

# Barndi Nganjungu Yalyba - *Good Mob* Program

An Evaluation of the first 12 months of program delivery by  
the Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation

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## Terminology

In this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used as this is the preferred term by the local First Nations people, and respectfully refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Acknowledgements

We respectfully acknowledge the Southern Yamaji, the Wadjari and the Badimia peoples, the traditional owners of the lands on which the City of Greater Geraldton, the town of Mount Magnet and the town of Mullewa are located.

We thank the following WACRH staff members for assistance with data collection and collation: Sarah-Jane Dymond, Carole Minney and Lisa Lockyer.

## Abbreviations

BPPS	Bluff Point Primary School
CGG	City of Greater Geraldton
DLGSC	Western Australia Department of Sport and Recreation (now Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries)
DSR/DLGSC	Western Australia Department of Sport and Recreation (now Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSCI)).
EO	Executive Officer
GSAC	Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation
GRAMS	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
MDHS	Mullewa District High School
MMDHS	Mount Magnet District High School
P	Participant in Evaluation Interviews
PMC	(Department of) Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO	Project Officer
WACRH	Western Australian Centre for Rural Health
WAPOL	Western Australia Police Force

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# 1. Introduction

The Barndi Nganjungu Yalyba - Good Mob (*Good Mob*) program developed and run by Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC) is based in the Midwest Region of Western Australia (WA). The vision for the program was developed over many years of GSAC's work in the region and was the subject of an Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) application in mid-2017. With the cessation of Commonwealth funding and the former Department of Sport and Recreation's Aboriginal Sports Program in June-2017, the GSAC Board was concerned the organisation could fold. The *Good Mob* application was built on the outcomes of work undertaken in Spalding in 2016/2017- GSAC developed a broad vision and sought funding for the *Good Mob* program in order to consolidate its activities, develop the scope and reach of its work, support Aboriginal youth and contribute significantly to social change in the region. The funding application was submitted to PMC (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) on 12/05/2017. Funding was confirmed late in December 2017 but not actually received until March 2018. In December 2018, PMC confirmed a further two years of funding to December 2020.

The *Good Mob* project targets Aboriginal youth aged between 8 and 17 years and funds GSAC to engage these youth and their families in a range of sport and recreation activities that link to education, culture, arts, health, leadership and community wellbeing in the locations of Spalding, Mullewa and Mount Magnet. Older youth (17-19 years) are engaged to share skills with the target cohort and develop leadership skills and capacities. The *Good Mob* program is directed by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to achieve outcomes in four areas: Sporting Engagement; Holiday Programs; Education; and Health and Wellbeing. There is a strong underpinning notion that many Aboriginal youth in these locations are "at risk" and that activities that keep them engaged and off the streets will reduce antisocial behaviour. There is also considerable concern, with good reason, that levels of attendance and engagement with school are poor.

The WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) was invited by GSAC to undertake an evaluation of the *Good Mob* program for the first year of the program and was contracted for this for the period from commencement (1 January 2018) to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. WACRH is a key partner with GSAC in the *Good Mob* program and engages in this evaluation as both an interested party with privileged opportunities to observe the program "close up" and in multiple sites of its operation. The evaluation team is committed to the concept of transformative paradigm in which evaluation is rigorous, but also fair through efforts to seek out a wide range of stakeholders and to include them in respectful and meaningful ways in the evaluation<sup>1</sup>. Consistent with this, we have endeavoured to show the strengths of the Program as well as the areas that can be improved upon in the future.

## 1.1 Background to the *Good Mob* Program

GSAC originated in early the 1970s and was incorporated in 1983, making it one of the longest serving successful Aboriginal community organisations in Western Australia. The first funded GSAC staff member was employed in 1994. In its early stages GSAC was a voluntary group auspiced by the WA Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) which delivered *ad hoc* sporting promotional programs to Aboriginal children and community members. The GSAC coordinator was based at (what is now called) the Department of

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<sup>1</sup> Mertens D. Assumptions at the philosophical and programmatic levels in evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 2016; (59): 102-108.

Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSCI) and benefited from shared office facilities, infrastructure and financial support as well as sharing space with other sporting organisations.

In 2016 GSAC partnered with WACRH to use a centre in Mitchell St, Spalding (a suburb of Geraldton with high unemployment and social unrest) for some school holiday activities aimed at supporting children attending the local primary school to improve educational attendance and outcomes. As a result of the success of this, in 2017 the WA Centre for Rural Health signed a five year lease with the City of Greater Geraldton to manage this under-utilised community facility in the heart of Spalding. GSAC contributed to activities in the Mitchell Street Community Centre in 2017. Once funded for the *Good Mob* program, GSAC negotiated the opportunity to be located in and deliver its programs directly to people in Spalding.

## 1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation aims to:

- highlight the successes of *Good Mob* over its first year (What has gone well?);
- explore the challenges (What has been difficult?); and
- make recommendations about ways the program can improve during the next two years of funding, with a view to long term sustainability and continuation of the program. (What can be done to improve the *Good Mob* Program over the next two years?)

