. It has actually started from here, and we see it as very much the way forward for the Aboriginal community in our part of the country. We also have 140 players and 21 white ribbon ambassadors, I think, which is a way of getting our fellas involved in the prevention of violence against women.

We have a whole range of other activities around, such as wellbeing camps for families and camps for our players, so that we are able to provide a better message about the lifestyle they should aspire to. It is really a community focus. We are pretty sure that we can do much better; we will continue to try to do that. As I said, we are participants, not recipients. If we do not have a voice then you are own your own. It is about the things that the community can do.

I would just like to say that I am little bit disappointed because we got late notice of this committee late and then had to madly run around and ring up to ask, 'Can we have a pair of ears at your sitting?' I am not sure who is responsible for that—please, do not shoot them; they probably just did not read the small print—but it is important that we have an opportunity to present our case and the direction that we want to take on this for our community.

Aboriginal communities across the state are engaged in sport in one form or another. It is great to see. We want to reinvigorate things like the state carnivals that we have had in netball and basketball et cetera. Those things will be part and parcel of the direction we take.

A key thing is to be able to sell a message of family wellbeing. In all our history, for all of those thousands of years, we have been based on family and around family. If we can have that family wellbeing restored then we can start to think about the principles of life that need to be restored to some of our young people so that we do not have to spend all our time at the bottom of the cliff with the ambulance waiting for people to fall over. We can actually do some things that are going to be more positive in changing the direction before we get to the cliff.

Miss Malpass: I am from the David Wirrpanda Foundation. I too would like to acknowledge the traditional land owners and the elders past and present. As I sit at this table, I am quite humbled and honoured to be here. I would like to tell you a little bit about my background and where I am from. I am a Nyunga girl from the south-west. I grew up in Western Australia. I grew up in a town called Kalgoorlie, but moved to Perth. I am sitting here as a mentor for the foundation. I am a physiotherapist. I played basketball in the WNBL for four years. At the moment, I currently work in Healesville at Worawa Aboriginal College as a mentor. I run a program out there called the Deadly Sista Girlz, which is the only one the foundation has based in Victoria.

I will tell you a little bit about myself. I finished high school and I graduated from year 12. I received an award for the highest TER of any Indigenous student in Western Australia. After that, I went on to play national league basketball for Perth for four years, which was a massive opportunity for me. While I was playing national league, I went on to uni. It took me six years to get a physiotherapy degree. Education was a big thing for my family. My mum was the first one in her whole family to ever graduate from university with a degree. She went back when she was 40 and now she is a teacher. She always pushed me down that path.

From a foundation point of view, the David Wirrpanda Foundation was established in 2005. David himself brought that about. We use Indigenous role models and mentors to deliver our programs. We have so far, over the last seven years, built six successful programs such as our Wirra Club which involves primary schools. We have got Troy Cook: he does the health and fitness program where we go out to communities. It is a 10-week program, introducing people to the lives of elite athletes and how you get there. The one I am mainly involved with is the Deadly Sista Girlz program. We see that there is a big scope in helping Aboriginal women. Clontarf was mentioned. I know a lot about Clontarf. That is very male based, around AFL and football. Netball Australia funds a few of our programs, including the one that I work at here. We really try to connect with the women and make a difference that way.

We also have a newly started program called Moorditj Mums. That is aimed at young mums, encouraging them to increase their education and also go out and get good jobs. We also have Plan 2day 4 2morrow, which is an employment program. That is based in two areas: the Solid Ground and Solid Futures programs.

Solid Ground is based more on your higher risks: people who do not have licenses, have criminal records and really need a bit of extra education and mentoring in order to then go to the Solid Futures program. We run that through Central TAFE. We help Aboriginal Australians get jobs.

Our other program is just on cultural awareness. We deliver cultural awareness training. The big thing for me sitting at the table today to say would be that our submission includes a lot of stories and personal input from all the Aboriginal mentors at our foundation. We have got 32 staff, both casual and full time. A lot of them are elite athletes. Our submission includes their stories on how sport helped them get to where they are today. I can personally say that the lessons I have learnt from sport, and being able to transfer them over into my own life, have helped a great deal. Every week, we go out and we deliver these programs, such as the one that I deliver in Healesville. Sport is just a great way to break down those walls with the kids but still deliver a message.

Out at Healesville, I teach sexual health to the girls, which some people like and some people do not. I teach them about money. I teach them about drugs and alcohol. However, in saying that, we then go on to play sport, because that is where their passion is. That is where they can relate to you. They look up to you, so they listen to what you say on everything else. I have had the experience of travelling throughout Western Australia. I have travelled from up the top at Kununurra to Esperance and most of the communities in between. I do have that hands on experience in heading out to very rural communities and using sport as the building block to teach other things and different life skills to these girls—I mainly work with girls—and boys as well. I think the lessons you learn in sport can easily be transferred into life, including education. That is the big focus of our foundation. We encourage education; we encourage people to stay in school.

Mr Bowd: First of all, I would like to pay my respects to the traditional owners of the land, past and present. As a young man 39 years ago, I did not have a very strong link to the land, but I have come to understand the importance of the need to recognise that 35,000 years ago young men like myself were born into this land and we have to pay our respects to it. I would like to pay those respects.

In the submission that VicSport have made we have looked at the 70 state sporting associations, many of whom are responsible for and have delivered Indigenous programs over time. In putting our submission together, we realised that there is not a lot of research that has been completed on the contribution of sport. There is some research that has been done on the benefits that sport can have on delinquency, but there really is a shortage of research on the benefits of sport.

A lot of good work is being completed by very successful programs, but that knowledge and understanding is not necessarily shared and understood amongst other sporting bodies. So sports that start to deliver programs basically start from scratch rather than taking on the advanced lessons that many good programs have put in place. Some work needs to happen to collate all of that shared knowledge and understanding so that all sport can benefit from knowing what it takes to successfully deliver programs into communities.

One of the key elements that we have found through looking at the successful delivery of programs rather than focusing too much on the barriers that exist for sport is the need to focus on the key enablers and facilitators of successful programs. If we can get that information out there and get that commonly understood among sports then hopefully more successful programs can be delivered.

I will touch on a couple of those elements, though not all of them. One is community engagement. Sports going in and not necessarily working on a 10-week program for two hours each week is a method for long-lasting, self-sustaining programs. There needs to be solid community engagement. There need to be, as much as mainstream sports, successful sports. I think we need to understand that there are many second- and third-tier sports which are less mainstream and which are also very popular in communities. I point to the example of the VicHealth funded Surfing Victoria program, a terrific program which has been delivered in coastal Victoria. So mainstream sport is important, but I think that a wide breadth of sport may also help to increase the appeal to young women and girls, which is what part of this inquiry is looking at.

I think the element of unstructured sport to structured sport needs to be understood. Programs need to start on an unstructured, recreational play basis, and, over time, as communities become more familiar with programs and more comfortable with the commitment they have made, the unstructured programs then move into a more structured programs. So there needs to be a transition from how programs start and develop and how they are finally delivered.

Community role models are very important. Sport has a role in going to communities and not just building the programs and moving on but also building community role models and people to deliver programs in the community. Those people then become champions of the program and also champions of the community more broadly. Sport has a role to play in building community role models, but sport also needs to be helped in itself to

be able to understand how it should work with communities. If sport is going to be a deliverer and a trainer and try to build long-lasting programs, it needs to be assisted in that regard as well.

The manner in which programs are being funded I do not think has traditionally worked with how successful programs are rolled out. Sporting programs are traditionally funded on a set time period—say, one year or two years—and at the end of that time we tend to count up the numbers and how many people participated, and that dictates whether the program is successful or not. But I think that history demonstrates that the really successful programs occur over a long period of time and that they do not necessarily fit into the standard funding models of 12 months, for example. So sports need to take a longer-term view—and funders also need to take a longer-term view—of how funds are committed to these programs.

Sport is very important to communities, but health and well-being in general is a component of sport. Sport is also important in terms of employment, strength of family, education and connection to culture, spirit and place. Sport has an important role in the entire mix. I think we might hear later of the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, which has had excellent programs delivered through their sporting club in terms of trying to link employment and the rest of it. So sport is important, but there are other determinants of physical health and well-being which sport can play a part in.

I thank you for the chance to be involved with this inquiry. It is much appreciated.

Ms Palmer: I am the CEO of Netball Australia, and I also would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay my respects to elders past and present. I thank the panel for the opportunity for Netball Australia to support our submission, which was prepared by my colleague Nadine Cohen.

We admire the achievements of the AFL and NRL and what they do in providing opportunities for Indigenous men and boys. They have wonderful role models at the top and incredible grassroots programs. We could just dream of having the same impact, and I think it is incredibly disappointing that there are so few female role models at the top and so few grassroots participation programs for Indigenous women and girls.

We know there are a range of federal and state government programs such as Closing the Gap that work to address Indigenous disadvantage, and groups such as the David Wirrpanda Foundation. I really enjoy the way you work with partners and certainly Netball Australia respects what you do incredibly. The Deadly Sista Girlz program has been one of our joys, I have to say.

Our key strategy, with so few resources, has been to establish a national Indigenous advisory group. What that brought to us was the intelligence, the information, so that we truly understood the role that we could play and what the issues were. They have collected information and gathered research—what little research there is—and evidence, and that guides our decision making on where we can direct our resources to have the most impact.

As you can probably sense, it has been an incredibly frustrating area for us. Some four years ago we prepared a submission. It was very innovative, based on programs that the AFL and the ANRL run, to provide a national program for Indigenous women and girls on the basis of participation in sport and all of the things that everyone has already said that bring in life skills but also leadership, mentoring and coaching.

We were not successful in securing funding for that program; in fact, we were ignored completely. Much to our joy, the federal government has acknowledged that we are capable of delivering this type of program and so are providing a significant amount of resources for us to run a program in the Pacific. So Netball Australia have turned our focus internationally, because we have a large role to play and—sadly—can help indigenous women in the Pacific islands much more than we can help our Indigenous women and girls in Australia. The program in Oceania is a really good example. For a relatively small investment we are building the capability and capacity of the administrators. It is not about us running the program; it is about us providing technical expertise ranging from governance through to programs and services. It means that the women in the Pacific islands now can take a leadership role and make decisions about their young women and girls and their participation, but it is also having some wonderful health outcomes and there is a safe place for them to go after school. We now enjoy great friendships with those communities.

We worked with the federal government and are now working with the international federation on a similar program in India. I personally had the opportunity to go into a program in the urban slums of Delhi. The disadvantage there is obviously very extreme, but the benefit of sport can be seen in how little girls, who are not even given the opportunity to go to school let alone play sport, are coming together and learning and becoming leaders. They select leaders out of that group annually who are then further developed. Just recently, one of those young girls graduated and has been employed by Standard Chartered Bank in India. So there are amazing outcomes from these sorts of programs. We have the evidence that, if you invest in programs for Indigenous women and girls, it does work.

We also work with the international community around UN Women. What they are just discovering is that development through sport does work. They do not understand sport and we do not really understand the international development community. But we are starting to speak the same language, because it is quite different, and that is bringing about some quite remarkable outcomes. We will start working in the five regions of the world soon. For me that is wonderful, but what it does is add to our frustration that we cannot find a way of doing similar work in Australia. I think that is incredibly disappointing.

We do have a big plan. We have a program sitting there waiting. As I said, we have worked where we can with wonderful organisations like David Wirrpanda. From our perspective I see this as something that really needs to be given a significant amount of thought. I understand your focus is AFL, but if you can ask one of your colleagues to look at the issues for women and girls as well that would be wonderful—and not just as an add-on but something that is a real focus.

It is probably something that VicHealth could also perhaps have a look at.

We do want to be part of the solution; we just need to find a way to be part of the solution. We can deliver on our vision, and I have quite a personal view about this. I see it really as a double-whammy for Indigenous women and girls, because as an all-female sport we suffer from all of things that women suffer from: a lack of respect, inequality, low levels of influence and economic power, and few women in decision making positions. So we suffer from that, and then the Indigenous women and girls have, on top of that, a lack of opportunity, racism and many other barriers to having an active and healthy lifestyle that every Australian should have an opportunity to participate in. Thank you.

Ms Warren: I too would like to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri of the Kulin nations, and the Bunurong just across the river. Those elders have certainly helped in the development of our programs. I would like to acknowledge all of the Aboriginal people in the room. I also need to acknowledge my Indigenous colleagues at the AFL who have been instrumental in leading all of our programs. I think our success is due to the strong Aboriginal leadership in our organisation. We have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander framework that is built on partnership with Aboriginal people and communities. We aim to engage community, to develop skills, to lead and coordinate, and to celebrate culture.

We are absolutely passionate about what sport can do in communities. I have just come from a week-long program in Perth with 50 young fellas from all around Australia. In that camp—or program, as I have been told to call because it is more than a camp—we talked to the young fellas about building their aspiration, making their world a bigger place and following their dreams and their goals. We incorporate culture and identity as a big part of that. The program involves the teaching of a war cry that has been developed from several communities and from young people who were involved in our Flying Boomerangs program. Fifteen-year-old boys were encouraged by our leadership coach, Mark Yettica-Paulson, to develop this war cry to perform at a champs in Oceania. That has then been taught to our Indigenous All Stars—all of our AFL players and all of the young people in our programs. The importance of reinforcing culture and identity in our programs cannot be underestimated. It is crucial to everything that we do, as is the fact that it is led by Aboriginal people.

Three years ago, when we developed our Indigenous framework, we also developed our employment strategy, and we have gone from less than 10 people employed in the industry to over 70. That has had a massive impact on participation. When we first measured our participation rate, it was just under four per cent; now, it is close to seven per cent because of the Aboriginal staff involved in delivering our programs at a grassroots level. We deliberately targeted that strategy at our state affiliates who are the ones who work in the development of the game and who are the ones who work with community. We want to continue to grow that. In Victoria we still have a gap; there are only five people involved in our TAC Cup program.

