



## Pathways to sport – Success story

### Skateboarding Australia, Lennox Head Public School and Rainbow Children's Centre Ballina

This document demonstrates the pathways to community sport and physical activity made available through the Australian Government's Active After-school Communities (AASC) program.

**Sport:** Skate

**Organisation:** Skateboarding Australia, Lennox Head Public School and Rainbow Children's Centre Ballina

**Location:** North Coast 2, NSW

**Date:** December 2011

**Transitions:** 32

#### Summary

The establishment of a skateboarding pathway was initiated by local Regional Coordinator of the Active After-school Communities (AASC) program, Matt Kelso, in response to publicity surrounding a number of injuries to children at the newly constructed skate park at Lennox Head.

The opportunity to provide introductory skateboarding programs through the AASC program was seen as an ideal tool to educating young children on the skills of skate as a means of providing safer usage of the facility.

The local skateboarding community was approached and quickly seized the opportunity to partner with the AASC program, providing two coaches to participate in the Community Coach Training Program (CCTP).

Local HUB Manager, Dylan McNamara said, "I had just completed my Level 1 when we were offered the opportunity to work with schools in AASC. The program has produced some fantastic outcomes for local skateboarding and we are very excited to be involved at this level."

The sites who engaged in the program were regionally based and located in close proximity to local skate parks within Ballina Shire Council. Additionally, the local skate community was engaged to supplement the program with coaches and resources from local businesses.

## **Planning**

Following concerns raised about the safety of children using the newly constructed skate park at Lennox Head, the local skateboarding community was approached by Truck Stop Sk8, and invited to participate in the program. From there, Skateboard Australia (SbA) were asked to provide guidance on the structure of skateboarding in the community, to ensure a pathway existed.

In consultation with SbA, meetings were organised with local skate stakeholders, councils and AASC to provide a series of grassroots events which would serve as a pathway from the AASC program to SbA membership. These events were intended to engage all skate parks in the region and councils.

A Special Initiatives Grant (SIG) was utilised to deliver the program outcomes through the provision of skateboards, helmets and safety pads to SbA and local coaches. This allowed for broader delivery in Term 1, 2012.

## **Implementation**

Two CCTP skateboard coaches were recruited to deliver the seven week programs, representing SbA. The program provided an introduction to skateboarding with progression to using ramps, jumps and rails.

Groups were divided into two, maintaining the one coach to eight student ratio required by SbA. This allowed for groups to be divided on ability and progression.

The week seven event involved the site escorting children to the various ramps, rails and jumps. Students were supervised at all times to ensure maximum safety and success.

In implementing the SIG, it was important to secure local input in providing equipment; it was local skate retailer, Truck Stop Sk8 who was able to provide the most competitive quote.

In satisfying local stakeholders there is a further commitment in trust and ownership in the AASC program which helped in later securing discount vouchers which were provided as prizes to students.

## **Outcome**

The main barriers in establishing the program were the lack of pathway programs within the sport. This was overcome by initiating meetings with all stakeholders to develop an annual roster of grassroots events. SbA has been very supportive of the process as their goals of HUB establishment were a fundamental driver in achieving positive outcomes.

The success of the program was fourfold; a grass roots program was established (AASC),

feeder programs are now being coordinated (SbA), a roster of facility usage is established (local councils) and links to major events are provided (local councils, retailers, SbA and participants).

In terms of meeting AASC program objectives, the skate program was able to provide an exciting and engaging sport to children as well as a simple pathway to SbA activities, whilst engaging the community stakeholders in the program and its outcomes.

Overall, the program achieved positive outcomes with 32 transitions recorded and a tangible increase in participation, which was evident through tracking of discount vouchers at the local skate retailer.

During Term 1, 2012 four skateboarding programs operated across the region with a strong possibility of future prospects.

## **Learnings**

In order to achieve key AASC outcomes it was essential that the regional coordinator provided the leadership to engage all the stakeholders.

Skateboarding is a sport in evolution, there is no established club culture and it exists primarily as a street level sport with pro-am events scattered across the country driven by local councils as a means of engaging disaffected youth.

Councils have a large stake in the future of the sport as access to, and usage of facilities is a key aim and most have made large investments into skate parks. Securing their support for organised events and follow on HUB / private coaching activities is also fundamental to pathway development.

*AASC Regional Coordinator Matt Kelso worked to establish this pathway for NSW North Coast children into skate.*