



Celebrating 10 years of AASC

November 2014

Overview





We have reached the end of an era – ten years of incredible success for the Active After-school Communities (AASC) programme, stretching across six states and two territories, reaching two million students in more than 6,000 schools and Out of School Hours Care Services (OSHCS) over that time.

This success simply would not have been possible without the support of every school teacher, local coach and AASC team member. Thank you to each and every one of you for your commitment and enthusiasm. You have played a vital role in helping Australian children experience the joy of sport.

We are all very proud to have been involved in the AASC programme. Together, we have made a significant impact on the Australian sporting sector. Our joint commitment to sporting ideals has seen the introduction of the Playing for Life philosophy in one quarter of Australian primary schools and more than 70,000 coaches trained.

Each semester, we saw more than 190,000 children take part in AASC. That's a huge number of children kicking soccer balls, practicing judo or playing wheelchair basketball, all the while learning how to live healthy and active lifestyles and developing a lifelong interest in sport.

I look forward to extending the success of the AASC programme with the new Sporting Schools initiative, which will build upon the success of AASC and involve more children, schools and coaches than ever before.

Before we look to the future, it's important to reflect on and celebrate the AASC programme. We have pulled together a collection of stories that capture the ten year journey, from heart-warming experiences of teachers and students to AASC team members' recollections on setting up the programme in regional Australia.

I hope these stories bring back good memories for you. ”

Simon Hollingsworth, CEO Australian Sports Commission

Six states and two territories

2 million children

70,000 coaches

6,000 schools and OSHCS

Have participated in the AASC program since 2005



“ It is with great pride that I look back on the achievements of the AASC programme. Hearing stories from the early days of long kilometres travelled talking to schools and coaches, as well as students growing up with the programme and then re-joining the AASC as coaches, reinforces our resolve to continue the legacy of the AASC in our new Sporting Schools initiative.

I want to acknowledge the first AASC staff whose hard work and commitment ten years ago made this all possible. Further, the collaboration between AASC staff, schools and coaches in the ten years that would follow was vital in ensuring the programme’s continued success.

The AASC’s dedication to delivering quality programmes for our nation’s children is clear. Kids all across Australia have grown up with healthy and active lifestyles, participating in judo, cricket, soccer or even lawn bowls. It has taken great passion and dedication from all involved to enable so many to build such a passion for sport, and for that, I thank you.

Reading through this collection of stories, I am reminded of the positive impact of the AASC programme and the importance of Australian children building a lifelong connection to sport. Fostering this interest in sport from a young age is one of the main foundations for our new programme, Sporting Schools. With the success of AASC behind us, there is no doubt Sporting Schools will continue to not only build sporting schools, but also sporting communities and a sporting nation. ”

**Sue Marriage, Deputy General Manager, Sport Participation,
Australian Sports Commission**



The early days



“ It was an exploratory period in which so much was happening all at once - strategy, process and resources were being formed all in unison. There was great energy across the business, despite there being uncertainty and constant change and revision.

Engagement was a key activity in the early stages. There was a breadth of organisations across the community who could participate in AASC directly, and similarly a large volume that the ASC could benefit from developing a relationship with. I remember spending a lot of time speaking to people - some of whom were found via the good old phone book!

We had a phased approach to the recruitment of schools and Out of School Hour Care Services (OSHCS) in the first year of AASC. There was sufficient time to develop a network of relationships and gain an understanding of the geographical area the positions were assigned to.

Plenty of kilometres were travelled on the road, and many cups of tea! Meeting people and understanding the geography was key, particularly where the staff member was not local or familiar to the area. ”

Angele Gray, AASC Operations Manager for South and Western Australia



“ Everything was basically starting from scratch. We had our induction folder, a stack of white files containing the expressions of interest from interested schools and OSHCS, a laptop and mobile phone and that was it. Everything we needed, we had to create. It was a very innovative time and we were constantly responding to identified needs as they arose.

There were two or three pilot programs in Victoria. The official launch of the AASC program in Victoria occurred at one of these pilots at Kew Primary School.

How did the program run in regional and remote areas? Like it did everywhere in the early days. On the back of innovative, individualised plans that were focused entirely on training coaches and getting them up and running in schools and OSHCS.