In terms of funding, I think one of the challenges is that we always tend to be able to find funding for remote communities, but there is just as much of a need in urban and regional communities. The stats in Victoria are worse than anywhere else in the country. Certainly one of our frustrations is that a number of our programs do not receive government support to roll them out in urban communities. There are 50,000 Aboriginal people in Western Sydney—more than in the Northern Territory. That is something that we have certainly tried to ensure—that we can invest in all communities—and part of our focus has been in New South Wales and Queensland because of the large Indigenous populations there.

In terms of mentoring, we have tried a number of ways of developing formal mentoring programs. They are very resource intensive, so our mentoring tends to be much more informal and focused on role modelling. Again, I acknowledge the work of SportsReady, because their mentoring program has been fantastic. They have had 1,000 trainees go through, which is probably one of the most successful Indigenous traineeship programs in the country. I am not aware of any program that has been more successful than that. As part of our programs, we

absolutely encourage the young people to stay in school. If you are not attending school then you do not get to participate. We just do not have the resources for a formal system to monitor that, but it certainly is a key pillar of our program and it is done informally, so it is done by people who are working in the community knowing the young people they are working with and reporting that back to us.

We also are looking at an ARC grant to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs in terms of community capacity building. We have evaluated our programs in remote communities in partnership with government. A major study was done in Wadeye, a major study was done of our club partnership program and we have also reviewed our Footy Means Business program. All of that evaluation has been provided to the committee. We did receive some negative media attention as part of that, but, as far as we are concerned, we are very supportive of monitoring and evaluation because that makes our programs better.

In this last week these young fellas went out and were role models to a program in south-east Perth to encourage young people on a Friday night to not be on the streets. Our local game development staff have been running that program for the past month. There were over 200 kids; goodness knows what else they would have been doing if they were not playing footy. We only want those types of programs to grow.

Mr Kipman: I want to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and paying my respects to elders past and present. Also, thanks to the committee for having Cricket Australia here today. As Professor Dodson touched on, there is a deep Indigenous heritage to cricket. Unfortunately, for whatever reason, since the 1920s, when Eddie Gilbert bowled Bradman and was evidently the fastest bowler Bradman ever faced, we have not capitalised on that passion of the Indigenous Australians. Indigenous cricket crosses multiple departments at Cricket Australia. It sits within game development, it sits within government and community relations and it also relates to the high-performance area and out into the state and territory associations, which are the owners of Cricket Australia. What each of these departments contributes is governed by the National Indigenous Cricket Advisory Committee. It is important that we take direction from the co-chairs, John Bannon and Aaron Briscoe, and the Indigenous representatives from each state and territory.

Our role is to create a spectrum from grassroots to the elite which is complete, has continuity and is accessible at all points. We have a national reach of 880,000 participants, which shows that it is a perfect vehicle—we can reach anywhere in Australia with cricket and there is no reason we should not be doing so. We also understand that our Indigenous programs are not just about sporting excellence or sporting participation; they have a civic nature. They come with social responsibilities and social benefits. As Ms Warren just mentioned, it is about talking about culture as well. Recently, we took a group of development players to India. A lot of it was about participation and developing those cricketers, but it was also about developing them as people, getting them to understand their culture and giving them the power within India to execute clinics and act as role models in those communities. Having seen 16- and 17-year-olds who have never before left the country come back from India—I went with them as a 30-year-old who has left the country many times—I was overwhelmed by what I saw in India. The experience for these guys was immense.

We also work closely with the government across departments. We have been involved in the Learn, Earn, Legend! program, particularly around the Imparja Cup, and No School No Play, which has been touched on already, where sport is used as a vehicle to encourage kids to stay in school.

We send a couple of players to India each year on scholarships as well, which is supported by the Australian government through AusAID. Not only is that furthering them as cricketers but it is also exposing them to experiences which they would otherwise not have.

The Imparja Cup, which I already just touched on, which is our marquee event as part of our Indigenous program, has had up to over 500 participants now in its 20-year history. It spans that spectrum that I spoke about earlier, of participation at the community level up to the elite level, which is state and territory participation. An example of how that has become a vehicle beyond just cricket is that there is a team that is released from prison each year to participate, and that shows that it goes beyond simply who is going to win the state and territory league—it is about the community involvement as well. Three state and territory women's teams are now involved, and we are looking at getting that up to eight, so that it matches the men's competition. Overall it has about 15 per cent participation of females in our competition.

Enshrined in our organisational strategy is the need to engage all Australians and make cricket accessible to all Australians. From that we have spawned a diversity strategy which will specifically address the needs of Indigenous communities. What we need to do, as an organisation, is to make sure that we meet these needs. We see cricket as a perfect tool to do this. Although we do not have the representation that the AFL and NRL have, it is our passion to make sure we engage these communities. Thank you.

Mr McGregor: I would also like to begin by acknowledging the Wurundjeri people, the traditional owners of the land that we are meeting on today, and pay my respects to the elders, both past and present, and any other elders that are in the room with us today. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I would like to address the second terms of reference for this group, which is predominantly around how NGOs can use sport as a platform to improve outcomes for Indigenous members of the community, with a particular emphasis on remote communities.

Ten years or so ago, we were approached by the Victorian government and asked to do some research into the link between sport and alcohol in Victoria, which we did. Unsurprisingly, there was a very strong link that was established. Out of that grew the Good Sports program, which is now delivered to over 5,300 clubs around the country, impacting about 1½ million members of the Australian population. Good Sports is a graduated program which works with club committees over a three- to five-year period, working to enact culture change within sporting clubs. What we have learned over 10 years—and we have thoroughly evaluated the program and have a strong evidence base behind it—is that over a three- to five-year period the Good Sports program helps sporting clubs to reduce short-term and long-term risky drinking, reducing drink-driving and antisocial behaviours. It does that by making clubs more family friendly, which helps to increase the supporter base and also the number of teams that clubs have, which increases revenue and sponsorships for clubs. Ten years down the track the program has been thoroughly evaluated. We have had ARC grants. There is a randomised controlled trial that will be delivered in December as well as a cost-benefit analysis from KPMG, and a meta-analysis of all the program evaluations to date.

In our work in the Northern Territory, we quickly became aware that the traditional Good Sports model was not going to be appropriate. It was not going to fit because there is a lack of formalised club structures. The structure of community sport, as we have discussed, is very informal in those communities, and those communities are dealing with much broader issues. We are now completing a pilot with two communities: Santa Teresa and Papunya, just outside of Alice Springs. We are working closely with the elders and land councils and have been developing an adaptation of what Good Sports would look like in those remote communities.

The two communities that we are working with want very different things from Good Sports. The Santa Teresa community wants members of the communities to be able to get into Alice Springs and back in one piece, without incident. The members of the Papunya community do not really want the members of the community to be visiting Alice Springs, so that there are not any problems.

They are all wanting the same thing from the Good Sports program: they want the community to be safe and healthy. Liz Archer and Robin Gray Gardner are two consultants working with those who are well known in those communities to develop an adaptation of what Good Sports will look like. It is a community development model on a whole-of-community level rather than an individual sporting club level, which is the traditional Good Sports model.

These communities have clearly articulated to us that they need a framework to help enact this social change. Community sport is a key platform for enacting social change, which we have discussed. We would say it is a key opportunity to improve preventive health outcomes for members of remote communities. We would like to thank you for your time to allow us to present. We will have our model for the Good Sports program in Indigenous and remote communities by December. We wanted to make you aware that this work is going on. We will keep you up-to-date on where we are up to with that program adaptation.

CHAIR: Thank you, Jon, you have no idea how many recommendations the group here has given us already this morning. Thank you very much for your frankness, honesty and criticism that has been levelled as well as the suggestions. We are now open to free discussion. I want to raise a couple of things. The Australian Rugby league gave evidence yesterday about reconciliation action plans, RAPs, and an advisory council. Australian Rugby Union also gave us evidence that they were going towards and developing a RAP. I am interested in hearing from sporting bodies but also from people like Bill and Mick on the importance of those sorts of institutions.

Ms Warren: The AFL does not have a RAP as it stands at the moment. That was because when they were originally introduced, Jason Mifsud, who is our national community engagement manager, was very strong on the fact that Aboriginal wards do not have a RAP so for the AFL, given our programs are being led by Aboriginal people, that was not our immediate priority. Also, given the work that it takes to prepare a RAP, we instead produced our own Indigenous framework, which was our version of a RAP. RAPs make organisations accountable for delivering on their agreed actions. As the AFL is constantly in the media spotlight, we are accountable always. We used a lot of the principles of the RAPs in our Indigenous framework but did something slightly different.

CHAIR: Nadine, you said that in your submission, didn't you?

Ms Cohen: A key priority for us would be for our community engagement manager to develop a national reconciliation action plan for us. She just started a number of months ago. Julia Symons is going around to all our member organisations to understand the participation programs we have to create fair, safe and inclusive sporting environments for all. One of the issues we first had when we looked at the reconciliation action plan was it was all good and well to say we would develop a plan but really to implement and evaluate it we needed a foundation, we needed a background, we needed cultural brokers, we needed cultural mentors and we needed to understand the area. We thought we could develop a plan for the sake of developing a plan but we did not want to develop it to sit on a shelf—to be perfectly honest with you. As Kate alluded to before, it is an area we really want to work in but we also have to understand the capacity and capability that we have as national sporting organisations. Our state and territory organisations have our clubs, which our delivery agents, and the volunteers on the ground. We need to get our strategic positioning right and provide tools to the community to understand and deliver sport in a non-Anglo-Saxon manner. It is a long way of saying that we are going to develop one but we need to understand what we want to achieve first and how we are going to achieve it.

CHAIR: Sebastian cricket is going down this road as well.

Mr Kipman: Yes it is. As I mentioned also the construction of a diversity strategy. We are not quite as advanced as the AFL but enshrined in that strategy will be the tenants of this sort of thing and a specific Indigenous strategy.

Ms Warren: The Richmond football club was the second AFL football club to produce an RAP. We are in our second year of that RAP, and have just gone through the review and development of that. Across the industry, we have also been approached by a couple of other football clubs on how we have evolved in doing that piece of work. There is absolute goodwill by a number of football clubs to look at, firstly, how we can put the Aboriginal context as the priority and work collaboratively, rather than the historic culture of clubland, which is about competition; secondly, that we actually look at structures that are relevant for the communities that those football clubs are working with; and, thirdly and more broadly, what has been learned by the likes of Richmond and Essendon in particular as two AFL clubs that have pioneered the public decision to launch an RAP. In saying that, the commitment to ensure that what it looks like on the ground is about evolution, and it involves a range of cultural awareness that comes through influencing change within a mainstream organisation, like any other organisation. We are looking at how we can collaborate across those football clubs to ensure that some of what was learnt from the RAP and the implementation of it is done with integrity, and in a way that this sustainable.

CHAIR: Mick, you and Bill are also working with cricket in relation to this, are you not? Can you talk about that?

Mr Fogarty: On the reconciliation stuff, I will probably defer to Mick as the next co-chair of Reconciliation Australia.

CHAIR: Sebastian raised before the great history of cricket in Australia. The first Indigenous tour in England—

Mr Kipman: 1868.

CHAIR: Yes. Mick, you raised before how cricket in the 1920s and 1930s was the sport of choice for Indigenous men in particular, and then it fell away, certainly compared to the AFL and rugby league.

Mr Dodson: Before I address the question, when you look at the history of cricket—and I have not looked at it in great detail but we hope to do that if we get the ARC grant—in the 1930s there was a huge female participation in cricket in Sydney.

Dr STONE: Was it?

Ms Palmer: Sorry to interrupt. The first tour actually included a female team. I know the daughter of one of the women that attended, and we have part of her kit. It is a wonderful story.

CHAIR: You should get this story out, Kate, it is a great story.

Mr Dodson: The first team to ever represent Australia was a team of Aboriginal cricketers. Interestingly, Tom Wills was involved in that; he was also instrumental in developing the Australian football game.

Talking about RAPs, as Bill pointed out I was the co-chair of Reconciliation Australia around the time that the idea of RAPs were developed. I am not sure who thought of the idea. It involves a number of commitments. I was responsible for putting in place a new reconciliation action plan, and we took three years to develop that. It came into force in January last year and runs to 2016, and it sets targets. I spoke to every dean and director at the ANU because they are the people who control the budgets in their areas. The process meant that we had to change the way people think when delivering post secondary school education and research opportunities.

In terms of funding that, I told every dean and director—and I want people here to listen to this—that there is no big government truck with a load of money that is going to dump this on your doorstep so that you can implement your grant. You actually have to change the way you do business, including the way you spend your money.

Do not think that the government is going to come along and help you do this. You have to want to do this. It has to become part of the way that you do business. It is going to be, 'This is the way we do things around here. We actually spend some of our budget on encouraging participation of Aboriginal people. We spend some of our budget in raising awareness and educating people about Aboriginal history and Aborigines' place in society. We spend money on paying people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to be lecturers, professors and researchers; to be undergraduates, postgraduates and general staff workers. We actually spend our money on that; we are not waiting for the government to come.'

So there has to be a rethink of the way in which you structure your budgets around this, because if you wait for the government to come along with that truckload of money it ain't going to happen. I am not intending to sound as if I am letting government off the hook; the government has a role to play, and a financial role to play. But we should not have this thinking that because it is blackfella stuff then, 'Oh, that's the government's business. It's not Cricket Australia or the AFL's business, or Netball Australia's; we want the government to pay for it all. We are happy to do these programs but we want somebody else to pay for them'. I do not think that you are going to be successful if that is solely your attitude.

Dr STONE: I could not agree with you more, and I was a bit sad when I was here for Netball Australia saying, 'We didn't get the AusAID grant for domestic Indigenous programs so we just had to do it in the Pacific.' I am just wondering: yesterday in Sydney we took a lot of evidence about the corporate sponsorship, particularly of rugby union and rugby league—I do not understand those footies, but anyway—

CHAIR: I do.

