

# **Final Report**

## **Evaluation of the AFL National Partnership Agreement**

### **Conducted by**

Collaborative Systemic Change Pty Ltd  
For the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous  
Affairs

November 2011

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Note to Readers: *Italicised words, phrases and sentences are direct quotes from those who were interviewed or made written comment in document received.*

## Executive Summary

In April 2011, the Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) contracted Collaborative Systemic Change Pty Ltd (CSC PL) to evaluate the Australian Football League (AFL) National Partnership Agreement (the Partnership Agreement).

In this section summarises the methodology, the responses to each of the evaluation's key questions and the evaluators' findings and suggestions.

The Australian Football League (AFL) has run two programs under this agreement:

- The AFL Club Fostership Program (later known as the AFL Club Partnership Program, but referred to in this document as the 'Fostership Program'); and
- The AFL Ambassadors for Life Mentoring Program (the 'Ambassadors Program').

The purpose of the evaluation is to obtain data that will:

- enable an assessment to be made of the outcomes achieved through the AFL Partnership Agreement; and
- inform future funding decisions by FaHCSIA for the AFL's involvement with community capacity building in Indigenous communities including the service delivery model to achieve the best possible results from any future funding.

Below is a summary of responses to each of the key questions for this evaluation.

**Table 1: Key Questions and Summary Responses**

Key questions	Summary Response
To what extent has the Club Fostership portion of the agreement achieved its objectives?	<p>Some elements of the program objectives were achieved well including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular visits to regional centres and communities as required;</li> <li>• Providing sporting and development activities;</li> <li>• Delivering positive health messages; and</li> <li>• Focussing on schools attendance.</li> </ul> <p>The objectives that are being met in limited ways are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building community capacity; and</li> <li>• Assisting individuals with goal setting.</li> </ul>
How many people participated in the activities provided by AFL Clubs on visits to Communities?	The total was 7642 for 2009/10.
In Indigenous Communities that have been involved in the Club Fostership portion of the agreement, how many people took part in activities between visits of the relevant AFL	Unfortunately, AFL Clubs found it difficult to collect this data and due to this we are cannot provide accurate numbers of participants.

Club?	<p>Activities undertaken or being developed by AFL Clubs were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone/skype/video-conferencing/webcam programs to maintain contact with community people;</li> <li>• Certificates of recognition provided by AFL Clubs to individuals for providing support and assistance; and</li> <li>• Community visits to Clubs (13 were undertaken in 2009/10).</li> </ul>
From the point of view of the AFL and community stakeholders, what benefits have resulted from visits by AFL clubs and from ongoing contact between AFL clubs and the communities?	<p>The benefits of visits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifting community spirits;</li> <li>• Increasing community cohesion;</li> <li>• Increasing school/attendance and performance;</li> <li>• Promoting healthy lifestyle;</li> <li>• Broadening views of community people (exchange visits);</li> <li>• AFL Club player development; and</li> <li>• Increasing Club cultural awareness.</li> </ul>
How many Indigenous youths have received mentoring or assistance in developing life plans or in goal setting?	<p>Under the Fostership Program, the number of Indigenous youth reported as being mentored or assisted to develop life plans in 2009/10 was 88.</p> <p>Under the Ambassadors Program, the number of Indigenous youth mentored included over 100 (including boys under 15 years) through Kickstart in 2009 and 266 in 2010</p>
How effective has the AFL (including Clubs) been in delivering services and activities	<p>The AFL Clubs have been effectively delivering most activities presented during and between visits. This includes activities listed above regarding benefits from the visits. Data show that both males and females have been involved in all aspects of the activities.</p> <p>Areas not effectively delivered through the Fostership Program include mentoring, goal setting for individuals, and building community capacity. Data show that quality mentoring has occurred, however, under the Ambassadors Program.</p>
What have been the strengths and weaknesses of this project?	<p>Three key strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivational for community youth;</li> <li>• Enhancing community cohesiveness; and</li> <li>• Learnings for AFL Club players.</li> </ul> <p>Two key discernible weaknesses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of mentoring under the Fostership Program; and</li> <li>• The imbalance in the number of</li> </ul>

	communities that AFL Clubs are required to service.
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## Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation process for this work was approved by the Murdoch University Ethics Committee.

The methodology for reviewing the Fostership Program consisted of:

- a desktop analysis of information forwarded by FaHCSIA;
- telephone interviews with the AFL and the six AFL Clubs, FaHCSIA personnel in Canberra, South Australia and the Northern Territory, regional State and Territory AFL personnel, and regional sport and recreation and other significant personnel across all six designated regions
- a questionnaire designed for this review focussing on personnel with knowledge of the operations of one or more Clubs in regions; and
- two visits to each of six Aboriginal communities in three regions – Katherine (Hawthorn), Alice Springs (Richmond) and Ceduna/Maralinga (Port Adelaide) were visited to assess client views on the worth of the Program.

The methodology for the Ambassadors Program consisted of:

- a desktop analysis of information forwarded by FaHCSIA; and
- six telephone interviews with personnel designated by FaHCSIA with in-depth knowledge of the Program.

The analysis of this information was based on a Developmental Model for Aboriginal Community Self-responsibility developed by Collaborative Systemic Change in 2010. The developmental model has five phases:

- Building Relationships — this is about Clubs establishing connections with the communities and other stakeholders;
- Engagement — in this phase the Clubs are establishing a presence in communities;
- Participation — this is the stage at which communities are actively participating in strategies and programs being delivered by the Clubs;
- Capacity Building — this is where communities and other regional stakeholders are working with the Clubs to learn how to establish and take over the structure, operations and strategies for program delivery; and
- Self-Responsibility — at this final phase, local communities and stakeholders take responsibility for delivering programs without being driven by the Clubs.

## Summary of Findings and Suggestions

**Table 2: Summary of Findings and Suggestions**

Findings	Matters for consideration by FaHCSIA in relation to the Findings
The evidence shows that the AFL clubs have taken considerable steps to build relationships, engage with local people, and each club is delivering a program during its required visits to encourage local participation.	FaHCSIA should consider acknowledging the efforts and achievements of the AFL clubs – this is a good news story.
<p>Under the CSC Developmental Model (see above, p.6), the evaluators assess that the program is well placed to move to the fourth phase of development – building community capacity and leadership skills.</p> <p>Community development and building capacity are not, however, the core business of AFL Clubs, and there are a set of skills necessary to undertake such work if FaHCSIA deem it advisable</p>	<p>Should FaHCSIA deem it advisable to require greater community capacity building, two strategies could be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigate the current capacity, interest, time and potential of AFL Clubs to work in the community capacity building area; and</li> <li>• where such a move is deemed feasible, provide AFL clubs with training to build community capacity.</li> </ul>
Indigenous communities positively regard the Fostership Program in terms of the impact of visits, coaching and health and lifestyle messages presented. Other stakeholders are supportive of the program.	<p>FaHCSIA should consider continuing the Program with the following suggested modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rationalizing the number of communities allocated to each AFL Club. An optimum number appears to be about 12;</li> <li>• appointing AFL Clubs to communities linked by common language and culture rather than shire or regional areas;</li> <li>• continuing town-based programs as a strategy for coaching; and</li> <li>• Each AFL Clubs visiting each community in its group as often as possible to create individual community-club relationships.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders, particularly Indigenous community members, provided feedback that AFL clubs may find beneficial in ongoing program development.	FaHCSIA should consider providing AFL clubs with feedback from this report as deemed appropriate by the Department.
<p>Data show the effectiveness and sustainability of the Fostership Program are influenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AFL and AFL Clubs’ commitment to the Program, the way connections with regions and communities have occurred, and the use of innovative strategies in different regions;</li> <li>• The strength of state/territory-based programs and personnel in regions; and</li> <li>• The level of ownership of the program at regional and community levels.</li> </ul>	FaHCSIA should consider how best to achieve cooperation at all three levels to achieve a greater level of local ownership of the program – the key to developing community capacity building from the program. The approach may need to be tailored to each region but the concept of regional boards or advisory councils could play a role here.

Findings	Matters for consideration by FaHCSIA in relation to the Findings
<p>There is disparity between the numbers of communities within each Club region. Essendon has four major communities in Wadeye and the Tiwi Islands region while Richmond deals with approximately 42 communities (not including outstations) in Central Australia.</p>	<p>Options that FaHCSIA may consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a way to fund the differing needs of the regions;</li> <li>• reducing the scale of coverage expected by some clubs; or</li> <li>• introducing more clubs into the program.</li> </ul>
<p>Evidence suggests that where AFL Clubs have undertaken mentoring through the Fostership Program, it has not occurred consistently or with a common understanding of the concept.</p> <p>Data on the Ambassadors Program, however, show that effective mentoring was undertaken by personnel in that Program according to strict standards.</p>	<p>Given that possibly developing capacity-building may be an outcome of this evaluation, quality mentoring provided by fully trained personnel can play an important role.</p> <p>FaHCSIA could consider, in consultation with the AFL if the Fostership Program is to be continued, to out-sourcing mentoring to an entity such as the Ambassadors Program or similar that undertakes mentoring as its core business with fully trained mentors.</p>
<p>While records show data collection by AFL clubs has greatly improved over the period of the Fostership Program, there is no systematised data collection occurring between AFL Club visits and a large number of individual stakeholders are involved.</p>	<p>FaHCSIA could consider, in relation to data collection between AFL Club visits, making it part of the responsibility of each regional board or advisory council (as suggested above). In this way, it is likely more accurate data will be collected and great accountability will result.</p>

# Introduction

## Background

In 2008, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) entered into a funding agreement with the Australian Football League (AFL). The name of that agreement was the Australian Government AFL Partnership Agreement (the Partnership Agreement).

Funding for the agreement was provided through the Indigenous Communities Strategic Investment Account (ICSI). The ICSI program objective is to provide engagement and support for individuals, families and communities to improve wellbeing and capacity.

The ICSI aim is to support the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) framework aimed at 'Closing the Gap' in life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. ICSI provides the opportunity to create sustainable improvements for Indigenous Australians through a range of flexible funding and strategic initiatives in Indigenous communities that build on a clear commitment between the local community, business and other stakeholders.

The AFL has used funding under the Partnership Agreement for two programs:

- The AFL Club Fostership Program (later known as the AFL Club Partnership Program, and referred to in this document as the 'Fostership Program'); and
- The AFL Ambassadors for Life Mentoring Program (the 'Ambassadors Program').<sup>1</sup>

The original Partnership Agreement did not mention the Ambassadors for Life Program. However, one project objective in the Agreement was for Indigenous youth to be mentored by AFL players. The AFL developed the Ambassadors for Life Program to provide mentoring services to Indigenous youth and the Department agreed that this was an appropriate approach. As a result, funding in recent years has also been allocated for the Ambassadors for Life program.

Through the Fostership Program, the six participating AFL Clubs have 'adopted' communities in six regions in the Northern Territory and South Australia. The program is designed to build the capacity of identified Indigenous communities by encouraging community members to reach their full potential. Clubs are expected to work in collaboration with communities and other stakeholders to engage local

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<sup>1</sup> The continued use of the term 'Fostership Program' was for the purpose of clarity. The term Partnership Program was very similar to Partnership Agreement.

Indigenous people in activities and educational programs aimed at reducing truancy levels and building local capacity.<sup>2</sup>

The Ambassadors Program is a mentoring program developed by the AFL which targets adolescent Indigenous boys and aims to develop a range of life skills, such as:

- acquiring strategies to make positive choices and set meaningful goals;
- defining boundaries;
- building emotional intelligence;
- creating action plans;
- exposing participants to industries for employment and career planning purposes; and
- assisting participants to develop skills in the information and technology area.<sup>3</sup>

According to the AFL the aims of the Ambassadors program are to:

- create a greater sense of community;
- provide accredited skill development for local community role models;
- encourage children and young people to reach their full potential;
- provide an opportunity to celebrate and reinforce positive healthy behaviours that assist in building positive change in communities; and
- provide a way for Indigenous AFL Players to invest in Indigenous Communities to create positive outcomes for Aboriginal people.<sup>4</sup>

In April 2011, FaHCSIA contracted Collaborative Systemic Change Pty Ltd (CSC PL) to evaluate the Partnership Agreement.

