



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# Active After-school Communities

Helping kids and communities get active



## AASC NATIONAL NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2007

### Children around Australia celebrate and get active!

You could almost hear the cheers of nearly 150 000 children around Australia following the Australian Government's budget announcement confirming that the Australian Sports Commission's Active After-school Communities (AASC) program will now continue through to 2010.

The decision to extend the program demonstrates that the Government is committed to continuing to provide healthy living opportunities for Australian children. The AASC program currently operates in around 3000 schools and out of school hours care services (OSHCS) across Australia. By the end of Term 3 of 2007 an estimated 3250 sites will

be involved, providing fun, structured physical activities for up to 150 000 children.

Mark Peters, CEO of the Australian Sports Commission, said that the continued support for the program is testament to the success of this nationally delivered initiative, made possible through the dedication of the thousands of AASC community coaches and the network of regional coordinators around Australia.

'The AASC program was the first national initiative targeting inactivity in Australian children. Through this program, primary school-aged children can access a huge range of sport and non-traditional activities, which

will encourage participation and help teach children to be active for life.'

Mr Peters also praised the efforts of the schools, OSHCS, community members and supporting organisations who have been involved in the program to date.

'The support of so many people at community level has been paramount to the success of the program. The Australian Sports Commission is very excited that the outstanding contribution of all stakeholders in achieving the program objectives has been acknowledged by the Australian Government through the extension of the program for a further three years.'

Children around Australia celebrate the extension of the AASC program.



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## Celebrating three years of quality, safe and fun structured physical activity

The AASC program has had an amazing three years, improving the lives of nearly 150 000 children across the states and territories, and training over 19 000 community members to deliver the program. Here are some stories that reflect on some of the achievements of the AASC program.



'To see the look on a student's face when they finally connect with the ball is quite inspirational,' Mrs Pat Aitken said.

### Building local club membership in Deniliquin, New South Wales

The Deniliquin Golf Club partnership with the AASC program has attracted so many budding young golfers that they are looking to start a junior competition. The club became involved in the AASC program in April 2007 and has 50 local primary school students a week come and try their hand at golf.

The club became interested in the AASC program as a way to attract new members, particularly junior players, and seven members of the club became registered deliverers with the program.

The AASC program not only provided the pathway for students to become involved in golf, but also provided Deniliquin Golf Club with the necessary training, equipment and financial resources to support the program.

Mrs Pat Aitken, a member of the club, said the AASC program gave the club a base from which to start.

'The AASC program has given the club the resources and confidence to become proactive in attracting juniors. Without the support and enthusiasm of our local AASC regional coordinator nothing would have happened,' she said.

'Initially we set about attracting new members and seeking some much-needed funds for the club, but our involvement has been much more rewarding than we imagined. To see the look on a student's face when they finally connect with the ball is quite inspirational,' Pat said.

### Building community capacity, Northern Territory

The Northern Territory has more than 60 sites participating in the AASC program, with over 60 per cent of these located in remote areas. Just under half of these sites are exclusively for Indigenous children. The program aims to build community capacity through many means, including training and supporting local people to deliver sport.

Wallace Dennis is a local resident in the remote community of Minyerri, 260 kilometres southeast of Katherine. With the assistance of the AASC program, he has gained important qualifications and employment through his involvement and is a vibrant role model for younger children in the region.

'Sport is important for young people within the community because it gives them something to do and makes them feel good about themselves,' Wallace said.

Through the AASC program Wallace has completed his Community Coach Training Program and now assists in coaching junior AFL, cricket, softball and football. He completed Year 10 in 2005 and now has a full-time position as Minyerri Council's sport and recreation officer. Wallace has two employees and runs the AASC program and holiday programs in the area.



Wallace Dennis, Sport and Recreation Officer for Minyerri Council.



Christmas Island children have fun getting active with the AASC program.

### Community coach training, Christmas Island, Western Australia

Located 380 kilometres south of Java and 2650 kilometres from Perth, Christmas Island is the most remote AASC site in Australia. The population of the island is culturally diverse, with approximately 60 per cent Chinese, 10-15 per cent European and 25-30 per cent Malay.

WA Regional Manager, Kim Low, visited Christmas Island this year to conduct community coach training with local teachers and residents interested in being involved in the AASC program.

'Christmas Island is such a unique place,' Kim said. 'The cultural diversity brings such variety to the local community.'