Dr STONE: You are a Queenslander, for heaven's sake! They had people like Qantas, Telstra, Harvey Norman and—was it?—KFC; all of these sponsors for their particular work that they do, not just in Indigenous sport development but in other areas as well.

If you go to a local little country footy team at the moment, basically the main sponsorship is a local pub. They do not tend to have any local, state or federal government funding; they depend on local sponsorship. To what extent do we have a problem with Indigenous sport involvement and engagement because it is harder to get local sponsorship to help buy the footy gear and keep the grounds in play and so on? I guess that what I am trying to get into is that with the participation—and I love the suggestion of 'participation' and not just always being on the recipient end—does it all boil down to money at the end of the day? You can have this fabulous lot of kids wanting to play cricket out at the back of Areyonga or at Goornong but they are on a household income of \$15,000 and they cannot afford pads, white skirts or shoes or whatever. I guess is what I am asking is how can we get local sponsorship of Indigenous engagement with sporting teams? Or the local Indigenous dart team, for heaven's sake—let's get beyond footy and cricket and netball.

CHAIR: I want to hear from Fred and then I want to hear from Ross, as from Rugby union grassroots—

Ms Palmer: Could I just clarify that, because I think you probably missed a point? We actually run a significant number of Indigenous programs nationally, and invest in this area.

Dr STONE: It was an issue of concern—

Ms Palmer: No, no—

Dr STONE: That you just had to pack up and go to the—

Ms Palmer: No, the issue for us was the focus of pathway. The reality is that it is very difficult for grassroots; they are under resourced. But when you are comparing a \$400 million-turnover to a \$10 million-turnover the impact we can have is much less. But in everything we do we have cultural training in our local associations. I am sorry if I gave you the wrong impression there, but to really do something that actually changes the world—and I think that is what we want to do—we do not have the resources to do that. That is just the reality.

And this is certainly not a grab for money, Michael. It is actually saying that we are happy with what we are doing now, but we would love to do much more.

Dr STONE: Is the problem you mentioned with women being less marketable for sponsorship?

Ms Palmer: No, women are just not given the same resources. You have a cricket, an NRL and an AFL which, combined, probably have I do not know how many million in resources to be able to do that. And that is great, because they are so successful and it is not a—

CHAIR: They spend about \$8 million, Kate, every year—

Ms Palmer: I am not having a go at them. My sister has worked at Rumbalara with the ASHE program, and she has seen generational change. It is amazing what can happen if you put the resources in the right spot. I am not saying that the government is going to solve this problem and should give us a bucketload of money. We can continue doing what we are now, and we love what we do and it is very effective. But if you really want to change the world for Indigenous women and girls in sport, there needs to be more action. Maybe you can help us—if there were more information and research, that would help us. I am sorry that I gave you the wrong impression. It is certainly much easier working internationally, I have to say.

CHAIR: I am interested in hearing from Alf and Ross their experience at the grassroots levels, particularly with the Fitzroy Stars and you have the rugby union at the grassroots level.

Dr STONE: And there is local sponsorship. When I go to the matches at Rumba footy ground in Shepparton, there is not much corporate signage around the ground, is there Alf?

Dr Bamblett: No.

Dr STONE: But if you go to Deakin Reserve, it is wall to wall. How do we make it marketable, commercially a good idea, to get stuck into Indigenous sport sponsorship as much as non-Indigenous sport.

Dr Bamblett: We have the Sir Douglas Nicholls Oval in Watt Street, Thornbury. There is a new surface there; a new ground. A part of that is the fence around the place for the advertising that is needed. That is the game that we have to play. I would be very pleased if we did not need to sell alcohol, but there is an alcohol culture that is linked to all sports and particularly football. If you do not get into that, then you miss out. There is the idea that you have to doorknock. I travelled for some months with a boxing troupe, and you would beat the drum and do the sideshow

Dr STONE: Jimmy Sharman?

Dr Bamblett: Something like that—it was not him. It is the same principle—you have to beat the drum to get people to come to see the sideshow. It is not a sideshow; it is a main event that is actually happening within the sporting arena right across the nation, yet there is this uniqueness that people will say is there with Aboriginal participation in sport. In terms of the way that we are going with the things that we do, it really is about being seen. Obviously everybody wants to be premiers, everybody wants to be the best they can. I have five sisters older than me and I learned very early in the piece my place in life. So in terms of women's participation and women's drive, in sport that is so important. That is why I emphasise the need to make sure that we are a community club, trying to tick the boxes as we go through. It is about being able to function—if you are going to have to start the season owing, you have to take time to build. If you stop selling grog, clubs will say 'We made \$10,000 at our bar today.' So, it is beat the drum, cap in hand, can you come and sponsor us and help out. We do that and we get support from people. We do not get as much as we would like, but we do get support from the various agencies.

There is the need for us to have a look at a number of things, and I did want to raise before I leave that in your report you need to address the issue of the GST carve-up. In Victoria, with its population base and the money that is raised through taxes out of Victoria, we do not get the return and hence we do not get the distribution from the state to do the things that need to be addressed in Aboriginal affairs. There is more of that in the submission we are putting forward. It really is about the sideshow. We are talking with the clubs, we are talking with the leagues, about the RAP programs. They have linked them to Close the Gap and I do hope they are not thinking money, money, money, because it is not that—we have not got it, and it is not there. It is important that we are able to project an image that we are doing things more not as a sideshow event but as a main event within the sporting arena and are actually becoming a community force and a community focus.

We will get people. Maybe we will need to change our name. We are not all Aboriginal. We have different nationalities that play with us. We have people from the north part of the country that play with us. We see ourselves in this state, now, very much as multinational. And if we had money we could probably truly say that. It is about all of the nations that have come from this place, whether it is to escape issues like the intervention or to escape whatever is happening in other communities. People move here so we have the ability, I guess, to attract people from across the nation.

It is really about the lifeblood in terms of players, resources and the volunteers that need to come. It is a pity for us—I say this unashamedly—that people within the state who are in the agencies that are represented here, do not get to have a look at what we do locally. At the end of the day if we do not produce the people to make the thing happen then you are going to have less and less participation.

We can turn to other things. We can turn to other sports. But we do not want to turn to grog and we do not want to turn to drugs. We have a nice epidemic happening in the state right now. What do we do about that? What do we provide for our young people?

If there is going to be a constitutional change to look at the role of local government then put onto local government the responsibility to make sure that something is happening in each of their bailiwicks in each of their areas. If they want national acceptance they should make sure they are doing something for the people locally.

CHAIR: With regard to women's Rugby Union at a grassroots level, how do you get corporate and community sponsorship behind you?

Mr Tanimu: There are two poles here. As you can imagine, working with the community as a case manager in an NGO in my working time and at the community level, behind the scenes it is as if I am married. So it is basically a 24-hour job. People do not realise that. Working in the community you are married, because the connection you make on the weekend carries through with the young fellas on the week days. As part of that role and responsibility as a coach you are an advocate, a brother, a mother and a mentor. You are all those things. What you have to do is to become a role model and you lead by example. And in doing so you encourage, behind the scenes, some of those people to take an active role as leaders within groups.

I turn now to the Nunga Touch Carnival. I am not sure whether everyone is aware of the media that surrounded the Gang of 49 in South Australia. Monsignor David Cappo was part of the Social Inclusion Board, putting forward a judicial approach to addressing some of the issues with youth. The line of thinking that we approached was that issues pertaining to Aboriginal youth do not have to be resolved in a purely Indigenous area or by government. It is about community. Who in the community can share the vision that we are putting forward and who can support the carnival that helps at the end of the year? So part of that process for me is to go out and advocate that with presentations and so forth. I just say to people, 'This is the sort of money we are looking at for a goodwill, wellbeing sporting carnival day at the end the year.' We are fortunate this year that we broke even because of the amount of support we got, and we actually got the state government aboard—Mr Caica, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation and three other government departments. That was wonderful.

That sort of philosophy leads me to believe that when you go out to present something like this, especially when it has got to do with sport, you need to show all the benefits that are associated with it for the community at large. When you talk about judicial disparity and exclusion or exclusion from the majority of the Indigenous communities, if we come together as a community we can break through a lot of those things by using something that I believe they are naturally gifted with—that ability to work as a team or as individuals or working in the community.

In saying that, we have had success in both roles, especially for the women. That is a new area for me. I have predominantly coached youth and men in Rugby but this is a challenge that has a lot of rewards because once you include the women you bring the rest of the family. One of the biggest things that I like to share is that as a coach in the Rugby code I have had two girls represent Australia in the Rugby Sevens. One girl was a Maori girl and the other is a young Aboriginal girl who has only played Rugby this year. She got picked up in the twelve-person Rugby squad for the youth Olympics next year in Australia.

Part of the process of getting them there is that we need to get the community involved, because once you get them involved and you support them you will get 130 per cent on the field.

Mr McGregor: I do not have research around Indigenous clubs specifically, but we have done some research about income and sponsorship across all of our 5,200 clubs. What it showed us was that the average sponsorship of clubs was around \$5,000 at the grassroots level. But after being involved in Good Sports for a three- to five-year period that trebled as the club culture changed a little and new sponsors were attracted to the family friendly environment. So that is one point.

We also talked about money coming from alcohol over the bar. What we discovered is that the amount coming over the bar as the culture within clubs is cleaned up actually increases, because less alcohol is being served to a larger number of people. So in fact income to clubs increases.

Ms Warren: I think there are two issues here. One is for Indigenous clubs and access to sponsorship et cetera, which Alf has addressed. It is a broader issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to corporate sponsorship. But in terms of integrating Aboriginal people into mainstream clubs, one of the things that we are looking at doing is making sure that we work with grassroots clubs to start getting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people onto club boards as coaches so that they are in influential positions at the local club level to ensure that we have that access. To do that, we need to have our staff on the ground. We have 400 regional development offices around the country, but we need additional support for those staff so that they can run

cultural awareness or cultural development programs in our clubs and provide their community engagement work with our clubs at a grassroots level.

Dr STONE: If I can follow on from that, Glenn James is a Yorta Yorta bloke, isn't he, Alf?

Dr Bamblett: That is right.

Dr STONE: He is the only Indigenous AFL grand finals umpire. I think what you are saying is absolutely right. Until we have as many Indigenous umpires, goal umpires, runners, coaches and physios as star players in the footy matches—or the cricket, rugby or whatever—then we are still not getting the right message out there. Kate, aren't you doing some of this work training Indigenous girls as umpires? Is that right?

Ms Warren: Worawa Aboriginal College is one of ours. I did not talk about our female programs either. Worawa Aboriginal College is an AFL academy. So we provide support to them through AFL Victoria and they have been running an umpiring program for the last two or three years, which has been fantastic.

Dr STONE: Yes. I think we need to put that very much on the record too. As you are saying, it is part of being involved in the whole vertically integrated system of sports administration, as well as having elite players pop up from time to time.

Ms Duarte: Given that we are talking about governance roles, capacity and getting Indigenous people into decision-making roles, part of the model that the KGI have implemented—and a couple of people made reference to it—is an Indigenous advisory group or an Indigenous advisory council. I am interested in how we get more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across decision-making roles but particularly how those advisory groups influence governance and the implementation of programs on the ground. Some people are doing great jobs; other people need some work.

The other thing I want to say is that the Korin Gamadji Institute will have a unique partnership with the Koori youth council, which was formerly the Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council. I think it is really critical that we consider the voice of young people in the evolution of this, given we want our communities from early childhood through to a youth perspective to be engaged and participating actively across a range of different sports. They are housed in the institute and are engaged with a range of different partners. When I say partners, on-site footy brings a really unique mix of people.

For them to be able to engage face-to-face with a range of corporates, philanthropists, federal government on-site and in environment that opens doors and bridges access for them to have visibility and voice in a range of different areas has been an opportunity for them. More importantly, for us they are a voice of direction on the work that we do in building our leadership programs through our REAL camps which are delivered to young people from across the state of Victoria, around 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and around 40 young people through our partnership programs with Alice Springs. We continue to build the capacity of mainstream structure so that there is a voice from a decision-making perspective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CHAIR: We might take a break in a minute. I want to hear from Kate and Netball Australia about female participation and barriers and obstacles. After that I would like us to hear about community, something that Anthony mentioned and Bruce as well, involving the whole community, things like linesmen, coaches, cutting up oranges, physiotherapists, all kinds of stuff getting whole community. It is not just about playing AFL and NRL, it is also things that Bill mentioned before. I think he used the word cherry-picking the elite athletes. Let us talk about how we can get at the grassroots level.

Dr STONE: We have got to remember that one of the biggest participating groups of individuals in Australia are the over-60s. A lot of Indigenous people do not go to over 60. However, there are many urban Indigenous communities who do, and why aren't we seeing Indigenous participants in the Shepparton lawn bowling clubs, the Bendigo clubs? Why aren't people playing bocce perhaps in Uluru, where there is plenty of sand to throw balls around, and all that sort of thing. Why are we fixated on just a few sports? There are darts, swimming and more athletics. Why are we so narrow?

CHAIR: So we will hear from Kate from Netball Australia and then community from Bruce and Anthony. I think we heard from Bill and Mick in relation to that grassroots participation stuff. So a quick cuppa and then we will come back.

Proceedings suspended from 10:47 to 10:55

CHAIR: We are talking about the barriers and obstacles to young women's participation in sport and how we can increase women's participation in sport. Kate is playing at the elite level of basketball. What is your

experience of working with young women, particularly? What can we do? What are the challenges and what are the obstacles? What is the solution?

Miss Malpass: I was having a chat about it just before. I work at Worawa, which is an Aboriginal boarding school based here in Victoria. Girls come from the communities to this school. You pick up a basketball or a netball, and the girls do not have an issue with participating. If you put them together with the same values and the same drive, they do not have a problem with participating. But if you take them out of their comfort zone—their community, their family and their friends—that is where bridging the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people comes in.

