



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Active After-school Communities

Helping kids and communities get active



AASC NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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Active kids win award for Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission was a joint winner at the 2006 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management in recognition of its Active After-school Communities (AASC) program.

The awards honour the achievements of the public sector and aim to encourage and recognise better practice and innovation in all levels of government in Australia.

The Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, said the AASC program is the major component of the Australian Government's Building a Healthy, Active Australia initiative — a nationally coordinated response to the challenge posed by increasing levels of inactivity among the nation's children.

'The Active After-school Communities program is the first national program to be implemented in Australia to tackle the growing issue of inactivity in Australian children and this award reinforces the valuable work the Australian Sports Commission is doing in the community,' Senator Kemp said.

Mark Peters, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Sports Commission, said that the award was a great achievement as it recognised the hard work of Commission staff as well as the organisation's ongoing commitment to helping Australian children to get active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

'Everyone involved in helping to get the AASC program up and running is to be highly commended for their efforts. The success of the program and the positive outcomes that have been achieved are a direct result of the dedicated and committed staff we have working for the Australian Sports Commission,' Mr Peters said.

The AASC program has grown from 900 sites and 45 000 children in Term 2 of 2005, to 2250 sites and over 110 000 children in Term 4 of 2006. The program is aiming to reach around 3250 sites and 150 000 children by Term 3 of 2007.



Australian Sports Commission CEO Mark Peters, National Junior Sport General Manager Judy Flanagan and AASC staff at the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management.

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Active After-school Communities goes remote

The AASC program has taken an exciting step forward in its efforts to offer a truly nationwide program to Australian primary school-aged children by joining with the School of the Air to deliver physical activity in remote areas across Australia.

The School of the Air at Broken Hill educates isolated children in Southern Queensland, South Australia and over half of New South Wales. The school services an area of approximately 0.8 million square kilometres and has an enrolment of 84 students.

The AASC program was introduced to School of the Air families through mini-schools. Mini-schools are gatherings where teachers, children and their home supervisors travel to a host station to participate in a variety of academic, social and sporting activities. They provide opportunities for people who are specialists in their field to work with the children.

Through this partnership the AASC program provides Playing for Life activities for School of the Air children, and trains parents and governesses in the AASC's Community Coach Training Program.

In addition to the mini-schools, School of the Air lessons are delivered on a weekly basis from the teaching studio in Broken Hill and received in each home site on the student's computer. Sessions involve a 15 to 20-minute satellite session,

which is then followed by Playing for Life activity sessions, where the children head outside and get active.

AASC Regional Coordinator Scott Umback said that while inactivity is not a major issue for School of the Air children, the chance to participate in structured physical activity is a great opportunity for them.

'The opportunities for the children are endless and we are all very excited about the program. Parents, teachers and children alike were all looking forward to the introduction of the AASC program in Term 4,' Umback said.

Due to the special circumstances of the School of the Air many accommodations have to be made, including delivering Playing for Life activities in bare paddocks and conducting the training of parents and governesses in shearing quarters and around camp fires.

Umback said that from working with the School of the Air he now has a far greater appreciation of the day-to-day challenges faced by remote families and children in rural Australia. He has also received some great ideas for new AASC activities.

'I have even been introduced to the children's own version of Playing for Life activities, which included cowboy hats and stock whips as standard equipment for the traditional whip-cracking competition,' Umback said.

School of the Air Deputy Principal Scott Sanford recently announced further good news about the program. Maari Ma, the local Aboriginal health service, is joining with the Australian Sports Commission and the School of the Air to provide each School of the Air family with a sports kit, valued at \$150, to aid participation in the AASC program.

'This news was very exciting for us as this support totals in excess of \$6000 and goes a long way to meeting our goals of building community partnerships and building a healthy, active Australia,' Umback said.

School of the Air Principal Anthony Edgecumbe has also expressed his gratitude to the Australian Sports Commission and said that the program is a great opportunity for the School of the Air.

'The positive attitude of AASC staff towards the program and the School of the Air has been very encouraging and exciting. This is a wonderful opportunity to get children in remote areas active,' Edgecumbe said.

'Feedback about the program from School of the Air families has been extremely positive so far, with some parents even expressing an interest in helping the School of the Air develop a unit of work based around the AASC for use next year.'