### **Explaining the Partnership Agreement**

The original Partnership Agreement was for a period of three years. The stated objectives were:

- to provide sporting and development activities in Indigenous communities as well as mentoring services to selected Indigenous youths as part of efforts to combat substance abuse, to encourage healthy, active lifestyles, and to build community capacity and leadership skills;
- that AFL Clubs participating in the Fostership program will visit their selected communities a minimum of three times a year to deliver activities as well as maintaining regular contact with the communities; and
- that community mentors have been selected to oversee the activities of selected Indigenous youths being mentored by AFL players. The AFL players

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<sup>2</sup> FaHCSIA (2008), *op cit*, p10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p7.

<sup>4</sup> AFL (2008), p8.

will maintain regular contact with those being mentored and assist them to develop life plans as well as assist in goal setting and encourage school attendance.<sup>5</sup>

FaHCSIA renewed funding for the 2010/2011 financial year only, and only for the Fostership Component of the Agreement.<sup>6</sup> Funding was not provided for the Ambassadors Program, allowing an increase in funding for the Fostership Program. FaHCSIA also modified the objectives of the Agreement on the basis that the original objectives were too broad and greater clarity was required. The modified objective was to “complement existing Australian Government initiatives to provide youth diversion activities to Indigenous youth of both genders aged between 12-20 in remote Indigenous communities and town centres in the Northern Territory and South Australia by:

- providing sporting and development activities in remote Indigenous communities and town centres involved in Club Partnerships to provide an effective diversion for young Indigenous people from ‘at-risk’ behaviours; and
- developing and improving life skills of young Indigenous people of both genders in Indigenous communities in the areas that are involved with Club Partnerships and encourage them to adopt healthy, active lifestyles and encourage school attendance.

Since 2008, FaHCSIA has provided the AFL with \$1.255 million under the two Agreements.

### **Evaluation Purposes and Key Questions**

The purpose of the evaluation, as designated under Official Order 45390684 from FaHCSIA, was to obtain data to:

- enable an assessment to be made of the outcomes achieved through the National Partnership Agreement;
- inform future funding decisions by FaHCSIA for the AFL’s involvement with community capacity building in Indigenous communities including the service delivery model that would achieve the best possible results from any future funding.

The key questions to be answered by the evaluation were:

- To what extent has the Club Fostership portion of the agreement achieved its objectives?
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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p3.

<sup>6</sup> FaHCSIA (2011B) Standard Funding Agreement AFL National Indigenous Agreement – Club Partnerships, unpublished.

- How many people participated in the activities provided by AFL Clubs on visits to Communities?
- In Indigenous Communities that have been involved in the Club Fostership portion of the agreement, how many people took part in activities between visits of the relevant AFL Club?
- From the point of view of the AFL and community stakeholders, what benefits have resulted from visits by AFL clubs and from ongoing contact between AFL clubs and the communities?
- How many Indigenous youths have received mentoring or assistance in developing life plans or in goal setting?
- How effective has the AFL (including Clubs) been in delivering services and activities?
- What have been the strengths and weaknesses of this project?

## **Methodology**

The data on the methodology are presented in line with the requirements designated in Official Order 45390684 (FaHCSIA) for this evaluation.

### **Liaison with FaHCSIA**

As per FaHCSIA's requirements, the evaluators participated in a briefing with the Department on the purpose of the evaluation and submitted an evaluation plan and methodology which addressed:

- the overall evaluation design;
- proposed data collection methods;
- data analytic methods to be used, and
- the proposed approach to addressing the cultural and linguistic issues associated with undertaking research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Data collection commenced following approval of the evaluation plan and methodology by FaHCSIA and the obtaining of ethics approval (see below).

### **Ethics Approval**

The evaluation has been conducted following ethics approval from Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office. All conditions of their approval have been met, including the requirement that all respondents involved in interviews be provided with a summary of notes taken from the interview so that they could review them and provide additional comments.

### **Analysis of Administrative Data**

FaHCSIA provided the evaluators with the documents available regarding the Partnership Program to undertake a desktop analysis. The major purpose of the analysis was to inform the evaluators of the background to, and evolution of, both the Fostership and Ambassadors Programs. In this way, the evaluators could be assisted in the development of interview questions and the questionnaire.

Documents reviewed included the following:

- The original Program Funding Agreement;
- Information about funding for AFL programs funded by FaHCSIA;
- Reports prepared by the AFL for FaHCSIA;
- Summaries of FaHCSIA's analysis of the AFL reports;
- Various activity reports prepared by participating Clubs for the AFL; and
- Data on 2010/2011 funding arrangements.

These documents were analysed to:

- enable the evaluators to gain an understanding of the program and related matters, in particular, information was gathered about the evolution of the Fostership and Ambassadors Programs and the ways that the programs had been implemented and managed;

- determine the extent to which the Programs appeared to be meeting their objectives, the perceived benefits of the Programs, strengths and weaknesses, and any concerns about the Programs evident in the literature; and
- inform the design of the questionnaires used in the telephone interviews and community consultation processes (see below).

The findings from the desktop analysis are incorporated into the body of this report where appropriate.

## **Telephone Interviews**

Telephone interviews were conducted with:

- FaHCSIA staff who have been involved with the management of AFL projects in the Northern Territory and South Australia;
- representatives of Indigenous Communities, community organisations, (for example Advisory Council Chairpersons and Indigenous staff where possible), schools, sporting groups, sport and recreation officers or other organisations in the Gove, Groote Eylandt and Wadeye areas of NT and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of SA;
- representatives of the AFL National Office, all six AFL Clubs involved in the Club Fostership Program, State AFL affiliates (AFLNT and SANFL), AFL Regional Development staff and other AFL staff involved in delivering services under the national project; and
- people who have been involved with the Ambassadors for Life Program including representatives of groups such as Cape York Mentoring Program and Fremantle AFL Club that received funding under the agreement.

Thirty-five people were interviewed about the Fostership Program. However, one person later withdrew consent to have his/her interview used as part of the research.

FaHCSIA identified 22 individuals to be interviewed (one of whom could not be reached) and the evaluators identified a further 11 stakeholders through the process of interviewing the 21 nominated individuals including representatives of Indigenous community organisations, sporting groups, school principals and teachers in remote areas. This included representatives of sport and recreation officers and other organisations in the Gove, Groote Eylandt and Wadeye areas of the NT and the APY Lands in SA.

Of those interviewed, 12 were women. Three respondents were selected on their capacity to provide a national perspective on the program. Three were able to comment on programs being run in South Australia, and three on the programs in the Northern Territory. The remainder were interviewed on the Fostership Program as it had been implemented in a specific region or community only. A regional breakdown of stakeholders interviewed about the Fostership Program can be found in Table 5 of Appendix 2. The people interviewed represented a wide range of agencies and the evaluators were satisfied with the consistency of responses.

Six people were interviewed about the Ambassadors Program. As per the Official Order, this included representatives from AFL Cape York and the Fremantle Dockers Football Club who had received funding under the Program, as well as others who had been involved in the program. Table 6 in Appendix 2 shows the breakdown of

people interviewed about the Ambassadors Program. Of these, two were women; three provided a state perspective on the Program and three a national perspective.

The interview protocols, as approved by Murdoch Ethics Committee, were followed in all instances, and included providing respondents with information on:

- the purpose of the evaluation;
- confidentiality;
- the right of choice to be involved; and
- the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

All respondents were provided with a summary of their interview and an opportunity to review and make changes or provide additional comments.

Tables 5 and 6 in Appendix 2 show respondents by organisations and regions.

Separate interview questions were designed for the Fostership Program and the Ambassadors Program and were approved by Murdoch University's Ethics Committee. These questions can be found in Appendix 1. The order of interview questions, particularly with community personnel was more flexible and sometimes changed to meet the context.

## **Questionnaires**

A total of 23 people involved in telephone interviews on the Fostership Program who had an AFL Club, regional or community focus (that is, a knowledge of the Program "on-the-ground") were asked to complete an on-line questionnaire to:

- see if it were possible for the evaluators to report quantitative data on a number of areas listed under the key questions — the numbers of people participating in activities provided by the AFL Clubs, numbers participating in activities between Club visits, a better understanding of costs incurred by AFL Clubs as well as efforts at sponsorship, and to assess the extent of mentoring that had been carried out; and
- use questionnaire data to compare with interview responses to gauge the overall accuracy of data.

In addition, nine other people with knowledge of the program overall (FaHCSIA or AFL personnel, for example,) were forwarded an email questionnaire. This was different from that for the AFL Club, regional and community personnel.

No questionnaire was designed for the Ambassadors Program because of the very limited number of personnel to be interviewed.

A total of 23 Club and regional personnel were requested to undertake the on-line questionnaire and 14 responses were received. The response rate is 61% which for statistical purposes is considered adequate. A breakdown of respondents is provided in Tables 5 and 6 of Appendix 2. A copy of the questionnaire is provided as Appendix 1.

The email questionnaire ultimately elicited only one response. It has been excluded from the final report.

Data from the first questionnaire are used, where possible, to point to discrepancies or, as is generally the case throughout, agreements in conclusions derived from the qualitative data.

## **Community Consultations**

As per FaHCSIA requirements, a community consultation process was undertaken to enable face to face interviews to be conducted with representatives of Indigenous communities including Board and Advisory Council members, community organisations, schools, sporting groups or any other organisations having some knowledge of the activities or services provided by the relevant AFL Club, in:

- the Katherine region of NT;
- the Alice Springs region of NT; and
- the Ceduna region of SA.

A community consultation process was undertaken in six communities participating in the Fostership Program:

- Barunga and Beswick from the Katherine region (Hawthorn FC);
- Trucking Yards Town Camp and Santa Teresa from the Alice Springs region (Richmond FC); and
- Yalata and Koonibba from the Maralinga/Ceduna region (Port Adelaide FC).<sup>7</sup>

Face to face contact with regional personnel with connections with these communities was also undertaken. Those personnel were in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and in Adelaide with FaHCSIA (SA) and SANFL.<sup>8</sup> Information on the communities involved in the consultation process is in Appendix 3 and provides a context to the evaluation.

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<sup>7</sup> Note that telephone interviews were conducted with school and Shire personnel from the three regions not involved in the community consultation process, Wadeye and Tiwi Islands, Gove Peninsula and Groote Eylandt and the APY Lands.

<sup>8</sup> The rationale for face-to-face interviews with community members was to:

- connect properly with Indigenous people who operate based on the values of relationships underpinned by trust, best achieved by face-to-face contact;
- explain the rationale for the evaluation to whole communities before it was undertaken, so they could understand why it is being done, because it is what they call 'respectful', and to allow them time to think, talk to each other and reach communal decisions as responses;
- cater for English being from a second to a fifth language for many Aboriginal peoples, making interviewing by telephone, at best, difficult and at worst, impossible in terms of comprehension and the consistency of responses; and
- cater for the differences between language groups and communities.

Tables on respondents by region and community are in Appendix 2, Tables 9 to 12.

## Summary of Desktop Analysis

As per the requirements for this evaluation, a desktop analysis of correspondence and data collected or held by FaHCSIA in relation to the Partnership Agreement. The documents reviewed are outlined in the bibliography of this report.

There were two purposes in undertaking the Desktop Analysis:

- to enable the evaluators to have an overall grasp of the evolution of the Fostership Program and the Ambassadors Program; and
- to assist the evaluators in developing interview questions for the different stakeholder groups and a questionnaire, required as part of the application to Murdoch University's Ethics Committee.

Both purposes were achieved, and aspects of the desktop analysis appear in this report.

The major themes from the desktop analysis were of the evolutionary growth of the Fostership Program, both on the part of the AFL and AFL Clubs, the involvement of the Ambassadors Program, and in the relationship between FaHCSIA and the AFL.

