

**School of Human Kinetics
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EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN SPORTS ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT



**MEMOS XXV
2022-2023**

Project Yul'lu

*Butchulla country lies in the Great Sandy region on the south-east coast of Queensland, Australia.
The Butchulla people's totem is Yul'lu (dolphin).*

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ABSTRACT

Australia has a long and proud history in the Olympic sport of swimming. As an island nation, it is a sport that many Australians have a close affinity to and one which Australians pay particularly close attention to during the Olympic Games. As the traditional custodians of Australia, for over 60,000 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had a strong spiritual connection to water, water protection and the sacredness of the water source. Yet, as we celebrate the tremendous success of the Australian Swim Team (the Australian Dolphins) in the XXXII Olympiad, the reality is there have been very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian Dolphins in the history of the Olympic movement.

The purpose of this research project is to understand the barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming in order to provide recommendations to Swimming Australia to increase participation and provide talent pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes.

The research has been conducted via a qualitative approach involving semi structured interviews, a yarning circle and case studies.

The findings have been incorporated into an action based on three pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation of the Problem

Australia has a long and proud history in the Olympic sport of swimming. As an island nation, it is a sport that many Australians have a close affinity to and one which Australians pay particularly close attention to during the Olympic Games. As the traditional custodians of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples have always had a strong spiritual connection to water, water protection and the sacredness of the water source. Yet, as we celebrate the tremendous success of the Australian Swim Team (the Australian Dolphins) in the XXXII Olympiad, the reality is there have been very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian Dolphins in the history of the Olympic movement.

The purpose of this research project is to understand the barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming in order to provide recommendations to Swimming Australia to increase participation and provide talent pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes.

1.2 Context of the research

In Australia, 812,000 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 3.2% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). An analysis of Swimming Australia's swim central platform in October 2022 shows only 1.2% of registered members identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. To make the Australian swimming community representative of broader Australian society, Swimming Australia will need to more than double the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in its membership.

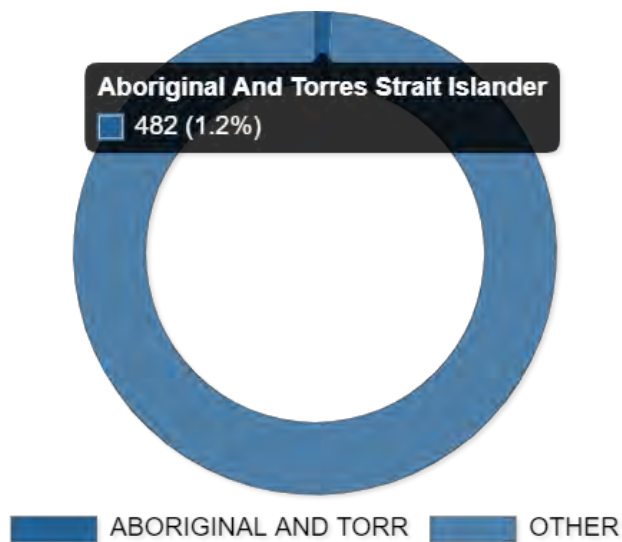


Figure 1 SwimCentral 2023

In addition to membership numbers, Australian sports have started to take important steps in their journey of reconciliation. “For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australia’s colonial history is characterised by devastating land dispossession, violence, and racism. Over the last half-century, however, many significant steps towards reconciliation have been taken. Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that reminds us that, while generations of Australians have fought hard for meaningful change, future gains are likely to take just as much, if not more, effort.” (Corporate Author, Reconciliation Australia, 2022). For swimming it is an important time to take a leadership role for Olympic sports in the reconciliation journey and ensure barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people’s participation in swimming are reduced and facilitators are enhanced to build an inclusive culture in the sport and to play a pivotal role in the health, wellbeing and safety outcomes of the traditional owners of Australian land.

1.3 Research aims

This research project aims to identify barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming and to lay the foundation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander swimmers to represent Australia in the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

In order to have an understanding of the context, the following key questions were addressed in the research:

- (a) What is the current state of play for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander of formal or informal participation in swimming across the Australian State and Territories?
- (b) What is the best way to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?
- (c) What sports have high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates and, importantly, how did they achieve this?

The findings from these research project will provide a roadmap for Swimming Australia to continue on its reconciliation journey and, critically, grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the sport.

1.4 Project Methodology

The research questions were addressed via a qualitative approach involving semi structured interviews, a yarning circle and case studies.

1.5 Recommendations

Based on the recommendation of Reconciliation Australia the proposed action plan in Chapter 5 is based on 3 pillars Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The action plan incorporates the learnings from this research.

1.6 Self Reflection

As a non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person and in fact a Portuguese migrant with no cultural authority, being respectful and carefully choosing terminology and language was front of mind at all times in this research. It was critically important at every stage of the project to have approval and validation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and I am so grateful for the many hours I have been gifted in advice and terminology changes throughout the research. It is important that all Australians continue to work hard to better understand culture and whilst not always getting it right, being open to learn and make mistakes and be better, in the spirit of reconciliation and healing.

CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is an important first step to analyse the research to date and provide an overview of the historical context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming in Australia. In particular, it presents extant literature on barriers and facilitators which informs the approach taken to explore the proposed research questions.

In this chapter an analysis of the historical context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's participation in swimming and literature pertaining to the history will be explored. A review of the literature regarding barriers and facilitators to participation in physical activity in an international context will be undertaken followed by a review of the Australian specific context. Finally, the literature review will be further refined to examine the literature specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation including barriers and facilitators in recent studies.

2.2 Historical Context

For over 60,000 years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had a close relationship with Australian rivers, lakes, creeks, waterholes and the seas surrounding the island nation of Australia (H20 Thinking, 2016). The diverse aquatic ecosystems abundant throughout Australia are reflected in stories of the Dreaming. Habitats cared for and protected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a source of cultural and spiritual significance offering a place for gathering and nourishment in a land that can be harsh and unforgiving.

Historical records suggest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were Australia's first great swimmers. William Govett (1836, p.224), assistant surveyor in New South Wales from 1827 to 1833, describing the country north of Sydney between Port Jackson and Broken Bay, noted that the "natives are... bold and surprisingly expert, both in swimming and diving" (Robinson & Plomley, 2008, p.87). George Augustus Robinson, noted in his diary during a visit to Bruny Island in September 1829: 'The females are in general very adept swimmers and are enabled to procure a surprising quantity of shellfish upon the single immersion in the water...The women are trained from children to swim and dive so that when grown up the water becomes their element' (Robinson & Plomley, 2008, p.87).

Walter Gormly, a well-known New South Wales competitive swimmer in the 1870's, credited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with teaching him to swim "Gormly himself had reportedly been taught the art of swimming by 'black gins' on the Murrumbidgee in the 1870s" (Osmond, 2017, p.48).

In recent memory swimming continues to play a significant part in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives. In 2003 Amy Jarrett of Stuart Island (Nambucca Heads, NSW) recalled at the age of 60 in describing her relationship to the waters surrounding Nambucca Heads: "As soon as we opened our eyes, we'd be over there swimming and then we didn't get home until dark when it was cool" (quoted in New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2003, p. 22).

Despite the close connection to water the inevitable effects of colonisation and the deep pain and suffering of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has impacted every aspect of life. The complexity and untold story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences in the sport of swimming continues to leave a hole in the tapestry of literature. Phillips in *Swimming Australia: One Hundred Years* reflects that "many details of Aboriginal swimming practices, swimmers and their deeds are forgotten or, at best, 'fragmented'" (Phillips, 2008, p.7). Phillips went on to say that "Aboriginal people with a strong water culture' rarely participate in 'formal organised swimming'" (Phillips, 2008, p.7). The question must be asked why the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Australia, despite their rich spiritual and cultural connection to the water, currently experience low rates of participation in formal organised swimming.