When I was growing up, I went down to my state tryouts. I wanted to play state basketball. I grew up in Kalgoorlie, where basketball was the sport to play. In the remote communities, the infrastructure for housing is different in all of them, but one thing that all the communities have is a school. At the school there is an AFL oval and a basketball court, and that is where a lot of the participation happens. But if you take a girl with all the potential in the world out of that and put her into a state tryouts where she is not wearing the best shoes and is not sure about anything, and there is so much shame involved in giving it 100 per cent. That is when I am trying to teach my Worawa girls—there is no shame in trying your absolute hardest when it comes to sport. They will often say, 'I can't do a jump shot,' and I say, 'You can; if you just try, you can do it.' But they are too embarrassed to even try.

The beauty of Worawa is that you have all the girls together. A lot of them are family and they speak their own language, and it breaks down the barrier of the shame that is involved with women and giving it 100 per cent. I find that that has been a massive thing. You can sit there and say that having role models and elite athletes as mentors is not the way, but the fact of the matter is that we have so many girls mentoring in our program, which the likes of Clontarf have not, and we have broken down all those barriers and forged our own pathway. The parents of the girls I play basketball with have played for Australia, and their older brothers and sisters have done things like that. I have never had anything like that in my family; I have had to forge my own pathway through it all. I played state for WA for six years growing up, and I was captain of three of those teams.

But I had to pay for my own trips away. If I had to ask my mum to do that, as a single parent, she couldn't. That is where it becomes difficult: what is the easy pathway? I think it is important to have role models in that position to go out there and show these girls that there are barriers—but none of the mentors in our program have ever sat around feeling sorry for themselves. We have got out there, we have made our own pathways and we talk. I do not just talk about my life experience; I talk about a lot of the other girls' life experiences as well, and that is where you relate to the girls. I think it is about showing them that there is that adversity but you can overcome it. I think that the women are in less of a position to do that—to have the self-belief.

CHAIR: You said 'pathways'. In fact, I wrote 'pathways' beside Belinda's name. She said that before. You are an elite athlete, Belinda, so can you talk about your experience, the opportunities, the accessibility and, indeed, the sexism or racism that Indigenous women face in terms of participation in sport?

Ms Duarte: I think it is important to say that I started Little Athletics when I was seven. So I was not always an elite athlete. Maybe in my head at that point I was. I was very blessed. I had a family that valued sport and there was a sport culture in my family. My mother played softball; I played softball and netball and I was doing athletics. I decided to take the pathway of track and field. I did want to highlight that it was normalised behaviour to be physically active—for all of us children within my family unit. From a female's perspective, to witness my mother being very physically active was critical and it was learnt behaviour that was carried on by the women in my family.

In transitioning into pathways, I need to acknowledge the support of other structures that helped me to do that. Initially, it was Mum and Dad driving me to training or to comps around regional Victoria, or down to Melbourne, or it was other people saying, 'Catch a lift with me to Melbourne to do state league' on a Thursday night. That provided me with the opportunity to grow as an athlete. During the time ATSI was around, Victorian Aboriginal Youth, Sport and Recreation, VAYSAR, funded sports development grants. Without their support, I would not have been able to go on to experience national titles on a number of occasions, both in track and field and later in Taekwondo. They provided me with equipment and travel fees to assist me to continue to grow as an elite athlete.

The other thing that I think is really critical and powerful is the transferable skills—I think you were talking about that earlier—and how we ensure that we are joining the dots and connecting them behaviourally around aspirations for young people. If you were to take away a family unit that did not value sport or active participation, access to seeing women doing sport regularly, driving to and from competitions and the funding to the next pathway to be able to go and travel, I would not be where I am today.

CHAIR: There is probably no greater female participation sport than netball. What is the response from Netball Australia in terms of barriers and obstacles?

Ms Palmer: I would probably refer you to the Senate inquiry into female participation in sport, because I think some of those barriers are the same. Perhaps I will let Nadine explain what our research in this area showed once our Indigenous advisory group was together. Just to tell you a story: I was closely involved in the early days—not now—with the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club. It was a really interesting time when they were established, because they did establish themselves quite separately. They were not integrated into the local netball community. In fact, they established a club beside the netball courts. At the time, the community in Shepparton was very upset about this, but it was a good decision ultimately, because it allowed the community to establish itself. It is very inclusive; they welcome anyone to play for their netball teams. It has been a wonderful program, and the ASHE program that supports it. It has still been very difficult because of the nature of our sport—we are very Anglo-Saxon. We have rules and we follow the rules.

Instead of being welcoming and accepting that the Rumbalara netball teams might operate slightly differently and were still learning, they found it very difficult and were quite discriminatory in the early days. That has changed now. I have been there at finals watching them play with crowds surrounding the netball court and I have seen the pride that that club has in its netball teams. Those teams have been very successful, too, and produce some wonderful netballers. I think it is a really difficult thing to break down, even in a community like Shepparton, where they have a large Indigenous community.

Those barriers are the same for women but what overlaid that was the initial lack of acceptance by the netball community in the Goulburn Valley region for this team. I am talking about a period of time and the transition has been over a long time. They are now very well accepted and celebrated, which is good, but I am sure there are still issues. I am sure they will tell you about those when you speak to them.

Ms Cohen: A number of barriers were identified in the research that was done in 2005—I will not focus, as Kate said, on the barriers that the Senate inquiry into women's participation, and others, have looked at, I will just mention the Indigenous research. One barrier was poor and non-existent communication and how communication was provided, both the language and the means and mechanism of the communication. There were early strategic partnerships that were not really developed in the communities themselves in the sense that there was a barrier between the Indigenous girls playing and the non-Indigenous girls playing. Another barrier was the male domination of sports in the areas and the expectation that females were there really to assist the male sports, not necessarily to participate. A lot of that was due to cultural attitudes. Belinda and Kate have both spoken of that visibility in community that women play sport, not necessarily just work in the canteen. I know that is a stereotype.

As expected in all sports, there was a barrier with finance, infrastructure and services, but particularly in remote areas. There was a lack of capital and life-cycle funding for facilities, so that facilities were built but there were no long-term plans around maintaining and enhancing those facilities. The view that whilst transport and logistics, particularly in remote communities, were issues—as some have alluded to before—those are issues also in urban communities, and that was not really well understood.

A further barrier was in the workforce, in terms of volunteers and the lack of appropriately trained people—which you alluded to before about physios, doctors and coaches—but also the managers, administrators and the volunteers who run the clubs, and knowledge of the government structures and understanding what it takes to actually put a team on the court. Then there was programming awareness—a little bit of this one-size-fits-all approach and not understanding that there were cultural impediments, particularly around coming-of-age and the cultural activities that take precedence over netball. As Kate said, particularly in some sports like netball, which is a traditional sport that has been around for a long time, there was a lack of understanding as to why a cultural activity or a funeral or a coming-of-age would take precedence over netball. Why could somebody not get to training on a Tuesday night? Well, there is no car, no transport, there is a strike. A lot of that was just around the climate of the club environment, in particular.

Dr STONE: We are sitting here in the Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Centre. Can someone tell us about this centre, perhaps not specifically sitting on the panel but perhaps in the audience? As I was coming up the lift, the chap who ran the gym—sorry, I can't do it? I think it is a bit ironic that we are sitting here and have not had any commentary on this.

CHAIR: Jason. He is not here at the moment. We will get him later.

Dr STONE: We will look forward to that happening. We have been touching on it; we have Rumbalara Indigenous specific sporting complex—football and netball is played there and it has had all sorts of spinoffs into

other educational training activities. Can someone comment on how important you think it is to have both Indigenous-specific teams or competitions or spring carnivals or whatever versus the integrated business. I think you were hinting at that in the early days of the separate teams in the Goulburn Valley. Why would they want to play separately? We have played together since 1902? Can someone comment on that? If you are in the mode 'Australia' there is not much alternative but if you are in Bairnsdale? Alf, tell us about it?

Dr Bamblett: The experience at Rumbalara is because you were not welcome there, so you go there and do your own thing, basically. It is a basic fact. It is the same sort of thing. We were in the comp and premierships—we did all of those sorts of things. The league disbanded and we were out for 13 years, then back in again and making some noise, obviously. As I said earlier, we include non-Aboriginal players and people in both netball and football and in the sorts of things we are going to develop for our young people. It is about community. We are very clear that we live, mix with and are involved with the non-Aboriginal community. Our kids are. There needs to be the development that answers that approach.

In the first instance, it is about being able to say clearly, 'This is out.' They are participants, not recipients. If we want to be told what we can do and how we can do it all the time, then fine—we do not need to do things ourselves. We have lots of people who will come and save us. We have lots of people who will do things for us. It is not as good an approach as with people who will do things with us. I guess that is the distinction. The major codes and the major bodies—fine, they are needed and they do things; there is Aboriginal participation. They are going to have to learn how to do it better without government money, so I am told. Nonetheless it is the sort of thing about Aboriginal voice, Aboriginal participation, Aboriginal people showing in fact they can do things. It is not any different to the same principle that has run for hundreds of years now. It is not any different to the sorts of things we talk about—community control and so on.

We play against non-Aboriginal sides. So not only do you have to be as good as, you have to be better than. That is the way that we view it and that is what we pursue. We have young people that we deal with. We have carnivals that we deal with. There is an academy of excellence in education that we deal with. Football and netball clubs are going to be a part of that. It is about creating opportunities.

In workshops with our young people, we found that they want to be the best at what they participate in. But if they have to rely on their parents' income to get them to and from places—to do training, to go to games, to travel, to make the national sides; all of those sorts of things—the families have not got the wherewithal to do that. There are all those underlying issues that we have to address to make sure the opportunities are provided in the way they should be.

CHAIR: Thanks, Alf. Before we have Anthony and Bruce talk about community and participation, I am going to put a quote to you, then I want to hear from Bill and Mick not just about cherrypicking the elite but about the grassroots participation. Jason, thank you for opening your centre for us. Perhaps you would like to identify who you are, for the sake of the record, and then talk about the centre here.

Mr Tamiru: Thanks for having me. Ministers, delegates and guests here at MAYSAR, welcome to all of you. I am a proud Aboriginal man. I was born in Melbourne. My traditional country is the Yorta Yorta people, along the Murray River. I am a Melburnian Aboriginal fella. I love this place and it is good to be here with all of you. Like we always do as part of protocol, we acknowledge the traditional owners. We do this everywhere we go because that is our law, that is our business and it is important that we follow these things. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, they being the Wiradjuri. The Wiradjuri are part of the Kula nation. I acknowledge the Kula nation. I acknowledge all traditional owners across this whole country, right across the planet and also, I guess, across the galaxy!

Dr STONE: Comprehensive!

Mr Tamiru: Where we are is called 'Black Fitzroy', and what a really wonderful place we are in! To understand what we are doing today you have to understand history. History brings us to where we are today. When Federation was being formed here in this country my people were not part of the conversation, and right from the beginning we have been on the back foot. We have been trying to get back on the front foot and get forward; to be even with everyone else and also to get ahead of everyone else. That is absolutely the goal.

The history of Black Fitzroy: through the Aboriginal mission setups and through oppressive policies, Aboriginal people were looking for better opportunities. Our people back in the early 1900s made their way to Fitzroy. Some of our incredible elders were fantastic speakers, and they hatched a progressive mob of community. Through this progressive community here in Black Fitzroy, organisations sprang up just like trees all around here: health services, housing boards, sports facilities and legal aid—everything community-based. There are football

clubs, art and so on and so on. The spirit of this country and the spirit of Aboriginal Victoria is alive and well in Gertrude Street Fitzroy, this place where we are.

What a fantastic venue it is but, like everywhere else, we are struggling. It started off, I guess, firstly as an office as part of the Aboriginal Health Service, which is just up the road in the old building in Gertrude Street. What was introduced to us firstly was alcohol and, down the road, of course, substance abuse was affecting not only the white community but also affecting my community. So our elders put their heads together and thought that we needed a response to this. Through the response we hatched these health programs that supported our people. They grew and grew and grew and we had to move to bigger and bigger buildings, and here we are now today in MAYSAR.

What are we? We are a true grassroots organisation. What happens with our people is that we follow the line of our old people. That is how it works. We have to feel confident in the place that we go to. I guess that what we constantly see are people trying to reinvent the wheel—inventing another organisation and a new flash building for our people to go to. When we go to those buildings there is a spirit there, but it is not as strong as in these old buildings. That is something that really affects all of us. So with regard to a lot of new buildings that are operating now, of course we are very, very supportive; but we have to think about the old buildings because these are like our new sacred sites. These are the places that our people feel really comfortable about. So that is something that needs to be addressed.

Absolutely, we need money. We can sit on the fence and think that we can get by through doing publicity and jumping and getting sponsorships and so on, but it is all about marketing. Unfortunately, this country has not matured yet in understanding the value of what the Aboriginal man and woman is in this country. Once people's minds are changed then they will start investing a lot more money because the market potential is incredible.

What do we do here? We do grassroots programs. We produced a program within this area called 'Aboriginal Games'. The Aboriginal Games were similar to an Olympic format, but the format we use is that instead of throwing javelins we throw spears; instead of throwing a discus we throw boomerangs; and instead of passing the baton in a relay we pass message sticks and so on.

We would also play Aboriginal football, which is called marngrook. The first focus was basically engaging with different schools. The second process was teaching them in our history and our culture. Then it was teaching the games. Traditionally we would learn from our elders. Back in the day our elders would teach us how to throw a spear, a boomerang and all these other things through particular games. We took this into the schools and the response that we got from all the schools was incredible.

Late last year at Victoria Park in Collingwood there was a massive event. Through the program we ended up getting 325 kids involved. There were all the schools within this area but we also made up an Aboriginal side, which was obviously all our kids. Far out! The kids, when they had to represent our people, they knew what it was all about. There were gold medals, a big trophy at the end of the day and points given to the winners. The kids went out there and, geez, they tried hard and, sure enough, they come home with gold—they came home with the trophy. That was really uplifting for the kids and it was really uplifting for the parents. It was a massive event at Victoria Park. We had non-Indigenous people there engaging with us through barbecues and also playing our games. It was a very successful event.