Far left: Kids getting active and having fun in bare paddocks.

Left: School of the Air kids demonstrating their own version of Playing for Life activities — whip cracking!

Active After-school Communities grows business for local deliverers

By getting on board and helping Australian kids get active, many physical activity providers are finding the AASC program is helping them to grow their business by creating links with the local community.

The AASC program is designed to engage traditionally non-active children and help build pathways between schools and out of school hours care services (OSHCS), local community organisations and sporting clubs.

Joel Muyot, Rhee International Taekwondo Secretary General for the Canberra region, said that they decided to join the AASC program to get wider exposure for their business and because they wanted to get involved with an organisation that had similar goals in mind when it came to children's health and fitness.

'Through the AASC program we have not only gained valuable skills and experience in training kids, but we have also had more exposure to the public than the traditional methods of advertising that we have used in the past,' Muyot said.

Rhee Taekwondo has been part of the AASC program since Term 4 of 2006, delivering to four sites in the Canberra region. As of Term 1 and 2 next year, they will be delivering to over 11 sites.

'Our program has grown unexpectedly due to the popularity of non-traditional sporting activities being introduced into the AASC program. We have also had an



Joel Muyot from Rhee International Taekwondo teaching kids the fine art of taekwondo.

increase in enquiries about continuing further training at our usual classes,' Muyot said

'I envisage that if these kids decide to start training in martial arts some time in the future, their memory of their involvement with this program will persuade them to enrol in one of our classes. The return in our investment is one of long-term benefits rather than short term. I'm confident that the more kids that know about our organisation, the higher the probability of them joining us in the future.'

Gary Maton from Soccer Under the Stars said he has also found that his business has grown since becoming part of the AASC program. Since starting the program in Term 3 of 2005, he has grown from one trainer to now having to employ 29.

'The program has enabled our part-time holiday program to become a full-time program. The AASC has spring-boarded Soccer Under the Stars to a full-time business,' Maton said.

'The AASC program has also helped create links to various councils with which we previously had no relationship and we are now receiving extra business. Only recently we have started working with Penrith Council to deliver vacation-care programs in addition to the AASC programs we already run.'

Soccer Under the Stars delivers 63 AASC programs in the Sydney area, including Katoomba, Parramatta, Windsor and Liverpool. The program involves football (soccer), netball, basketball, touch, tee-ball, aerobics, cheerleading/dance and multi-sports.

Maton said that through word of mouth, people are now also approaching the business to become trainers and because of the AASC program, they are looking to expand to other states.

Anyone can apply to become a deliverer of the AASC program, including local sporting club members, volunteers, parents, students, school teachers and OSHCS staff. All those interested will be required to complete an application form addressing the program's quality assurance requirements, and will be provided with specific program training.

For more information about becoming a deliverer, people are encouraged to visit the AASC web site (www.ausport.gov.au/aasc).



The kids from Penrith's Yoorami OOSH @ Werrington get active with Soccer Under the Stars.



Riddells Creek Primary School students get on their bikes.

Schools and OSHCS join together to create ‘Cycle Fun’

Children in the Macedon Ranges are cycling their way to a healthier lifestyle thanks to a joint initiative funded by the AASC program.

By combining their AASC grants, local primary schools and OSHCS, have been able to purchase 14 mountain bikes, helmets and a trailer to deliver Cycle Fun activities as part of their AASC program.

The arrangement involves four sites — Riddells Creek Primary School, New Gisborne Primary School OSHCS, Kidzone Romsey OSHCS and Lancefield Primary School. Two sites agreed that they would purchase the bikes and the other two sites would support the application for the AASC State Special Initiative Grant.

Stephen van Gils, Principal at Riddells Creek Primary School, was a key instigator of the initiative and has seen it in operation as part of their AASC program.

‘The concept arose from the need to encourage students to gain experience in the skills required to ride safely, previously limited opportunities for children to participate in cycle education within

the area, and a chance to offer greater variety in the AASC program,’ van Gils said.

‘Once we offered Cycle Fun, it was noticeable that a number of the less-active children have really become involved. The enthusiasm of the children is absolutely delightful to watch. We hope that their riding will lead to continued activity and safe riding around Riddells Creek.’