## 1.3 Audience and stakeholders

The audience for the evaluation includes GSAC staff and Board members, DPC contract managers, key partner agencies and stakeholders, and community members.

## 1.4 Approach and methodology

The evaluation research draws data and information from two main sources: document review including attendance sheets, event evaluations, reports by GSAC to PMC; and a total of 20 interviews with key staff and stakeholders, analysed for themes. Organisations that contributed to the Evaluation are listed in Appendix 1. To maintain anonymity, where a participant interviewee is quoted directly in the report, they are identified by P and a number.

The evaluation considers four aspects of the *Good Mob* program over its first 13 months of establishment:

- Establishing the program and building the organisation's capacity to manage *Good Mob*;
- Forming partnerships;
- Engaging participants; and
- Impacts of the *Good Mob* program on the participants, the staff, the stakeholders and the community.

Discussions have occurred with GSAC in relation to WACRH undertaking the evaluation over the first three years of the *Good Mob* program. WACRH offers expertise in evaluation and also an understanding of the challenges that exist with program delivery in rural and remote areas. WACRH has undertaken a variety of formative searches around evidence of best practice and evidence gaps with respect to Aboriginal

engagement in sport<sup>2,3</sup>, and is interested in the opportunity that this program presents to contribute to building evidence in relation to acknowledged gaps.

The evaluation was approved by the WA Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (HREC 857, 24/07/2018) until 20 July 2021.

## 2. And they're off! Establishing the program

### 2.1 Overview

Receiving funding three months into the initially funded a twelve month project presented enormous challenges in terms of start-up: expediting the hiring of staff, developing facilities to operate from, and putting in place the legal, financial and administrative framework to expand. Despite the need to act swiftly, sound processes were followed and GSAC's Executive Officer is rightly proud of its achievement of a 'perfect score' audit report for the period to June 30 2018, delivered in November 2018.

### 2.2 GSAC Board and senior leadership

The GSAC Board is well established, with some members having served for over a decade. Receiving funding for the *Good Mob* program gave Board members new interest in the organisation and in their positions. One Board member who had been considering stepping down decided to nominate for a further term on the Board after receiving the IAS funding.

The Evaluation found that the Board and Executive Officer of GSAC are highly regarded in the community.

"When there are challenges I know that I can always talk to GSAC about things." (P18)

"[They] are highly ethical, community minded people. They make a ripple effect through their passionate commitment – they're touching hundreds of lives." (P4)

"Adrian has been an awesome leader" (P8)

"GSAC has always been able to do things" (P7)

The GSAC Board's strength, approachability and 'can do' attitude was a key element of success in the rapid establishment of the *Good Mob* program.

"Our motto is: We never say 'no'. If we can't help, one of our partners can." (GSAC EO).

### 2.3 Staffing

The delay between application, notification and receiving funding meant the *Good Mob* program needed to establish itself very quickly from what could have been a 'standing start' to achieve outcomes. Of note, is the commitment of GSAC to the work that it does and had continued to do in the second half of 2017, even in the virtual absence of any government funding. GSAC's success in rapidly hiring staff was

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<sup>2</sup> Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW and AIFS). Healthy lifestyle programs for physical activity and nutrition. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Australian Institute of Family Studies., 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlberg E, Hamilton S, Hamid F, Thompson S. Indigenous Australians Perceptions' of Physical Activity: A Qualitative Systematic Review. International journal of environmental research and public health. 2018;15(7):1492.

commendable, and was central to the program's achievements. The core staff are 4 full time Project Officers (Paddy Walsh, Corey Walsh, Cecilia Kelly and Carissa Bellottie) and the EO. Three of the 4 project officers were on staff within six weeks of confirmation of funding. Additional part time staff bring the regular weekly complement to 8. The full time POs and part-time staff are all Aboriginal people who are known and respected in their towns, passionate about sport and committed to Aboriginal advancement. Key stakeholders spoke of the commitment and passion of the staff, and the respect they have earned.

"GSAC has recruited very good staff. In Mount Magnet, Corey and Cecilia have been gold." (P10)

"They give heart and soul to it" (P4)

"People have so much respect for him [Paddy Walsh] – it blows my mind." (P15)

Each site has established a database of local people with the appropriate clearances who can take on casual work at short notice. This enables the programs to operate smoothly through the high intensity periods such as school holidays and trips that require additional staff.

The mandatory Working with Children Checks were a block for some potential employees. The EO always followed up personally with people who were rejected so that they understood the reason.

The organisation has created functioning systems and a positive working environment. As one staff member commented:

"This is the most positive work environment I've had the fortune to be employed in. I believe in what the organisation is doing. They are making a difference and it feels great to be part of that team. It makes a difference to my own mindset and my quality of life." (p4)

The rapid establishment of the *Good Mob* program and expansion of the organisation across three sites, employing quality staff, with strong and well-functioning HR, operational and financial processes in place was nothing short of remarkable. Key elements of success were:

- GSAC's existing networks, local knowledge and strong reputation throughout the Midwest;
- Strong partnerships and the willingness of partners to contribute labour, facilities and office space (including WACRH, the CGG and Shire of Mount Magnet)
- Access to the support needed to develop systems to support a dispersed organisation, and willingness to make use of appropriate professional support;
- the support and strength of the GSAC Board;
- Building the trust of local people by delivering outcomes.
- The willingness of the staff to put in long hours and split shifts.