It was a very collaborative time right from the beginning. ”

Matt Calf, AASC Operations Manager, Southern Zone





Bringing AASC to students across Australia



“ In regional Gippsland there was strong uptake of the program – it was highly valued as a fantastic opportunity for kids to get active in the after school time slot. Gippsland has many small rural schools with one school only having 10 children in total. This school has been involved from the start of the program and still is. We ran the program similar to metro regions, however there were more internal staff delivering in the program.

As we moved along, the direction of the program became far more focused on involvement of local clubs and State Sporting Associations rather than private providers and internal staff. This was reflective in both metro and regional areas however regional areas sometimes had more difficulty with workforce within clubs. ”

Mary-Ellen Ray, AASC Regional Manager, Southern and Gippsland region

“ As a retired life member of Tennis Australia’s Coaches Association, and with five years involvement in the ASC pathway to sport, I have witnessed the success of the multi-sport programme for talent identification as well as Active After-school Communities.

The respect shown from parents and OSHC coordinators, together with witnessing the children growing up with sport, have been a major part of my life. As a qualified instructor, I have introduced hockey, soccer, tennis, cricket, indoor bowls, and athletics. The children have always looked forward to participating. ”

Doug Parker, coach, Ulladulla, NSW



“ It is a shame that all good things come to an end!
For me, being one of the first teachers to be involved in the program has been an honour.

I remember 11 years ago as a teacher at Fairfield Public School, being asked to run a sport program in the afternoons. After the initial traumas of putting in the grant and figuring out how to run and pay workers (remember - I was then an inexperienced teacher), we finally got the go ahead - one of the very first schools to run with it.

With two young casual teachers, Amy McKnight and John Grigg - we went off in our school holidays to Olympic Park and did the training. We aced the assessment - we were the only teachers doing the course at the time. We passed with flying colours. This was a journey that would change the lives of children as we know it today. Here we were, three teachers, just wanting to give kids a chance to play and at that stage we didn't know the real impact it would have on me and the others who followed.

We were nominated as being the best run program and we were aptly assisted by our mentor Elisha Stanton who gave us the opportunity to prove that we were on the right track. By then, two new people Elvin Cansino and Anne Lowther joined the team and we seemed to be doing well.

I left Fairfield in 2008 but by then I had retrained twice - had our federal and state MP's join in. We were in newspapers and expanded from a two afternoon to three afternoon program. By the way, we did not win the State final but to be nominated was an absolute honour. ”

Morrie Mourad, Teacher, AASC Foundation Member and Noodle Hockey enthusiast, Fairfield Primary School (2003-2008), Canley Heights Primary School (2008-2013)



“ My name is Bethany Divola, I am 16 years old and in year 10 at St Joseph’s College Mildura. I attended St Joseph’s Primary School in Red Cliffs where I participated in all of the AASC programs on offer whilst I was a student there, one of which was a volleyball program. My older brother, Luke had already joined the SVI under 13 program when I decided to go to the tryouts as well, having had a taste of volleyball at the AASC.

I successfully gained a place in the Under 13 SVI academy and began attending training sessions. I soon progressed from the under 13’s to the under 15’s Academy program and from there tried out for the Sunraysia Academy of Sport (SAS) Volleyball Program and successfully gained a place in 2012-13 and again for the 2013-2014 Program.

During this time I have also represented my school, St Joseph’s College in local interschool Volleyball competitions, this year we achieved a place in the regional finals but were unable to attend. As a member of the St Joseph’s Volleyball team I competed at the Australian All School Volleyball Cup in Melbourne in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

In 2013 I tried out for the Western Phantoms State League Women’s Division 2 team and successfully gained a place in the squad. I was soon promoted to a regular team member. This year I was appointed Captain of the Western Phantoms Division 2 Women’s Team and continued to play in the position of opposite or middle.

In 2013 I travelled to Melbourne in February to try out for the Under 17 team to represent Victoria at the National Championships in Canberra. I made the squad for Vic West and was quickly promoted to a team member. We trained in Mildura then attended the Ballarat Skins Tournament as a team match practice. I made the team again in 2014 and we are currently in training for the Nationals in Canberra in July, where we hope to improve on last year’s ranking.

Early in 2014 I completed a Community Coach Training Course with AASC and I’m currently coaching at Mildura Central as part of the AASC program, after finishing off a term at Ranfurly Primary school. I am also volunteering as an Under 13’s Volleyball Coach for the Sunraysia Volleyball Institute (SVI).