Van Gils said that the school’s program has formed a very effective partnership with the Macedon Ranges Council to deliver safe cycling to children in the region.

‘After a successful program at Riddells Creek Primary School and New Gisborne OSHCS during Term 3, the Cycle Fun activities have moved to Lancefield Primary School and Kidzone Romsey in Term 4. We are extremely lucky to have access to this exciting program in the Macedon Ranges area.’

AASC Regional Coordinator Brad Roylance said that as part of the program children are learning general bike control and safety, with the instructors adopting a

fun, challenging and game-based approach to the development of the cycle skills and knowledge.

‘The children are enthusiastic about participating in a different type of activity, which has further increased their motivation to be a part of the AASC program,’ Roylance said.

‘The children’s reactions are a clear indication of how much they are enjoying the Cycle Fun program, with many commenting on how much fun they are having at each session.’

Due to the popularity of Cycle Fun the bikes will be in use throughout the life of the AASC program, expanding the positive impact of the program on children in these communities.



Children at Riddells Creek Primary School mastering figure eights.

Clubs blow the whistle on Active After-school Communities

The Western Region Football League has successfully used the flexibility of the AASC program to its advantage by delivering AFL umpiring to the students of Werribee Primary School.

Terry Gunn, of the Umpiring Division of the Western Region Football League, said that from an umpiring perspective, the AASC program has allowed them to market umpiring as a rewarding sport, integral to the game of AFL.

'We have introduced umpiring as a 'cool and fun' option for the youth of the area, so that as the children develop, they have a positive attitude towards umpiring. Over time we will attract more young men and women to become involved,' Gunn said.

'Umpiring is a fantastic way to develop personal skills and decision-making, supervision, presentation and self-confidence. It certainly adds quality to the content of a CV as well. I have been delighted to see the students have fun during this program. Many of them actually interpret and give some great decisions.'

Liz Mulconry, Western Region Football League Club Development Manager, said that by delivering a quality junior AFL umpiring program in addition to their regular AFL football program, the organisation aims to increase the number of children exposed to football and support and strengthen community cohesion and development.

Meredith Kelly, AASC Regional Coordinator, said it was pleasing to see all the organisations involved coming together in a partnership to provide a program that is clearly very rewarding and stimulating for all involved.

'The umpiring program has been extremely successful from the AASC point of view. The kids have thoroughly enjoyed it and learnt a lot from it. They have also developed more of an awareness of what umpires do,' Kelly said.

'The program has helped build community links by involving a new not-for-profit organisation and it has allowed the Western Region Football League to gain access to schools, where they are keen to target young people to get them involved in umpiring. It allows them to build the profile of umpiring and hopefully some of the older kids may consider getting involved by going through the AASC umpiring program.'

The Western Region Football League is keen to continue delivering both AFL umpiring and Australian football, and the AASC program will be working with them to deliver the maximum amount of programs they can manage in 2007.

Kelly said that the program is a chance for the Western Region Football League to get their brand out in the community and to start promoting positive messages to young kids that umpiring is interesting and fun and something that can be pursued if they wish to take up the sport.

The initiative has been supported by the AFL and Football Victoria and is currently only delivered to Werribee Primary School students. In 2007, Western Region Football League will be looking to deliver both their football and umpiring programs at a number of schools in the western suburbs of Melbourne.



Werribee Primary School students learning about what it takes to be an umpire.



Werribee Primary School students putting their new skills into play.



Western Region Football League's umpiring clinic.

Penola scores big with football



'Parents versus students friendly' team photo.

With the success of the 2006 Football World Cup, young children in South Australia have decided to take up the sport with the help of local award-winning AASC community coach, Guy Detot.

Detot has successfully taken the AASC program's version of football (soccer) to Penola and other small schools and local communities in the south-east of the state to get kids active and generate a passion for football.

AASC Regional Coordinator Josephine Duigan said that with a current population of 1200 there had never really been the capacity or interest to establish a local club or competition in Penola. However, this has all changed with the introduction of Detot's football program.

'Due to Guy's enthusiasm for football, AASC participants have become inspired and many now travel a 100-kilometre round trip each week for training and games with clubs in Mount Gambier and Naracoorte,' Duigan said.