## The Fostership Program

### Implementation of the Fostership Program

The following Club-Community Partnerships have been established through the Program:

- Essendon Football Club partnered with the Tiwi Islands and Wadeye;
- Geelong Football Club partnered with the Gove Peninsula and Groote Eylandt;
- Collingwood Football Club initially partnered with the Katherine region. Collingwood withdrew from the program in 2009 to be replaced by Hawthorn Football Club;
- Richmond Football Club partnered with the Alice Springs region;
- Adelaide Football Club partnered with the APY Lands; and
- Port Adelaide Football Club partnered with Ceduna (Koonibba) and Maralinga Tjarutja Lands (Yalata and Oak Valley).<sup>9</sup>

In the Northern Territory:

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<sup>9</sup> Australian Football League (2008) Report to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, May 2008, unpublished.

- Hawthorn’s area is based on Katherine, and therefore covers the Victoria River-Daly Shire, Katherine Municipality and the Roper Gulf Shire;
- Essendon’s area is based on the Tiwi Islands but also includes Wadeye (Port Keats) which sits within the Victoria River-Daly Shire;
- Richmond’s area, based in Alice Springs, includes the MacDonnell Shire and several communities in the Central Desert. It is a vast area and has more than twice the number of communities of any other area. Including town camps in Alice Springs there are an estimated 42 communities (not including outstations);
- Geelong’s area sits within the East Arnhem Shire, and focuses on the Gove Peninsula and Groote Eylandt (or Alyangula as it is called on the map).

Appendix 4 shows maps of all regions that are the focus for this evaluation.

In South Australia:

- Port Adelaide’s area includes the Ceduna District Council and two communities from the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands. Ceduna is part of the Eyre Peninsula Region shown in Figure 2 in Appendix 4. The Aboriginal Communities named to west of Ceduna – Yalata and Oak Valley – form one of four recognised Aboriginal Councils (ACs) in South Australia, and are not part of the Ceduna District Council;
- Adelaide’s area is the APY Lands, centred on the community of Ernabella. Figure 3 in Appendix 4 is a map of the APY Lands designating the communities that fall within that region.<sup>10</sup>

There are five components of the Fostership Program that each Club has incorporated into its program to a greater or lesser extent. In this regard, the disparity between the regions in terms of size and number of communities for the AFL Clubs has led to differences in approach between Clubs.

- Consultation with Stakeholders — the desktop analysis suggests that the extent of consultation varies between Clubs;
- Flying Squad Visits — a Flying Squad, comprised of players, coaching staff and/or administration personnel, visits the regions and/or communities to deliver football activities in the community and act as advocates and mentors to complement the work already undertaken by the community Police, Health, Education and Sport and Recreation organisations;<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Wingellina Community is included on the map as part of the APY Lands. It is also recognised as part of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the 2010/11 Standard Funding Agreement only required Clubs to visit communities a minimum of twice in a 12 month period. FaHCSIA (2011B) *Standard Funding Agreement*, unpublished, p4.

- Community Activities — each Club has designed its own program of activities. These include school visits, coaching clinics, healthy lifestyle and nutrition information, training sessions and camps to reward players, assisting teachers to deliver AFL themed curriculum, reading to children in class, delivering coaching and umpiring training and attending special community events;<sup>12</sup>
- Ongoing Community Connection Activities — Clubs are expected to maintain connection with communities between visits. Richmond has introduced a webcam program. The desktop analysis indicates that this has been a challenge for a number of Clubs; and
- Community Exchange — all Clubs have established, or are establishing, exchange programs where members of the community visit the Clubs. Often these are aimed at young people as a reward for school attendance or performance. Other activities include Club visits by community leaders and elders, work experience placements for community members, participation in incentive activities for young people or participation in football carnivals and other events.

Appendix 5: Case Studies, provides a précis of activities undertaken by each Club.

### **Evolutionary Growth of the Fostership Program**

The evolutionary growth is best described by following a developmental model for Aboriginal community self-responsibility. It was created by Collaborative Systemic Change during 2010. The developmental model has five phases:

- Building Relationships — this is about establishing connections with the communities and other stakeholders;
- Engagement — here, Clubs are establishing a presence in communities;
- Participation — this is the phase where communities are actively participating in strategies and programs being delivered by the Clubs;
- Capacity Building — where communities and other regional stakeholders are working with the Clubs to learn how to establish and take over the structure, operations and strategies for program delivery; and
- Self-Responsibility — at this final phase, local communities and stakeholders take responsibility for delivering programs without being driven by the Clubs.

Reports submitted to FaHCSIA from the AFL and AFL clubs demonstrate increasing competency in attempts to achieve the objectives set under the Agreement. The Desktop Analysis demonstrated the following objectives were being achieved:

- connecting with regions and communities and building relationships;

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p3.

- engaging with them in ways that were deemed satisfactory; and
- the Clubs seeking diverse and at times unique strategies to participate actively in their regions (as much as possible within the confines of time, distance and the number of communities to be serviced) with Indigenous peoples and their communities.

The above aspects were evident in reports covering the first three years of the Agreement. The main area which caused the evaluators concern, and was born out through interviews with Club and community personnel, is that of mentoring. This is discussed in detail in the next section headed Presentation of Data.

## The Ambassadors Program

As stated earlier, the original AFL Partnership Agreement did not mention the Ambassadors for Life Program. As a project objective in the Agreement was for mentoring for Indigenous youth AFL players, the AFL developed the Ambassadors for Life Program to provide mentoring services to Indigenous youth. FaHCSIA agreed that this was an appropriate approach. As a result, funding in recent years has been allocated to the Ambassadors for Life program.

Three Clubs linked the Ambassadors Program with the Club Fostership Program:

- Adelaide players – APY Lands;
- Essendon players – Wadeye; and
- Richmond players – Alice Springs.<sup>13</sup>

Other partnerships that were established were:

- Geelong players – Wathaurong Community (Geelong);
- North Melbourne/Melbourne/St Kilda Players – Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport & Recreation;
- Western Bulldogs players – Munarra AFL and Netball Indigenous Sports Academy (Shepparton);
- Brisbane players – Djarragun Indigenous College (Cairns);
- Carlton players – Ballarat Aboriginal Cooperative;
- Sydney players – West Sydney AFL Academies; and
- Fremantle players – Fremantle City Council, Indigenous Youth Services.<sup>14</sup>

It is evident from the analysis that the Ambassadors Program has been through a number of iterations since it was launched in May 2008.<sup>15</sup> At first, a *player-initiated* approach was adopted. Indigenous AFL players were linked with mentees and were expected to take responsibility for contacting them. Community mentors were trained to provide support to mentees on a daily basis.

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<sup>13</sup> Note that it appears that these Clubs have merged together the Ambassadors Program and the Fostership Program. Respondents from these Clubs/Regions who were interviewed about the Fostership Program often used the term “Ambassador” to refer to liaison people in the regions who were working with the Clubs as part of the Fostership Program.

<sup>14</sup> AFL (2008), *op cit*, p10. Note that in the 2009 Report they say that 50 of the 72 players undertook mentoring training delivered by Leading Teams, AFL (2009), p1.

<sup>15</sup> AFL (2009), *op cit*, p11.

This proved *too challenging*<sup>16</sup>, and in 2009, the AFL provided mentoring, under the auspices of the Program, to participants at the AFL Kickstart Camp. In that year the AFL also diverted funding to two community-based programs:

- The Cape York Communities Mentoring Program run in May 2009, a four-day intensive mentoring program for 25 young people aged under 14;
- The Fremantle Football Club and Kimberly Community Camp which involved a series of school visits, sports clinics, and other events.<sup>17</sup>

Since then, a more coordinated approach has been adopted. The AFL has employed former Indigenous AFL players to deliver mentoring to Indigenous youth participating in the AFL's existing programs, namely:

- The annual Kickstart Camp for 5 to 15 year olds;
- The Flying Boomerangs Tour for boys aged between 14-16 years (see footnote 19, p.27 for further detail);
- Footy Means Business – which exposes 50 participants each year to elite AFL programs and training, as well as networking opportunities in corporate environments; and
- AFL SportsReady Indigenous Trainees.<sup>18</sup>

The reports submitted indicate that the current model has proved effective in enabling the AFL to access the target group. This is discussed in detail in the next section headed Presentation of Data.

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<sup>16</sup> Correspondence between FaHCSIA and the AFL suggests that neither approach was envisaged by the original Program Funding Agreement.

<sup>17</sup> AFL (2009) *op cit*, pp 6-9.

<sup>18</sup> AFL (2010), *op cit*, Part B, pages unnumbered.

## Presentation of Data

Data in this section are presented in terms of the key questions designed by FaHCSIA for this evaluation. For clarity, data relating to the Fostership Program and the Ambassadors Program have been presented separately.

## Response to the Key Questions

### **To what extent has the Club Fostership portion of the agreement achieved its objectives?**

The evaluators have used data derived from phone interviews with AFL personnel, AFL Clubs and regional stakeholders, reports and documentation from FaHCSIA, and questionnaire data and interviews with Aboriginal community-based personnel to assess the program against the objectives set out in the ALF Partnership Agreement. There were varying degrees of achievement against each objective.

Those which are being achieved to a very positive extent are described below.

- Visiting selected communities a minimum of three times a year — all Clubs are now visiting their regions a minimum of three times a year. Some clubs are visiting all communities in their region three times a year; others are visiting all communities in their region once a year; and others are aiming to visit all communities in their region at least once over the three year period of the contract. There is a vast disparity between the numbers of communities within each region. While Essendon has four major communities within Wadeye and the Tiwi Islands region, there are an estimated 42 communities (not including outstations) in Richmond's area, based in Central Australia.
- Providing sporting and development activities in Indigenous communities — it is evident that the AFL Clubs have been providing sporting activities as a key component of their Flying Squad visits. Richmond's regional development officer is providing sporting activities at schools between visits. There is evidence to suggest that there has been a strengthening of AFL activities in communities between Club visits. The evidence shows that where AFL Clubs have worked closely with local Regional Development Officers, either with the Northern Territory Australian Football League (AFLNT) or with the South Australian National Football League (SANFL), consistent development of programs are evolving.
- Encouraging healthy active lifestyles — all Clubs are making a concerted effort to deliver positive health messages to communities. Questionnaire respondents identified nutrition and active lifestyle as the primary messages. Clubs have approached this in different ways and some have linked with other agencies to deliver messages in innovative ways (eg, Hawthorn and Richmond).
- Aiming to assist an increase school attendance — all AFL Clubs have developed strategies for rewarding students for school attendance and attitude. Ninety three percent of respondents to the questionnaire stated that school attendance was a key message imparted by Clubs. Richmond and Geelong

have developed structured incentive schemes. Other Clubs tie school attendance to participation in activities and exchanges.

Objectives being met to a lesser, although still observable, extent are:

- Maintaining regular contact with the communities between visits — data from the questionnaire indicate that the primary means of keeping in touch with the community between visits is via state/territory-based regional development officers (93%). Other means include telephone (50%), skype and video conferencing (43%), certificates of recognition (21%) and letters (16%); and
- Providing mentoring to Indigenous youth — the extent to which this objective is being met depends on the level of understanding of AFL Clubs of the meaning of mentoring. Four clubs report that mentoring is being provided to Indigenous youth. However, all data suggest that there is no common understanding of what mentoring means in the context of the Fostership program. A substantial number of respondents to both the interviews and the questionnaire appear to think that mentoring could be achieved without individual relationships between the mentor and mentee, which suggests confusion between the delivery of aspirational messages and mentoring. (See the comments below about the Ambassador’s Program).

Those objectives that are not being met in any discernible way are:

- Building community capacity and leadership skills — the extent to which this objective has been met by AFL Clubs is questionable, mainly because there is little comprehension of the meaning of the term community capacity building. AFL Clubs have run activities under the Fostership Program such as coaching and training clinics which could be seen as building community capacity and leadership skills. Some Clubs have rationalised the community exchange programs as being a tool to develop leadership potential of young players. The extent to which these programs and strategies are being led and sustained by community people, and managed within communities between and beyond AFL Club visits are, however, the key criteria. Where there appears to be an increase in community capacity (for example, Wadeye and the development of a local Australian Rules competition and entry into the NT AFL competition in Darwin for 2012), it is not clear if this is due to the efforts of the AFL Club, community people or Regional Development Officers appointed by SANFL or ALF NT; and
- Assisting people with goal setting — twenty-nine percent of respondents to the online questionnaire identified “life goals” as a key message delivered by Clubs. Again, it appears that there is confusion between aspirational messages and goal-setting and little evidence that AFL Clubs are working with Indigenous people to assist them in the process of goal-setting per se.