What do we do here? We tend to our communities needs—pure and simple. There is no set structure because our people are different. We are a creative mob of people. We respond to our people. We ask them what they want and what they want to do. Of course, we have got some good ideas on what would like to do, but we listen to the people. From this consultation and consent we put on the job. So what do we do here? Downstairs we honour 'Uncle' Jock Austin and 'Uncle' Lionel Rose—we honour that man. It is a sacred site downstairs for us. We have boxing programs downstairs so people can come in and use our facilities to get fit. The demographic around here has changed a hell of a lot. We open the door to all people, all communities. This is what MAYSAR is all about.

We not only work with the kids. What we all seem to talk about is the first step. We are past the first step. It is keeping people engaged right through. Not only at the beginning but in the middle and at the end. It is about keeping the adults engaged in whatever the proposal is. Having their input into what we are doing is going to have a massive effect on our people. I thank you for your time.

CHAIR: Thank you, Jason, for opening your centre and for the work that you do in the schools particularly in the local community.

Dr STONE: How many people are employed here, Jason?

Mr Tamiru: Not many. We run a little bit different to everyone else. It is good, but it is had an absolute negative effect when it comes to funding. We do not fit into the bigger corporations' strategies. That is really, really difficult. Like I said, we are a grassroots group of people. We open the door to everyone. The kids and adults that come in here feel really, really comfortable in coming into this place. Last night we had an Aboriginal film on in here and we had—what?—60 or 70 people in attendance. We also put on a barbecue for the people. It is all free. This is what we do. To answer your question, it all depends on what we have got on. If we have a music event here, we get hundreds in here. On a film night we have 60. If we have a political event, we could have up to 80 to 100 people. It differs, all depending on what is going on in the community. We are pretty strong. We absolutely honour our elders and we keep the spirit of what they produced and we are continuing it.

CHAIR: How many people have you got working here?

Mr Tamiru: We have got three people. I am going to say it straight: we do not get paid to work here. That is the reality. We volunteer our time here.

CHAIR: Thank you, Jason, for doing that. We will continue with our roundtable. Professor Colin Tatz gave evidence in Sydney. Some of you might know him; he has been around quite a while. His submission is online and you can have a look at it. He said: 'Sport must not be seen as confined to playing. People can be involved in other ways such as scorers, umpires, organisers, managers, fundraisers et cetera'—and even physiotherapists.

Dr STONE: Which is what you have been saying.

CHAIR: 'Sport enables people to belong, to develop a sense of loyalty and community, and to have a purpose.' Anthony and Bruce mentioned that as well.

Dr STONE: And the other thing he stressed is that it gives someone a future—something to think about and look forward to. I think it was the Dalai Lama who said there are three ways to happiness: having something to look forward to, something to love and something worthwhile to do. For kids, it is pretty much the only thing they have got to look forward to—playing in the game next weekend, their team winning or whatever. Bruce mentioned apathy. For a lot of Indigenous kids in particular, where there has been no employment for a couple of generations there is apathy. Having nothing to look forward to can be a killer in terms of their own sense of wellbeing. Colin Tatz was focusing on sport as being one of the ways through to give someone a sense of the future.

CHAIR: Colin Tatz said: 'Sporting competition is about anticipation—the next match, the next season. It is a future oriented activity whereas suicide resides in the immediate past and the immediate present.' From his research, when the football is on there is very little delinquency and almost no suicide in some communities.

Mr Bowd: There are a couple of points I would like to make. The first is about the size of the volunteer workforce that supports community sport. I think about 2.4 million people Australia-wide are involved in supporting community sport as referees, lines people, committee members et cetera. I do not believe anyone could point to accurate data on the percentage of those people who are Indigenous. It would be intuitive for researchers to see what the numbers and representation are. If I were to guess at the reasons why there is low involvement, I would firstly point to training. How much volunteer training is culturally aware and culturally sensitive and tailored towards the requirements of Indigenous people?

The Australian Sports Commission is the leader in the volunteer training area, and I acknowledge that the sports also do their own training. For example, the volunteer resource on increasing the marketing and signage of your club, which we saw before, is a 150-page Word document that you are quite welcome to download from the website and read through at your own pace. That is not really culturally aware or sensitive training. If that is what is driving our volunteer training then that tells you why the representation might be low.

Another point to raise is about the experience of volunteers within club culture. Is club culture a reason why people are reluctant to put their name forward? That is another piece of work for researchers. How much is in that? Is it a factor or is it not a factor? I think looking at the reasons for lower representation, rather than just guessing at it, would be worthwhile from a research perspective.

Dr STONE: Alf, you were saying a moment ago that people formed their own clubs in the Goulburn Valley because they were not welcome in the club culture.

Dr Bamblett: I go back to Jason's point. The history of it is that Aboriginal people walked off Cummeragunja and moved into Shepparton but they were not welcome in town and lived on the banks of the river and over at the tip. When you move from the mission to the houses in town, you become part of the town. The next thing you do is participate in the town life, and part of that is being involved in football clubs. But the mentality is 'you belong back over there'. Those things are part and parcel of the history of this country.

Dr STONE: Or you can play if you are good, but you are not be the coach.

Dr Bamblett: No. If you are nice we pat you on the back and you are okay; if you play by our rules and fit in, that is good. How many Aboriginal coaches are there in AFL? One or two. I do not want to pick on one sport, but have a look at Aboriginal participation and the opportunities to be involved at senior level; they are certainly limited. That is because it is a long, hard road to get there for anybody and certainly for Aboriginal people to be welcomed and accepted. The second part is that we do not play bowls—because we are probably a bit concerned with life yet! But, as we live longer, maybe we can get to do bowls. But there are people like me and Paul Briggs at Rumbalara who are old enough that we actually get involved in footy clubs. I think it is important to know that we will get there and we will be a part of it. But we have to have a space of our own. It is more than a voice. We have fought long and hard for that. It is about participation and involvement growing. We will make sure the voice remains and the activities increase.

Dr Hearn Mackinnon: Jason's comments were inspirational. I think he may have even underplayed the importance of the Fitzroy Stars and this centre here. In some respects, this organisation and the building have been a beacon and a symbol of resistance. As a person who has grown up in Melbourne, I think it is a living treasure. As a society, it is something that should be valued not just by Aboriginal people; it makes us a richer place. In the discussion about sport and Indigenous issues, there is the question of whether the urban areas or the remote communities are more important. I want to make it very clear that I am talking about remote communities only because that is the area I have developed a relationship with and had the strongest experience with. I do not intend to suggest that more effort should be put in to remote areas than other areas.

One of the things I have learnt as an outsider, particularly with the Warlpiri communities I have been involved with, is that historically the culture is very much about family groups. These communities—Yuendumu, for instance—were artificial constructs started up by outstations, missions and whatnot. If we want a strong sense of community to develop in these remote communities and to provide a really functioning community, sport seems to be one of the only avenues that gives people a strong sense of community ownership and community identity. When I talk to people from Yuendumu, they do not distinguish between being the Yuendumu Magpies and the Yuendumu community—they are the one thing. I do not know whether anyone has been following it, but in the last few years there has been trouble up there. In fact, the Yuendumu Football Club temporarily has not been functioning. As a result of that, divisions and troubles in the community have escalated. My little group, the Industrial Magpies, is doing its bit to try and help rebuild the community and the football team.

I see sport not only as an incredible opportunity for wider capacity building but also for promoting self-governance, autonomy and strength in these communities. It is one activity for all people, which includes elders, young people, men, women—it just does not seem to matter. There is a unified excitement and passion for sports. You only have to visit a remote community sports weekend or the Lightning Carnival in Alice Springs for instance to see that engagement of people. That just shows people can be energised and motivated but people do need assistance. As Alf said, it is about working with people and letting them determine their futures. It is not just about handouts.

A really important question was asked earlier on about sponsorship and funding. If we are talking about remote communities—as I said, that is my experience—obviously you are limited. There tends not to be any local businesses there. In the Yuendumu there are two shops. In some areas of the country, there might be mining companies with opportunities for sponsorship but by and large in a lot of remote communities it is going to be dependent upon government funding. It is not necessarily just about more money but about priorities. As an anecdote, last time I was in Yuendumu there was what they call the kids disco, which is basically the community hall, not much more than an old cattle shed—to be honest. It is falling down. It has no real quality about it. It is a sad and sorry building. Last time I was there, 10 metres away, just across the road I noticed a brand-new building. Apparently seven semitrailers had arrived and assembled this multimillion-dollar building in a week. I thought, 'Wow, this is fantastic. What is it?' It was a new Centrelink office. To me, that just says we as a society—and I am not blaming federal governments or whoever—have got our priorities wrong. I just wanted to put that out there.

Prof. Dodson: I was in Yuendumu about two months ago to talk to the people who run an organisation there called the Warlpiri Aboriginal Youth Development Corporation. This corporation transcends all that trouble. It seems to be the only organisation in town that is a safe place for everybody. This organisation is responsible for eliminating petrol sniffing in Warlpiri country. There is a new sports hall there that they run. It has a basketball court in it. It has a kitchen to help teach kids about healthy eating and how to cook and things like that. They also run the swimming pool. That must be the only town or village in Australia where the people have to find the money to run the local swimming pool. The federal government funded it. They went to the shire. In most other places in Australia, as I understand it, the swimming pool is run by the shire. The shire refused to run because

they did not have the money. But these people found the money through their own resources to fund the swimming pool. They have to do that every year. Where are we going to get the money for the next season? Where are we going to get the money for the season after? I think that is outrageous that they as a community have to do that because an organisation like that does such terrific work. They have a terrific leadership program for youth.

We went to look at them because they were among eight finalists in Australia for the Indigenous Governance Awards, which is run by Reconciliation Australia but supported by BHP Billiton. BHP Billiton do not have an interest there. Newmont has a mine nearby that gives them find some financial support. That reminds me to return to the discussion we had before the break. I am not saying government should be let off the hook here. But something simple like that I think it is outrageous that people have to fund their own town's swimming pool.

I know a lot of towns around Australia raise money to get them built but, generally speaking, they get run by the shire, and the shire puts aside money for that.

Going back to our discussion before the break, I am not saying government should vacate the space—government has to be in the space. My point is that everybody has to do some of the lifting; it is not just all up to government. We cannot just sit back and wait for government to turn up. In fact, if we find some private money from the corporate sector, from our own resources or from elsewhere then government tends to come in. It is easier to persuade government to come in, but do not expect them to be first cab off the rank.

CHAIR: I am interested in the dysfunction and breakdown role of sport, and drugs and sponsorship. Jon, you might have some comments on this as well.

Mr McGregor: The issue of funding and sponsorship is especially important in those remote communities where there are very few other options. Around the country what we have found is that when clubs can change the culture and attract more members than other businesses and philanthropists then a range of other organisations are willing to make investment into the space.

Ms Cohen: Picking up on the comments that were made, in terms of corporate sponsorship, government investment and grants, one of the areas sport has traditionally been excluded from is the philanthropic sector. The not-for-profit reform agenda that is being looked at both federally and in some jurisdictions, as well as the not-for-profit tax reform working party, really needs to have a look at how sport can access some of the philanthropic opportunities without having to set up separate foundations which then add compliance and regulatory burdens, governance arrangements et cetera. I am not talking about providing incentives for sport outcomes per se but opportunities to use sport to achieve health and wellbeing, and other social change outcomes. That, perhaps, is an avenue that the committee could have a look at.

CHAIR: What Mick was saying before is that consistent with the evidence we got in Sydney that there were not enough gyms, cricket fields, football grounds and sporting facilities in these regional and remote areas, and so the kids did not play. If you build it they will play, to paraphrase *Field of Dreams*.

Prof. Dodson: The infrastructure is virtually nonexistent, and if it does exist it is pretty rudimentary.

Dr STONE: And then you have to maintain it.

Prof. Dodson: A footy ground without a blade of grass on it.

Dr Fogarty: As Kate said, there is a basketball court and there is an oval, and that is it. Sometimes the oval is not really an oval and sometimes the basketball court is definitely not a basketball court.

Dr Bamblett: We have spent the last season for football and netball known colloquially as the Nomadic Fitzroy Stars because we did not have our own home ground or our own home court in Melbourne. It is not just in other parts of the state—

CHAIR: It is in major cities and provincial cities; it is not just in the bush.

Dr Bamblett: Yes. So it is a part of the reason we do it ourselves. It is great to say to all of those who are against it that Rumbalara have done well and made a presence in Shepparton. We are doing the same thing here. It is about being able to develop those facilities and to make sure that we can participate in a lifestyle that we are supposed to be in, rather than being the fringe dwellers in the sporting arena and within society.

CHAIR: And that leads onto what Bill talked about before about grassroots.

Dr Fogarty: I made a comment in my opening statement about cherry picking, which was being deliberately provocative. What I was getting at is that there are two parts to getting Indigenous engagement. I was not saying that role models do not have a part at all; what I was getting at is that they are one part. Julie mentioned that you need both those things—the grassroots development and the role model elite athletes—happening at the same time.

What I see as a bit of an issue is that some sports like AFL—and other codes probably get very sick of hearing about how well AFL is doing in engaging Indigenous people—are doing a fabulous job, but it has not come easy. It has come through critical mass and a real commitment and determination.

To get that mass grassroots engagement is the kind of commitment that codes need to make at their highest levels. I used the word 'tokenism'. I do not mean it in a derogatory sense; I mean that if a code is going to be serious about engaging Indigenous people in their sport for the long haul, and reaping the benefits at the elite level, then it takes grassroots commitment. From a research perspective, there are some key elements that we need to know some more about. I mentioned the social history stuff which is so important as the glue at the bottom, if you like, that helps us all get together. Indigenous governance structures that Belinda brought up are also critical. We have done a lot of work on governance in other areas, but we are not applying this to sport. We need to look at it and see what are the best models that sport can adopt to enhance that.