2.3 Barriers and Facilitators

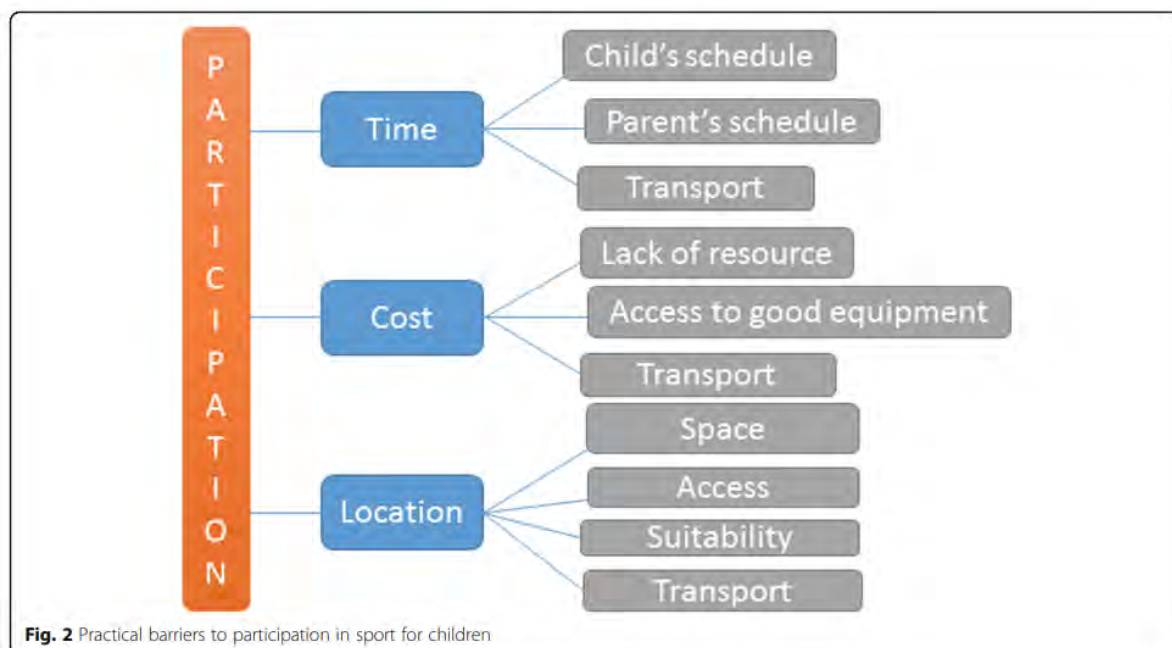
Allen et. al. (2021) describe barriers and facilitators to participation generally as "engagement factors related to behaviour change, where facilitators are factors that enable, and barriers are factors that inhibit, participation" (p2). Common barriers to participation in sport generally included lack of time, access issues, financial costs, entrenched attitudes, inappropriate environments, and low socioeconomic status (Kelly et al., 2016). Common facilitators often include enjoyment of physical activity, motivation related to health benefits, social support and integration of physical activity into lifestyle (Kelly et al., 2016).

2.3.1 Barrier and Facilitators Internationally

A number of studies have been conducted on a multi country basis in relation to barriers and facilitators to physical activity. Sterdt et al. (2014, p.74), conducted a systematic review of physical activity in children and adolescents, and noted: “show a complex and multi-dimensional behaviour determined by numerous biological, psychological, sociocultural and environmental factors.” Vancampfort et al. (2019) undertook a multi country study, which included low, lower middle income and upper middle-income participants. It was found that key facilitators included physical education classes (in a schooling environment) and conversely food insecurity, low parental support, no friends participating and bullying as the key barriers. Marzi et al. (2018,) in their study went further to also look at neighbourhood safety, crime, traffic, car ownership and distance to facilities as key factors. Socioeconomic disadvantage has also been identified in a number of global studies as a significant barrier to participation where cost is prohibitive for many (Bellew et al., 2020). Similar findings were made in 2010 where DeBate et al. (2010) conducted a study in Florida which determined that the following key factors were barriers and or facilitators to participation:

1. the location being part of the child’s normal routine
2. being part of an afterschool location the child already attended
3. parent’s knowledge of the location
4. the presence of a variety of activities, especially those familiar and favourable to the child
5. cost
6. perceived safety of the location

Somerset et al. (2018) reviewed the literature across nine quantitative studies and 15 qualitative studies looking at barriers to children’s participation in sport (including the study by Irwin et al., 2008). A summary of the findings can be found in the Figures 2 and 3.



Importantly and of relevance to the research regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming, USA Swimming in partnership with the University of Memphis Department of Health & Sport Sciences examined minority participation in swimming in the United States in a study by Irwin et al., (2008). This study with more than

2000 respondents found that (amongst other variables) the most commonly or significantly variables in influencing minority youth swimming include:

- The child's as well as parent's fear of child drowning/being injured while swimming
- Family environment, a category of responses which includes:
 - Parent swim ability
 - Parent encouragement
 - Family swim participation
 - Family exercising regularly
 - Household income/free or reduced lunch program receptivity
 - Parent/guardian education
- Easy access to/feeling safe at nearest pool
- Awareness and admiration of a highly competitive swimmer
- As income increased so did respondent swimming ability/comfort, agreement with "swimming is for me", "I have a parent/guardian that encourages me to swim", "a majority of my family members can swim", and fear of drowning decreased.
- Respondents from homes with highly educated parents/guardians (advanced degrees) were significantly more skilled/ comfortable swimming and inclined to receive parental/guardian support for swimming, and less inclined to express fear of drowning than children from households with less educated parent/caregivers.
(Irwin et al., 2008).

2.3.2 Barriers and facilitators in the Australian Context

In Australia, as in the international context, family income is a significant factor impacting participation (Somerset et al. 2018, Bellew et al., 2020). This is aptly illustrated in the Ausplay data below. AusPlay is census data collected by the Australian government once every four years, physical activity is one segment of data collected, the data below is from 2018.

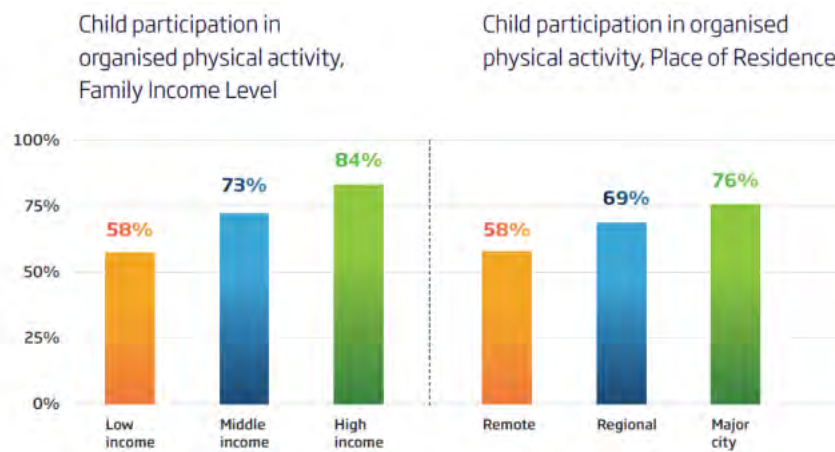


Figure 5 Child participation in organised PA by family income level and by place of residence.

Source: AusPlay Focus, 2018

Figure 4 AusPlay survey data showing the participation rates based on income in Australia

In addition, the AusPlay data suggests that there are a number of other factors, such as parental and sibling participation as well as place of residence, which again correlates with the finding on an international basis and as demonstrated in the analyses by Somerset et al. (2018).

