



Your ref:

DO06/195462

Our ref:

Enquiries:

Senator Andrew Bartlett
Chair
Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and The Arts
References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator Bartlett

Thank you for your correspondence received 7 August 2006 regarding the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia.

The Department of Education and Training strongly advocates for quality physical activity opportunities for all public school children. Current initiatives include fulfilling the recommendations of the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS), commissioned by the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) in 2003.

Please find the responses to your specific questions below:

1. Recent State and Australian Government announcements regarding physical activity require that, from 2007, all students in Years 1-10 participate in a minimum of two hours of physical activity each week, during the school day as part of student learning programs. Schools are also encouraged to provide opportunities for students to be physically active during breaks, and before and after school.
2. Although there is no formal requirement for physical education classes to have pre-determined periods of activity, the Western Australian Curriculum Framework describes Health and Physical Education as providing students with an understanding of health issues and the skills needed for confident participation in sport and recreational activities. This enables students to make responsible decisions about health and physical activity and to promote their own and others health and well-being.
3. The Department has no compulsory requirement for participation in school sport during regular school hours and does not monitor what is offered to students.
4. The Department contracts School Sport WA Inc (SSWA) to offer interschool, interstate and international competitive sporting opportunities to students in Western Australian schools. SSWA is an association of school teachers with the principal purpose of organising and coordinating sporting competitions for school children at a local, regional and interstate level.

SSWA works in close cooperation with the Department, other educational sectors, state sporting associations, local government, key organisations in other states, schools and other agencies. Schools make their own decisions in relation to participation. Decisions are usually based on a school's capacity to identify staff members who are prepared to volunteer their time to prepare and present teams. It is the voluntary contribution of teachers' time that ensures the success of the various competitions.

SSWA is supported by a grant from the Department and through a user-pay system, in which schools competing in the interschool Champion Schools Program (132 events across 26 individual sports) and individual students competing at state level (in 27 secondary and ten primary teams) are largely responsible for the funding of specific components of the program. SSWA is located within the Department offices at 151 Royal Street, East Perth and comprises a full-time manager, a full-time executive officer, a full-time clerical officer and a full-time finance officer.

SSWA, in accordance with its charter, provides competitive opportunities for all students, regardless of sector, and encourages maximal participation in a range of quality sporting programs. The extent and intensity of the competition is varied and based on the experience, skill level, maturity and interest of the student.

5. *Physical activity* is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy. *Physical education* is defined as physical activity sessions performed as part of the school curriculum. *School sport* is defined as competitive physical activity performed as a logical extension to the school physical education curriculum and is conducted both in school and out of school time. *Exercise* is a subset of physical activity and is defined as planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of fitness, such as muscle strength, endurance, flexibility or cardio-respiratory endurance¹

¹ Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. and Read, H. (2004). *Physical Activity and Nutrition Levels in western Australian Children and Adolescents: Report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.

6. Schools are required to report on their compliance with two hours of physical activity requirement.
7. Two hours of physical activity requirement is consistent amongst Department, Catholic and Independent schools.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



PAUL ALBERT
DIRECTOR GENERAL

14 AUG 2006