## 2.4 Challenges

- The Finance Officer's workload in terms of data entry is difficult to manage, particularly during time of high expenditure such as holiday programs.
- IT systems continue to be a challenge, despite the support of WACRH with IT infrastructure at all sites.
- Regular meetings across the whole team over three geographically distant sites are difficult to organise but are needed to achieve sharing of ideas and expertise and commitment to common aims and organisational procedures.

## 2.5 Staff training

The need to rapidly establish operating programs that would meet KPIs meant that the Project Officers and other staff were under pressure to start running programs immediately. This necessitated a lot of on-the-job learning without solid grounding in organisational procedures, management of risks and establishment of systems for recording.

“I am right into my sports but just the work and how many things I had to do and the amount of time required. I just felt that I got thrown in the deep end sort of. But it is good because I have worked it all out.” (P2)

Several staff commented on their training needs and noted some of the on-the-job learning involved in their roles, including:

- office routines, administration, following systems and paperwork
- IT skills
- communication (personal and email)
- networking
- communicating positively with children and teaching them about right and wrong
- learning strategies to positively engage the older teens.

Some partner organisations commented that staff training in planning, consistency and following procedures would help with maintaining a strong program.

Formal training to February 2019 for all POs and some casual staff included Senior First Aid and Bronze Medallion.

The POs have the required clearances for the work they do. However, their schedules and the time needed for formal training (often requiring two days of training plus travel time) meant that in 2018 a full program of training was not able to be implemented.

Staff reported that they welcome opportunities for training. Some had attended training provided locally through other agencies. See below under Health and Wellbeing.

## 2.6 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** The organisation employ an office assistant to assist the EO, for example with input of financial data, particularly during school holiday programs and other high-intensity periods.

**Recommendation 2:** GSAC prioritises and plans a staff training program based on identified needs including a focus on leadership skills, staff supervision of casuals, planning, organisational policies, procedures and the range of performance indicators.

**Recommendation 3:** GSAC recognises the importance of dedicated time for training related to organisational requirements and achieving KPIs beyond sport (for example, educational outcomes).

**Recommendation 4:** GSAC maximises opportunities to share expertise and resources (e.g. checklists) within the team across the three sites. Video linking or teleconferencing should be considered to reduce costs and increase *Good Mob* team meeting opportunities. The involvement of casual staff in team meetings could help ensure there is a common understanding and that GSAC administrative processes are understood and followed.

## 3. It's a team effort: Forming partnerships

### 3.1 Overview

The *Good Mob* program relies on support from numerous organisations and has mastered working in partnership to achieve its outputs. Several key partners have made important contributions to the establishment and running of the program:

- WACRH provided office space and IT facilities in Mitchell St, Mullewa and Mount Magnet and has contributed staff and students to help develop and run holiday programs, homework clubs, breakfast programs and after school activities in all three sites. The use of the Mitchell St Centre for office space and as a Centre to run programs came from the pre-existing partnership with WACRH but undoubtedly assisted the rapid ability to implement programs.
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) continues to provide office space for GSAC's EO which provides excellent linkages to multiple sporting bodies in the region.
- The Shires of Mullewa and Mount Magnet provided sporting and engagement facilities
- The City of Greater Geraldton (CGG). Strong partnership in designing diversionary programs for at risk youth e.g. Safe Space, Midnight Basketball and Night Fields.
- In Mullewa and Mount Magnet the Police have been strong and supportive partners, and collaborated with programs including community football and Auskick. The police in Mount Magnet and Mullewa expressed enormous support for the *Good Mob* program.
- Bluff Point Primary School (BPPS) has engaged closely with *Good Mob* to work through issues and reach firm agreements about school programs including breakfast programs, homework clubs and sporting activities after school.
- ATLAS – A strong partnership has been in existence for some time and continues where GSAC Coordinates the Wheelchair Basketball Competition and has developed Aboriginal Buddies for ATLAS. The two agencies have worked on creative program co-development.
- Midwest Employment Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation (MEEDAC) became a strong partner through shared funding of projects and assistance with travel.

The 2018 funding Agreement stipulated that GSAC partner with the Department of Education through local schools in the specified areas, WA Police, WACRH, GRAMS and the [then] Department of Sport and Recreation. The Agreement also specifies relationships to be developed with Local Governments, CDP providers, Aboriginal Corporations and Job Networks.

GSAC has now established an impressive number of working relationships. As evidence of the growing strength and reputation of GSAC, an increasing number of agencies are seeking GSAC's support and advice.

