



2006 SENATE INQUIRY INTO WOMEN IN SPORT AND RECREATION IN AUSTRALIA

Australian Paralympic Committee Submission

Introduction

The Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) develops and nurtures Paralympic sport in Australia. The APC is responsible for the preparation, selection, management and participation of the Australian Teams at Paralympic Summer and Winter Games. The APC also conducts a range of development programs for Paralympic athletes. The APC shares the vision of the International Paralympic Committee "to enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world".

A priority of the APC is to encourage women and girls to become actively involved in sport with the possibility of representing their county at World Championships or Paralympic Games. A key ingredient in achieving this objective is to present positive images of Paralympic athletes and athletes with a disability through mainstream media.

The APC respectfully requests financial support to enable it to provide adequate television coverage of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. The Beijing Games will be able to be televised live in Australia due to similar time zones. This represents an excellent opportunity to maximize Paralympic exposure for all athletes.

Background Information

- Women with disabilities represent approximately 35 percent of the Paralympic population. At the Paralympic Games in Athens in 2004, the Australian Paralympic Team comprised 92 males and 60 females.
- To effectively remain as a world leader in Paralympic sport we need to increase the number of women with disabilities who play organized or competitive sport. This is a high priority for the Australian Paralympic Committee.
- Following Athens the Australian Paralympic Committee, with government and sponsor support, introduced a National Talent Search program. This program has proved successful in this early phase identifying over 600 people with disabilities who have the potential to strive for medal success in future Paralympic Games.



- With a staff of 23, the Australian Paralympic Committee currently employs 14 women [six in management roles]. In particular three female Paralympians, two in management roles, and one in data related areas as part of a plan to develop athletes careers post retirement.
- There are presently many barriers identified for women with disabilities to become involved in sport. Greater attention needs to be given to the promotion and education of women with disabilities about the benefits and opportunities. There is no televised coverage of women's sport, for athletes with a disability.
- Television for the 2004 Paralympic Games cost the Australian Paralympic Committee over \$380,000. No network would cover disabled sport without a direct payment to assist in the production and associated costs. The promotion of women's active involvement in a Paralympic Team as well as in recreation or organised sport requires assistance.
- Assistance in the coverage of the Beijing, 2008 Paralympic Games during the two week period, would ensure women's sport for people with a disability, is showcase at least once in a four year period.

Recommendation

An allocation of \$1 million to the Australian Paralympic Committee to assist in acquiring television coverage – including live coverage or key events beyond one hour per day during Games time. It would also enable pre Games promotion and coverage.

Such a focus would produce positive outcomes in three core areas:

1. The visual promotion of sport for people with disabilities through role models, both male and female;
2. The specific promotion of sports women with disabilities who currently receive limited opportunities. Such profile would also have the effect of providing additional incentive for women to develop their athletic skills and to become involved and stay involved in the Paralympic movement;
3. Advance the value and objectives of the Australian Paralympic Committee.

Greg Hartung
President