Objectives set for the Partnership Agreement and listed below appear to have been met to a limited or negligible extent, unless supported or undertaken by the Ambassadors Program:

- Mentoring, defined as an individual mentor-mentee relationship which continues over time and operates on guidance and challenge rather than power and control, has been provided to selected Indigenous youth;

- Community mentors have been trained under the Ambassadors Program, and interviews suggest that at least some are still involved in overseeing the activities of selected youths; and
- It is reported through interviews that a limited number of AFL players are providing “mentoring”, maintaining regular contact with mentees, and there is a focus on goal setting and school attendance. This approach, while worthwhile, appeared to more motivational than mentoring as it is defined. Under the current model, mentoring is mainly being delivered by AFL employees (former AFL players), who are supported by employees of state/territory affiliate organisations.

### **How many people participated in the activities provided by AFL Clubs on visits to Communities?**

The AFL reports that a total of 9015 people took part in activities through the Fostership program in the period 2008/09 and 2009/10.

**Table 3:** Total number of participants reached through the Fostership Program\*

	Essendon	Geelong	Richmond	Adelaide	Hawthorn	Port Adelaide	Total
2008/09	170	Apprx 80	60	755	N/A	308	1373
2009/10	1386	1578	442	571	2971	694	7642

\* Based on information provided by Clubs. May include participants in community visits, consultation processes, coaching courses, school visits, etc. No participation data are available prior to 2008/09.

Responses from the questionnaire show that while the types of activities varied, the above concepts have been undertaken to a strong degree by AFL clubs – for example:

- visiting specific communities (100% said yes though number of visits varied greatly depending on the number of communities in an AFL Club region)
- school visits (100% of respondents said yes);
- coaching clinics apart from school (64% said yes);
- attending local matches (78% said yes);
- attending special community events (86% said yes); and
- supporting local teams, whether present or not (86% said yes).

### **In Indigenous Communities that have been involved in the Club Fostership portion of the agreement, how many people took part in activities between visits of the relevant AFL Club?**

It is not possible to quantify specific data on numbers of people involved in activities between AFL Club visits. Apart from limited data (see next paragraph) on contacts and connections with communities between visits, there is little accurate data available. AFLNT and SANFL officers in all regions apart from Ceduna/Maralinga

provide on-going support for communities – organisational and management support of senior competitions, the development of junior and women’s competitions and the provision of coaching clinics in communities and their schools. Regional and community sport and recreation officers also undertake a vast range of activities. But the extent to which these are directly or indirectly connected with the Fostership program, and the numbers involved with the vast range of activities, personnel and organisations involved is virtually impossible to determine.

Data from the questionnaire indicate that ongoing connection is maintained with the community between visits via state/territory-based regional development officers (93%). Other means include telephone (50%), skype and video conferencing (43%), certificates of recognition (21%) and letters (16%). With the support of Dick Smith, Richmond has developed a webcam program to keep players in touch with students at Ti Tree School between Flying Squad Visits. Hawthorn is also investigating the use of Skype, with assistance of the AFLNT Regional Development Officer, to trial at Macfarlane Primary School in Katherine. Other Clubs have considered similar programs, but did not indicate any implementation.

Other initiatives undertaken by clubs between visits include the provision of work experience to individuals and the provision of support to young people from the communities who are boarding in the city. As well, 93% of respondents to the questionnaire indicated that community exchange visits had taken place. According to AFL reports, 21 people participated in Community visits to Clubs and other places in the period 2008/09-2009/10.

**Table 4: Total number of Community visits to Clubs and other places as part of the Fostership Program\***

	Essendon	Geelong	Richmond	Adelaide	Hawthorn	Port Adelaide	Total
2008/09	3	2	6	1	-	3	8
2009/10	1	2	3	1	4	5	13

\* Based on information contained in Club Reports, includes work experience placements

**From the point of view of the AFL and community stakeholders, what benefits have resulted from visits by AFL clubs and from ongoing contact between AFL clubs and the communities?**

Respondents interviewed in communities identified the following benefits of the visits by AFL Clubs and from ongoing contact between AFL clubs and the communities through the Fostership Program:

- Lifting spirits in the community — the vast majority of respondents saw that a key benefit of the program was the fact AFL players visited communities was a highlight for the communities and gave community people a sense of *being noticed*.
- Increasing community cohesion — a key theme was the perception that the program strengthened cohesion in the communities by developing structured

football programs that broke down traditional rivalries in communities, engaged whole families in an activity and reduced crime and conflict.

- Increasing school attendance/performance — both phone interview and community visit data indicate that an impending visit from, or contact with, AFL Club members increases school attendance. The requirement that young people wanting to play football have to go to school or be in employment has increased attendance, although the degree to which this is sustained between visits from the AFL clubs varies, depending on whether schools and communities are competing in competitions. The level of functionality of communities is also a factor in school attendance.
- Promoting healthy lifestyle — Government and AFL representatives commented on the importance of the healthy lifestyle messages being delivered by the Clubs. However, a number of teachers commented that the message itself was not new to the students and that it was the relationship being developed with Club personnel that was more important.
- Enabling reciprocal visits/exchanges — AFL representatives and teachers who had direct experience of these visits regarded them as key achievements of the Program.
- Providing equipment — 52% of those interviewed by telephone commented favourably on the Clubs leaving equipment for the community. A smaller number considered that the money might be better spent on activities. Children interviewed during community visits strongly agreed with the former.
- Providing benefits to individuals — examples were given in phone interviews of specific individuals who had benefited from exchange and/or work experience opportunities through the program.
- Attracting funding to the communities — it is evident from both phone interview and through the questionnaire that five of the six Clubs, to varying degrees, had managed to attract additional funding to the communities.

AFL respondents also identified the following benefits to Clubs from the Fostership Program:

- Providing personal development for players;
- Celebrating Indigenous AFL players;
- Increasing cultural awareness for Clubs; and
- Increasing each Club's capacity to deliver services.

### **How many Indigenous youths have received mentoring or assistance in developing life plans or in goal setting?**

The AFL reported that in the period 2009/10, four Clubs provided mentoring to 88 Indigenous people through the Fostership Program. Prior to that period, AFL Clubs had not been successful in establishing ongoing mentoring services with communities.

Assessment of all the data suggests that mentoring, as the evaluators understand it, is not being provided as an integral component of the Fostership Program. Seventy-one

per cent of respondents to the online questionnaire agreed that mentoring was being provided through the program. Two respondents indicated that this was being provided through exchange programs. Another indicated that it was being provided to the under 18 football team. By contrast, only two examples emerged from the interviews of individuals who had received mentoring in the formal sense. An area where some local mentoring may have occurred is with older members of the community to develop coaching and training skills.

The AFL reported under the Ambassadors Program that in 2009, mentoring was being provided for more than 100 adolescent males nationally and that Indigenous boys aged under 15 were being mentored through the AFL Kickstart Camp. In 2010 the AFL reported that 266 Indigenous young people received mentoring leadership, training or life skills assistance through various existing AFL programs.

Interview data suggests that long-term mentoring relationships are being established with Indigenous young people through the Ambassadors Program. Respondents indicate that mentors are linked with mentees for approximately six months, and that mentors contact the young people fortnightly or monthly over that period of time by telephone or email, or in person. The interviews also suggest a clear focus on life goals and leadership development through the Ambassadors Program.

How effective has the AFL (including Clubs) been in delivering services and activities?

### *The Fostership Program*

The evaluators have assessed the effectiveness of the Fostership Program overall against the following sequential phases of operating (see p.17 in Summary of Desktop Analysis for details on these developmental phases). They begin, however, with Building Relationships and conclude with Self-Responsibility:

- Building Relationships;
- Engagement;
- Participation;
- Capacity Building; and
- Self-Responsibility.

The Fostership Program has been assessed by evaluators as having, in general, been effective in reaching the third of these phases. Participation is occurring – AFL Clubs are participating with regions and varying number of individual communities within those regions are participating with the Clubs. In some sites, it may be that elements of capacity building are beginning to emerge, where AFL Clubs are supporting the communities to establish and administer their own football leagues. It is not clear to what degree the establishment of such leagues is a consequence of community endeavours, because of the efforts of regional development personnel, because AFL Club driven initiatives or a combination of all three.

Data indicate that three key factors appear to impact on the effectiveness, and sustainability, of the Fostership Program regionally:

- The AFL and AFL Clubs' commitment to the program;
- The strength of state/territory-based programs and personnel in regions; and

- The level of ownership of the program at regional and community levels.

#### *AFL and AFL Clubs' Commitment*

The success of the programs has led at least three AFL Clubs to state they would continue to be involved with the programs, even if FaHCSIA funding were to cease. Those Clubs see such things as player development, Club cohesion and corporate social responsibility as vitally important. Clubs have been motivated to actively seek corporate sponsorship and make contingency plans in case government funding is withdrawn. Three Clubs are investing over \$70,000 to the program annually, and several examples were given of innovative and cost-effective ways Clubs were seeking to add value to their programs.

#### *Strength of State/Territory-Based Programs*

The evaluators regard the strength of state/territory-based programs as a critical success factor. Where state-based affiliates already had a strong program of activities in the region and good relationship with AFL Clubs, the Flying Squad visits added a new dimension to an overall program focused on healthy lifestyle, engagement in sport and diversion from negative activities. Richmond and Hawthorn are examples of AFL Clubs well-supported at the regional level in Alice Springs and Katherine, while Port Adelaide is virtually unsupported in the Maralinga/Ceduna region. The nearest SANFL support is based in Port Lincoln, some 700 kilometres from Ceduna. This particularly affects the Club's capacity to connect in a participative way, and maintain participation between visits, with its stakeholders.

#### *Ownership at Regional and Community Levels*

Another key success factor is the level of ownership of the program by regional and local stakeholders. Currently, some regional stakeholders do not feel fully connected with or appreciated by the Fostership Program. Community people in the communities which were visited for this evaluation, while appreciating the visits, appear to have little ownership of the concept and therefore the opportunity for capacity building will be limited. From the interviews, it is evident that the line of communication involves Clubs communicating to regions and communities rather than the other way around.

The opportunity for local ownership appears to be enhanced where Clubs are working with a smaller number of communities, and where Clubs have focused on developing the capacity of local people in concert with state/territory regional personnel.

#### *The Ambassadors Program*

The Ambassadors Program, as discussed on pp.19-20, trialled several different service delivery models. Early models were not effective as they placed too much reliance on players to instigate contact with mentees. This, coupled with a lack of resources for the program, meant that early efforts did not gather momentum. The evaluators assess that the current model of providing mentoring through existing AFL

programs is effective at accessing the target group and delivering outcomes. In 2010, the AFL attributes the following outcomes to the Ambassadors Program:

- Seven former Flying Boomerangs are engaged in AFL SportsReady traineeships;<sup>19</sup>
- All Flying Boomerangs are engaged at school;
- Three Flying Boomerangs have been drafted to AFL Club lists in 2010;
- All Kickstart participants must have 90% attendance at school;
- Twenty-five were selected for the Flying Boomerangs tour of Tonga;
- Twelve participants from the Footy Means Business programs who were previously unemployed are now engaged in employment;
- All participants in the Footy Means Business programs are in the process of setting 'stretch goals' for football, employment and a project to benefit their community;
- AFL SportsReady has a 90% retention and completion rate for their trainees; and
- Over 2000 Indigenous players have provided aspiration and reward phone calls to approximately 50 trainees.<sup>20</sup>

AFL representatives advised that they only reported to FaHCSIA on mentoring that was provided by AFL employees. From the interviews, however, it is evident that some AFL players who were trained at the start of the program are continuing to provide mentoring. One Club representative stated that six or seven players from his Club had been trained as mentors, and that three were still actively mentoring approximately 12 young people. As well, representatives from State affiliates talked about the mentoring that they were providing in their state under the Program.