### 3.2 Relationships table

The table below lists the relationships developed and/or consolidated during 2018. Key partners are indicated with an asterisk \*

Agency type and name	Nature of the partnership
<b>Education</b>	
*WA Centre for Rural Health	Mitchell Street; office space and IT support in all three sites; coordination and program delivery support in Mt Magnet and Mullewa; program development and student support for activities throughout the year in all three sites. Increased opportunities for WACRH student programs
Midwest/Gascoyne Education Department	Education Programs; School engagement; consultation
*Bluff Point Primary School	Key partner and site for sporting and education engagement.
Mount Magnet District High School	Key partner and site for sporting and education engagement
Mullewa District High School	Key partner and site for sporting and education engagement
Geraldton Universities Centre	Practical students attend relevant holiday Programs
Champion Bay High School	Venues; support; engagement of students
Our Lady of Carmel College, Mullewa	Included in any sports days, sports role model programs etc.
<b>Sporting organisations</b>	
Midwest Football Development Trust	GSAC support league with a focus on Aboriginal players/issues
WA Cricket Association	Indigenous Programs, selections, issues
Football West	Initiate Programs i.e. Soccer for Change, clinics, coaching courses etc
Great Northern Football League:	Sponsorship, consultation, Indigenous round
Clontarf Academy	Youth programs; football
Stephen Michael Foundation	Football programs; women's football in 2019 in Mount Magnet.
Midwest Academy of Sport	More Aboriginal sportspeople are now receiving scholarships.
East Fremantle Football Club	Participation in Talent Day; opening opportunities for young players
<b>Aboriginal Corporations/groups</b>	
Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS)	program activity- intermittent
Northampton Old School Community Initiative	Program delivery, Night fields, Sports Leaders Program
Geraldton Streetwork Aboriginal Corporation	Program partners, no formal partnership
Murchison Regional Aboriginal Corporation:	In-kind support, Consultancy general advice.
*Midwest Economic Employment Development Program (MEEDAC)	Participant transport, funding partners
Badimia Land Aboriginal Corporation	Partner programs, Cultural engagement; hire of bus for football to Northampton, MOU being developed.
Follow the Dream	Educational support and tutoring (Geraldton)
Mount Magnet Yamaji Aboriginal Reference Group	Cultural advice and guidance; community engagement
<b>Community organisations</b>	
*ATLAS (Access to Leisure and Sport) (disability focus)	Coordinate Wheelchair Basketball Competition; develop Aboriginal Buddies for ATLAS; creative program co-development

Agency type and name	Nature of the partnership
Ngala	Provide education sessions; school holiday programs
Radio MAMA	Promotion, advertising, videos
PCYC Geraldton	Safe Space Program, Friday night diversionary.
Helping Minds	Wellbeing sessions/workshops
Desert Blue Connect	Wellbeing sessions/workshops
Headspace	Wellbeing sessions/workshops
Local/ Regional Government	
*Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC)	Grants, consultation, regional support. The partnership has allowed the GSAC CEO to maintain an office in Geraldton's Sports House, which has been an invaluable source of practical support.
Department of Local Government Lands and Culture	Very supportive and being at Sports house enables quality partnerships and current trends, issues and funding opportunities are immediate and hot off the press.
*City of Greater Geraldton	Quality partnership when designing diversionary programs for at risk youth, Safe Space, Midnight Basketball and Night Fields are very good examples of that.
*Shire of Mt Magnet	Venues; support with Blue Light Discos and community engagement/recreation
Midwest Development Commission	Mt Magnet Expo
• WAPOL (Police)	Mount Magnet and Mullewa Police are strongly supportive partners and provide sporting and recreation activities e.g. evening football and sausage sizzles; support for Blue Light Discos. Geraldton Police refer people to participate in at Spalding activities.
Healthway	Funded GSAC for Soccer for Change
Department of Communities	Partnered with GSAC in the Youth Careers expo; in Mount Magnet GSAC staff attend the Yamatji Aboriginal Reference Group. GSAC on Working Party to Mitchell Street/Spalding improvement strategy.
Business/Corporations	
Ramelius Mining (Mt Magnet)	\$10,000 grant for cost to get 12 footballers over the Northampton games each week, bus hire, fuel costs, team uniform etc.
Mount Magnet IGA	Provides a weekly \$10 voucher for best all-rounder in activities, to encourage participants to be team players and work harder. GSAC account with MMIGA.

### 3.3 Building the program through seeking additional funding

GSAC sought and gained additional funding for a number of local initiatives including

- Transport for football travel (Ramelius Mining)
- Soccer for Change program (Healthway)
- Training for the aquatic program; Nightfields (DLGSC)
- Football development (Stephen Michael Foundation)
- Wirrapunda Foundation (training and mentoring)

A number of unsuccessful funding applications were submitted (Department of Transport, Confiscated Goods, Lotterywest). Interviewees noted there are opportunities for more funded partnership arrangements. Closer cooperation with a wider range of Government Departments could open up these

opportunities. However, it is acknowledged that writing funding applications and building partnerships takes time away from program delivery.

It should also be noted that GSAC has been very supportive of partner agencies also seeking funding that add strength and capacity to the programs that they deliver working with GSAC. This reciprocity is a real measure of partnership where the focus is on a common vision for an outcome, and acknowledges both agencies interest in working together to achieve this.

