

**JCPAA INQUIRY INTO AUDIT REPORT NO. 12. 2008-09 ACTIVE
AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM AUSTRALIAN SPORTS
COMMISSION**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY MATT CAHILL, GROUP EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES GROUP**

1. Thank you, Chair. The audit's objective was to assess the effectiveness of the implementation and administration of the Active After-school Communities (AASC) program by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). The extent to which the ASC is able to determine that the program is achieving its objectives was also examined.
2. To implement the AASC program, the ASC received \$90 million in funding over three years in 2004. This funding was extended by \$124.4 million in 2007 to continue the program until the end of 2010.
3. Within a very short timeframe, the ASC effectively implemented the AASC program, establishing a network of State managers and Regional Coordinators. Systems and processes for selecting sites and administering grants were also developed, including providing the necessary administrative support for the program.
4. A management framework was also established. However, the ANAO suggested that the governance framework supporting the program could be strengthened and quality standards over program delivery better monitored. A sub-committee of the Board was established to oversee the program. However, its role and responsibilities were not clearly defined. Key decisions and some approvals were not always sought or appropriately documented, particularly for the evaluation project. Oversight of the program could be improved by regular management reports to the Board and the executive.

5. The design of the program included two key quality controls: deliverers of the program must complete the Community Coach Training Program (CCTP) and have satisfactory criminal history checks. However, a number of exemptions to these controls had been granted to probationary deliverers, which risks undermining the standards and philosophy that underpin the program.
6. Chair, in the early years of the program, assessments of expressions of interest for places in the program were poorly documented. The assessment process improved considerably in 2007.
7. Sites received grants ranging from \$320 to \$3518. Given the number of grants and the relatively small amounts involved the grant application and acquittal processes in place were overly complex and resource intensive. Improvements could be made to simplify and streamline these processes.
8. The ASC is also undertaking an evaluation of the program, which I understand an interim report into Phase 1 has recently being finalised. The ANAO highlighted a number of issues relating to the evaluation methodology and reporting of the evaluation results.
9. Chair, the ANAO made four recommendations, which were accepted by the ASC. Our recommendations were aimed at:
 - developing and applying minimum quality standards for training and criminal history checks and monitor the use of exemptions;
 - reviewing of the purpose and function of the AASC database;
 - reviewing and streamlining the grant application processes, including assessing the merits of automating the process; and
 - adopting a risk based approach to the acquittal of grants.

10. Finally, I have with me today two members of the audit team to assist the Committee in its inquiry, Ms Barbara Cass, Executive Director, who oversighted this audit and Ms Donna Hanson, the Audit Manger.