Respondents in interviews often became passionate about outcomes for individuals who had received mentoring through the Ambassadors program, particularly in terms of employment:

I ran into four of our past players who are now in the navy. I nearly cried... They'd all come through our program.

Two kids from the APY lands have become police community constables. The other two ... work for me in the SANFL now. The most positive would probably be their employment... Probably two of them [would have been employed anyway]. The remote kids are probably the biggest incentive, because kids their age there don't work at all.

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<sup>19</sup> The Flying Boomerangs is the name of the underage (mainly 14 to 16 year old Indigenous Australian boys) Australian Rules Football team. The team has played against South Africa and Papua New Guinea and its senior equivalent is the Indigenous All-Stars.

<sup>20</sup> AFL (2010), *op cit*, Part B, pages unnumbered.

Other benefits of the program for Indigenous people include:

- engaging people in Australian Rules, including women as players;
- the training that has been provided to community mentors; and
- increasing the attendance of Indigenous AFL players at community events.

Benefits for AFL Clubs and players included:

- providing a structured way of enabling Indigenous AFL players to ‘put back into’ their communities;
- developing the skills and capacity of Indigenous AFL players; and
- providing career development and a career pathway for Indigenous players.

## **What have been the strengths and weaknesses of this Project?**

### *The Fostership Program: Strengths*

The key strengths of the Fostership Program, identified through phone and community interviews, are as follows:

- The communities’ responsiveness to messages delivered by elite footballers — the majority of respondents commented on the fact that young people absorbed messages delivered by elite football players more readily than by other service providers;
- The importance of Australian Rules Football in providing a sense of identity and cohesion for Aboriginal communities — linked with this was an acknowledgement between the values that underpin playing AFL (and team sports in general) and those of traditional Indigenous cultural values. These include such values as authority, respect, family, sharing, commitment and obligation;
- The requirement that AFL Clubs co-fund the program — while some Clubs have struggled to get corporate sponsorship, others have been successful in attracting additional funding to the communities and therefore have greater ownership of and commitment to the Program;
- Gender-neutrality — an aspect of the Program which was particularly visible in communities is the extent to which the program is supporting females to participate not only in Australian Rules football, but in other areas as well
- The Clubs’ commitment to the program — three Clubs stated they were committed to maintaining their involvement with the communities, even if government funding was withdrawn; and
- The relationship that the Clubs are building with the communities — Clubs have spent considerable time making connections with the communities and given the importance Indigenous people place on relationships this is likely to pay dividends.

### *The Fostership Program: Weaknesses*

While required to report on “weaknesses” in the program, the evaluators find the term a misnomer. We therefore report “weaknesses” under two headings:

- Areas of discernible weakness where new or different strategies are required; and
- Suggestions to improve current strategies.

### *Discernible Weaknesses*

The following discernible weaknesses were identified:

- Mentoring — as noted above, this is not being implemented in a coherent or structured way through the Fostership Program, and nor with personnel undertaking it having an understanding of the meaning of mentoring or the skills to undertake it. The efforts of the AFL to develop and use the Ambassadors Program as a key vehicle for mentoring appears to have had considerable success
- Clarifying expectations between Clubs and Communities — while AFL Clubs have done their best to meet the objectives of the Fostership Program, it is not, and cannot be, their core business. Their core business is to win a premiership. Community members tend to “localise” – their community is their world and their expectations are high, and growing, in terms of what they want from the AFL Clubs. It becomes important for the Clubs to manage the expectations of the communities by involving them more in programs such as Flying Squad visits and discussing what can be achieved in the current context with current funding levels;
- Length and nature of visits — the vast majority of regional and local stakeholders commented that visits were too short and that AFL Clubs should take time to get to know communities and build closer relationships. To give a context to this criticism, AFL Clubs with many communities often work to a regional focus and attempt to spread themselves as widely as possible because of limited time and resources. This begs the question of how to re-distribute the number of communities so each AFL Club has greater potential to make local visits and set out to increase the number of annual visits;
- Gaps between visits — local and regional stakeholders were also concerned about the gap between visits. Almost all wanted to see the Clubs come up more often; and
- Long term benefits for communities — a number of government respondents were concerned that the long term benefits of the program were questionable. Other stakeholders considered that the Clubs were building relationships with the communities with a view to what they could do in the long term.

### *Suggestions for Improvement*

The following were identified:

- Status of players — a number of regional respondents wanted the AFL to send higher profile players. The appearance of high profile players is what cause motivation and recognition to rise to the highest level;
- Use of resources — a number of regional stakeholders expressed concern that the AFL Clubs were not using resources as well as they could. They had concerns about the number of people flying to communities who were not high profile players;
- Provision of resources — community participants wanted to see an increased focus on resources to the local level to support football endeavours;

- Reporting — a concern emerging from the desktop analysis is the way that the AFL has reported on activities. There is a limited amount of qualitative evaluation data collected by clubs and quantitative data collected are not necessarily reliable and valid;
- Lack of clarity about program activities — the original agreement lacked clarity in terms of what was required of AFL Clubs. Regional respondents wanted greater clarity between state-based AFL Programs and the Fostership Program. In part this appeared to be due to a desire to account separately for state-based programs. It also appeared to be related to a desire by regional personnel to have some sense of ownership of the Fostership Program;
- The role of regional development staff — some regional people felt taken for granted for their role in the Fostership Program – as an addendum rather than having some ownership of the process;
- Collaboration with regional stakeholders — regional respondents were concerned about the lack of coordination with regional stakeholders, including Indigenous community leaders. This resulted in regional people being recipients of a Program rather than being involved in, and taking ownership of, its development. Such an aspect is crucial in terms of capacity-building; and
- The role of the AFL — a number of AFL Club and government respondents queried the AFL’s management of the program. Concerns were raised about whether FaHCSIA should be communicating directly with the Clubs, about the lack of support provided to Clubs in terms of data collection and reporting.

The evaluators are of the opinion that the greatest strength of the Fostership Program lies in the ability of Australian Rules Football to engage the hearts and minds of the Indigenous communities involved. This is linked with the fact that the values of AFL, and potentially a whole range of high profile sports, align strongly with traditional Aboriginal values. This gives the program enormous potential for capacity building in an organisational sense – by Clubs and regional entities continuing to work with local individuals or groups on goals, plans, management skills and many other areas.

### *The Ambassadors Program: Strengths*

A key strength of the Ambassadors program, in its current form, lies in the integration of the program into the existing AFL programs. This has meant that the AFL has access to an audience of young Indigenous people who are already engaged in football, who want to succeed and are open to receiving mentoring. Some may consider the current model limited as it only targets young people who are already engaged. The evaluators, by contrast, regard this as a strength as, from a change management perspective, the AFL are starting small and working where there is a strong chance of success.

A second strength of the program in its current form is the fact that it is being delivered by AFL employees, rather than players. This means that there are dedicated personnel available to provide mentoring and who have been trained to deliver it. The fact that the employees are former AFL players gives them a unique insight that they can offer to the young people involved in the program.

### *The Ambassadors Program: Weaknesses*

The key weakness of the Ambassadors Program, to date, has been a result of the number of different models of service provision that have been adopted by the AFL. This has meant that the AFL has not been able to capitalise on the training provided to AFL players and community mentors in the early years of the Program. It has also resulted in a lack of clarity about the scope of the Ambassador's program and the amount of resources available to drive it.

With additional resources, the AFL has the opportunity to build on what has been developed and achieved through the Ambassadors Program since the inception of the Partnership Agreement. Should FaHCSIA accept the suggestion in this evaluation pertaining to mentoring, it may wish to re-open dialogue on mentoring with the AFL.

## Conclusion

The positive nature of the feedback regarding the Fostership Program, and the various gains achieved through it, suggests that it be continued.

The evaluators assessed that some very positive outcomes have been achieved through the Fostership Program - the motivation that the visits by AFL clubs generates and examples of cohesiveness and purpose that Australian Rules Football tends to bring to remote communities during a football season. The simple fact of feeling that their communities are being recognised through AFL Clubs visit was seen by Aboriginal community people as a positive. They want more of it.

There is acceptance and appreciation by community members of the health and lifestyle messages that AFL Players deliver to children and young people as part of their visits. The same applies to elements of skills coaching that occur during the same visits, and the appreciation of meeting, face-to-face, with some very famous Australian Rules Football names.

In return, the evidence suggests that AFL Clubs participating in the Fostership Program have benefited participating because players and officials have had the chance to meet and gain a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples in remote areas in Australia.

With such outcomes, there is a desire on the part of regional personnel (AFLNT, SANFL, Sport and Recreation Officers) to be more involved in the Program. This could be accomplished, should FaHCSIA so choose, by having an advisory committee or Board for each region involving all stakeholders.

The limited capacity of some AFL Clubs to deal with individual communities in the way communities would wish (personalised relationship-building visits) has been caused by an imbalance in the number of communities that AFL Clubs service in different regions. Those Clubs with approximately 20 or more communities have struggled to meet such a demand and the evaluators suggest, in the Executive Summary, a number of modifications if the Program is to continue.

The capacity of AFL Clubs to provide quality mentoring and life goals has been called into question. While AFL Clubs claim to have provided mentoring, the consistency of provision, the comprehension of what mentoring means, and the skills to provide services do not seem to be in evidence.

On the other hand, the AFL has created and utilised The Ambassadors Program as focussed and consistent strategy to provide mentoring in a number of sites. The evaluators suggest that if the Fostership Program is to continue, having mentoring delivered by an entity or program such as the Ambassadors Program would enhance the program overall.

## **Appendix 1: Telephone Interview Questions and Questionnaires**

### **Telephone Interview Questions for Stakeholders involved in the Fostership Program**

1. What do you see as the purpose of the Club Partnership Program?
2. What is your organisation's role in the Program? (e.g. planning and undertaking the program, monitoring the program, assisting in undertaking the Program)
3. Explain how the program operates in terms of you and your organisation's role in it?
4. Who would you describe as partners in the Region in which you are operating (for example, schools, health clinics, sport and recreation officers...)?
5. To what extent do you assess that the program has achieved the objectives set for it in the agreement?
6. What assessments of the Program were undertaken to reach that conclusion?
7. To what extent are locally-based (town or community) individuals and organisations involved in the planning and undertaking of activities designed?
8. What do you consider are the most positive achievements of the program?
9. What do you consider, if any, are areas where achievements have been limited, non-existent, or negative?
10. Do you see a future for the Program?
11. If so, what changes, if any, would you suggest to improve how it operates?
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

## **Telephone Interview Questions for Stakeholders involved in the Ambassadors Program**

1. What do you see as the purpose of the Ambassadors for Life Program?

If the respondent refers to mentoring ask:

- Which sites are you working in?
- How does your organisation define mentoring?
- How many mentors have been trained?
- How many people are actively mentoring?
- What do the mentors do?
- How often do mentors provide mentoring?
- Over what period of time is mentoring provided?
- What is the focus of mentoring?

2. What is your organisation's role in the program?

3. Explain how the Program operates in terms of your organisation's role in it?

4. Who would you describe as partners in the sites in which you are operating?

5. To what extent do you assess that the Program has achieved the objectives?

6. What assessments of the Program were undertaken to reach that conclusion?

7. To what extent are locally-based (town or community) individuals and organisations involved in the planning and undertaking of the program?

8. What do you consider the most positive achievements of the Program?

9. What do you consider, if any, are areas where achievements have been limited, non-existent or negative?

10. What changes if any would you make to improve the way the Program operates?

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

## Questionnaire for Club-Connected Personnel

Evaluation of AFL National Partnership Agreement Research description for Questionnaire participants (To be read by participants before completing the survey)

The purpose of this project is to conduct an evaluation of the AFL Club Partnership Program / AFL Ambassadors for Life Mentoring Program. Dr Dave Goddard is working with Dr Lindy Norris, Nick Norris, Colin Bell and Natalia Gemmell to evaluate these programs under the auspices of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). We hope to find whether the program(s) you are involved with is meeting its aims successfully and whether there is anything we can learn from you that will be of value in thinking about the future of the programs. To help us achieve this, we are asking you to complete a brief survey. If you have any questions about the programs or the survey you can contact the research team members on 0402 459763 (Natalia) or 0419 048897 (Dave). We thank you for your time and effort.