There is a dearth of research. Nadine brought up a little bit, but there is a dearth of research on the participation of women and girls. We need to look at the models that are actually working. What is it about Deadly Sisters that is working? What are the things that you think could be working better? How applicable are they to other codes and other areas? The final really big thing is around the grassroots capacity. What are the models that are working really well? Again, what are the parts that are adaptable and what are the parts that are not adaptable? Clontarf is a fantastic thing and it has become the catch-all phrase of a great model, but does it work in other codes? We do not know. How well is it really working for girls and women? We do not know.

Dr STONE: It does not involve girls.

CHAIR: Not many girls.

Dr STONE: It does not claim to, quite simply.

Dr Fogarty: There are some key themes that we need to look at that go across all the codes, but we need to begin at that grassroots level.

Ms Warren: I know that our staff out in the regions will assist with running football during the football season, but in the off season they will be running swimming, softball and softball or netball for women where it is appropriate. When they are working out in community they are not just running football, they are also supporting other sports. They recognise that if they want people to come back for the next season they have to keep them engaged. The people involved at grassroots would know that to make sure that the whole team comes back next season they will work with them throughout the year.

Dr Fogarty: Julie, say in somewhere like the Northern Territory, in the remotes, roughly how many engagement officers or whatever do you have on the ground? Do you know off the top of your head?

Ms Warren: Across the country there are 400. In the Territory we have roughly 12 sites, and that is continuing to grow through partnership with the government. We are working to make sure that there is a person there and also trainees coming up, so we are growing the capacity to make sure that that is run by local community people. At this point in time most of those appointments are non-Indigenous people, but we are really focusing strongly on making sure that there are trainees coming through, so that ends up being owned and run by the community.

Dr Fogarty: But it is a significant investment and commitment from the locals.

Ms Warren: Massive investment.

Dr STONE: How many of those are in southern Australia? What is the commitment in Tasmania and Victoria?

Ms Warren: In Tassie we have Brett Mansell who is on the executive of AFL Tas. He is running Indigenous programs, multicultural programs, school programs and pretty much everything—he's Superman. There are probably seven regional staff down there. Across Victoria I am not exactly sure how many regional staff we have, because we have just done a review and we are injecting a number of new staff in to the new country football model. There are six regions and some of those regions have up to four people working in them. I am not sure of the numbers in South Australia, because it is a different model. And it is the same with WA where it is all done through the clubs.

Dr STONE: People have said to me the problem with AFL, when it goes into the field, is that it tends to go to northern Australia and look for the Maurice Riolis and the like. The typical situation is that they look more Aboriginal; they get more bang for their buck with someone who is very black versus someone who is not so black, from Victoria.

Ms Warren: I can tell you now that certainly from the AFL's perspective we are very focussed on growing participation in Victoria.

Dr STONE: Are you aware of those criticisms?

Ms Warren: Absolutely. But we are working with recruiters to make sure that there is an understanding of the talent that is in New South Wales and Queensland and also in Victoria. Our staff, Chris Johnston and Jason Mifsud, are both strong Victorian Aboriginal men, so I can tell you that they will not forget about Victoria. Aaron Clarke is another strong Victorian Aboriginal man. He is absolutely making sure that we are focussing on Victoria.

Ms Duarte: There are discussions around some developmental pathways that are critical, particularly from a Victorian perspective, and that are currently evolving with AFL Victoria particularly in a pathway program considering TAC Cup activity. Going back to some of the grassroots activity and dialogue around why do we need our own teams, our own carnivals, our own activities, you cannot underestimate the ceremonial significance of getting our mob together. Traditional ceremony has a place, but culture continues to evolve over the years. All the evidence shows that events and activities that celebrate contribution or engage communities where they feel a sense of belonging, pride and a coming together on something that is positive and not another funeral, or are connected to come with family again for sorry business, or just the interpersonal challenges that families live with day to day, those gatherings are critical—they are critical because they give us a sense of belonging; they give us an opportunity to dip our toe in the water and say, 'Actually, I am not too bad at this.' Often Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young girls might decide to go somewhere else and there has to be somebody who taps them on the shoulder and says, 'Sis, you are pretty good at this—have you thought of being engaged regularly with some of your local clubs?' That requires very strong face to face trusting relationships at that grassroots level which bridge that pathway for our mob. This has a critical role to play in assisting us to evolve and to celebrate our identity and have non-Aboriginal people join us in feeling what that is and understanding what that is. It strengthens our country to be a part of those ceremonies. When a common religion in this country is sport, why can we not house that and allow others to be exposed to it and understand the cultural significance of it right here today?

CHAIR: Jason, that is what you were saying. Do you agree with Belinda?

Mr Tamiru: Absolutely. It is all about history. I have said it before and I will say it again: we do follow our people's tracks. It is not a cliché; it is the reality. Belinda was talking about the footy carnival—it is a modern-day ceremony. We all come together, everyone looks forward to it. There are so many communities in Victoria, and here is an opportunity for all of us to come together, catch up, see what is going on and, most importantly, see who gets the bragging rights for the next 12 months.

Mr Bowd: Talking about carnivals, one of the major multisport carnivals in Victoria was run by the Victorian Aboriginal Youth, Sport and Recreation, VAYSAR. My understanding is that VAYSAR is dormant, or does not really exist. That carnival, which has been their most successful for years and years, did not run this year.

Ms Warren: It ran in a women's form. Was it Ballarat or Bendigo?

Dr Bamblett: The junior one was at Ballarat. The other one was out Mildura way. The next one is going to be at Wodonga. They are struggling for their existence. There are obviously issues around resources, money and people et cetera—and of course sponsorship. The intentions are still there and the drive is still there. As Belinda said, it is a cultural event and people come together. The history for those that see it is one of dispersal. They get people from this and that part of the country and they all come together. The networks in terms of nationhood and history and so on are revived and they all become part of it. Everybody knows that a carnival is a good place where legends are made and people get more than bragging rights, where they are able to live former glories.

Dr STONE: In southern Australia, particularly Victoria, we have a lot less rugby union and rugby league activity than they have in New South Wales and Northern Territory. Yesterday, we were endlessly regaled with the fabulous things those two sports are doing and what they are investing in, and their massive sponsorship. Of course, they have hardly penetrated, thank heavens, Victoria. Soccer does not do much at all in Victoria.

CHAIR: Melbourne Storm won the rugby league grand final.

Dr STONE: They did but Melbourne Storm is an aberration! That is on the public record, I hope. Without rugby league and rugby union, and with the AFL more focused on the north, and if VAYSAR and others are having difficulties, we must be aware that Victoria does not have those major activities associated with those huge leagues and their huge amounts of money.

Ms Warren: We probably get more publicity for the work we do up north, but there is—

Dr STONE: That is the point I was making: you get more bang for your buck marketing- and commercial-wise—

Ms Warren: still a lot of work that is actually going on here in Victoria. All of our clubs that have a partnership with a remote community are also doing a lot of intensive work in Victoria, it is just that it does not make the newspapers because there is no red dirt.

Dr STONE: That is the point I was making.

Mr Bowd: It is important to recognise, particularly in Victoria, the lack of a Victorian recognised sporting body which other sports can work with. This has a big flow-down effect. The mainstream sports have big budgets and I hear about the numbers of their staff, and that is fantastic. But some of the smaller sports—Darts Victoria, Table Tennis Victoria, Softball Victoria and taekwondo—are hand-to-mouth organisations that do not have the luxury of deciding where they can have these elective type programs. In the past, VAYSAR has existed to various degrees and these sporting bodies can partner with them to try to roll out programs. Now that does not exist and that has had a real flow-down effect.

From the VicHealth perspective, this year VicHealth has a \$10.2 million program, which 30 state sporting bodies can apply to for funding to help disadvantaged community groups, of which Indigenous is one. Of 30 sports that applied, only four applied for Indigenous programs. That is the flow-on effect of not having VAYSAR to work with and partner up with these smaller sports. This is something that should not be glossed over. Recognised peak bodies are needed so that Indigenous sport can partner and work with the less financial sports to try to deliver some of these second- and third-tier programs.

Mr Kipman: Taking a step back from talking about NRL and rugby union and how they regaled you with their stories, I thought I would talk—

CHAIR: It was more about rugby league than rugby union.

Mr Kipman: The Imparja Cup is exactly what you have just talked about: the coming together of cricket teams from across the country. There are stories of people driving for 20 hours straight to get to the Imparja Cup. We talk about bragging rights. It is a competition that was started by a couple of guys bragging about the best cricket team. One of the two guys did not even have a cricket team, so that history is still strong there. When teams travel interstate, their team management require them to investigate the culture and interrogate who they are playing, so it is beyond just cricket. We obviously do not have that profile in NRL or AFL because we do not have that real body of elite athletes, but I think in the next generation that we will start to see that. The way that the Imparja Cup has evolved, it has become very much part of our elite pathways. Many of the kids who play in that also represent their states and territories in the mainstream teams as well.

Dr Fogarty: I was lucky enough to go to the Imparja Cup this year and it was a fantastic event. Everyone from Tangentyere to Tiwi was playing cricket and the girls community cricket was fantastic. I went to about 19 games over about five days and there was some really good cricket and some really bad cricket played. It is a fantastic thing. It is a jewel in the crown for Cricket Australia and it should be proud of that. But one of the things that came through constantly from people who I talked to there was that when they go back to their communities they do not have anything to go to. That is something that I think you need to work on.

CHAIR: I am interested in comments from the sporting perspective in relation to Learn Earn Legend!, No School No Play and particularly the Australian Drug Foundation Good Sports program. Netball Australia talks a fair bit about that, and I am interested in your comments about the effectiveness of those programs.

Ms Cohen: The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations approached Netball Australia to be part of the Learn Earn Legend! program when they identified that there were not many girls involved and the girls who were involved through the successful programs, particularly rugby league and AFL for the boys, were dropping out of the program. There were not high retention rates. We really grappled with the Learn Earn Legend! program for netball and, in effect, made a strategic decision not to be involved because we really did not feel we had the capacity to keep kids at school, help them go into further education or have jobs. We were happy to, in a sense, lend our brand to it, but there was not going to be anymore to it, so where was the sustainability and the legacy? It was a very tough decision for us, as Kate has alluded to before. We are very, very keen to help Indigenous women and girls, so to make a decision not to progress an application was a difficult one to make.

In terms of No School No Play, the Dare to Dream sisterhood program, the Deadly Sista Girlz program, as Kate has alluded to, the partnership of the David Wirrpanda Foundation has been extremely beneficial on a number of fronts, including for the girls and the schools involved, and the research is there to show that the girls are engaged. We have a fabulous story, if I can digress for a moment. One of the mentors said to me that there

was a young girl who thought that sleeping around was the badge that she needed until one of her mentors spoke with her and asked: 'Why do you want that badge?' She has turned her entire life around, realising that she is not what she wants to achieve or what she wants to be known for. She does want to, in a sense, be the first person in her family to finish school and then decide her own pathway and her own future.

Unfortunately, like most of the other sporting organisations, we have been advised that the program is not continuing beyond the current year, and we do not have the resources to continue it. However, relating to the comment I made before about philanthropic organisations, we have that program in the ACT. It has found a corporate supporter to be involved in that program, and we are working with the David Wirrpanda Foundation to see how we can continue with it. What we have added to that program is the 'Netball says no to violence' message. It is about empowering the girls around respect for relationships, not just staying at school, getting a job and getting further education. Kate, I am not sure if you want to add a little bit more to that.

Ms Palmer: Yes. I think the real benefit that Netball Australia contributed with the Deadly Sista Girlz program is that it is about netball. It is a two-hour delivery once a week, but netball is the reward for the first hour. For the first hour we are teaching the girls real life skills. The other day I was teaching them about bank cards and credit cards, which is a real everyday skill that these girls need. It is just telling them that if they use a different ATM they are going to get charged for it, which they do not necessarily know.

So we pretty much give them the skills at the start to make their own decisions. I think that is really where we need to go with this. You need to be able to give these girls the chance to break away from different bad beliefs that they have, empower them to make their own decisions and teach them to support their own decisions as well, whether it be in sport or in life. Then at the end of it we play netball. They love netball. We do not have to beg them to play netball; these kids want to play sport. It is about teaching them the other skills in their lives first and using netball as the tool to get that across the line.

CHAIR: I am interested in what the AFL and cricket say about those federal government programs. And you, John, about the drugs and Good Sports.

Dr STONE: If anyone wants a toss in Clontarf or Polly Farmer, we have Swan Hill, Mildura and Bairnsdale.

Ms Warren: In terms of No School No Play, we have rebadged it School then Play so that it is not a deficit mentality. We have used that to grow participation in a couple of regions, and we have been able to incorporate that into our core business. If we do not incorporate government funding into delivering what is our core business, which is increasing participation, then when that government funding stops our programs fall over and that does not do anyone any good. We have had that challenge with the PaCE program, which is Parent and Community Engagement. In New South Wales we had five people employed to deliver the PaCE program and unfortunately that program was decided to be defunded because it was not seen to be delivering the school outcomes. My staff would argue that it was because the staff they employed were fantastic at engaging community and getting the kids and parents engaged but they were not necessarily good at writing government reports.

Learn Earn Legend we have used to support our all-stars and in the past some of our Dreamtime activity as a kind of promotional, aspirational message. That has been very effective. We also ran employment expos as part of Indigenous round and again we incorporated the employment expos into participation programs so that it made sense for our business to do those. Here in Victoria at the KGI there was a great expo that the community got behind. We had Kutcha Edwards MCing the event. When that did not happen again community were disappointed. I have some personal reservations about the effectiveness of expos in themselves. I am not sure that they really help kids to get jobs. They are useful in terms of providing an aspiration point but what tends to happen is that the follow-up is not resourced, so the ability for the participants to then be case-managed into employment is not incorporated as part of expos, and that is really important.