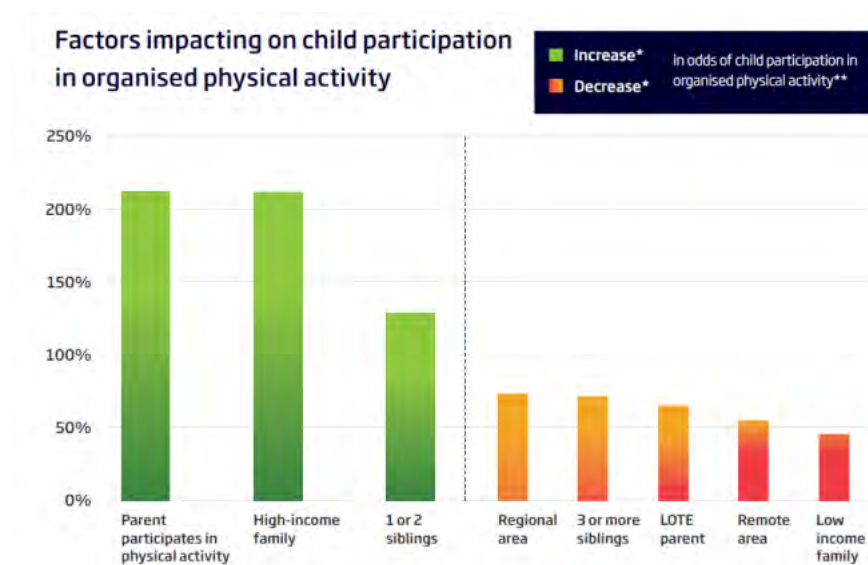


Figure 7 Factors impacting on child participation in organised PA

Source: AusPlay Focus, 2018

Figure 5 AusPlay survey with factors impacting on child participation

The AusPlay data is also consistent with the findings of Hardy et al. (2010), who found that in a review of parental perceptions of barriers to children's participation in organised sport "the decision to allow their child to participate in organised sports was

strongly influenced by time. The financial costs associated with a child's participation in organised sports influenced families with lower incomes and with girls, while for rural families the option of a wider variety of local sporting activities influenced decisions about their child's participation in organised sport” (Hardy et al., 2010, p.197).

2.3.3 Barriers and Facilitators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Barriers

Common barriers and facilitators, which are globally and nationally derived, must however be overlayed with the historical context to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience.

May et al. (2020) conducted a mixed-methods systematic review which identified 37 facilitators and 58 barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children using a socio-ecological framework. The review synthesised the existing literature including nine studies of 10,061 participants published between 2005 and 2018 regarding barriers and facilitators to sports participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adolescents.

May et al. (2020) found that “At the individual level, the most commonly reported barriers related to shyness/ embarrassment, self-perception of not being good enough as well as lack of motivation and time” (p.5). For women and girls May et al found that, “barriers show how the complex interactions of interpersonal and cultural factors, associated with gender can be strongly determining the personal behaviour of individuals.” (p.10) In May et al. (2020) research, three studies reported young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women feeling shy or embarrassed about wearing sports clothing, particularly bathers, and identified this as a barrier to participation.

A literature review by Nelson et al. (2010) also using socio-ecological model similarly identified the barriers of shame, lack of facilities and climate, as well as a lack of time and resources to support participation, which stemmed from socioeconomic disadvantage and family and work commitments. From a facility perspective one young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person laments “this is a photo of the basketball court. People used to drink there a lot and they used to like throw beer bottles and now it’s all wrecked because of them an’ the basketball nets are like, poles are like, falling, tilting, like it’s about to fall” illustrating bleakly the lack of appropriate facilities and resources to support participation (as quoted in Liew, 2022, p.6).

In recent studies other barriers have been identified, such as “consumption of unhealthy foods and exposure to excessive screen-time as barriers to physical activity. Children described the association of these factors with low levels of physical activity and poor physical health, citing chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity, both prevalent in their communities” (Liew et al., 2022, p.8).

Finally, it is important to also identify barriers at a policy level. May et al. (2020) found that “the most common policy level barrier was ‘welfarism’ where communities were dis-empowered by external organisations coordinating programs” (p.11). May et al. (2020) identified one study that provided a remedy for this by creating a memorandum of understanding to ensure programs were conducted in a partnership with the community. May et al. (2020) also found that continuity of programs was a barrier, and this was reflected at other social-ecological levels through high staff turnover. Finding long term structured agreements in partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities provides a facilitator for long term success.

Facilitators

From a facilitator perspective, in a study by Allen et al. (2021, p.18) “enjoyment of sport and a desire to remain physically active have also been identified as facilitators to physical activity participation”. This facilitator is noteworthy for increasing participation strategies. Canuto et al. (2013, p.11) also found “a self-stereotyped belief of being a ‘natural athlete’ facilitated participation”.

In the study noted above May et al. (2020, p.3) found that “at the interpersonal level having family and friends who were active was one of the most commonly reported facilitators; and if they were inactive this was a barrier.” Accordingly, providing family sporting opportunities and adult sport and physical activity options with a whole community approach where parents and other family members can role model being physically active and participating, as well as leveraging transportation, may overcome these barriers. This is further supported by Edwards et al. (2005) who found that “Aboriginal families (parents and siblings) play a crucial role in supporting children and young people’s physical activity engagement through encouragement, role-modelling an active lifestyle, and facilitating activities in-volving exercise” (Edwards et al., 2005, p.26-27). As summary table is included in Appendix 1.

2.4 Summary

There are a number of common barriers and facilitators to participation which are universal. Socioeconomic factors, parental support and access to facilities have been reported across international and Australian studies and are consistent themes in the literature.

In the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, May et al. (2020, p.3) found in a synthesis of all recent research that “taken together, programs which offer sporting participation options for all family members (children, adolescents and adults), which appeal to males and females, are accessible through existing transport and related infrastructure, and are committed to communities through formal partnerships are needed”¹.

In addition, research has reiterated the importance of hearing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people when developing and evaluating sports and programs designed for them (Dahlberg et al., 2018, Edwards et al., 2005). “Aboriginal community co-design and leadership of all matters of relevance to their communities, including in public health and health promotion, are essential and widely recognized as central to improvements in health and wellbeing” (Liew et al., 2022 p.13).

Finally long-term structured partnerships and funding are critical to the success of programs to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation (May et al., 2020).

The literature review forms an important basis for the method of research particularly the significant of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s voices in data collection, the decolonising methods of collection and in formulating the actions in Chapter 5.

¹ A summary of the findings of May et al. (2020) can be found in table in appendix 1 which provides a useful snapshot of barriers and facilitators.

CHAPTER 3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

To add to the existing literature and to further identify barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming with the aim of increasing participation and having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes representing Australia at the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, the research used a three-phase methodology.

The first phase of the project was to understand the current state of play for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming across the Australian State and Territories. The second phase was to discover what is best practice and authentic when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Finally, the project then looked at exploring what sports have high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates and secondly how did they achieve this. This involved three case studies.

The overall data analysis informed the recommendations.

3.2 Theoretical Approach

A qualitative approach was selected using individual interviews and First Nations methods of Yarning and Dadirri. This exploratory approach provided an opportunity to review a wide range of engagement and best practice examples providing alternative options for a specific problem (Dudovskiy, 2017). Qualitative research has become a dominant research method of sports studies research methodology (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019). Critically significant, consideration was given to culturally appropriate engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in considering research methods. “Decolonising research undertakes to locate Indigenous identity and privilege their voices at the centre of research, recognising Indigenous researchers and community members as experts in the research process and agents for change” (D’Atoine et al. 2019, p 2). Both in considering the research proposal itself and then in formulating the methodology, informal consultation and advice was given by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which was an important element to every aspect of this research.

3.3 Research Methods- rationale

Research methods using traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodology of Yarning, which is conversational storytelling and Dadirri which, incorporates deep listening, sharing and trust was used to ensure culturally appropriate engagement. “Effective interviewing in the Aboriginal context includes recognising the data in the stories that you are told and avoiding imposing a preferred structure on data by interrupting stories. Data collection through ‘yarning’ has been developed in response to the need to harness Aboriginal narratives effectively and includes allowing adequate introductory conversation for participants to feel comfortable sharing their stories” (D’Atoine et al., 2019, p. 4). In addition, semi-structured interviews provided deep insight and contextually relevant content which could be immediately translated to learnings for the recommendations.