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2011/061). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677) or e-mail [ethics@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:ethics@murdoch.edu.au)).

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome. To provide participant consent is to have read the information sheet about the nature and scope of this survey and to have acknowledged the following conditions.

Any questions I have about the research process have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this research. By submitting the questionnaire, I give my consent for the results to be used in the research. I am aware that confidentiality of the content of this questionnaire is guaranteed and that I will not be named in any report, and my individual response will not be seen by anyone other than the research team. I know that I may change my mind, withdraw my consent, and stop participating at any time; and I acknowledge that once my survey has been submitted it will not be possible to withdraw my data. I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential by the researchers and will not be released to a third party unless required to do so by law. I understand that the findings of this study may be published and that no information which can specifically identify me will be published.

Thank you for undertaking this questionnaire. We appreciate it. Your answers will remain confidential. Please click on the box which matches your reply for Yes or No answers. Where numbers are required, please click on the box and fill in the details. Where you wish to comment, please click on the space and type your replies.

THE TERM "COMMUNITY" REFERS TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES OR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE LIVING IN OR EXTERNAL TO REGIONAL CENTRES SUCH AS KATHERINE, ALICE SPRINGS OR CEDUNA. NOTE: PLEASE FOCUS ON THE YEAR 2010.

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What is your working title? What is your working title?

Which organisation are you with? Which organisation are you with?

If you work with or are linked to a specific AFL club, please indicate which one? If you work with or are linked to a specific AFL club, please indicate which one?

**Question 1.** Which of the following activities are undertaken by the Club responsible for the region in 2010? Visits to the regional centre?

Yes

No

If yes, how many?

Visits to individual communities in the region?

Yes

No

If yes, how many? If yes, how many?

Visits by community members to the Club (Please indicate the number of visits)?

Yes

No

If yes, how many visits?

Other: Please define and state how many.

**Question 2.** Please indicate if any of the following activities were undertaken by the Club or Club members including players in its region in 2010.

Football clinics

Yes

No

Coaching clinics

Yes

No

Attending matches

Yes

No

School visits

Yes  
No

Cultural activities  
Yes  
No

Supporting local football teams  
Yes  
No

Other (Please Comment)

**Question 3.** Were these activities undertaken: Only when AFL club representatives were present?

Yes  
No

By the State or Territory Football League?  
Yes  
No

By a local football club from the Regional Centre?  
Yes  
No

By regional or local sport and recreation officers?  
Yes  
No

With local people trained to continue them?  
Yes  
No

Other activities undertaken by the Club within its region (Please Comment)

**Question 4.** What is the focus of the two main messages that AFL clubs impart when they visit? (Please tick only two boxes below.)

School attendance  
Nutrition  
Active lifestyle  
Football  
Life goals

Other (Please Comment)

**Question 5.** What means has the Club used to maintain regular connection with its communities between visits over 2010? (Please click only on boxes that apply.)

Videoconferencing  
Skype

Telephone  
Letters  
Certificates of recognition  
Through regional development officers

Other (Please Comment)

**Question 6.** How many individuals were involved in Programs conducted during 2010? (If accurate numbers are not known, please approximate):  
Visits to regional centre?

Of these, how many were Adults? (25 and over)

And how many were Youth? (Under 25)

Visits to individual communities?

Of these, how many were Adults? (25 and over)

And how many were Youth? (Under 25)

Visits by community members to the Club?

Of these, how many were Adults? (25 and over)

And how many were Youth? (Under 25)

Other programs?

Of these, how many were Adults? (25 and over)

And how many were Youth? (Under 25)

**Question 7.** To what extent did funding for the Club Partnership Program provided by the AFL and FaHCSIA for 2010 meet the cost of operating the Program? (Please click on the appropriate box if you can answer and leave blank if you do not have the knowledge.)

Totally

75% - 99%

50%-74%

25-49%

Less than 25%

**Question 8.** If the answer was not “totally”, who provides the remainder and to what extent?: The Club?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide percentage

Club Sponsors?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide percentage

Other Sponsors?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide percentage

If yes, please indicate sectors(s)

Private

Public

Not for Profit

Other Sources?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide percentage

If yes, please indicate sectors(s)

Private

Public

Not for Profit

**Question 9.** How many Indigenous youth (defined as people under the age of 25 years) have received mentoring from the Club? (Please approximate if accurate numbers are not known. If no mentoring occurred, please insert 0 in both boxes.):

Number of Males

Number of Females

How was it delivered? One-on-one?

Yes

No

**Question 10.** If mentoring occurred, approximately how many hours were undertaken as a total?

Groups?

Yes

No

Other (Please describe – for example, via teleconferencing.)

**Question 11.** How many Indigenous youth (defined as people under the age of 25 years) have received other forms of assistance from the Club? (Please approximate if accurate numbers are not known.):

Number of Males

Number of Females

Please describe the forms of assistance that were used.

## Appendix 2: Breakdown of Respondents for Telephone Interviews, the Questionnaire and Community and Regional Interviews

### Fostership and Ambassadors Program Data

**Table 5: Breakdown of Respondents – Fostership Program Telephone Interviews**

National Perspective	1 x FaHCSIA 1 x AFL
Northern Territory Perspective	2 x FaHCSIA, NT State Office 1 x AFLNT
South Australian Perspective	1 x FaHCSIA, SA State Office 1 x SANFL 1 x Prime Minister and Cabinet Office of Sport
Wadeye (Essendon FC)	1 x Shire representative 1 x School representative 1 x AFLNT representative 1 x Essendon FC representative
APY Lands (Adelaide FC)	2 x School representatives 1 x SANFL representative 1 x Adelaide FC representatives
Gove Groote Elyandt (Geelong FC)	1 x Shire representative 2 x School representative 1 x AFLNT representative 2 x Geelong FC representatives
Central Australia (Richmond FC)	2 x Richmond FC representatives 2 x AFLNT representatives
Katherine (Hawthorn FC)	1 x Hawthorn FC representatives 1 x Australian Sports Commission representative 1 x Shire representative 1 x AFLNT representative
Ceduna (Port Adelaide FC)	1 x Port Adelaide FC representative 1 x ICC representative

**Table 6: Breakdown of Respondents: Ambassadors Program Telephone Interviews**

National Perspective	1 x FaHCSIA 2 x AFL 1 x AFL Sports Ready Program
Western Australian Perspective	1 x Fremantle Dockers FC representative
Queensland Perspective	1 x AFL Queensland/AFL Cape York representative

**Table 7: Breakdown of Respondents by Regional Focus: Fostership Program Online Questionnaire**

Wadeye (Essendon FC)	3 respondents
APY Lands (Adelaide FC)	3 respondents
Gove Groote Elyandt (Geelong FC)	2 respondents
Central Australia (Richmond FC)	1 respondent
Katherine (Hawthorn FC)	4 respondents
Ceduna (Port Adelaide FC)	1 respondent

**Table 8: Breakdown of Respondents by Organisation: Fostership Program Online Questionnaire**

State affiliates	4 representatives
Club representatives	5 representatives
Government representatives	4 representatives
Unspecified	1 representatives

**Community and Regional Visits Data**

**Table 9: Summary of Regional Visits**

Darwin	1
Katherine	2
Alice Springs	2
Ceduna	1 (extended)

**Table 10: Summary of Community Visits**

Beswick	2
Barunga	2
Santa Teresa	2
Trucking Yards (Alice Springs)	2
Yalata	1 (extended)
Koonibba	1 (extended)

Two visits had been planned to each community. The first visit to Yalata, Koonibba and Ceduna, however, was curtailed for two reasons: the unavailability of Yalata Community, and issues with airline flights (ash and fog). In lieu of that, an extra day was spent on the second visit.

In total 35 formal interviews were conducted in the communities. An additional 62 informal interviews were conducted (see Table 3).<sup>21</sup> Note that the 23 Beswick youth were a class of students who were spoken with as a group.

**Table 11: Summary of Community Interviews**

	Formal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Informal	Aboriginal Adults	Aboriginal Youth
Beswick	6	2	4	34	11	23
Barunga	4	2	2	6	4	2
Santa Teresa	7	5	2	10	4	6
Trucking Yards	4	3	1	6	1	5
Yalata	11	5	6	6	3	3
Koonibba	3	1	2	0	0	0

Twelve regional interviews were conducted (See Table 4 below). All were formal interviews. The personnel interviewed were AFLNT employees, Sport and Recreation Officers, teachers in schools or FaHCSIA (SA) and SANFL employees.

**Table 12: Summary of Regional Interviews**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Darwin		1
Katherine	1	1
Alice Springs	3	3
Ceduna	1	2

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<sup>21</sup> The term ‘informal interview’ means that the formal scripted set of interview questions was not followed. The mechanism used was an informal chat – do you follow footy, how is your community team going this year, do you play, have you seen (Richmond/Hawthorn/ Port) players out in your community or in town, do you like having them visits, what things did do they with you (where pertinent) ...?

### Appendix 3: Background to Communities Involved in the Community Consultation Process

<p>Barunga (Katherine Region – Hawthorn FC)</p> <p>Barunga is located 80 kilometres east-south-east of Katherine. It has a population of approximately 300 of whom 92 per cent are Indigenous. The primary language group is Jawoyn and traditional skin groups remain strong. There were 81 dwellings in mid-2007.</p> <p>The current site was established in 1951, renamed Bamyili in 1965 and Barunga in 1985. Land tenure for the community is “Inalienable Commonwealth Freehold Title”.</p> <p>The Barunga Sport and Music Festival is held annually at the community and is now in its 25th year. In 1988, then Prime Minister Bob Hawke attended the Barunga Festival, and was presented with a statement on Aboriginal Self-Determination that became known as the “Barunga Statement”.</p> <p>The community had its own Community Council until 1 July 2007, when it became part the Roper Gulf Shire based in Katherine. A Local Advisory Board still operates.</p> <p>Education is provided through the local Community Education Centre (CEC) up to year 10, although many secondary students attend boarding schools. Attendance at the CEC is low (approximately 50 to 60 per cent annually) and literacy and numeracy levels are commensurately low. A total of 15 per cent of community members</p>	<p>Beswick (Katherine Region – Hawthorn FC)</p> <p>Beswick is located 118 kilometres south-east of Katherine and 31 kilometres to the east of Barunga. It has a population of approximately 400 of whom 97 per cent are Indigenous. The primary language group is Jawoyn and traditional skin groups remain strong. There were 63 dwellings in mid-2006, 60 of which were rented, with an average of 6.34 residents per dwelling.</p> <p>The current site was established in 1947 on the former Beswick Reserve, a cattle station purchased by the Federal Government as a result of concern at the population drift from the region during the Second World War. It aimed to be a permanent settling place for local groups, to provide training in livestock breeding for young people from the region and to provide beef for the local community and Bamyili (now Barunga).</p> <p>In 1985, Wugularr people secured freehold title over 200 hundred hectares of the training station. The Community is known for its “Walking with Spirits” event in mid-July each year when the community is open to the public for camping. Traditional life remains strong, with regulatory authority operating under kinship groups. Alcohol and other substances have caused some breakdown in authority, but the older community people liken the values of Australian rules football to their own authority structure.</p> <p>The community had its own Community Council – the Beswick Town Council Incorporated until 1 July 2008 when it became part of the Roper Gulf Shire based in Katherine.</p>
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have completed Year 10 or above.

The total labour force in Barunga is estimated to be approximately 30, with the majority in full-time employment. The number includes non-Indigenous people. The shire has appointed an on-site Indigenous Community Shire Officer with approximately five assistants. A local community store also operates.

Health and other social services are generally coordinated from Katherine. There is a local health clinic operating under Sunrise Health Services with a doctor visiting one day a week.

The community participates in the Katherine Districts Football League and cites its football teams as giving cohesion and an identity for the community. The Barunga Crows, as they are known, were premiers in 2009, and have a great rivalry with Beswick Bears, 30 kilometres east.

Education is provided through the local Community School. Attendance is reasonable for an Aboriginal community (approximately 70 per cent annually) but literacy and numeracy levels are low.