Last year I completed a semester of sports coaching at Mildura South Primary School through my VO Sports Coaching subject. This year I am studying Fitness and Sports Training. I volunteer at the Mildura Waves Gym on Tuesday evenings to learn more about the fitness industry. In the future I would like to be a level II sports trainer and gain a Bachelor in Sports Science and Human Movement then become a PE teacher in Secondary schools.

I hope to be able to continue the AASC coaching and inspire other girls and boys to join the SVI like I did as a junior. ”

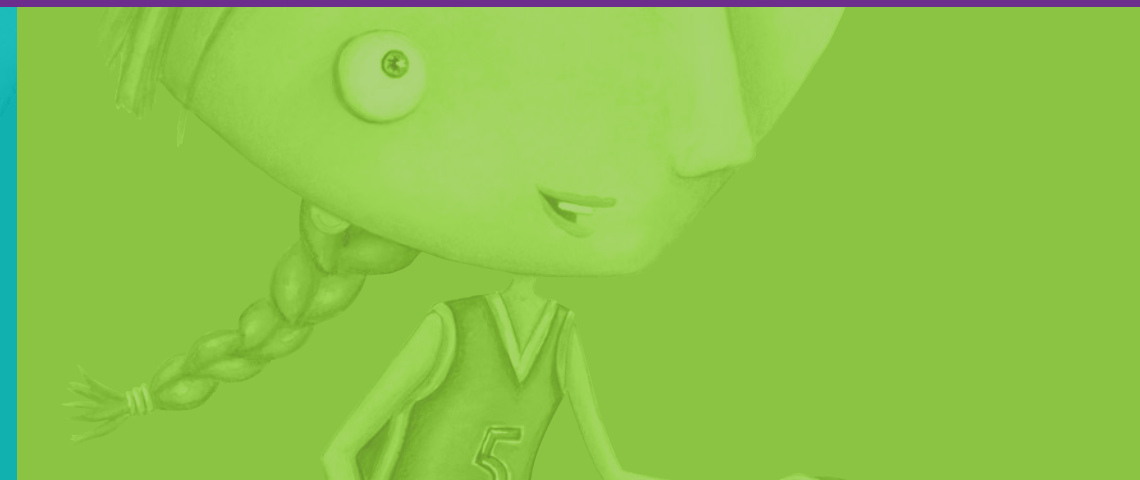
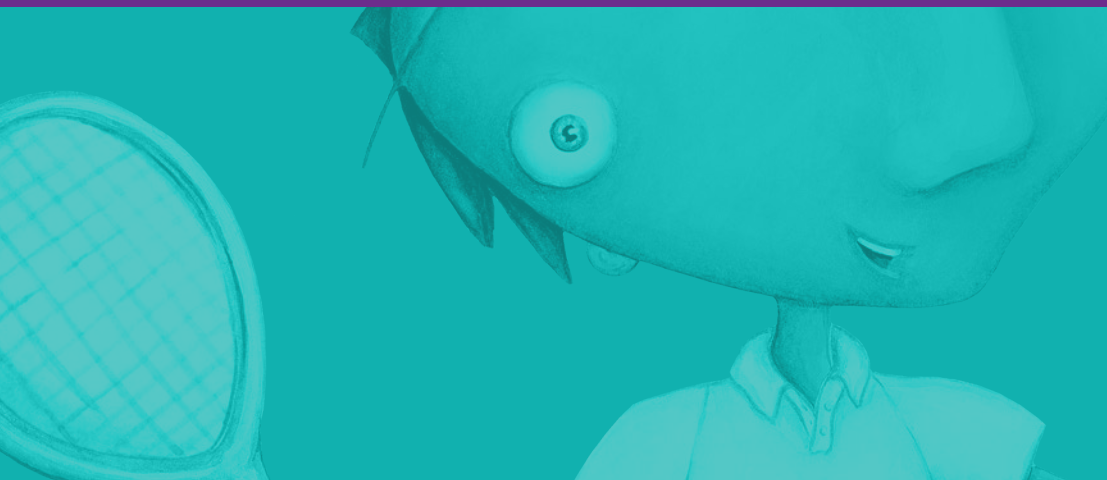
Bethany Divola, student St Joseph’s College Mildura and AASC community coach