School Physical Education Coordinator, Grant Maires, is grateful for the introduction of the AASC program on Christmas Island. 'The community coach training was very beneficial and the funding enabled us to purchase additional equipment and provide a greater variety of activities after school for the children,' he said.

### World champion delivers for AASC, South Australia

David Gould has achieved some amazing feats in wheelchair basketball, being a five-time world champion and Paralympian who captained the Australian team to a gold medal in Atlanta in 1996. David is also a AASC 5-star Community Coach winner and a valuable asset to the AASC program. It is not only AASC participants who have benefited from his experience. David is a junior coach at North Adelaide Rockets Basketball Club.

Over 900 children have been fortunate enough to participate in David's fun and engaging sessions at Paringa Park OSHC.

Paringa Park OSHC has been involved in the AASC program since the initial roll-out phase of the program in Term 2 of 2005. Throughout this time, the Paringa Park OSHC has had an average attendance of over 30 students per session.



David Gould, wheelchair basketball world champion and Paralympian.

### Pathways to little athletics, Queensland

'Family, fun and fitness' is the philosophy of Noosa Little Athletics and this ensures a great fit with the AASC program.

Noosa Little Athletics is now nearing the completion of its term delivering for the AASC program at two schools, and the club is now taking the next step to actively create pathways for AASC children to start participating with the club.

As Val Hooper, secretary of Noosa Little Athletics, said: 'Our delivery program for little athletics accommodates both children who want to have fun and those who wish to improve their athletic abilities. We have introduced each of the events that the children would normally compete in at little athletics and have done so in a fun and inclusive manner'.

In structuring the program this way, the club intends to make it easier for those children participating in the AASC program to come to their club and join in. To further facilitate this, the club has decided to give everyone who participates two free 'trial vouchers', redeemable once the season starts in September 2007. These vouchers will be attached to an information flyer for parents interested in taking up the offer.

'As the term has progressed the children have become more curious about what our club has to offer. When our athletic season starts we hope to see some familiar faces jumping into our philosophy of 'family, fun and fitness', said Val.



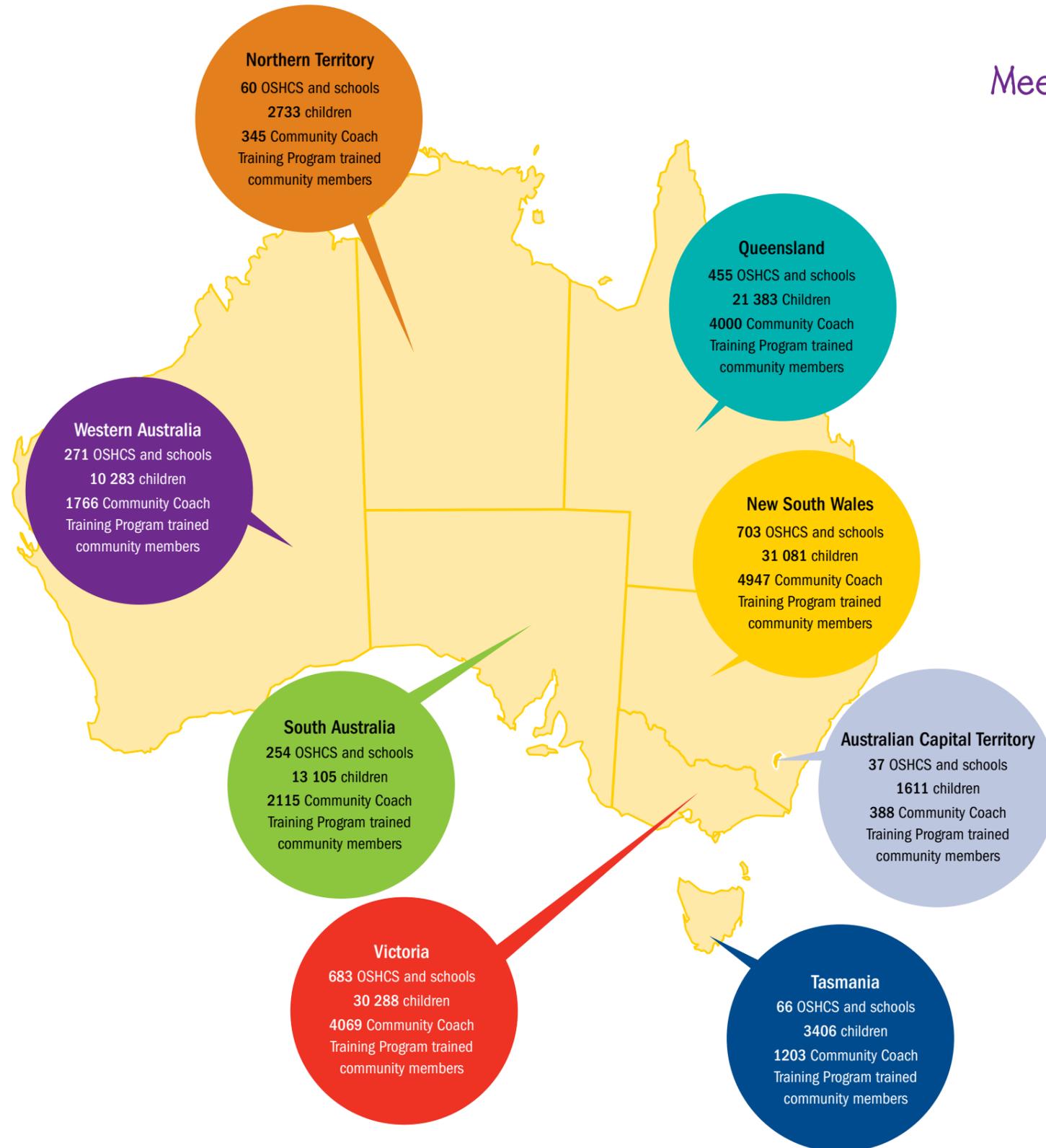
Noosa children enjoy the inclusive activities that assist in building pathways to their local little athletics club.