3.4 Taking a Qualitative Approach

Interviews with each Swimming Australia State or Territory member were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the current state of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and participants. A Yarning Circle was then conducted with members of the Australian Olympic Advisory Group to better understand from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective best practice engagement that is authentic to ensure engagement in a culturally appropriate manner and to obtain thick and rich data.

Case Studies, including interviews with the head of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement at Athletics Australia, the Australian Football League (AFL) and Netball Queensland were conducted. These case studies provided an opportunity to learn from the successes and shortcomings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation programs in sports with particularly high levels of engagement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

3.4.1 Semi Structured Interviews

“A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further” (Pritchard, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participation lead in each Australian State and Territory. The participation leads in each state were a mixture of male and female employees of the State or Territory member organisation and ranged in age and experience. In smaller

States and Territories, the participation lead was the CEO. The interviews were approximately 20-70 minutes and conducted by Ana Croger as interviewer. One State declined to be interviewed, which was a limitation of the study.

Each consenting participant was provided with an overview of the research project and all participants signed a consent form and were advised of the ability to withdraw consent at any stage. A transcript of one semi-structured interview can be found in Appendix 2.

Details of the stakeholder semi-structured interviews:

Who	Code	When	How	Duration
Swimming NT	SNT	2/8/22	Microsoft Teams	45 mins
Swimming Victoria	SV	4/8/22	Microsoft Teams	61 mins
Swimming WA	SWA	5/8/22	Microsoft Teams	70 mins
Swimming SA	SSA	8/8/22	Microsoft Teams	27 mins
Swimming Tas	ST	15/8/22	Microsoft Teams	43 mins
Swimming NSW	SNSW	26/8/22	Microsoft Teams	47 mins

Table 1 Semi Structured Interviews

3.4.2 Yarning Circle

The Australian Olympic Committee Indigenous Advisory Committee was established in 2019 as part the Australian Olympic Committee's commitment to reconciliation. The Indigenous Advisory Committee Chaired by Patrick Johnson OLY is tasked with accelerating the integration of the Olympic movement into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Indigenous Advisory Committee agreed to conduct a focus group/yarning circle to consider best practice engagement for National Federations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Yarning Circle was conducted on 1 December 2022 with four members of the Committee. The Yarning Circle was held over Microsoft Teams for a duration of 75 minutes. The participants were all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Olympians from a range of sports. The participant group comprised of both male and female Olympians from a range of age groups. The Yarning Circle Guide is in Appendix 3.

3.4.3 Case Studies

The AFL, Athletics Australia and Netball Queensland were identified as having strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation numbers with programs that enhance

facilitators and reduced barriers to participation. AFL was the most popular sport (mostly for boys), Netball was the most popular sports for girls and athletics, track and field ranked highly (for both boys and girls).

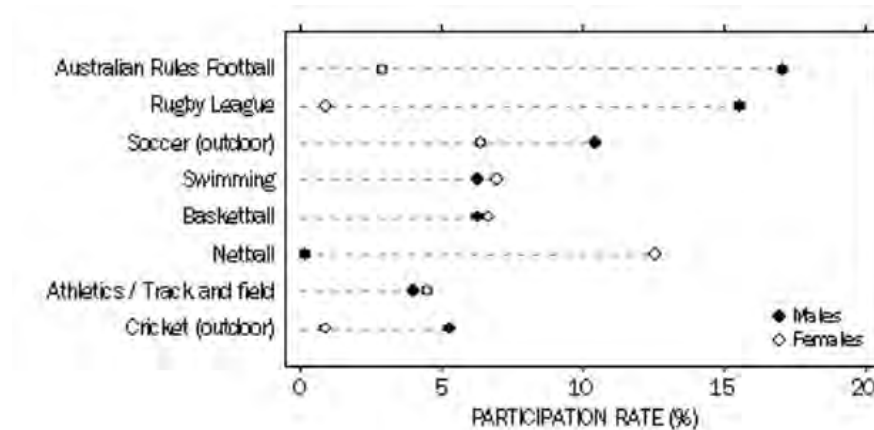


Figure 6 Participation rates Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010a, Perspectives on Sport, June 2010

A case study of each was conducted which included semi-structured interviews with each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island program lead.

Who	Code	When	How	Duration
Australian Football League	AFL	27/10/22	Microsoft Teams	40 mins
Athletics Australia	AA	25/10/22	Microsoft Teams	51 mins
Netball Queensland	NQ	1/11/22	Microsoft Teams	27 mins

Table 2 Case Studies.

3.4.4 Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews with each State and Territory participation manager were collated to provide a background of the current state of play for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Australia.

The Yarning Circle, semi-structured interviews and case studies with Netball, the AFL and Athletics Australia then provided data which was collated and formed the basis of the recommendations included in Chapter 5.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The Australian Government has codified standards in relation to research The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

The purpose of this National Statement is to promote ethically good human research. The key values of research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect were strictly adhered to in every aspect of the research. Each participant was provided with a detailed outline of the proposed research and written consent was given to the author (Appendix 4). Participants were advised that consent could be withdrawn at any stage.

3.6 Summary of Research Methodology

This chapter examined the research design for the project and in particular research methods using traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodology and qualitative data collection. Consideration of ethically centred human research with a lens of culturally considerate methods was the anchor of the research.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the key findings and themes that were identified in the semi-structured interviews, yarning circle and case studies. The key findings are presented using a thematic analysis.

4.2 Semi structured Interview findings

All States and Territories that participated reported that they had historically run programs that were funding dependent but as funding stopped so too did the programs. “In 2015 and 2017, and around that time, we had a huge amount of funding specifically for learn to swim for indigenous kids, and so we employed somebody who's job, it was more or less to roll that out.... But when the funding dried out, so did the program. I guess we couldn't sustain it with our own level of funding.” (Semi structure interview response code SNT)

Several key themes emerged in the semi-structured interviews in relation to barriers and facilitators for the States and Territories in running programs (see table 3 and 4).

Table 3: Results of Semi-Structured Interviews- Barriers

Research Question	Theme	Evidence
What are the greatest barriers to running Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander programs in your State or Territory?	External funding	“The programs that we've got, like I said, we're under a federal funding grant until the end of next financial year... so, we're actually running under that for another 12 months, which we'll keep our programs happening for the next 12 months. But then obviously at the end of that, it's going to be very trying time for us. If we can't access them further funding.” SNT “we can never make it sustainable on, it's on its own without the third party funding” SSA “when the funding dried out, so did the program” NSW
	Lack of Cultural understanding	“But the coaches haven't got that cultural understanding of trying how to feed them into that pathway” SNT “They're not identifying the fact that indigenous child is not going to train six times a week. They're not going to turn up for morning sessions. You know, there's cultural reasons or family reasons that are going to stop them having that commitment.” SNT “But I think having coaches' education in that area is probably one of the biggest things that needs to be done” SNT

		<p>“we've had a few meetings with other people and that has come up that one of the barriers is that coaches just simply don't have the cultural understanding on how to engage and have a welcoming environment” SVIC</p> <p>“I guess if you want indigenous swimmers by 2032, I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done in the coaching space prior to that.” SNT</p> <p>“I'm only speaking from a WA perspective. I'm not sure if it's all First Nations mobs that have a similar thing in WA. Lawmaking time is normally over the swimming season, so particularly like around February, March I want to say. And in regional towns swimming only goes over those summer months and swim.” SWA</p>
	Inability to engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups	<p>“The block for that at the moment is engaging First Nations people to be in a working group.” SVIC</p> <p>“So we don't have any specific sport direct level of engagement.” SSA</p> <p>Do you have any level of engagement currently with First Nations people? “Not that I'm aware of” SNSW</p> <p>“how can we engage better in these communities and build a report before we go in there to deliver something.” SWA</p>
	Financial Barriers	<p>“There is a large financial barrier that they are remote. They need to come into the city and then fly over east to compete at nationals” SWA</p> <p>“With the sustainability was the hard bit because the indigenous families couldn't or wouldn't choose to spend money on swimming lessons.” SNSW</p> <p>“The cheaper it is, the better. Ours weren't all 100% free, but they were very close to free like some of them were. I'm sure it came down to the like literally \$10 a term or something crazy like that.” SNSW</p> <p>“So it's free to the whole community.” STAS</p> <p>“Cost is definitely a barrier again because let's face it swimming coaching is expensive. It's even probably worse than ones with swim when you're paying for a term's worth of fees and pool entry and then it comes into the equipment like everybody's wearing these fancy race suits. I don't know. I think they'll like \$500 or something stupid like that.” STAS</p>
	Access to facilities	<p>“So, none of our communities have access to indoor water. So, and a lot of them don't have access to heated water either. So, we're probably talking. There's and 6 to 8 week period across that sort of November, December, January type timeframe where they actually feel the OR have the ability to swim.” SSA</p>