Mr Kipman: I would share some of those sentiments. Our Learn Earn Legend support was pretty much solely confined to the Imparja Cup, part of which was an employment expo. While on the day, much as Julie said, it was successful because it was an outside company that we employed to do it, beyond that they become a bit detached. We also employed three of our players as mentors, one of whom was Samantha Hinton. Again their roles were pretty much exclusive to the Imparja Cup. It was successful when confined to the Imparja Cup. Our desire is to make it broader. What we really wanted to do is be able to employ some of these people full time. I know the focus has changed for the funding as well to go away from the branding which they achieved through the Imparja Cup and more towards those ongoing employment opportunities. Ideally for us we want a national Indigenous workforce which is one national officer and then eight state and territory officers. We are pursuing a pilot program which we hope will lead to that structure.

No School No Play was confined to New South Wales, so it was not a widespread operation, but I understand that the successes were achieved.

CHAIR: As I said before, you should be employing Geoff Dymock, the former Queensland and Australian fast bowler up in North Queensland. He should be on the payroll for sure.

Mr Kipman: There is one other thing. The funding from AusAID and the Australia-India Council, which we received recently, has helped us support development of Indigenous teams. That has been as successful as any other funding that we have received.

CHAIR: Cricket does not quite make the same use as the Origin greats in rugby league or the AFL. You have all these great players: Dennis Lillee, Doug Walters and Geoff Dymock, who does an enormous amount of work up in Queensland in terms of Indigenous areas. Cricket Australia needs to do better in my home state of Queensland—very much so.

Mr Kipman: Matthew Hayden is probably the most prominent of people to do that. Part of the Imparja Cup is that we bring in some of those masters to speak. I admit: we do still need to do more.

CHAIR: In North Queensland, if you play for the Cowboys in Townsville you are a god. John, I am interested in Good Sports.

Mr McGregor: We are supportive of all the national programs that you mentioned. I will not run over some of the achievements of Good Sports, because I have already put that on record. As the alcohol and tobacco component is really strong, we are starting to look at the other avenues for extension of the Good Sports program. Can we be working with the community sporting clubs? We have some new program adaptations. We have Good Sports and Healthy Eating, on healthy canteens, to help deal with the obesity epidemic that is gripping the country. Mental health is another big concern and is a natural adaptation to the Good Sports program. We have the adaptation Good Sports-Healthy Minds, which helps sporting clubs with early identification of young people and adults who are experiencing mental health issues. There is a local service audit to help link them with local providers. There are a number of adaptations. We are looking at a junior model as well and a graduate program. A large number of clubs that are through the full three levels of the program are asking us: 'That's been a fantastic journey. We've really improved the club, but what's next for us?' So the graduate is about the 'where to from here?' Also, how can we deliver this program in a more cost-effective way? How can we make it a cheaper program for the public purse?

Dr Bamblett: Do not forget Jason's message, and of course this place, which has been your facility for today, and the need for assistance to continue. I endorse the sentiments about VAYSAR and the state sports body. It needs to be up and about. It is not dead, but it is pretty sick. We need to make sure that it is back on its feet. We are working on that and there are other things that are happening. We definitely want to make sure that the major bodies feel welcome to come to our place and be involved. If we want to have programs like RAP, the Reconciliation Action Plan, please make sure that the people who get involved act with some integrity. It is about an Aboriginal voice and Aboriginal participation and Aboriginal lead. Integrity requires that you act with a great deal of honesty. So do not come and tell us one thing and do another. Thank you.

CHAIR: On that note, we must finish the roundtable. I thank everyone for their honesty, candour, forthrightness and participation today—

Dr STONE: And their persistence.

CHAIR: And their persistence in the work they do all over the country—in rural areas as well as urban and periurban areas. I thank the sporting bodies for their submission and everyone for attending today. If, after today, you want to make an additional submission, please feel free to send it to us. There may be something that you were going to say but time prevented us from hearing you. Please feel free to contact me or the secretariat at any stage. Thank you very much.

SHEEHAN, Mrs Catherine Mary, Private capacity

SHEEHAN, Mr Peter Gerard, Private capacity

[12:21]

CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming and giving evidence. We have read your submission. If you are interested in making a brief introductory statement we would appreciate that, Peter and Catherine.

Mr Sheehan: We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission, and we do note that you have read our submission. I would like to remake some of the key points that are in that, but by way of introduction I would say that this is an independent submission from the two of us; but we do think that we probably also reflect the views of quite a lot of people in the, shall we say, 'white community' who are interested in these matters and who would readily acknowledge to Dr Bamblett that we, or our grandparents, did occupy their land and that the injustices that flow from that are not yet redressed.

We read and reflect on the things that Dr Mick Dodson says and we look forward to some resolutions. We note what Dr Bamblett said this morning, that in order for us to move forward the Indigenous community has to be seen as participants not just recipients of all of our goodwill and endeavours. I then make the point that that certainly requires bipartisanship from our political leaders. I commend what you are showing in this committee and we earnestly hope that it would go forward to the senior policy level, and that it would not be that one side of politics would pretend to have the wisdom and moral integrity to have all the answers.

I think a genuine bipartisanship is necessary for a long-term, steady program because this is not an issue that is going to be resolved overnight. So grandstanding or big-picture programs may not be the way to go, and that is why our submission addresses small, practical things that could be done, not alone but in combination with many others. It was certainly encouraging to hear the comments that were made from the various organisations that were here. None of them would conflict with the suggestion we are putting forward—in fact, most of them would say, 'Yes, there are aspects of what we are saying which they could participate in.'

The only reservation I would have about that is to say: it really is unarguable that sport will promote community development. If you went to any country town in Australia, you could point to the bowls club, the football club and the cricket club as the community. It is simply not an issue.

So there is no research required about whether it could help. This inquiry has to be directed towards what is going to be done for it to help. What we are therefore posing is: there is no need for further research. Just get on with it. In saying these things, we do have some experience—it is set out in the submission—which should give our submission some authority. But we are also aware that many people are working in the field. I would take this chance to acknowledge my brother Richard Sheehan and his wife Julie, who have been working in the Northern Territory for 18 years and steadily getting on with endeavouring to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. It is pretty hard yards. It is hard work. They are sceptical about inquiries such as this because there seems to be a lot of talk and not a lot trickles out at their end. So, generally speaking, they say, 'Oh yes, another inquiry.'

We at least feel comfortable in this environment and are able to make submissions and have the time to do so. Our submission was made from Ikuntje where, incidentally, it is not black and white—it is a Swans community, and Adam Goodes would walk on water if there were any, because it is a very dry place. It is 250 kilometres west of Alice Springs. That community would be interested in sporting facilities. Our submission demonstrates the way in which we think that could be done.

I go briefly to that. We are suggesting that, using a combination of government and corporate funds, a number of two-person sports teams would be set up, and they would be each equipped with a four-wheel-drive vehicle and an off-road trailer full of sports equipment. They would rotate through their own set of related communities that request participation. This is not an imposed program; this is a program which would be accepted and agreed to by the communities in advance. Remember that the groups up there are actually in language and tribal groups. There are five related communities in the area west of Alice Springs that we are familiar with. I think the same thing is repeated in numerous other parts of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. We are talking about the arid zone, which covers a very big portion of Australia.

At each community, the sports club would have a wide brief to support and encourage whatever opportunities for promoting sport already exist. This is not reinventing the wheel. People are involved in sport in various ways in Indigenous communities, including remote communities. The overriding requirement would be to promote participation, regardless of gender or level of ability. The particular sports would build on existing interests and climatic constraints. Remember that it is over 40 degrees most days between September and April, so vigorous outdoor activity during most of the daylight hours just is not going to happen. But court sports which take place

under cover or with fewer people, or in the evenings or mornings, certainly would have prospects. For example, tennis or netball probably have great possibilities. You would choose sports which suit the climate.

They would take existing facilities as they are and there would be no focus on capital investment.

Familiar leaders making repeated regular visits and planned predictable activities will build confidence and trust. The sporting celebrity visits which happen here and there and from time to time are all very well but, if you want participation at a grassroots level, there has to be trust and repeated and regular attention.

The proposal that we have put up and costed in the submission suggests that participating communities could receive frequent, organised, climate appropriate sporting opportunities at an annual cost of less than \$50,000 per community—and we are talking about corporate as well as government funding. The government funding would only need to be seeding funding. The scheme can grow as enthusiasm develops. The enthusiasm could be expected to come from the communities and from corporate and philanthropic sponsors—vehicle and trailer manufacturers, sporting equipment suppliers, sporting organisations, the mining industry, Rotary clubs et cetera. Sponsors would be sought by invitation and advertisement, with an expectation that they can brand their contribution. This is not to be seen as a program owned by a particular government—including state, federal and local—or political ideology. Community agreement to participate is essential, and the first couple of these could be treated as pilot programs.

Another essential requirement is that knowledge of local conditions is the basis of equipment choices and demand. So it will vary from place to place. We have looked at a risk analysis of this from, I suppose, a political point of view. I have worked at senior government level and I am aware of the sorts of pressures that operate and advising ministers on how they should proceed. In the first place, there are many potential risks that can be avoided by what we are suggesting. As sport is the universal Australian preoccupation—and it can hardly be criticised on ideological grounds—a genuine offer of bipartisan participation could not really be refused. Pressure on the government budget not only is modest but also can reduce as corporate sponsorship is secured.

This uses a well-tried delivery mechanism. This rotational visiting is quite frequent in these areas, with health workers, specialist teachers like music and dance teachers and the like. It can be used introduced incrementally and it has only a minimum overhead component. With determined leadership and an incremental mechanism for implementation, reporting requirements can be minimised. Certainly from when I was working for AusAID, I know that an enormous amount of effort goes into satisfying the minutiae of reporting and sometimes the reporting is against targets that are completely out of date and inappropriate but almost impossible to change. So there has to be flexibility in the arrangements and there has to be a reporting mechanism that is not overly burdensome. Incremental introduction responding only to requests from interested communities will dramatically reduce consultation requirements.

We think the proposal is worth a try. There is nothing to lose. Why not give it a go? Thank you very much for this opportunity.

CHAIR: So would recommend that these two persons be trained teachers, trained sports physio—for example, PE teachers—or well-known sporting identities? Are you critical of celebrities coming into these communities? They were joking before about my comment about Geoff Dymock, but Geoff is a school teacher as well as a cricketer and could be the sort of person you are talking about here.

Mrs Sheehan: We are not really highly critical of big-name people—just that that is a one-off type of thing.

Dr STONE: Presumably you are talking about a male and a female.

Mr Sheehan: We have five daughters and six grandsons.

Dr STONE: I have two daughters and I have nine grandchildren.

Mr Sheehan: I only say that to point out that, yes, we are very sensitive. Many comments were made at the roundtable about the difference, and this program is certainly non-gender specific. To answer your question: it could include competent people who are dedicated to the job.

There were already sport and recreation officers up there employed by local government bodies. This is not re-inventing the wheel. The person, regardless of gender, would not have to be a recognised sportsman but they would have to have a passion for what they were doing, and they would probably be trained professionally as teachers or as sport and recreation PE specialists.

Above all, they would have to have a passion for it and an ability to deal competently with the community and to built trust and support. I am sure they would in some way be tertiary trained. It would seem, going on from that, an ideal opportunity to have Indigenous people who had those competencies introduced to that program.

Dr STONE: And also language; a lot of those communities, and children in particular, do not have standard Australian English.

Mrs Sheehan: They speak English in the classroom but they speak Luritja on the playground in that particular place at Haasts Bluff. Boys and girls are playing softball together in that particular place, so they have a great time.

Dr STONE: There is lots of creole beings spoken in Northern Australia, too. What worries me about your proposal is that it could be wildly imagined to work only if there were some infrastructure in those places. If you are driving in once a fortnight or so and the area says, 'We would very much love to play football or netball, or learn some martial arts,' but there is nothing there in the way of those types of sporting facilities. Would it not have to be embedded in a whole range of other investments in those communities?

Mr Sheehan: In the communities we have seen, which are several, there is the basis of infrastructure for what we are talking about. There is what they call the government business manager's facility, which would provide accommodation. The schools are generally well equipped, and they have shaded areas where court games could be played. Sure, the football ground has brumby droppings over it, and it is just a patch of red sand, but I do not think that large capital investment is necessary. The girls at Ikuntji were playing softball out on the red dirt with some bases that they put out, and they play with enormous enthusiasm. I would suggest building on what is there. If the corporate sponsorship develops in such a way that investment in capital facilities can be done, then yes.

Dr STONE: Would it be the objective of the mobile sport and recreation officers to build the capacity of local people to take up these roles rather than waiting for the person to arrive once a fortnight in a cloud of dust?

Mr Sheehan: Yes, of course, and it varies from place to place. There already are local people and football games and intercommunity events and those sorts of things. There are people that can do it already, and there are places where it could be done with some encouragement. Yes, of course, that must be an objective to work yourself out of a job.

CHAIR: How do you envisage this? Do we have Indigenous sports development officers on the ground at the moment in regional and remote areas? I know they are funded through ISARP funding, as well. There are obviously state based Indigenous sports development officers as well, often funded through the federal government. Where does that fit in with what you are proposing?

Mr Sheehan: Yes, there are, and it varies from place to place and time to time. I would say: build on that enthusiasm where it exists and take the opportunities that spin off from that. Do not try to re-invent the wheel or disregard good efforts that are happening. There is no program which says, 'Look, corporate Australia, you can brand this four-wheel drive vehicle that is moving across several communities and bringing something that the community enjoys having come through, in which they know the people and enjoy the participation.'

CHAIR: What kind of sport are you talking about? You are talking about table tennis, bowls and all kinds of different sport. You cannot play cricket out in the sun in 45-degree heat, though people still do. You understand what I am saying. Are we talking about mobile sports, basketball and netball rings?

Mrs Sheehan: I think we used to have basketball courts.

Mr Sheehan: I think we are talking about whatever currently exists and starting from there. What we have seen is covered areas, generally speaking, close to the school with a court where they play court games. There will be a football field, as I said, with brumby droppings on it, but it is basically a field of red sand. The opportunities would be taken up where they existed at the time.