Inspired by his most recent state AASC Community Coach Award, Detot's passion for football continues to burn. He has single-handedly organised a fun Saturday morning football competition which is hosted with the approval of the governing council at Penola Primary School.

Detot said that parents and students from five AASC sites including Nangwarry, Kalangadoo, Glencoe, Mount Burr and Penola, are involved in various roles each week.

'Parents take on the roles of coaches and referees and teams are changed each week to ensure a fun, fair and social game,' Detot said.

'It is quite possible that the huge turnout of parents is because the morning ends with a 'kids versus parents' friendly game. I have never seen so many mums and dads so keen to get on the field!'

Detot, who is a member of the Western Border Centrals Soccer Club, is now calling for local children and adults to register their interest in a twilight summer competition.

'Through the competition I hope to attract local footballers and netballers of all ages to continue their fitness regimes through playing football in the off season,' Detot said.

Detot maintains that his enthusiasm for creating community football opportunities was generated by his participation in the AASC Community Coach Training Program, learning about the Playing for Life philosophy and becoming a popular choice for local sites participating in the AASC program.

Duigan believes that given the momentum that has been created by one person's love of a popular sport, it seems safe to assume that with support from the community, a new club will eventually emerge.



Far left: Parent coaches and student participants at the 'fun' Saturday morning football competition.

Left: Regional Coordinator Josephine Duigan, deliverer and 5-Star Award Winner Guy Detot, School Principal Dale Price and students.

Reach for Your Goal gala day

AASC gala days continue to increase in popularity around the country, with many regions now expanding the days to include more children and a wider variety of activities.

Of particular note was the Reach for Your Goal gala day held on 8 November 2006, which brought together over 60 primary school-aged children with varying disabilities from nine schools around the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie regions to participate in a free, fun and active day.

The AASC program hosted the event to promote local community sport and to give primary school-aged children with a disability the chance to experience a range of activities and sports with an emphasis on fun and high activity.

Lake Macquarie Regional Coordinator Sue Barben, with the assistance of University of Newcastle student Michael Brown, coordinated the day to bring together kids with a disability and local community sporting groups.

Barben said that often sporting groups are unsure when it comes to working with kids with disabilities.

'The gala day provided an opportunity for community sports to understand the needs of these kids to participate



Kids having a ball with tennis, one of the many games on offer during the day.

in sport and live life to the fullest. It also gave the kids an opportunity to try different sports,' Barben said.

Sports such as Australian football, taekwondo, hip hop and street dance, tennis, basketball, traditional Indigenous games and active fun games were offered to the children.

Barben said the gala day has encouraged some of the sports to include activities for kids with a disability into their everyday program,

as well as encouraging five schools to submit expressions of interest to be involved in the program.

'From the huge smiles on the children's faces during the day it was evident that they enjoyed the opportunity to participate. The day was supported by teachers, teachers' aides, parents, carers, the Red Cross and volunteers,' Barben said.

At the end of the day every child received a 'show bag' with information on how to access the sports that were present, ensuring ongoing networks and assisting with building links within the community.

If you are interested in holding a gala day or would like to know if one is happening in your area, contact your local AASC regional coordinator.



Kids from Newcastle and Lake Macquarie getting into the groove with hip hop and street dance.



Be challenged, be inspired, and explore the future of sport!

The Australian Sports Commission is hosting its third Our Sporting Future forum at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from 21 to 23 March 2007. Held every second year, this forum attracts delegates from sport and sport-related industries across Australia and internationally.

The forum program will address the key challenges for Australian sport now and in the future, including:

- > the changing face of Australia and its sporting society — population and demographic changes, and the potential impacts on engagement strategies, volunteerism, talent identification and cultural issues

- > the future of technology in sport — sports science and the latest research developments relating to performance analysis and new media and the impacts on sport
- > the future business of sport — changes in sport governance, sponsorship and media/broadcasting.

Our Sporting Future 2007 will also provide strategies, ideas and information that can be applied across the Australian sports industry. Some of the topics that will be covered include effective sports management, improving participation rates, protecting sports integrity and remaining internationally competitive.

More information on the forum can be found on the Our Sporting Future web site (www.ausport.gov.au/events/osf2007).

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