		<p>“OK, so one of them is access to water, which in the low of the country areas the pools are shut 50% of the year or more depending on if they're in a really cold location, they might only be open from November to March Ish. Usually it's October to April.” SSA</p> <p>“So, some of the kids, the indigenous kids that live out in communities that don't have cars” NSW</p> <p>“Access access is the access is the key and I think you would find the same thing in Northern WA and also in Northern QLD.” ST</p>
	Solo sport and not community orientated	<p>“We all, we all know that swimming is not a team sport in in the sense that you know, if you want to achieve yourself, it's a personal drive that will get you there. They they're a community type people there are, there are team sport.” ST</p> <p>“The number one answer is because of their friends. So it depends what causes their friends to drop out.” NSW</p> <p>“one kid was going on the bus to learn to swim and his mates came the next day. So but we are we allowed all that of course.” ST</p> <p>“We had some mums and Bubs, as part of that program, actually, like a mums and Bubs. But where not only is the bub getting familiar with the water, but the mummy is getting something.” NSW</p>

Table 4: Results of Semi-Structured Interviews- Facilitators

Research Question	Theme	Evidence
What are the greatest facilitators in running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs in your State or Territory?	Vehicles or ways to get access into remote communities	<p>“Access is the key and I think you would find the same thing in Northern WA and also in Northern QLD...Ones that are really successful, it's because you can actually get into the communities.”</p> <p>“some of our funding helped cover buses to the pool” NSW</p> <p>“There is a large financial barrier that they are remote. They need to come into the city” SWA</p>
	Community contact- a person from the community as liaison.	<p>“it's the community contact and the access they're the two biggest things. The community contact is the biggest that's what we'll make or break your program.” ST</p> <p>“that's where that lady was good because she went into a community and they probably all knew each other and she got them all” NSW</p> <p>“We went through the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and we engaged one of their development sort of officers who actually became a really good ally for us and went around the communities and they actually bussed people into the areas for us” ST</p>

Table 4.

4.3 Yarning Circle Findings

There are several key themes and recommendations that emerged during the yarning circle. Whilst many sports have good intentions it was pointed out during the Yarning Circle that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to suffer institutional racism in sport (Speaker 1). It is clear that the group felt that “Aboriginal people have been overreached and what is important is creating real impact” (Speaker 1) from this research project.

The first important factor to consider was that having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in key decision-making positions within a sport was critical to success “And so it's about also bringing in a diverse group of First Nations people into the organisation, from grassroots all the way up into those decision making, I guess, in leadership roles.” (Speaker 4). Importantly however having more than one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island person is also key “it's bringing more than one person as well, because the cultural load that one person will have in the organisation is huge. And the cultural fatigue that can come from that is almost like they won't last long, because just everyone in the organisation is going to that one person for everything. Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders are related, and one person can't speak for all communities and so it can get quite heavy.” (Speaker 4). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in every level of the organisation will ensure cultural safety and success “I think all too often we're looking at the athletes first, bringing in the athletes, but then our environments aren't culturally safe. And so, we're almost in some ways setting our athletes up to fail where if we can flip it a little bit and think of, okay, let's sort out the organisation first, then naturally these athletes are just going to find a way because it is culturally safe.” (Speaker 4). Another participant concluded “if you can't see it, then you can't dream it or be a part of it.” (Speaker 2).

Another theme that emerged was creating a sense of belonging. In reference to another sport a participant commented that “he makes sure that everyone belongs, he treats everyone the same. He brings in older REDACTED from the past and lets them have a talk to the kids where they can sort of relate and go, look, this is what happened to me.” Another participant added that “They do have a sense of belonging and it's an enjoyable experience for them to be a part of rather than them having to leave half of themselves at the door when they come to training. Because they have to adapt to an environment that is uncomfortable for them to be able to achieve their dreams. And so, it's about creating that environment first and foremost.” (Speaker 3). Belonging was also enhanced by including changes to the uniforms to include Indigenous designs.

The final advice was that Swimming Australia needs to “start small and ensure that there is an ability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to see a career in swimming”. (Speaker 5). There needs to be “longer term investment with targeted measures and accountability” (Speaker 1).

Summary of findings can be found below in Figure 7.

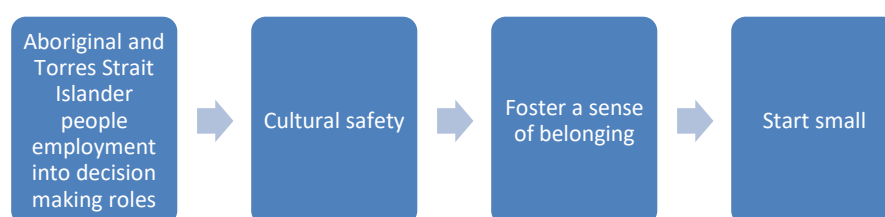


Figure 7: Summary of Findings

4.4 Case Study Findings

The AFL, Athletics Australia and Netball Queensland were identified as having strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation numbers with programs that enhance facilitators and reduced barriers to participation. A case study of each was conducted which included semi-structured interviews with each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island program lead.

Table 5- Results of Case Studies- success factors

Research Question	Theme	Evidence
What are the key success factors and how do you evaluate success?	Community specific	<p>“The reason for that is that often were specific to community, so rather than us trying to impose something uniform across the country, it's really working with communities on, you know what their interests are, what their facilities are like to what's available there.” AA</p> <p>“it's about identifying those community leaders who can champion athletics” AA</p>

		<p>“Opportunity to upskill them in in community so that they can run athletics when we're not there” AA</p> <p>“Set up a working group just so we can get more insights from across the country” AFL</p> <p>“Community consultation and stakeholder engagement as well, was really important to the success of Diamond spirit” NQ</p>
	Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander personnel	<p>“One is 3 of the four people that we've actually employed in the programme are indigenous, so they have a specific background and that's been very important” AA</p> <p>“again, having that person with experience” “authentic voice” AFL</p> <p>“Having that key staff member and Michael being there to deliver the programmes has been huge and critical to our success” NQ</p> <p>“I think Michael being there for the remote community deliveries being huge. He obviously has the ability to build trust and report a lot quicker within the remote communities and has an understanding of the cultural elements and the culture that goes with that. So, I think that has been huge in him being there and him. I guess having that delivery across since the start of diamond spirit as well. So, he's been our consistent.” NQ</p>
	Continual improvement	<p>“we've had to think about where do we communicate that and how do we facilitate those sorts of things? How do we make sure that it's not too administratively heavy” AA</p> <p>“So, within the educate pillar, one of the key learnings that we've kind of come to now is making sure that programmes continuously reviewed and refreshed, especially when it comes to the school environment and school curriculum. Just needing that consistency and reviewing it along the way and refreshing the curriculum.” NQ</p> <p>“Quality control and continuous improvements and making sure that yeah, we are measuring their success, tracking how</p>

		well it's going reviewing it. And yeah, aiming for continuous improvement.” NQ
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Table 6- Results of Case Studies- advice for Swimming Australia