# Playing for life around Australia

The AASC program reaches far and wide around Australia and is delivered at over 3000 schools and OSHCS nationwide. Nearly 150 000 children will benefit from the program, and the vast network of coaches that the AASC program has trained will assist Australia in getting active.

## Success around Australia

- > By Term 3 of 2007 the program aims to reach 3250 sites (schools and OSHCS) around Australia and up to 150 000 children.
- > Since 2005 there have been over 19 000 community members trained by AASC staff in the Community Coach Training Program.
- > The AASC activity list is vast. At last count there were 80 traditional and non-traditional structured physical activities being delivered around Australia.
- > AASC coordinators are situated all over Australia, making the program work at a local level, with local communities.
- > The AASC program spans Australia with 9 per cent of sites in remote areas, 38 per cent in regional areas and 54 per cent in metropolitan areas.
- > The top ten sports and activities, by participation, are:
  - multi-skills
  - dance
  - football (soccer)
  - basketball
  - cricket
  - gymnastics
  - rugby league
  - circus skills
  - taekwondo
  - martial arts.



## Meet the AASC kids



### Alice Active

Alice likes to play cricket, enjoys going to the movies with her friends and participates in surf lifesaving. She hopes to be a lifesaver one day.



### Franz Fun

Franz goes to little athletics on Saturdays with his little brother. He also plays softball at lunchtimes with his friends at school and has joined his local hockey club.



### Emily Enthusiastic

Emily enjoys swimming and can often be found at the local pool during the school holidays. Emily also likes talking on the phone and goes to gymnastics on Friday afternoons.



### Eric Energetic

Eric enjoys playing basketball, softball and rugby union. When he is not playing sport, he enjoys watching the Australian Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team (Paralympic silver medallists, the Rollers) in action, and hanging out with his friends.



### Pablo Participation

Pablo is a big tennis fan and watches Wimbledon each year with his family. Pablo also enjoys marbles at lunchtime and going to the cricket with his dad.

## Australian Rugby League gets active with AASC

Rugby league is alive and well in the AASC program, with over 500 children participating in rugby league-related activities each term. Australian Rugby League (ARL) Development believes that the AASC program is a priority for getting Australian kids active, and supports the program through LeagueFun. LeagueFun was developed in conjunction with the AASC program and gives children the chance to experience the skills involved in rugby league, learn more about teamwork, increase their fitness and have a great time.

LeagueFun introduces basic skills in a safe and enjoyable environment through coaching resources created specifically to suit the Playing for Life philosophy of the AASC program. Gabrielle Rose, ARL Development Project Officer, believes that the LeagueFun program is a great way to introduce children to the skills of the game, and allow them to have a fun time playing rugby league.

'During 2006, we ran a total of 165 LeagueFun programs across Australia. In 2007, we have set a goal of 300 programs nationwide. We are on the right track, having already conducted 76 programs during Term 1,' Gabrielle said

This year, ARL Development has been working closely with the Australian Sports Commission to assist the AASC program in developing a rugby league companion manual for AASC deliverers. The manual will help deliverers and coaches adapt Playing for Life activities to enable children to understand the concepts of rugby league.