### 3.4 Challenges

- Infrastructure is needed to implement programs. Facilities provided by local government and leased in the case of Mitchell Street give the program a base. Ongoing funding is needed so that the *Good Mob* program has safe and well-maintained facilities and a 'home' for the programs into the future. The GSAC EO has continued to look for and negotiate around facilities that could meet their needs in the longer term given some limitations in the size and nature of facilities in all three service locations.
- Security of funding is critical for sustainability and keeping staff. The program must be maintained financially or risk losing momentum, consistency and community trust.
- GSACs close association with DLGSC means there is occasionally confusion in the community about GSACs status as a fully independently funded NGO.
- There is a need to plan well ahead so that partner organisations are fully on board and activities are properly prepared for. As far as possible, the *Good Mob* program needs to avoid sudden changes of plan that impact negatively on partner organisations' schedules.
- In some places there are also opportunities to better integrate activities between the school, the Shire and GSAC.

"I also think it would be great if we can do a program together in town, all of us, the Shire and GSAC and the school - everybody running the one thing, not trying to run tiny things. Pool our resources ... It's like the school is a little business and the Rec Centre is a little business. Even though we have our own contracts to fulfil, I am sure we could find something in common to work on." (P15 – Mullewa)

### 3.5 Recommendations

**Recommendation 5:** *Good Mob* staff contact key partners well in advance to plan programs so that programs linked with schools are developed before the term begins. The *Good Mob* encourage partner organisations to communicate and confirm their interest in program involvement prior to program scheduling.

**Recommendation 6:** *Good Mob* senior management identify how more support can be provided to the remote sites in terms of planning, ideally by being directly involved in program scheduling or delegating it to a staff or subcontractor with relevant skills.

**Recommendation 7:** GSAC and partner organisations explore ways to jointly plan and deliver programs to ensure better integration and use of resources.

## 4. Engaging young people and communities: Success builds success

### 4.1 Overview

The Good Mob project funding application set an ambitious target to engage more than 1000 Aboriginal youth and their families per year. The Project Schedule set the target at 700 people: 150 each in Mullewa and Mount Magnet and 400 in Spalding. Attendance data indicate that while the overall target of 700 was probably met, the individual targets for Mount Magnet and Mullewa were somewhat unrealistic, especially if confined to school-aged participants. According to the Department of Education's website, the school populations for the three sites in 2018 were as follows:

BPPS (ages 4-11 yrs)	370
MDHS (ages 4-17 yrs)	82
MMDHS (ages 4-17 yrs)	91

In Geraldton and Mullewa, Aboriginal young people from other primary and high schools (e.g. Walkaway and Rangeway Primary Schools, Champion Bay Senior High School and Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Mullewa) engage in *Good Mob* sporting and holiday programs, many of which achieved daily attendances of close to 100 (e.g. Soccer for Change; some holiday program activities). Further, several school and community activities extended beyond the three key sites of Spalding, Mullewa and Mount Magnet, engaging young people from surrounding suburbs and towns. In Geraldton, participants in many activities came from the wider City of Greater Geraldton; the weekly Mullewa Indoor Netball competition brought players from Yalgoo, 100 km away; footballers travelled from Mullewa and Mount Magnet to Northampton every weekend throughout the footy season; holiday programs in Mount Magnet had outreach activities to Yalgoo and Cue.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that overall the *Good Mob* program engaged at least 700 Aboriginal young people and their families in the full range of activities offered during its first 8 months of operation. It is also likely that there are individuals and families in the target populations who have not (yet) been engaged.

The contracted engagement activities cover Sporting Engagement, Holiday Programs, Education and Health and Wellbeing

### 4.2 Sporting engagement.

#### 4.2.1 Overview

Not surprisingly given GSAC's expertise and long experience in this area, the *Good Mob* program has excelled in engaging high numbers of children, teenagers and adults in a wide range of sports. Sport has been a powerful hook that allows for further social and educational activities.

Activity sheets and reports show that the program has engaged all age groups including substantial numbers of children under seven years old, mainly in sporting activities and holiday programs.

Since many of the activities are community oriented, younger siblings have tended to join in with their older brothers and sisters. In addition, some of the activities encouraged participation from the under 7s. For example, the Auskick program in Mullewa which ran in June 2018 in partnership with the Mullewa Police targeted children aged 5-8.

Regular programs of mixed netball and basketball in all three sites have brought together families and the whole community and have been ongoing, positive community events. Run in partnership with the Police, GSAC has strengthened and expanded these activities in Mullewa and Mount Magnet.