CHAIR: And where did you get the costings of \$50,000 per community? Is that your estimate?

Mr Sheehan: That comes, I suppose, from experience.

Dr STONE: And the budget you worked up.

Mr Sheehan: We worked up a budget there, subject to criticism or analysis. But it must be in the ballpark.

CHAIR: Yes, I had a look at it.

Mrs Sheehan: It could be based around the school too. As we say, the music teacher comes in once a fortnight and has time in the junior and senior parts of the school and goes around several schools like that. That is a regular timetable. So there are things like that that can happen too and are already in place.

Dr STONE: Would you say that that mobile school music program is successful?

Mrs Sheehan: The children love it. He does leave instruments there for a while, and they might be practising to perform for a particular occasion—all going into Alice Springs to perform together, as happened just as we were leaving. We missed out on the actual event just recently. Then there is other equipment that he takes to other

schools, but he did leave drum sets and things behind. But he comes every fortnight. So we were looking at that model.

Dr STONE: In between those fortnightly visits for the music, presumably the local teachers—

Mrs Sheehan: The idea is that the class teacher is supposed to carry it through. Probably some teachers are more interested than others. But, where you have the Indigenous aide, they sometimes have a bit of a challenge and will join in a bit too and encourage. That was boys and girls with the drums.

Mr Sheehan: Deputy Chair, if I could just respond to some of the scepticism that you have—

Dr STONE: I am not sceptical; I am just challenging you to tease it out, because one of the criticisms we often get—perhaps one you share—is that, with Indigenous communities in particular, it is stop-start, fly-in fly-out and brief—six weeks worth and nothing more.

CHAIR: And it is a waste of government money. We have been criticised for that.

Mr Sheehan: We certainly saw various FIFO programs, and we could be described as FIFO do-gooders, although we drove up there and we participated in a voluntary program. So, yes, they do get used to people coming past. There are audiologists and there are dental clinics, and we saw the renal clinic and various things like that happen.

Mrs Sheehan: The renal ran for two weeks.

Mr Sheehan: But that is why we are saying that a small group of communities where the rotation is rapid enough for familiarity to develop—

Dr STONE: Yes, at least fortnightly.

Mr Sheehan: These are communities that interchange regularly anyway. If you take the five communities we are familiar with west of Alice Springs, there are lots of reasons why those people meet and regularly exchange ideas and exchange school pupils. Some pupils turn up in one school or another depending on the cultural requirements at the time.

Mrs Sheehan: Or it is some sorry business going on and families move to the other community.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for taking the time to come in. Thank you for your written submission as well.

Dr STONE: And thanks for your proposed model. That is certainly important to think about.

CHAIR: The secretariat will send a copy of the transcript to you for any changes you wish to make.

Mr Sheehan: Yes. If I could make one final suggestion, this could start as a pilot program; it does not have to be across the whole of the arid zone.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

GUTHRIE, Mr Phillip John, Manager, Academy of Sport, Health and Education

[12:43]

CHAIR: I call Phillip Guthrie, who has been sitting there patiently.

Dr STONE: That is right—last but not least, Phillip.

CHAIR: I understand you might know the deputy chair.

Dr STONE: Yes, same patch.

Mr Guthrie: I take some comfort from that!

Dr STONE: Indeed.

CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief introductory statement?

Mr Guthrie: Only that I attend here representing Justin Mohamed, the Director of ASHE—who is unavailable today due to business with NACCHO in his role as the chair of NACCHO—and obviously 'Uncle' Paul Briggs, who is the President of the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club and I guess also the inspiration behind the Academy of Sport, Health and Education.

There has been a major involvement with Wesfarmers in an employment program in the Shepparton for the last three years. There is a review of that happening today. I guess, in his wisdom, Paul has decided—

CHAIR: They have sent you down here?

Mr Guthrie: Yes.

CHAIR: Mr Phillip Guthrie, from the Academy of Sport, Health and Education?

Mr Guthrie: That is right, yes. I am very honoured to be here and very humbled by the fact that Paul and Justin would trust me to represent them on this day and I am happy to share whatever I can.

CHAIR: Share whatever you can.

Mr Guthrie: My involvement personally with ASHE and the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club started eight years ago, when I commenced as a football player with a club and as the coordinator of the Academy of Sport, Health and Education, which was only six months old at the time.

To background my involvement, I was personally interested in having a role in the community and using my involvement with footy. I thought it was a great opportunity to have a significant experience around people like Paul and learn from them. I did not envisage at the time it would last as long as it has. But I suppose personally it has just become a real passion and interest and a real labour of love in some ways.

ASHE stems from a partnership arrangement between the University of Melbourne and Rumbalara Football and Netball Club. The university had had a presence in Shepparton for some time prior to the commencement of ASHE and a connection with the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club. I think it was Paul who just felt that a change was needed to try to energise the education and vocational development landscape, and sport was seen as a good way to breathe that energy into the system. I defer to Paul's wisdom on this, but I guess there was a growing disenchantment with the chronic lack of outcomes or results of young people completing training and getting jobs.

Dr STONE: Early school leaving and lack of going on to higher education or trades.

Mr Guthrie: There was a significant number of young people outside the system. They were not really participating at all in any meaningful way in the community, and I think ASHE pretty quickly picked up that backlog when the ASHE program started. It started in 2004. I was not involved in the first six months, but even at that stage there was a sense that it could have had an elite aspect to it in terms of developing elite programs for elite aspirational footballers and netballers through the football club to really drive those links into AFL and Netball Victoria systems. But once the reality struck and ASHE started rolling out on a daily basis, the kind of student who was enrolling for our program was not that elite style of young person; they were more the disenfranchised, highly disengaged young person who was just looking to make a fresh start. We were, I guess, keen to see what ASHE could achieve and were keen to get anyone and anything involved at that stage to see what the program might be able to do.

CHAIR: What are your observations, Phillip, of the outcomes for those young people? Pardon my ignorance—is it for girls as well as boys?

Mr Guthrie: It is men and women. It is both. Seventeen is the compulsory school age in Victoria, but many kids disengage earlier than that. There is a system whereby we can engage earlier than that in cooperation with the schools and the Aboriginal education group. There is a consultation process. If school is just not working then

other options are explored. Outcomes have been many and varied. In 2010 we did a major review of everything we had done and tried to backtrack with all our students. We did not have great systems initially as far as retrospective checks on outcomes and that sort of stuff; it was really just a game of survival and, 'Let's see if we can hold this thing together on a day-to-day basis.' At that point we had had about 375 individuals go through our system. We were able to contact directly about 130 of those—basically to get their status. I think there was about a third of that group—about 40 to 45—who were actually in employment or had been in employment subsequent to their program participation, and a number of others who, I guess, what they had been doing you would call a favourable outcome—whether that be ongoing training or various other possibilities. I guess that was quite affirming.

But what showed through that process is that it was many and varied. The sport and recreation training that we had been running was not leading to direct outcomes in sport and recreation employment. The employment outcomes were largely incidental in some cases and they were opportunistic by virtue of fact that partly what we were able to do through sport especially was to develop some energy, motivation and engagement that could then tap into a range of opportunities for the young people. We are flooded by emails on a weekly basis about programs, opportunities or employment possibilities. I do not think it is a lack of opportunities, but what we are trying to build is a system that can develop and deal with some significant and profound issues, in some cases, that some young people are grappling with and put them in a space where they can take advantage of those opportunities and the goodwill of groups like Wesfarmers.

I am confident that there are opportunities out there and there is a lot of goodwill, but I think where employers or others struggle is with the work that needs to go in to develop and address issues of development for the young people, so that they can do a job in a really effective and long-term manner. We need a system of trying to do that work effectively. Subsequent to our review of the outcomes there was a sense that we needed to be more strategic in how we delivered the training be ran and how we linked students explicitly through pathway plans to employment opportunities.

CHAIR: Please talk about the success with employment of the pathway plans.

Mr Guthrie: ASHE went through some phases. There was the initial phase of keeping the kids in on a day-to-day basis. How do we keep them in each day and what do we have to do to get them in? That accounted for the first couple of years. Once you get some security around enrolment then you start to look at what to do, what programs to teach. It is a curriculum issue from that point. Once you get your head around that, the question becomes the outcomes and where we are directing these kids. We took a major step in 2010 when we identified a program called VCAL, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning. This program is school equivalent still, so young people enrolling at the academy can still push on towards school-equivalent qualifications.

The other thing is our demographic became increasingly younger—from average ages of around 19, 20, 21 initially down to 16, 17 currently. It was clear that the program we needed to offer should give those kids the opportunity to push towards school completion. The beauty of VCAL is that in the pathway plans the young people can choose from a range of VET training options such as school based new apprenticeships. We have a VET taster program especially for the first-year students who are not clear on where they would like to go. That gives them a taste of a range of possibilities.

Work placement is on the rise in our program which is really positive. One thing we have identified is that it is absolutely critical—and this is also through consultation with employers—that there is work experience or work placement. ASHE has a magic for two or three months with the young people, but that can wear off and they look for the relevance such as getting them into workplaces to build that sense of aspiration. There is also ongoing development work to get the employment outcomes they are looking for. That is a new phase, the VCAL. This is the first year we have delivered the program fully. We have learnt a lot and what we have now is a really robust pathways based system.

It is no longer sport and recreation training being delivered at ASHE, it is VCAL and some other programs. But we still use part of the ASHE approach which is the holistic attitude. We know that health and wellbeing are absolutely critical to young people going into employment in the long term. We use health assessments and participation in regular physical activity as a means of trying to build the healthy-lifestyles approach that can hopefully lead to a successful future. Sport still plays that role, but it is perhaps not the be all and end all that it was initially.

Dr STONE: Wesfarmers engagement is employment focused. They came along two years ago?

Mr Guthrie: Three years ago—I think it has been three years.

Dr STONE: Were they behind the VCAL shift? You talked about moving from training for a sport or recreation type of job to now embedding good health and physical activity into the overall program. Have you had to address things like obesity and drug and alcohol issues amongst your participants? How important has the physical exercise and sport element been? This is an inquiry about sport and its significance for Indigenous communities. Can you see any connection between the participants at ASHE versus the participants staying in Shepparton High? What do they get out of ASHE, rather than staying at Shepparton High, which would continue to justify it as a standalone?

Mr Guthrie: What ASHE provides is a really intensive, day-by-day approach. In some cases it is a case-management approach.

Dr STONE: So it is like a mentoring—

Mr Guthrie: It is to an extent. I guess our process is that on any given day the attendance is looked at, reviewed and then chased up if need be. If a kid is not there and we do not know why, then that student will be chased up on a day-to-day basis. So that rigour is there initially. There are the pathway plans, which are fairly intensively managed by a careers person who we are fortunate to have at the moment as part of our staffing make-up. So we have a person dedicated to pathways and careers and the management of those plans, which we see as absolutely crucial to that role. Whether Shepparton High can give the degree of support that is needed around that for students is questionable.

The big issue that comes out of schools is that invariably it is very difficult to get Aboriginal students to take part in work placement programs. Our experience is that we know how fundamental that is. Even the way our curriculum is structured around the emphasis on culture and the empowerment around culture is a really important part of what we can offer. We do have, by good fortune, great mentors either employed or participating in the project on a regional basis. It is nothing for someone like Paul Briggs or that kind of person to come in and be involved in what we do, so the students get regular access to that kind of thing. I believe that there is a great case, and we are making that case as we speak with our state government around the ongoing funding. We are trying to quantify why ASHE needs to be there.

The Wesfarmers involvement did not directly steer us towards the VCAL. ASHE has just tapped into part of that involvement, and it has given us ways to offer students opportunities to go into part-time employment or full-time employment as part of their study program in order to potentially cease study to pursue full-time employment. It has given us a great avenue there. It also helped us pilot a work placement program with Bunnings. It is all well and good to say that we need work placements for these kids, but they need to be successful and positive. We put a lot of work into getting the young person to that stage, and, if it goes wrong there, they can be back where they started. So what you need there is a really successful experience and a trained mentor who understands what we are about, knows the young person and is supported by us and our careers officer so that, if there are any dramas or issues around mentoring the young person, they can deal with them.

The nature of our kids is that we are going to have difficulties from time to time, and we need employers like Bunnings or Wesfarmers group who are happy to take that ride with us and not judge us and be happy to understand that it is not going to be a flawless process and that there are going to be problems but that we have a system which can deal with them. The Bunnings work placement program has been really successful. We have used it as a model for a program we ran with the local Shepparton council this year which saw six students go into two weeks of work placement with the council, and we are exploring one with GV Health at the moment on a similar sort of model. So it has given us a model to tackle work placement in a way that can be successful and does not require anyone to be Hercules or anything like that; it is sustainable.

Dr STONE: What does Wesfarmers actually contribute?

Mr Guthrie: Job opportunities, primarily. Employment opportunities.

Dr STONE: Do they, for example, pay for the careers counsellor?

Mr Guthrie: No. To my knowledge, there is no financial contribution at this stage. That is something that we might be thrashing through today. It has been job opportunities and it has been really vibrant. I do not have the numbers here, but the number of young Aboriginal people in Shepparton gaining employment with the likes of Kmart and Coles and those sorts of organisations has been really positive. For the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, I know it has been a huge boost. There has been a great and positive involvement and there are great hopes that it can continue and be built upon, which was the purpose of today's discussion.

CHAIR: Thank you, Phillip, that is very interesting and very commendable. The work you are doing is obviously making a difference in the lives of lots of young people, both young men and young women. It is great.

Mr Guthrie: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: A copy of the transcript of your evidence will be posted out to you by the secretariat. You may make any changes you want if there are any errors or omissions.

Dr STONE: You can add anything, if you want.

CHAIR: Exactly. If you want to put in a written submission to us, that is fine.

Mr Guthrie: Thank you for your time.

Resolved (on motion by Dr Stone):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 13:01