AASC former student and current coach, Bethany Divola



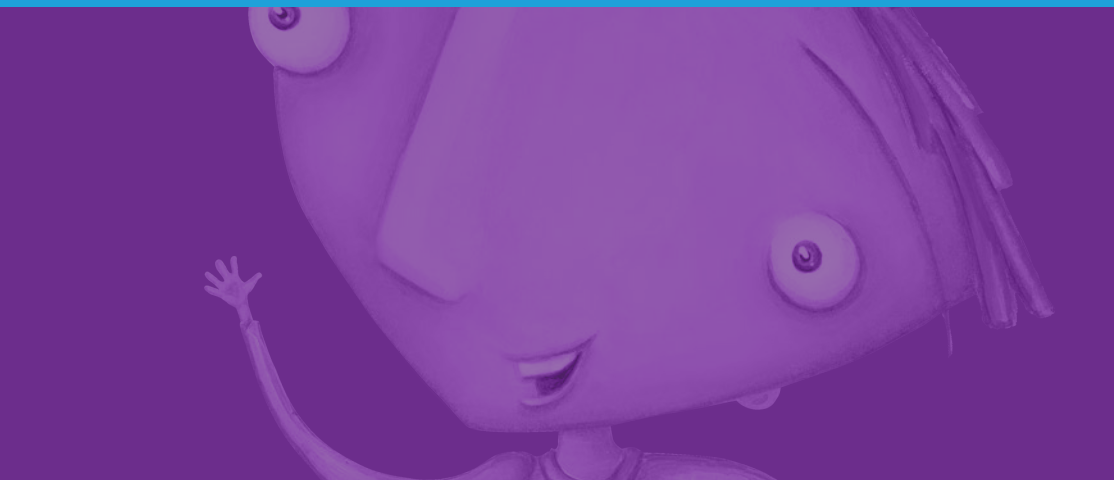
What AASC brought to local communities





The School of Air Sports Week is an annual AASC programme event held in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. In 2014, former Australian Olympic sprinter Patrick Johnson, NRL Games Development Officer James Lewis, and children from 65 locations participated in a big celebration of sport which included hockey, athletics, and rugby league.

“Hi everyone, my name’s Patrick Johnson. I’m the outback coach for NT Athletics. The relationship we’ve had with the Australian Sports Commission gives us a great opportunity to work with athletics and rugby league and be able to get out to those schools and communities that we probably never get to.”



Les Herring is proof that age is no barrier when it comes to coaching in the AASC program. The 81 year old lawn bowls coach successfully completed a lawn bowls program during term two, 2010 at Harkaway Primary School in Melbourne's outer southern region.

Much to the delight of the children in his program, Les brought the bowling green to the classroom, setting up lanes indoors and providing children with a range of games and activities designed to help them learn the skills of lawn bowls.

According to Charlie, one of the children who took part in Les' sessions, lawn bowls is great fun. "I've really enjoyed learning from Les. I had never done lawn bowls before and now I know how to hit the jack."

Les is no stranger to coaching, having successfully taught programs at the Berwick Bowling Club and also introduced lawn bowls as part of local schools' sports curriculum. He has a particular interest in developing opportunities for people with a disability.

Les encouraged all children who attended his program to come along to free coaching sessions at the club once he concluded at Harkaway Primary School.

As Les says, "Lawn bowls is no longer an old person's game. It's important to promote the sport to a younger generation and the AASC program is the perfect way to do so. Besides, I love doing it."

If Les' passion and enjoyment of lawn bowls rubs off on the children in his AASC sessions, Berwick Bowls Club may have a whole new breed of up and coming bowlers on their greens!

Les Herring, AASC lawn bowls community coach



AASC coach Les Herring



What we're proud of

“ We approached the school with trepidation. It was one of our early jobs and we were still finding our feet. We had a plan though and we were confident. We heard the noise of kids, loads of kids, at least 50 of them. Wow, we didn’t expect that amongst them was Jordan. Eager as the best of them, smile beaming as big as I’ve ever seen. It wasn’t until we started our warm up game that I realised Jordan had muscular dystrophy. But that didn’t stop Jordan.

Unable to speak, he made the other children understand him and interpret for us until we understood him better. He ran in his own way and we assisted him, laughed with him and succeed with him, all with that beautiful smile on his face. At the end, we were rewarded with a hug.