“Once GSAC entered the picture, they took over running the programs and I assisted them from then and provided support where needed. Now there are social activities happening on a nightly basis which is great.” (P14)

“Seeing the kids involved on the oval every day now is great – there’s always something on.” (P12)

#### 4.2.2 Table of community and school engagement activities across three sites

##### Geraldton

Dates	Geraldton Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC’s role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
April -August	Wheelchair Basketball	All	6 teams 70 per fixture average(player/supporters)	Coordinate
April - August	Futsal	All	10 teams averaged 80 per fixture players/supporters	Coordinate
March	Kirby Bentley Cup Girls AFL	Females 13-15 yrs	200 player/supported at Perth Carnival	Coordinate fund supervise team
March	Nicky Winmar Cup Boys AFL	Males 13-15 yrs	205 player/supporters at carnival in Mandurah	Coordinate fund supervise team
Feb, April, July, Oct, January	Holiday Program	At risk youth 8-18 yrs	Average between 40-100 kids depending on program and time of year	Co-coordinate, co-fund, co-supervise with WACRH.
March, January	Jambinu Basketball Program	At risk youth	121 signed up for programs between 70-100 per day over a week	Coordinate, supervise, fund, partners recruitment
December	Soccer for Change	At risk youth 8-18 years	105 registered, between 75-90 each day over a week	Co-coordinate, co-supervise, fund, partner with Football West, WACRH
All year	Bluff Point education Program	Those at risk of non-attendance at school	14 kids per day picked up conveyed to school, breakfast and to class	Provide transport, fund, partner with WACRH, co-supervise
All year	Mitchell Street Community Centre	At risk youth 8-18 years	Each day/week/month is different depending on programs being run	Help coordinate user groups, Spalding suburb improvement
All year	Executive Officer: Sports house	All programs, youth 8-18 years, partner groups, Advocacy	As per documented	Coordination

Dates	Geraldton Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC's role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
Tuesdays	Homework Club	Aboriginal Primary School kids	Average 30 kids per session	Co-ordination, fund partner BBPS, WACRH

### Mullewa

Dates	Mullewa Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC's role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
April/ May	Cross Country Interschool Sports Carnival Eneabba	Male & Female	20 MDHS students	Mullewa District High School with Support from GSAC
Every school term Monday – Friday	School Breakfast Club	School aged Children Pre-primary to High School Male & Female	Average 15 – 20	Mullewa District High School with Support from GSAC
July/ August	Midwest Football Academy	High School 13 – 18 years	40 Students	Midwest Football Academy with support from GSAC
Every school term Tuesdays November - December	After school activities Pool activities	Male & Female	10 – 15 participants – school aged children	GSAC in partnership with Mullewa Youth Centre
Monday nights May-September	Mixed Netball	Over 15 yrs; Male & Female	Average 20 per night	R
June-August	Auskick	5-8 years Males and females	10	Co-run with WAPOL
Monday nights October – January	Mixed indoor soccer	15 + years	Average 22 per night	Run
Wednesday afternoons	Milo Cricket	5 – 10 years; Male & Female	10-15	Run with support from WAPOL
Friday afternoons	Mixed basketball	18 – 30 years Male and Female	Up to 50	Run
Every school term Thursdays 3-4pm	Homework Classes	School aged children Male and Female	7 – 10 Children	GSAC with support from MDHS
Tuesdays November – December (Terms 4 and 1)	After school activities at Mullewa Pool	School aged Children Male and Female	10 – 15	Run

Dates	Mullewa Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC's role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
November Fridays	Rec centre fun afternoon activities	12-15 years	20	GSAC
November	Exmouth trip			Midwest footy academy with support GSAC
January	School holiday program – Jambiru Basketball Academy	8 – 15 Years Male and Female	100+ (25 from Mullewa)	GSAC and WACRH
December	Soccer for Change	8 – 15 years Male and Female	100+ (25 from Mullewa)	GSAC and WACRH
January	Excursion to Geraldton	11 – 18 years Male and female	15	GSAC and Mullewa Youth Centre
January	Excursion to Dongara	11 – 18 years Male and Female	15	GSAC and Mullewa Youth Centre

### Mount Magnet

Dates	Mount Magnet Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC's role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
Wednesday night June-February	Mixed Netball/ Mixed Basketball	18-30 years; Males and females	Up to 58 people attended; Average 30 per night	Run with support from WACRH and WAPOL
Tuesdays Terms 3 and 4	Cooking at school	Males and females High school ages	10	Co-ran with MMDHS
Friday afternoons May-February	Junior football	Primary School aged males and females	Up to 30	Ran with Police support
Friday nights May-February	Community football	Whole community – older teens and adults aged 18-30	Up to 50 attendees/ average 30	Ran with Police support including BBQ
August - September	Girls' football training and Carnival with Meekatharra students	Females 8-15 years	15	Ran with support from Meekatharra DHS
Every school term Monday afternoons	Girls' Club	Females 6-12 years	4 - 18	Initially WACRH ran;

Dates	Mount Magnet Activity	Target group age, gender	Approximate numbers of participants	GSAC's role (Run, Co-run, Support, Attend)
				then GSAC ran.
Every school term Thursday afternoons	After school fun activities	Males and females Primary School ages		WACRH ran; GSAC assisted
July and October	School holiday program	5-17 years male and female	Up to 40	GSAC ran some activities and supported WACRH, Bidibidi and visiting Church Group
Wednesday afternoons September & October	Junior Basketball	6-15 years Male and female	18 - 25	Ran with support from WACRH students
September afternoon and weekend workshops	Assisting Badimia Beats – Music workshops incorporating Badimia language	Primary School aged Girls Older boys	Up to 5 5	Co-ran with Windabarna Arts Centre
Thursdays October to December	Mooditj program during school	10-14 years Males and females	20+	WACRH ran, GSAC supported
Wednesday afternoons December	Softball and T ball	8-17 years Males and females	Up to 30	Ran with Police support
January School Holidays	School holiday program at Rec Centre and Pool over three weeks; trips to Cue, Sandstone and Yalgoo.	5-17 years male and female	10-35 per day	Ran, with support from the Pool management.
Tuesday afternoons February	Junior softball and cricket	10-15 years Boys	14	Ran

#### 4.2.2 Elite athletes

In the area of supporting and promoting elite athletes, *Good Mob* has excelled, providing direct assistance to the following 16 individuals. GSAC has a long history of instrumental support to talented Aboriginal youth who have gone to achieve at state and national level in sport. This support has continued and in future evaluations we would like to capture more about the nature of the support provided and its importance.

