



Pathways to sport – Success stories

Newcastle Surf School

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: Surfing

Organisation: Newcastle Surf School

Location: Newcastle

Date/Year: September 2011

Transitions: 39

Summary

Over the past five years, two local primary schools in the Lake Macquarie district, Marks Point Public School and Swansea Public School, have been taking part in a number of surfing programs run by the Active After-school Communities (AASC) program in conjunction with Newcastle Surf School. These schools were selected due to their close proximity to the beach.

All Newcastle Surf School coaches who participate in the AASC program have completed the Community Coach Training Program (CCTP). These coaches assist the children by teaching them in the water, standing by their side. This has proven to be an effective method of coaching as it makes the children feel more confident as well as helping them to develop their skills faster as the coaches are able to provide more guidance.

Over the past five years, these coaches have primarily focused on helping children learn how to be safe in the water. In addition to this, they also focus on surf awareness, paddling, catching waves, riding waves, standing up, how to read the waves and the ocean, turning techniques, riding the wave face, surfing etiquette, where to surf and all about their surfing equipment.

All the equipment is supplied to the children by Newcastle Surf School. This includes a soft, stable surfboard which is easy to balance, paddle, stand and surf on, as well as a wetsuit or rash vest.

The surfing programs are run separately with both schools attending the sessions at different times. By having the programs run independently, Newcastle Surf School is able to provide enough equipment for each child to participate in every surfing session. Overall, there have been up to 24 children participating in every surfing session in the program over the past five years.

Newcastle Surf School owner, Dan Frodsham said, "We love our job and are so stoked to be out there helping the kids and seeing them have fun. That's the most important thing."

At the end of the seven week program, Frodsham hands out information to the children and their parents about two of the local board riders clubs in the area, Frenchman's Board Riders Club and Blacksmiths Board Rider's Club. This initiative successfully promotes the local tow board riders clubs as well as Newcastle Surf School's 'learn to surf' clinics, which are on offer during school holidays to children and their parents.

At this stage, there are up to 39 children who have successfully transitioned into local board riders clubs in the Lake Macquarie district over the past five years.

Planning

- The Lake Macquarie Regional Coordinator for the AASC program, Sue Barben, approached Newcastle Surf School to engage them in the AASC program by requesting that they conduct a surfing program for schools in the local area that are in close proximity to the beach.
- Marks Point and Swansea Public School were the first choice due to their location as well as a number of requests that were made by the schools to provide a surfing program to their students.
- Marks Point Public School asks their teachers at the beginning of each year to select a number of inactive children from their class that would benefit from the program. The first round of offers goes out to those children and all remaining places are offered to other students.
- Swansea Public School follows a similar process to identify their inactive children to ensure they get a place in the AASC surfing program.
- A number of resources have been used to implement this program over the past five years. Notably, Marks Point Public School utilises a Special Initiative Grant (SIG) to fund busses which transport children to and from the local beach. Without the use of the SIG, many children would not be able to participate in the program due to several families not owning vehicles. Swansea Public School did not face this issue therefore a SIG was unnecessary.

Implementation

Both schools offer surfing as an annual program to students as part of the AASC program. The school's staff are very supportive of the AASC's surfing program.

Throughout the entire seven sessions of the AASC program, Dan Frodsham has continued to

encourage children who are participating in the AASC program to transition into local clubs by promoting local board riders to children and their parents. He also offers surf boards at cost price to any interested child and parent. Dan has an arrangement with a surfboard manufacturer to on-sell the learner's boards at cost to AASC participants.

Outcome

- 18 children from AASC surfing sessions have joined Blacksmiths Tow Board Riders Club (affiliated with Surfing Australia) since 2007
- 21 Children from AASC surfing sessions have joined Frenchman's Tow Board Riders Club (affiliated with Surfing Australia) since 2007
- 100 Children from AASC surfing programs over the past 5 years have purchased surf boards from Newcastle Surf School at cost price since 2007

Learnings

Communication between the AASC program and coaches is the key to tracking information as regards transitions. Once the coach understands the importance of pathways and follows through with promotion of them, transitions will occur.

As a result of the children who have joined local clubs thanks to the AASC program, the local board riders clubs have continued to encourage pathways into their clubs.

At this stage there are currently 39 children who have joined local clubs, this has been a significant motivator to local clubs.

AASC Regional Coordinator Sue Barben worked to establish this pathway for NSW children into surfing.