ARL Development gets AASC children moving through LeagueFun.



The AASI is a huge hit with kids in the Lakemba and Macquarie Fields regions in Sydney.

## All Australian Sporting Initiative

The All Australian Sporting Initiative (AASI) is a new project that supports Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to participate in sport within the broader community. The AASI is an Australian Government initiative that builds on the foundations of the Australian Sports Commission's AASC program. The Australian Sports Commission manages the AASI on the Government's behalf.

The AASI gives primary school-aged children the opportunity to be physically active with quality, safe and fun sports-related activities. The initiative also has a strong focus on local community involvement, including schools, parents and local sporting groups, and aims to equip communities to deliver the program themselves.

Within a year, the AASI team has recruited 20 schools and OSHCS from the Lakemba and Macquarie Fields regions in Sydney, catering for almost 1000 children two to three times per week. Cultural awareness training and gala days have also been organised to promote cultural acceptance and inclusion while providing more opportunities for participation in mainstream sporting activities.

In addition to increasing participation in sport and recreation, the team encourages current and emerging community leaders to participate more widely in local community sporting activities through special grants and support from members of the AASI team.

## AASC continues to get Australia moving

To gauge the impact of the AASC program so far – on parents, teachers, students, deliverers, local sporting clubs and, of course, the children – the Australian Sports Commission has undertaken an extensive evaluation and research project.

### Program hits the mark

The research to date shows that the AASC program is hitting the mark in terms of targeting those children who need it most – inactive children. In 2005, according to the research, 88 per cent of children in the program participated in three hours or less of structured physical activity in a week. In 2006, this was 85 per cent. Furthermore, children who participated in three hours or less a week of any type of physical activity – considered sedentary behaviour – rose from 16 per cent of participants in 2005 to 21 per cent in 2006.

The research also found that participating schools and OSHCS are overwhelmingly satisfied with the program, with 92 per cent agreeing that the program is having a positive impact on the development of fundamental motor skills. Participants believe that the attitudes of non-active children towards structured physical activity are improving, and that there are other positive flow-on effects, such as positive changes to children's social skills and behaviour. This includes an increase in self-esteem, confidence and concentration, better sleep patterns, less truancy and greater teamwork.

### Keys to success

A key element of the program's success, the research shows, has been the placement of regional coordinators in the communities themselves. Judy Flanagan, the Australian Sports Commission's Director of Community Sport, said: 'The placement of the regional coordinators in communities aims to provide hands-on support in implementing the program through a network of staff who know and understand the community'.

The research shows that over two-thirds of deliverers believe the program is stimulating local community involvement in sport and physical activity. Communities are supported through the training model, which has seen 19 000 community members including parents, teachers, OSHCS staff, high school and tertiary students, senior citizens, local sporting clubs and community members, trained by AASC staff in the Community Coach Training Program.





## Day in the life – Flinders Island

Flinders Island is approximately 60 kilometres from the northeast tip of Tasmania and a 40-minute flight by light aircraft from Launceston. Flinders Island joined the AASC program in Term 1 of 2007.

Ralph Morris, Northern Tasmania Regional Coordinator, recently made a visit to Flinders Island to conduct research, watch the AASC program in action and conduct a coaching course. Ralph's report of his visit is below.

<b>8.40am</b>	Landed into a 30 knot 'roaring forties' westerly that increased as the day went on. The pilot did well to get both wheels onto the ground!
<b>11.30am</b>	Principal Gary Sykes introduced me to the classes I would be working with. With introductions out of the way, I started the online research with the children.
<b>3.00pm</b>	As school finished, I made my way to the gymnasium to see the AASC program in action. The 40 children attending had a snack of fresh fruit and juice before the activities began. The activities were delivered by local teachers and community volunteers.
<b>4.30pm</b>	Local community members began arriving for a Community Coach Training Program course. They watched the end of the AASC session and then we headed off to start the first part of the course.
<b>7.00pm</b>	We finished the first part of the Community Coach Training Program course. Having people able to access the Beginning Coaching General Principles component online at local access centres has been a great help in conducting the program in remote locations.
<b>7.15pm</b>	One of the community members kindly gave me a lift to the only hotel on the island. After enjoying a great country pub meal and then checking my emails with the MiniMax (great for working remotely!), I slept as well as the rattling windows would allow.

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