I learnt a lot from Jordan and I was humbled by his ability to overcome his disabilities and enjoy simple pleasures, as well as by the other children accepting him so easily and making allowances without complaint. I looked forward to each week with Jordan and was sad to say goodbye. I often think of him and what became of him and what lay ahead from his future – but he was certainly enjoying his childhood. ”

Judie Alabaster, Knox Basketball, Victoria



Current waterskiing world champion and five time Australian champion, Jason Sleep, is providing opportunities for children living with disabilities.

A keen competitive water skier, Sleep was injured in a quad bike accident that made him a paraplegic. Growing up in a water skiing family, Sleep didn’t let his accident stop him from excelling on the water-ski circuit.

Becoming an AASC community coach in 2009, Sleep has delivered 60 wheelchair basketball AASC sessions at 22 different sites throughout Victoria. Sleep said that despite being based in Bendigo, he enjoys travelling the long distances to smaller country towns to deliver his sessions.

“I take my trailer of wheelchairs with me and my sessions consist of games of wheelchair basketball with modified rules, as well as other fun activities such as relays.

“The children are often so captivated by the activities that I allow the session to go longer than the allocated one hour time slot.”

Sleep said the activities were educational for children and provided them with knowledge that sport and physical activity were available to everyone.

Jason Sleep, AASC wheelchair basketball community coach



When given an opportunity for my sport to be a profession,
I thought it would be great fun, and now I have a confession.
I saw that being a coach is more than just playing sport,
It's about teaching and learning, and giving others a thought.
The children I coach hold football close to their hearts,
And if there's one thing I've learned, coaching is not a science, it's an art.
My goal was to challenge those who had the skill,
While making sure those who didn't still got the thrill,
Because football's a game that includes everyone,
And I realised that coaching was about making sure the kids had fun.
Slowly but surely, I noticed something strange.
After a session of coaching, my mood would always change.
The excitement and games shared with their friends,
Would keep us all happy until the very end.
The parents would say that footy became a common word,
In their family, it was all they ever heard.
So when they're running and laughing and kicking a ball,
The joy of the sport has them all enthralled,
And when we pack up and they all go home,
There's something I think every coach should know.
Yes, it's good to develop and a cool job's a plus,
But at the end of the day, it's not about us.
And I think that's what makes being a coach so great,
Is seeing the smiles on each kid's face.

Hayley Gossow, coach, Western Bulldogs Football Club, Victoria



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We began with a thought and a story to tell
From a man with a dog who couldn't see well,
With very low vision and a dream so clear
To teach little children, they have nothing to fear.

With an idea to teach games with low or no sight
The AASC program was sure to be right.
With mentors and teachings to encourage us all,
We got some equipment, blindfolds and balls.


Blindfold Sports emerged so slowly at first,
With excitement and fun it gave us a thirst.
With many more schools, our program has grown
Goalball, Blind Cricket, Beep Baseball is now known.

With so many children in after school care,
Opportunities to try a new sport if they dare.
With thanks to the Australian Sports Commission,
We are on our way to accomplish our mission.

Anita Fagg, coach, Blindfold Sports, ACT



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To help celebrate the achievements of the AASC programme over its 10 year history, the ASC launched the AASC&ME competition in 2014.

This is the national winner of the competition - Paul Mitchell, from United Taekwondo in NSW - describing the positive impact the programme has had on his club and the children involved in it.

“My name is Paul Mitchell, and I run a martial arts organisation called United Taekwondo. For the past eight years we’ve been a part of the AASC programme. In that time, we’ve taught in over 250 locations, with 7,000 children participating in martial arts based activities.

[Please sit back and enjoy our video](#)

Paul Mitchell, United Taekwondo, NSW

Thank you AASC



What's next?



The legacy of the Active After-School Communities (AASC) programme is enormous. We saw 25 per cent of Australian primary schools take part and together we taught children from Hobart to Humpty Doo the importance of healthy and active lifestyles. To build on this success, we are delighted to begin our new programme, Sporting Schools.

Sporting Schools will pick up where AASC left off, encouraging children to get active and develop a lifelong interest in sport. It will provide primary schools with the resources to offer a range of different sports before, during and after school hours by tapping into the local network of community sporting organisations and coaches.

Sporting Schools will reach more than 850,000 children around Australia – that's more children in more schools than ever before. With your support, we can achieve our goal of creating a healthier Australia by teaching children the importance of healthy lifestyles and instilling a passion for sport early in their lives.

SPORTING Schools