It is also important to recognise that sport is one avenue to fame and success for Aboriginal youth who are talented. However, for every young person who has a dream to succeed, there are many who don't achieve at the competitive level to which they aspire. An important part of GSAC's role is also to support youth to cope with disappointment and adversity and to learn self-management when dreams are not realised.

WA Indigenous Women's cricket team competing in the National Aboriginal Cricket Carnival.	4 female: (1 selected in All Stars-Black Caps) Dainria Papertalk, Callie Rose Woods Allee Bartlett, Kavita Pepper (Black Cap) 1 Male: Marley Crowe
WA Kick Start team	3 selected Michael Wall, Xavier Wright, Richard Bartlett (Kickstart team)
State Country u18's Basketball team	Johnny Narkle
Australian Team for BMX. (35-40 age group)	Daniel Darcy
State Country Basketball team	Xavier Wright
State League under 18's Netball -team	2 girls: Dimiris Simpson/ Ella Kaye Dalgety
Geraldton representative Cricket -team	Marley Crowe
WA Imparja team (National Indigenous Cricket Carnival)	Bobby Gibson
Australian Indigenous Basketball Team	Johnny Narkle
State Woomeras Indigenous Aussie rules team.(u15's)	Ella-Kay Dalgety
State Taekwondo team	Kyhan Townsend

It was not possible within the scope of this evaluation to explore the impact of GSAC support of elite athletes in terms of their growth and development. This could be explored in greater depth in a future evaluation.

### 4.3 Holiday Programs

#### 4.3.1 Geraldton holiday programs

Holiday programs were run out of Mitchell Street in January, April, July, October 2018 and January 2019, with attendances up to 100 on any one day. With the support of WACRH, each program had a focus on education, health, and life skills. Community organisations such as Helping Minds, Ngala, Head Space, and Desert Blue Connect also assisted with providing the health and life skills sessions. In July, the second week of the holiday program was devoted to the Jambinu Basketball Academy program, giving basketball clinics and life skills for 8-17 year olds. On average, 80-90 young people attended daily. A video describing the program is available <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOzmzvxLC4I>

In December 2018, the holiday program offered Soccer for Change, attended by up to 90 school age children (target age 12-17 year olds) each day. The program uses sport to educate and empower young people, with soccer as a platform to develop leadership skills for youth. The program was modelled upon a program delivered in December 2017, and held in a different venue which included the basketball stadium so that indoor futsal could be offered on three days when very high temperatures occurred. There were over 60 participants each day, with 90 attending on the Wednesday. The availability of volunteers and support staff was much higher than in 2017, largely attributable to having some dedicated funding from Healthway and the increase in GSAC staff. The program had a high attendance by Aboriginal youth but included many non-Aboriginal youth. Families sent multiple children which meant that children outside the target minimum age range were also included. Healthy eating and health and wellbeing messages were included as part of the program.

A debrief re Soccer for Change was held to capture the strengths and opportunities for better delivery of the program. The discussion from this is captured below to show the highlights and challenges of delivering the program, and the commitment to working with partners to improve the quality and safety

of the program in future. Commitment to quality improvement is a feature of a high performing organisation.

#### What worked well about Soccer for Change in 2018?

Great organisation of the week, fabulous staffing, felt not much risk

- Everything went well
- Futsal worked well, indoors 3 days
- Coaches all pulled together; five game leaders
- Consciousness about food hygiene
- Shirts for staff and coaches look fantastic
- Competition works well, having a prize at stake

#### Opportunities for improvement?

- Little boy took off (emphasise safety) (Note a few kids are in foster homes)
- Confusion re registration – add wrist bands so it is clear kids are registered (different colours for different days)
- Registration on a laptop rather than hard copies, so can be sorted in alphabetical order
- Form needs review and improved process for online registration
- Authorised leadership - Pre-program meeting so that coaching coordination was clearer
- Catering go a bit boring, could eat whole fruit (vegemite and honey rolls were popular) – be good to have a student project on healthy eating

#### Other Suggestions

- Need to follow up with kids who had talent – follow up. Seven a side,
- Include sessions on Zones of Regulation for supervisors and children
- Consider a survey to get feedback of participants next time
- Needs to be clear in instructions that kids must bring their own water bottle
- Have a First Aid station available. Tent to be identified so it is clear where to go to – just having a First Aid person with a vest doesn't mean they are easily found
- A couple of kids had no shoes or shin pads – GSAC were loaning these and supplying a number of kids
- Think about using clowns to deliver the health messages rather than health agencies (difficult environment to gain and hold kids attention)
- Two daily awards for respect, effort, cooperation, teamwork, looking after others

There is considerable value adding to education and learning from structured education programs that occur through the Mitchell St centre. The vignette highlights the role that GSAC through the Good Mob program has played in developing an appropriate program, working with WACRH and others, and the value of structured learning that exposes children to new concepts and role models.