In 2006, the total labour force in Beswick was given as 110, of whom 13 per cent were employed full-time and 87 per cent part-time. The part-time figure included CDEP employment which ceased to operate for a period but is now reinstated. The full-time percentage includes non-Indigenous people.

The shire has appointed an on-site Indigenous Community Shire Officer with five assistants. A Night Patrol operates with four Indigenous personnel. Significant numbers of people have little work or access to training locally.

There is a local health clinic operating under Sunrise Health Services and a doctor visits one day a week. A local community store also operates. It was placed under administration, and now has new managers.

As with Barunga, the community is very proud of its Australian Rules football exploits, having been premiers in 2010, defeating their arch-rivals, Barunga. As with Barunga, the focus and identity for the community are said to be very powerful. Currently, the school, together with the Shire Services Manager and Sport and Recreation officer, are entering a junior team in a new competition for pupils under the age of fifteen years. The school also has regular matches against Barunga school and Clontarf Foundation operating at Katherine Senior High School.

Koonibba (Ceduna/Maralinga Region – Port Adelaide FC)

The community of Koonibba is located some 40kms northwest of the coastal township of Ceduna along Highway One. The nearest city is Adelaide, some 800 kilometres to the east.

In the early years of the 20th century, before it became a missionary settlement in 1901, it was thick unused scrublands owned by the Australian government. The land was sold to the Lutheran Church for a few pounds and the mission was established. A government surveyor with the help of two friendly natives set about determining the boundaries of the Mission lands. The land is roughly 7000 acres - 4000 acres are used to farm cereal crops such as wheat and barley, the rest is scrub. Presently the land is leased to one of the local farmers for 3 years, with 20 per cent of the profits coming back into the community.

The population in the virgin years was in its high hundreds; today the community can only cater for a maximum of 150-200 people due to limited housing and essential services. Approximately 100 people are said to live in the community with transience between Ceduna and, to a lesser extent, Oak Valley, being high. Members of the community are connected with at least four different language groups – Kokatha, Wiringu, Mirning, and Pitjantjatjara

The community has its own Council to administer its affairs, operates a CDEP program of 55 places administered by Tjutjunaku Worka Tjuta Inc (TWT) based in Ceduna, and has a school, a child care-centre and an outreach health clinic connected with Ceduna/Koonibba Aboriginal

Yalata (Ceduna/Maralinga Region – Port Adelaide FC)

Yalata community is located approximately 200 km west of Ceduna and 983 km west of Adelaide. The people are part of the Anangu people of the Western Desert Language groups and speak a dialect of Pitjantjatjara. Although the name Yalata has been used in the area for well over a century (it probably means 'shellfish' or 'oyster' in the language of the local Aborigines), the actual Yalata community only came into existence as recently as 1952. The decision to declare the Maralinga desert area to the north a site for atomic testing meant that Aborigines from the Maralinga area (particularly those living around the mission at Ooldea) had to be moved out. Most members of the Ooldea community were moved south to Yalata where, in 1984, the South Australian government officially handed back some 76 420 sq km of semi-desert. The Yalata Aboriginal Reserve now runs on either side of the Eyre Highway from the Nullarbor to the Nundroo Roadhouse. It includes about 100 km of the coastline of the Great Australian Bight.

In 1996, the Yalata Reserve was proclaimed an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) being an area of distinct character having significant ecological and cultural value. The reserve holds the largest expanse of untouched coastal mallee in the south hemisphere. Under agreements between Commonwealth and State Government agencies, Yalata Community Incorporated (YCI) is committed to conserving the unique coastal and inland landscapes on the Yalata IPA.

The community is governed by the Yalata Council and has a store, roadhouse, and arts centre. It has a school that has low regular attendance. The approximate population of the Community is given as 100 stable

Health Service Inc, and a building company responsible for the maintenance and up-grading of all buildings in the community. It is reported to include fifty houses.

The community is extremely proud of its record in Australian Rules football. Koonibba Football Club has been in existence for over a century, participating all that time in the Far West Football League. It is said to be the oldest Aboriginal football in Australia and has won thirty premierships in that time. Such a record gives Koonibba a strong identity and focus, despite the fact that the Club has re-located to Ceduna.

The Club also the only one of the original clubs that participated in that League to still be in existence.

residents, with others who move regularly between Yalata and Ceduna and Yalata and Oak Valley, 300 kms to the north. Unemployment rates are high and, although the community is 'dry', alcohol remains a problem for many inhabitants.

Yalata Community has a football team that participates in carnivals organised by Aboriginal communities, particularly those from the APY Lands with whom they have very close connections. In 2011, after a gap of many years, Yalata conducted its own carnival with APY teams and a team from Oak Valley. There is also an annual Maralinga versus APY Lands football match, which is the highlight of the football calendar.

It has had regular visits from Port Power personnel since the inception of the AFL Partnership Agreement. They also have a women's team, linking with Koonibba community, near Ceduna, to make up numbers.

Australian Rules Football has a strong place in the culture of the community. It is described as giving the community a focus, an identity, and giving some direction to young people. Traditional lore is carried on in the community through skin and kinship structures. A senior man from the community, in the process of this research being undertaken, likened the playing of Australian Rules football to obeying traditional Aboriginal values.

The community is considering applying to the Far West Football League based in Ceduna to enter a male team in the competition in 2012 or 2013.

The high cost of travel is seen as an obstacle to this occurring as it is unlikely that teams from Ceduna will consider travelling to Yalata to play.

### Santa Teresa (Alice Springs Region – Richmond FC)

Santa Teresa Community is 80 kilometres south east of Alice Springs. It is inhabited by people from the East Arrente language group. These people moved to Alice Springs in the 1920s and then north to Charles Creek. In 1942, there was growing ill-feeling towards Aboriginal people by European settlers. Coupled with military administration of the town at that time, the Charles Creek group of Aboriginal people was moved to Arltunga, an old gold-mining centre and gold battery about 90 kms ENE of Alice Springs.

Over the next decade, an unprecedented up-surge in child mortality rates was eventually traced to the very high levels of arsenic in the water supply, created by residue from the gold battery. This led the Catholic missionaries to trek, using wagons and horses, about 100 kilometres to the south, where a good water source was located. That led to the establishment of Santa Teresa in 1953.

Until 1976, the Catholic Mission ran the community. Then, until the 1 July 2007, Santa Teresa was administered under the Ltyentye Apurte Community Government Council. Since then, following the amalgamation of shires in the Northern Territory, authority rests with the MacDonnell Shire based in Alice Springs, although an advisory Council consisting of local residents still exists.

The community population is estimated to be 650, of whom 57 per cent are 24 years or younger, 24 per cent are of compulsory school age and 90 per cent are Indigenous. Employment is available at the local store, the health clinic, the school and through the Community Development

### Trucking Camp (Alice Springs Region – Richmond FC)

The Camp is about 4 kilometres north of the town Centre, just off Stuart Highway towards Darwin. It was established by Aboriginal people who were either displaced from, or chose to leave, cattle stations in the late 1960s after award rates for workers applied to Aboriginal people. The camp comprises five family groups, all from the Arrernte Language group, and numbers about 100 people.

As with Aboriginal people in all Town Camps in Alice Springs, Trucking Yard Camp people have lived with a level of disadvantage ever since it was established. Unfortunately, too, most Aboriginal people from the various Town Camps are all viewed in a quite negative light by many non-Aboriginal people.

As Aboriginal people say, being part of a ‘remote community’ does not mean living several hundred kilometres from a large centre. In many respects, these ‘town camps’ reflect a sense of isolation that is as severe, if not more so, than that suffered by communities classed as remote because of distance. The level of boredom for people in Town Camps leads to activities that have a downward spiralling effect on health, community welfare and the self-confidence of people.

The more recent story of Trucking Yard Camp, however, is worth telling.

For a number of years, Trucking Yard Camp has had its own AFL team and plays in carnivals under that name. It also has male and female basketball teams entered at all levels in local competitions, as well as softball and netball teams. And Trucking Yard Camp young men play with Pioneers

Employment Program (CDEP).

Traditional life is very strong. There is a kinship network of eight subdivisions, which dictates marriage arrangement, ownership of land, ritual responsibilities and social behaviour.

As with other communities, Australian Rules football plays a big part in community life. The community has two teams (an A Grade and a B Grade team) in the Alice Springs Football League. Community members state the importance of football in giving their young people, boys and girls, a focus that keeps them busy and away from less savoury elements of life.

Football Club in the local competition, while two Aboriginal men, one was born and brought up at the Camp, are both involved in the administration of that Club.

Mick and Sam (pseudonyms) spoke of not only AFL, but sport in general, as being a motivator to, as Mick put it, overcome boredom and all that goes with that – drinking and other drugs – and acts as a means to help younger Aboriginal people overcome shyness and a sense of shame. Mick has also developed a music program that is generating a lot of interest among younger people in the community.

Both agreed that decades of government policy and regulations have brought about dependency where Aboriginal either won't, don't know how to, or are scared to, make decisions about their lives.

Through sport in general, they believe they are starting to give young people greater self-confidence. They spoke of a number – at least five – young people who now have a trade and many more are working in various tasks.

But the issues remain. Mick spoke of the Club Partnership Program (CCP) as focussing on schools, which neither was against, but they spoke of the structure of the program missing too many of their people:

- The younger ones who have dropped out of school and need the messages that the program is designed to deliver including mentoring
- Parents who need some guidance about their influence on their children, and about improving school attendance.

In their view, while the CCP provides motivation to young people who

attend school, the gaps between visits do not lead to a cohesive program that supports as well as motivates. They agreed that currently there is Richmond as one entity, AFLNT as another, Clontarf Foundation, and the communities and their need. While each of the first three programs are worthwhile in different ways, it would be good if there was connectedness between them all – some form of leadership that let the left hand know what the right hand is doing.

Sam spoke of Trucking Yard Camp in two ways:

- As a cohesive community that needs to be dealt with in that way; and
- As a group which makes decisions in different ways from the western system of large meetings or representative democracy. He and Richard described it as one-on-one conversations or yarning with small groups.

All elements should be taken into account when focussing on the goals of the CCP.

Both men want to take things further but feel, apart from SIHIP and seven new houses, they are left to their own devices to generate programs and make a difference to the lives of all people in Trucking Yard Camp. How to get financial and other support remain both a burden and a question. Financial support is something that both men see as crucial and they were interested in approaching people and organisations for various forms of support – in sport, employment opportunities, music, self-confidence and decision-making development were examples.

Sam, for example, spoke of wanting to meet with someone from Richmond

to show them what is happening at Trucking Yard Camp and have some input to the way the CCP operates and develops at the local level.

In summary, the basically voluntary work happening at Trucking Yard Camp operates to the following sequential principles:

- Motivate young people to participate in things like sport and music to overcome their boredom, shyness and sense of shame;
- Use that interest to encourage more productive use of time – such as attending school, understanding well-being and what contributes to achieving it and by learning a trade; and
- Through that, decrease the sense of dependency on outside organisations and increase the sense of self-confidence of individuals and the community by encouraging, and allowing Trucking Yard Camp people to make their own decisions in a respectful and proper way.

The extent to which the CCP can meet any or all of the above principles is, or should be, part of the way it develops in the future. It's potential to support initiatives such as that occurring at Trucking Yard Camp, rather than drive such initiatives, is an opportunity to support the desire of Aboriginal peoples for capacity-building and self-determination.