Research Question	Theme	Evidence
What advice do you have for Swimming Australia?	Collaborate	<p>“Just making sure that you're engaging with communities and understanding how those communities operate” AA</p> <p>“Collaborate and communicate and you know, work with these States and territories, but also work with key First Nations People who have an understanding and a passion for this area” AA</p> <p>“Making sure that you communicate with community and engage them through the process” AA</p> <p>“Prioritised principles of consistency, so making sure that again that consistent delivery and Community monitoring, consultation and stakeholder engagement so stakeholder engagement from education perspective with the teachers and the schools, but also with our funding partners, community organisations such as PCYC and then Community groups and elders as well” NQ</p>
	Start small	<p>“Big programme that was out there and it was really inspirational when it was too hard to deliver that. You know, with the resources we had that scale so just starting off small” AFL</p> <p>“The new programme design and piloting that and learning and then maybe developing” AFL</p> <p>“It can be really expensive to coordinate things centrally and deliver out of a central location, so I think it's really important to partner with people who are there on the ground and conform that ongoing lasting connection cause the last thing you want to do go into community, don't go back for two years, because that that's wasting everyone's time.” AA</p>

	Adaptability	<p>There is also an adaption of the AusKick program from community to community. “We just want to adapt that and build in some of that indigenous storytelling and artwork and imagery and games into the into the junior programme” AFL</p> <p>“Being able to adapt it in a way that it can other people, can you know, deliver it in a way that's meaningful” AFL</p> <p>“The new programme design and piloting that and learning and then maybe developing” AFL</p> <p>“Being prepared to adapt and change plans” NQ</p> <p>“Working in remote communities, he might have a trip planned or might have a session or programme planned, but things can change instantly. Obviously due to the weather in remote Queensland, but also due to community conflict. Sorry business and other cultural factors as well, so being prepared to adapt and things might not always happen” NQ</p>
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4.5 Discussion

There were several key insights which came through repeatedly across the semi structured interviews, yarning circle and case studies. These included the importance of:

- cultural training for coaches and all staff
- ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at all levels of the organisation
- co-designing all programs with community and ensuring adaptability to meet community needs
- measuring success

Consideration has been given to these results in Chapter 5 and incorporated in the action plan therein.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Simultaneously with this research, Swimming Australia continued on its Reconciliation journey. Following the data collection phase of this research, Swimming Australia held its final Reconciliation Action Plan workshop where evidence from this research was interwoven into the proposed Reconciliation Action Plan. The Working Group consisted of two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators, Swimming Australia CEO and Executives, Swimming Australia and Member organisation staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members that are involved in Swimming in Australia.

Based on the recommendation of Reconciliation Australia the proposed action plan is based on three pillars Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. The action plan incorporates the learnings from this research.

5.2 Proposed Action Plan

Based on the three recommended core pillars of Relationships, Respect, and Opportunities the following key actions have been identified.

Relationships:

1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW), NAIDOC week and/or other key events
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

Respect:

1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.
2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.
3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week

Opportunities:

1. Establish and maintain an effective Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments
3. Establish a national advisory committee
4. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

A detailed action plan including deliverables, timelines and responsibilities in Appendix 5.

5.3 Limitations to the research

An important limitation to this research is that the researcher is not of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. Whilst every effort was made to ensure cultural authority was obtained from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through every step of the research, the author is acutely aware of this significant limitation.

In addition, the small sample size of the semi-structured interviews, case studies and yarning circle means there was opportunity for bias. Notably one large Australian State Member Association declined to be interviewed.

Finally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are culturally and linguistically diverse. Whilst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have contributed to this research, the research does not cover the breadth of experience and cultures across Australia.

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was to understand the barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming in order to provide recommendations to Swimming Australia to increase participation and provide talent pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes.

The research identified:

- (a) The current state of play for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming across the Australian State and Territories?
- (b) Recommendations for engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- (c) Sports with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates and their learnings.

The finding from this research and the subsequent action plan provides a roadmap for Swimming Australia to continue on its reconciliation journey and grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the sport.

5.5 Future Research

An opportunity now exists to conduct future research into the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plan and future pilot program. Focussed research on a community basis to identify community specific barriers and facilitators to participation in swimming will allow for community pilot adaption and a more targeted program that reduces barriers and enhances facilitators in community.

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Appendix 1

May et al. (2020) Table of Results

May, T., Dudley, A., Charles, J., Kennedy, K., Mantilla, A., & McGillivray, J. et al. (2020). Barriers and facilitators of sport and physical activity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adolescents: a mixed studies systematic review. BMC Public Health, 20(1).

Level	Description of Barrier / Facilitator	Study Reference Number							Total Number of			
		2	3	4	5	8	9	1	6	7	Barriers	Facilitators
Individual											18	12
	Motivation					F	B	B			2	1
	Enjoyment of Activity		F									1
	Shyness /Embarrassment		B			B		B	B		4	
	Perceived lack of ability					B		B			2	
	Lack of sporting ability					B					1	
	Financial cost/opportunity		B		B	F					2	1
	Lack of time						B	B			2	
	Goals/Future opportunities					F			F			2
	Having good health					F			F			2
	Cultural practices					F						1
	Program delivered in local language									F		1
	Preference for certain sports					BF					1	1
	Racial/ethnic identity					BF					1	1
	Alternative to negative behaviours					F						1
	Academic ability					B					1	
	Use of drugs, alcohol and smoking		B								1	
	Overweight or obese			B							1	
Interpersonal								r	r	r	9	11
	Parents who smoke		B								1	
	Living in a sole parent household		B								1	
	Moving house in the past 5 years		B								1	
	Family owns their own home		F									1
	PA important to the family							F				1
	Parental/Family role-modelling/activity level					B	BF				2	1
	Friends activity level					F		B			1	1
	Connection with friends		F									1
	Family connectedness		F			F						2
	Family provides transport					F						1
	Lack of family car		B								1	
	Peer competition					BF					1	1
	Connection with cultural practices		F			F				B	1	2
Community								r	r	r	27	11
	Living in a remote community			F								1

	Lack of sporting facilities and amenities	B	B			B	3	
	Lack of sporting equipment				B	B	2	
	Lack of readily accessible venues and equipment outside of organised sporting sessions	B					2	
	Lack of appropriate training				B		1	
	Lack of activities/programs				B	B	2	
	Type of sporting program			F		F		2
	Opportunity to hire equipment	F						1
	The distance of sporting venues from residential areas	B	B				2	
	School holiday programs with transport to physical activities	F						1
	Safety of community play areas for children		B				1	
	Poor community cohesion		B				1	
	Lack of transport	B	B			B	3	
	Experiences of racism in the community	B		B		B	3	
	Climate too hot					B	1	
	Seasonal restrictions					B	1	
	Access to natural environment, tracks and parks	F						1
	Fear of dogs					B	1	
	Community members/leaders			BF		B	2	1
	Perception of negative attitude of authorities	B					1	

	Admired sports people				F					1
	Connection to the community/sense of belonging				F					1
	Organisations providing services							F		1
	Cost of organisation providing services							B	1	
	Coaching programs poorly attended/too academic							B	1	
	Consistent mentoring of sports staff required							F		1
Policy / Institutional						r	r	r	4	3
	Welfare dependency			B				B	B	3
	The Aboriginal community governed collaboration			F						1
	Continuity of provision of sporting/PA programs							B	1	
	Effective publicity about sporting programs by clubs and agencies		F							1
	Using a MoU to make partnership explicit							F		1

B barrier, *F* facilitator, *r* remote location

1 = Abbott 2008, 2 = Dockery 2017, 3 = Edwards 2005, 4 = Evans 2018, 5 = Gwynn 2014; 6 = Macdonald 2012; 7 = Meldrum 2012; 8 = Nelson 2009; 9 = Victorian DEED 2009; r = Remote only location

Appendix 2

Example Interview Transcript- SNT

1. What is the history of first nations programs in your state?

As both of you probably realised, I've only been on deck in this role for the last couple of months. I've been coaching here since September, so I've got a bit of a feel for how swimming works here.

I guess the thing up here and I mean, you guys obviously realize that the programs that we're running at the moment, we've got 8 core programs that we're running throughout the territory. They're all reliant on external funding. Which is probably the biggest problem as you can appreciate. Like for example, I'm going to Alice Springs this afternoon as part of that funding to run some programs down there. There's a couple of programs that we've got in the making. I guess you'd call it. But again, they're going to be reliant on funding. I think the biggest thing up here, I don't know if you've spoken to Queensland yet because I came from Queensland, I worked remote Queensland, I've worked in indigenous communities in Queensland and my previous life, so I know that funding for any type of indigenous type participation program or any type of high performance program, if you were looking at that type of thing, is really reliant on funding, trying to get into those communities and you know, doing it at the right level. The programs that we've got, like I said, we're under a federal funding grant until the end of next financial year, so. It's a Department of Health Grant. It's not actually a swimming or sport grant. It's a Department of Health Grant.

So we're actually running under that for another 12 months, which we'll keep our programs happening for the next 12 months. But then obviously at the end of that, it's going to be very trying time for us. If we can't access them further funding.

2. What programs are you currently running?

Well, I can tell you as much as I know at the present time, as I said to you, I've only sort of landed on deck and we're actually going through. And I haven't seen the final report yet, but we're actually going through the final report for the federal government for this year, the activities report and look, if you want to know exactly what the programs are and what we've delivered, that would be the best way I could get that I could get you to have a look at that and that hopefully will be ready in the next week or two to give you a better outline of what we're doing. But basically what it is, what I've had to do with at the moment, Borroloola Alice Springs. It's more along the participation and health line because obviously the grant is aimed at health. Like I said, it's not aimed at swimming specifically, it's just aimed at healthy, active lifestyle. That's the format of the grant. So we go in there, obviously on a swimming basis and we deliver, whether it be swimming lessons, swimming carnivals, that type of thing. Umm, within all the communities, like I said, until I see the final report once it's all put together, I can give you a better idea of what's done where. But within those eight, I know that we've put activities into each of those during the year. Probably they're

predominantly been along the lines of health and active lifestyle which has incorporated the swimming component.

3. How do you promote and communicate the programs with community?

It's direct contact. It's. Yeah, we, we've got, we've got direct contacts in the community. As you know, and you probably understand that like in the indigenous and First Nations world, going into a community, it's no good trying to. To promote it via Facebook, whatever you know, all the usual streams of promotions, you know, fly it just doesn't work. You've got to have a direct contact and you've got over community driver. So we've got those and that's probably for us. That's the best way because obviously. Uh, when we do go into these communities, I've been in the Borroloola twice and the community contact there. He's really great. Like he will make sure if we tell them where they're on these days, he'll make sure that words out and he'll get as many there as he can.

4. Why do you think are they are successful?

Access access is the access is the key and I think you would find the same thing in Northern WA and also in Northern QLD. Uh, I think access to some of the communities up here is rarely is difficult. We have vehicles attached to swimming and tea, so we do a lot of driving flights to some of those communities are not reliable. Umm, so yeah, it's probably access would be the biggest challenge. So Borroloola is a 10 hour drive. There's no flights in the Borroloola, so you actually got to drive there. You got no choice. So it's a 10 hour drive, but it's probably the most. It's the easiest access apart from Alice Springs. So when I I'm going to Alice Springs this week. I'm going to meet with a couple of the YMCA. They run the remote community pools there. They're only a seasonal thing. So and they're very small. So I I don't know. I'm going to meet with them to see what we can sort of deliver down that way.

It the community contact and the access they're the two biggest things. The community contact is the biggest that that's what we'll make or break your program. You know you need to have that on the ground support driving the program in the community. It's no good coming in from the outside and just randomly trying to contact someone. You need someone there who is on site and willing to drive that program because without that, without that local drive, you've got nothing.

5. How do you think they could they be improved?

It how they can be approved? Yeah. Look, you know, I guess, yeah, funding is probably the biggest thing because we're limited. We have got that grant and we're going OK at the moment. But yeah, probably funding and getting into those type of communities can be costly, and having staff away for a period of time if you want to send more than one or two people into those communities, it's a costing exercise, as you can appreciate, you know.

6. How do you seek feedback?

So yeah, so the feedback basically comes from again our community contacts and whoever we deal with on the program. So the Community contacts, for example, may put us, we may go out there for a school swimming carnival, for example. So we then obviously put in

contact with the teachers principal, whoever. It's managing that side of things and then we get feedback from them in relation to that. You and I both know getting feedback from the individuals participating is probably not going to happen at any sort of recognisable level.

7. What are the greatest barriers to participation?

So the participation side of things, I think I think the sport itself does not lend itself to First Nations people, they they're a community type people there are, there are team sport. You know, culture, that's what. That's where they're at. We all, we all know that swimming is not a team sport in in the sense that you know, if you want to achieve yourself, it's a personal drive that will get you there. I put my coaching hat on. I've coached in indigenous communities and it's that commitment and that drive in that solo type environment that is probably the biggest barrier. I'm trying to get them participating in the sport. Is best done. Probably the way we're doing it now through a health type perspective because it because it eliminates that necessary need for instruction and direct. Courses of action, you know, skills and drills and that type of thing, that that's just not from my experience. That's just not something they're into.

8. What are the greatest barriers in the pathway?

The older you get, the more elite you want to become. The more commitment you need. Uh, I think the coaching generally depending on where you are and where you're from. It's a pack mentality. They bring as many good swimmers as they can together and then hopefully you end up with one or two out the other end that are going to succeed. I don't think that there's probably enough assistance for the coaches in you know, identifying those indigenous athletes like we, we've even got a couple of Sri Lankan and Indian kids up here that are there. I'm not saying they're great, but they're certainly showing some potential, but the coaches haven't got that cultural understanding of trying how to feed them into that pathway. And I think it's the same with the First Nations. I think it's really a case of coaches having a better understanding and a better way of dealing with those kids because if you bring an indigenous child into a program at, say, 13 or 14 years of age. And you've taken that mentality of I'll have 50 kids and hope that I get something out the other end then. They're not identifying the fact that that indigenous child is not going to train six times a week. They're not going to turn up for morning sessions. You know, there, there's, there's cultural reasons or family reasons that that are going to stop them having that commitment. But if they're identified as a potential athlete, then I think there should be some scope to deal with them in the pathways process locally by coaches, but also at a state level.

9. What level of engagement do you have with First Nations People in overseeing your programs?

Community contacts are imperative like whenever we go, for example, Borroloola. Whatever we go there, we've got actually Indigenous parents that come and help us and all that type of thing. You know, you can't do it without that. The Community contact that we use, obviously through the Council, he's not indigenous, he's been there for nearly three years, so he knows the Community very well. You need that leadership with the kids because me going in and

trying to control 30 indigenous kids that are swimming carnival or at a swimming lesson is just not going to happen without having that adult input. So the as I explained we go more in on the health and healthy lifestyle type of basis we're not actually going in to teach them just. We're not trying to get athletes out the other end. We're in there, under our healthy lifestyle program. So on the two occasions that we've been there, we've got probably we've got four of the elders that each time we go there. We obviously have a chat to them, but we'll say, you know, this is what we this is what we're doing this time, but this was agreed upon last time. So you have a conversation with him probably at the end of the session that you're doing to say, OK, well, next time we come, what would you like to see? So you give them a bit of input into that they're probably from the ones that we're dealing with at the present time, they're probably not engaged enough to say, you know, we want our kids to learn freestyle or we want our kids to learn back to, you know, they're not engaged to that point. What they'll say is, you know, we're happy to. We'd like you to come out, do two days of swimming lessons, then do a swimming carnival type of thing, you know where it's. And again, it comes back to what we were talking about with the pathways. It's a group activity. That's more what they're looking for. They're looking for that group participation, and that's probably where that's where we drive our numbers through that, but they their input will be a conversation at the end of 1 program or at the end of one session and then their input will be what would you like to see in next session?

10. To you what role should Swimming Australia play in this space What can Swimming Australia do to remove barriers in the pathway?