## Appendix 4: Maps

Figure 1: Map of the Northern Territory



Figure 2: Map of South Australia

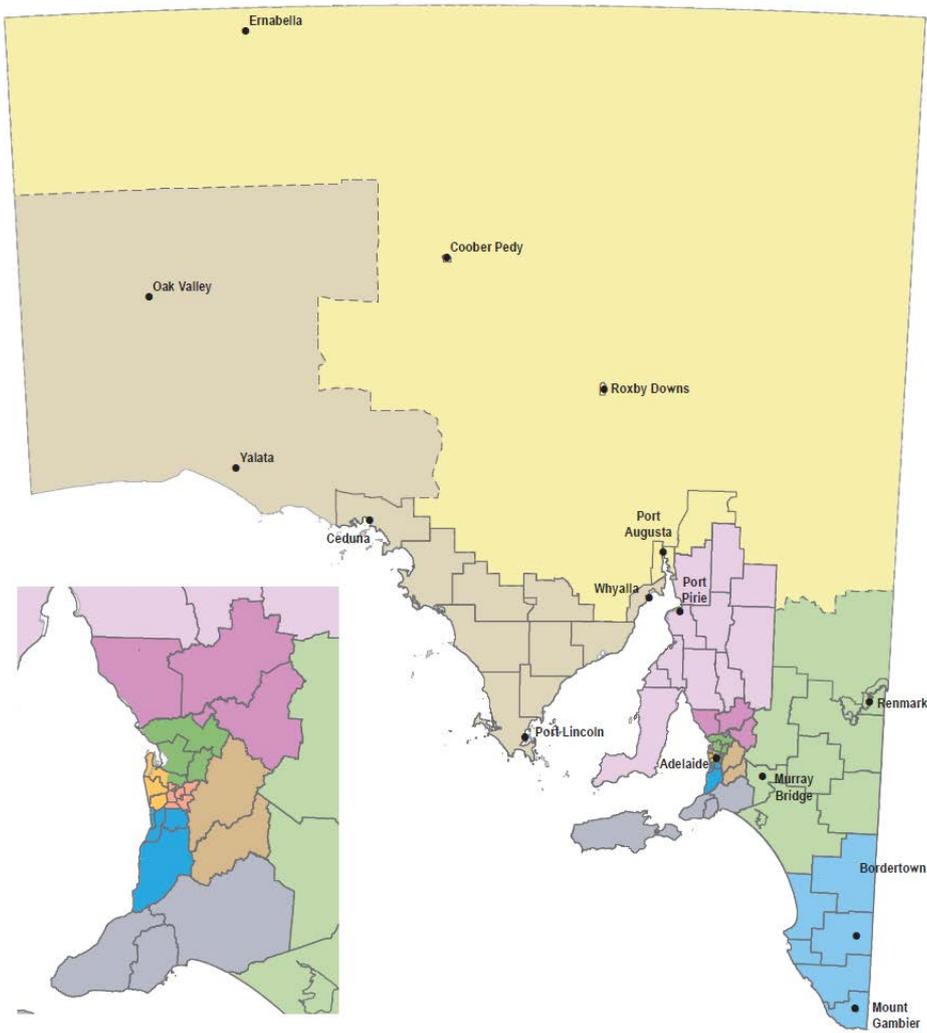
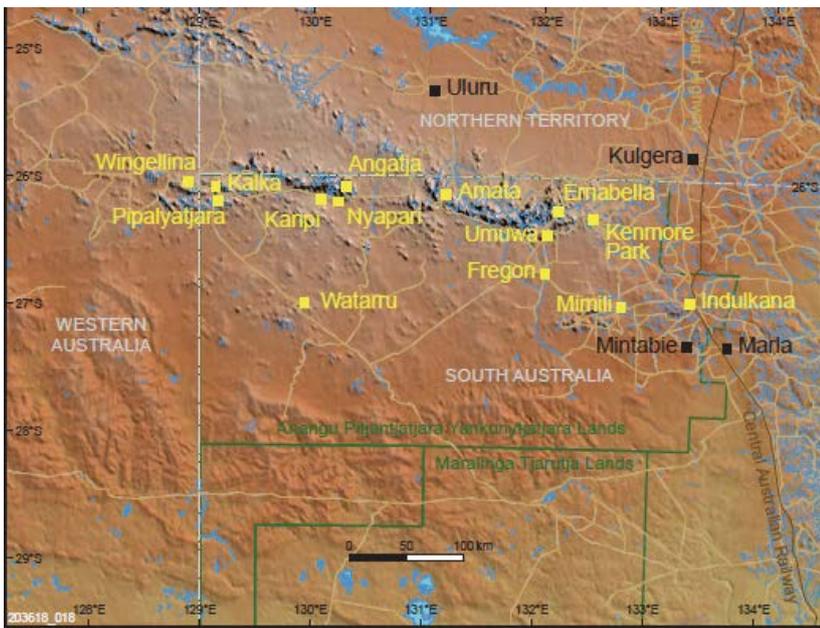


Figure 3: Map of the APY Lands



## Appendix 5: Case Studies of Clubs involved in the Partnership Agreement

### Groote Eylandt and Gove – Geelong Football Club

Geelong first visited Gove and Groote Eylandt in February 2007. They chose to link with the community that was the hometown of one of their young Indigenous players, Nathan Djerrkura. The first two years of the program was focused on developing relationships with stakeholders in the community and consulting with the school and community to set objectives for the partnership.<sup>22</sup>

They have conducted several Flying Squad visits since then along with opportunities for community members to visit the Club. The Club has focused on developing a good football base in the communities, and promoting school attendance by offering incentives to students.<sup>23</sup> The Club has also sought to promote healthy lifestyle messages through their activities.<sup>24</sup>

The Club has addressed the mentoring component of the program by running leadership sessions with local captains and coaches as part of club visits.<sup>25</sup>

### Wadeye-Tiwi Island Communities and Essendon Football Club

Essendon first visited Wadeye in July 2007 to start community consultations and develop a schedule of events. In 2008, the Club secured DESA as the official Indigenous programs partner.

Since then the Club has conducted a number of Flying Squad visits and runs coaching clinics and exchange programs. As well, a community member was given the opportunity to spend time with the Essendon Merchandise Manager who is assisting the community to develop its own retail social enterprise in Wadeye selling football gear to the community with profits to be channelled to community sport and development activities.

The Club struggled to establish ongoing mentoring due to changing staff in schools. To address this, the Club sought to build relationships with other people in the community and also secured sponsorship for communication technology for players and students to talk online. In 2009/10 the Club trialled the use of Skype with one school in Wadeye. The Club also facilitates links between the Thathangathay foundation and the Wadeye

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<sup>22</sup> Community Fostership: Geelong Cats Gove and Groote Eylandt, NT, p3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p3.

<sup>24</sup> Geelong 2008-2009, p11.

<sup>25</sup> Geelong 2008-2009, p13.

<p>Geelong has received financial support for the program from BHP Billiton and in 2011 is appointing a new community manager who will oversee this program and have more scope to seek corporate sponsorship.</p> <p>In interviews, Essendon also advised that they provide incentives through their merchandise area for the Cats Schools program in Angurugu, mentoring through Skype and Internet, guernseys for the Football Program, sports equipment for Little Athletics Program, mentoring for coaches and leaders of the Football League, incentives for good behaviour and school attendance by offering visits to Geelong and participation in school programs in Geelong. Encouraging support from schools (Firbank and Geelong College) in developing relationships with Community schools and children, involvement of corporate interest in supporting the program.</p>	<p>community.</p> <p>Essendon also joined with the AFLNT to employ the first full time Regional Development Manager on the Tiwi Islands.</p> <p>From the interviews, it was apparent that the Bombers had also devoted considerable energy to developing the Wadeye Football League. They are also working with the school, currently, to develop a Youth Academy. According to an Essendon representative:</p> <p>‘We thought it would be a good idea to develop a resource that we could use at the school in a practical component -they learn how to run a football competition. So they are learning literacy and numeracy based around football and Essendon.’</p>
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<p>Central Australia (Alice-Tennant Creek) – Richmond FC</p> <p>Richmond made their first visit to Alice Springs in 2008. Initially, the club chose to focus on a communication strategy delivering key health, education and leadership messages to the five new community teams playing in the Central Australian Football League, as well as coach, management and umpiring accreditation programs. They are also actively sponsoring Santa Teresa when they come to Melbourne to play the curtain raiser match to the Dreamtime.</p> <p>In 2008/09, Richmond linked their Partnership Program with their new Korin Gamadji Institute in Melbourne that will provide ongoing activities for students. They also conducted leadership camps and provided VET opportunities for students.</p> <p>They have employed a full-time person on the ground in Central Australia and are looking to strengthen their mentoring program and expose</p>	<p>APY Lands – Adelaide Football Club</p> <p>In 2007/08 Adelaide had confirmed a sponsor to support their program in the APY Lands and had planned a number of community meetings for the end of May.</p> <p>The Club has established Flying Squad visits and run a number of activities with communities. As a result of the program, structured football programs are now delivered by local people on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The Club has formed a partnership with the My Eye Health program and are currently seeking corporate sponsorship for the program. They have also linked with an employment organisation that is focused on assisting Indigenous Australians to achieve sustainable employment.</p> <p>Structured mentoring has not yet been established. However, to maintain ongoing contact between visits, Adelaide coordinated a program called</p>
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<p>community to employment opportunities.</p> <p>Richmond has secured Dick Smith as a corporate sponsor for the program, who have provided the technology to link Tigers players with communities between visits, and technological incentives to support school attendance. According to a Richmond representative:</p> <p>‘We took the General Manager of Dick Smith for Australia, New Zealand and India up there. It changed her life. She’d lived in India [and] thought she’d seen it all, poverty and all that. But it’s different. The best thing on that trip [was that there are] so many other ways to help other than just giving cash out. So we basically get 54 items of technology each term for 54 schools. Each term each school has an IPod or something to improve their school attendance or behaviour.’</p>	<p>Centra – a web-based program that is broadcasted to the APY Lands, but has faced technical difficulties.</p> <p>According to an Adelaide FC representative the team visits every school in the APY Lands through the “Crows in Schools” program and presents health information. They work with the APY Lands Football Team, providing mentoring and giving them the opportunity to meet the players, and supply resources and football equipment for the team. They also run a sports trainers and coaching course to support the football competition in the APY Lands.</p> <p>In addition, four students from the APY Lands are coming down to Adelaide this year to participate in a three-day football camp where they will train with the team, and attend mentoring sessions and other activities ie zoo tours.</p>
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Katherine - Collingwood and Hawthorn Football Clubs

Collingwood Football Club started negotiating with the AFL in 2008 about setting up a partnership with Katherine that failed to take off and Hawthorn took over as the partner Club. Funding from 2008/09 financial year was provided to Hawthorn in advance for activities in 2009/2010 with the partnership officially commencing in October 2009.

Two flying squad visits were undertaken by the Club in the 2009/10 financial year, which included school visits, football clinics and healthy lifestyle messages. In addition, the Club arranged incentive activities for young people as a reward for academic participation and performance. The Club has also tied in with Youth Beyond Blue activities and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects to promote adolescent mental health.

Hawthorn has a dedicated community manager developing their program; they are working closely with AFLNT to develop their relationship with the community.

Mentoring has been initiated during visits to Katherine, with students being identified by the Clontarf Football Academy and players having one-on-one sessions with these young men.

According to a Hawthorn representative, the Club is seeking to visit each community in the Katherine region at least once over the three year term of the project.

Ceduna/Maralinga – Port Adelaide Football Club

Port Adelaide committed to the program in 2008. They met with key stakeholders to plan the program. It was agreed that the Club would engage with youth and promote a commitment to sport and a commitment to learning. They identified activities to promote a football pathway, as well as activities to support the education pathway through integrating football into the community. They also offered leadership forums in the community.

The Club has secured corporate funding for their program and has worked closely with the SANFL to deliver programs. The Club has conducted a number of Flying Squad visits with a focus on school visits, and has also been involved in supporting community football teams, and other events in the communities. As well, they have run exchange programs and sponsored teams in the Aboriginal Power Cup.

A focus has been on increasing use of AFL school curriculum resources and linking participation in activities to a “no school, no play” policy. The Club has not yet focused on mentoring of young people, but is planning to invite 60 students to Adelaide for a 3-day leadership workshop, with 12 students to be selected for a mentoring program supported by Santos. The mentoring program will support students through their final year of study and look at identifying career pathways.

According to a representative from Port Power, there are two parts to the program:

‘1. Us making sure we’re in town the minimum 3 times and on those trips see the people we’re meant to see ...

2. Helping some of those groups from Ceduna to come to Adelaide – school trips, football camps, where teams of students or footballers have

	come to Adelaide to participate in carnivals and competitions.'
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