There's two parts to that. There's obviously the participation then the pathways development. So from my perspective, I think the participation side of things There needs to be more support for the on ground staff. Umm, I don't know that by swimming Australia sending someone in to run programs in the community in the NT is going to work. I just don't see that. I think swimming Australia having people on the ground here through whether it's the territory Queensland whichever state body. Having people on the ground that can deliver those programs and I think probably a more structured swimming type program that comes down from swimming Australia, whether it got, you know, go swim and whatever the whatever the program that comes down. I think should be probably firstly negotiated with each state because obviously I think our needs would be different to South Australia needs or WA, so there's no good coming in with an overarching this is what we're going to do. That's not going to work. So negotiation from a base platform of participation. So whether that's swimming lessons, swim schools, whichever way you want to go. Coming in with that base participation model and then negotiating with each state or territory to say how can we make this fit with you guys and then you know what can we do to help you guys? What what do you need from us to help you guys? The obvious answer is going to be money and the obvious answer. Yeah. There's no hiding that. You're not going to get away from that. Because as I said, even here Queensland, WA, the cost of delivering programs in some of these places is quite high. Pathways wise, I think there needs to be a lot more coach education and this is not just indigenous. I think it's from a cultural perspective as well. I think there needs to be a lot more coach education about trying to get those identified athletes so whether they're. You know, like you, I'd probably look at 13/14, get an identified athlete and then how

they can work with them through a modified program. Having the coaches have a better understanding of how to deal with that, the coaches up here are pretty good. We don't have a lot of indigenous swimmers even in the local swimming. Which is something that we're trying to work on but I think having coaches education in that area is probably one of the biggest things that needs to be done from a swimming Australia perspective and probably again targeted and negotiated with each state or territory or whatever.

11. Do you have data around participation and trends in your state?

So you are you talking in membership? We we've got plenty of data around the participation model round our health and lifestyle around that grant. We've got plenty of data for that and like I said here, that will probably that will be updated obviously in the next week or two, one because we've got I think we're due at the end of August to have our activities report due. So we will have a much clearer picture than and yeah, we've got we've got numbers of participation numbers in that space. Umm, in relation to actual competitive members and swimmers? I can pretty much tell you that if you are looking for indigenous or First Nations swimmers, that would be an obvious identification. I don't think we've got any. Off the top of my head, I can think of maybe up to 20 that identify. I think you'll find that that data in swim central is the matter of when they register. They don't kick a box. That's the issue with swim central. Umm, you know, like I know, I know. If kids when I was coaching here at Casuarina that identify as indigenous, but they're not on swim central as that. So swim central data I wouldn't I don't know what the other states are like but.

12. Final comments

Yeah, look, I think and again, I don't know what other states she was spoken to about this, but I think probably the biggest take away and I I'm not saying that you're going to come and try and run a national program in each state. But I think when it comes to Indigenous First Nation, any participants are our participating in any sport from my experience. Uh, you really need that on the ground level and that on the ground work to be done. And like I said, you probably I think the biggest thing that right across Australia from my experience that we're missing is that coach development and that coach education, I guess if you want indigenous swimmers by 2032, I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done in the coaching.

Appendix 3

Yarning Circle Guide- Key questions:

1. Introduction from advisory group
2. Can you tell me what sports engage with Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities well and with authenticity?
3. Can you tell me what sports you engage with that demonstrate best practice in Aboriginal Torres Strait Island participation
4. How do you recommend Swimming Australia approaches development of a swimming program that is authentic and reduce barriers to participation?
5. Can we now explore the theme of belonging and how Swimming Australia can foster a sense of belonging

Appendix 4

Interview/Focus group consent form

I(name), being over the age of 18 years, hereby consent to participate as requested in the [focus group/interview] for the research project held on (date).

1. Details of the focus group/interview have been explained to my satisfaction.
2. I agree to a transcript of my information and participation.
3. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified and individual information will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any treatment or service that is being provided to me.
 - I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
4. I understand that I can contact either the researcher with questions about this research via the contact details below.

Ana Croger

anacroger@gmail.com

0407628389

Participant's signature:

Date:

Appendix 5

Action Plan

Relationships		RAP WG – RAP Working Group, IAC – Indigenous Advisory Committee, RL - Research Lead	
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible Person
1.Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our ecosystem and sphere of influence.	Ongoing	RAP Lead
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	March 23	RAP Lead + RL
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW), NAIDOC week and/or other key events	Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff (athletes, coaches).	March 23 (When available)	RAP Lead
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.		RAP WG
	Swimming Australia to host or facilitate an internal NRW event at the state level.	May 23	RAP Lead + MO’s
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW, NAIDOC week and/or other key dates	May 23	CEO+EGM Team
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff and our broader networks.	ASAP	CEO
	Include the information on our commitment to reconciliation in our recruitment and rookie and staff induction processes.	ASAP	HR

	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Ongoing	RAP Lead
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Ongoing	RAP Lead + RAP WG
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination. Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. Broaden the education that we provide regarding cultural awareness and safety across the organisation and for coaching staff.	March 23 ASAP/Ongoing	RAP WG + RAP Lead + IAC HR Swimming Australia all staff

Respect		RAP WG – RAP Working Group, IAC – Indigenous Advisory Committee, RL - Research Lead	
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible Person
1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop action plans for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June 23	RAP Lead + IAC
	Share cultural learnings within our ecosystem.	August 23	RAP WG + RAP LEAD + IAC
	Identify opportunities for cultural learning experiences.	June 23	RAP LEAD + IAC

2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Provide resources and encourage state and local swimming clubs to develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	August 23	RAP Lead + IAC
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	ASAP/Ongoing	RAP Lead
	Mandate that our staff commence external events with Acknowledgement of Country.	Done?	Events/Commercial
	Develop signage in our offices and at our national events that acknowledges Traditional Owners	Feb 23/Ongoing	RAP Lead
3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	May/June 23	RAP Lead
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 23	RAP Lead
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 23	RAP WG

Opportunities		RAP WG – RAP Working Group, IAC – Indigenous Advisory Committee, RL - Research Lead	
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible Person
1.Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop an action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment (including swimming instructors) within our organisation.	April 23 Ongoing	RAP Lead + EGM HP + EGM SD

	<p>Identify opportunities for increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our ecosystem.</p> <p>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</p>	ASAP/Ongoing	<p>EGM SD + GM P + RAP Lead</p> <p>RAP Lead + RL</p>
2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	<p>Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.</p> <p>Review Supply Nation offerings and match with need from Swimming Australia to ensure effective use of Supply Nation Membership.</p>	<p>August 23</p> <p>August 23</p>	<p>Commercial</p> <p>RAP Lead</p>
3. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in swimming.	<p>Develop a pilot program that is designed with community that reduce or remove identified barriers and enhance facilitators. Ensure programs are low cost with whole of community involvement including parents and siblings.</p> <p>Upskill the swimming coaching workforce with cultural awareness training</p> <p>Support, develop and grow Indigenous coaches and officials through scholarships, mentorships, additional training opportunities</p>	<p>Done/Ongoing Dec 23</p> <p>Sep 23</p> <p>Ongoing/ est. May 23</p>	<p>RL + RAP Lead</p> <p>GM Coach Dev + GM HP Coaching</p> <p>GM Officiating</p>
Governance		RAP WG – RAP Working Group, IAC – Indigenous Advisory Committee, RL - Research Lead	
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible Person

1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Done Jan 21	EGM SD
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	Feb 23	RAP Lead
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	Completed	RAP Lead
2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Mar 23	RAP Lead
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Feb 23	RAP Lead + Whole of Business
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. Consider the role of champions outside of the RAPWG	Feb 23	RAP Lead
3. Establish a national advisory committee	Consult other sports that have established advisory committees to define best practice, ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on National Advisory Committee	Feb 23	RAP Lead
	Develop and execute development plan for advisory committee based on best practice	April 23	RAP Lead + RAP WG
	Draft Terms of Reference for Advisory Committee	May 23	RAP Lead + RAP WG
4. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	Dec 23	RAP Lead + RAP WG
	Review and update key data collected within Swim Central to align with RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire	June 23	RAP Lead + GM Swim Central
5. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	Nov 23	RAP Lead