### **A Vignette: Observation of a Successful Holiday Program Activity in Mitchell St**

The following describes some aspects of the holiday program which operated from Mitchell St in January 2019. The program is planned and delivered in conjunction with a number of agencies and in this site holiday programs have operated for at least some weeks in every school holidays since September 2016 when they were started by WACRH with GSAC support as part of efforts to improve Aboriginal education outcomes as part of the *More Than Talk* project. It's important to recognise that in this site there has been a much longer and sustained history of GSAC–WACRH partnership around school holiday programs and that the personnel and resources available in the regional city are hugely greater than that available in Mullewa and Mt Magnet.

The School Holiday program in Jan 2019 was largely developed by WACRH staff members Lenny Papertalk and Associate Professor Monica Moran. A structured program for younger aged children ran every morning until about 1pm, which utilised but further developed some of the same structured activities that had been utilised in previous holiday programs. . Older Aboriginal youth (15-17 years) who were part of the "Youth Leaders Program" developed by GSAC were supervised by the GSAC worker and then supported the activities of younger children. Every morning children were sorted into age groups with each group being given a coloured wrist band and paired with a Youth Leader. Numbers were kept manageable, with ~24 children attending, making it noticeably easier to deliver educational enhancement activities than had occurred on some days in previous holiday programs when numbers were much greater. A WACRH occupational therapist with experience in using "Zones of Regulation" introduced that as an interactive activity with the young children to great effect. This helped to train children to recognise their own feelings and to learn to verbalise and manage these, without reacting or acting out. Children recognised that this was "about helping me get ready for school".

GSAC had employed two experienced Aboriginal teachers to help assist with the educational aspects of the program and they supported children in activities such as counting out money to go shopping, reading, and learning Wadjari language. They were assisted in this by a teaching student from Geraldton Universities Centre who contributed to the program, learning both about lesson planning and delivery and working with Aboriginal children in the process. Children were encouraged to undertake problem solving through teamwork. This identified children who might need extra support with numeracy, but they were not singled out as failing.

Children were encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating morning tea. Older youth from the Youth Leaders program, including those who had not previously cooked (and had not been encouraged to do so at home), helped prepare meals such as Spaghetti Bolognese, and their achievement in learning a new skill was acknowledged.

Sport also featured in the program, both through the banter that occurred, including with visitors (for example, a visiting policeman) and among children. Children also had the opportunity to kick a footy with young Aboriginal men who had played in the AFL.

A debrief meeting was held every afternoon, involving the youth leaders, to discuss what was working well and organise/recalibrate for the following day. As some children are dropped off by a parent or guardian and are not collected at 1pm, they are allowed to stay on in the centre for unstructured leisure activities after the formal program was finished while debriefing and other activities are occurring. Many are then dropped off at home by Gordie using the GSAC bus. There is attention to child safety.

Observations and comments highlighted the benefit from existing relationships when adults involved in the holiday program were also providing services within Bluff Point Primary School. This highlights the importance of sustaining programs across time and place with key messages related to respect, behaviour and learning.

Overall, the program identified many positive attributes: Aboriginal leadership; working with other agencies; volunteering to help others; pre-planning and organisation; encouraging youth leadership (including in planning and debriefing; role-modelling; linkages with school activities; skill building in activities such as sport, cooking and self-regulation; building self-respect and a sense of community.

#### 4.3.2 Mullewa holiday programs

Holiday program activities in July, October and December piggy-backed on the Geraldton-based program. Mullewa participants engaged in the sporting and health and wellbeing activities, as well as the nutritious lunches and snacks.

- July – participation in the Jambinu Basketball Academy, which was attended by 25 young people aged from 7 – 13 years from Mullewa, with the venue alternating between Geraldton and Mullewa to give both groups the opportunity to travel to the others' town. One comment from an observer was "It was good to see the local older [Mullewa] kids were really happy to help out".
- December – 8-10 Mullewa students travelled to attend Soccer for Change in Geraldton on some days.

#### 4.3.3 Mount Magnet holiday programs

- July holiday program was a joint effort between a number of agencies including WACRH, Bidi Bidi, and a visiting church group. GSAC staff attended and supported the activities.
- September – GSAC *Good Mob* contributed activities to the Mount Magnet Mission Church Holiday Program in the first week and provided its own activities in the second week.
- January – A three-week holiday program was led by *Good Mob* and run at the swimming pool and recreation centre, with weekly excursions to water parks in Cue and Yalgoo. Daily attendances varied between 10 and 35 youth. The program concluded with a very successful community BBQ at the pool, attended by 30 children and 9 adults.

### 4.4 Education – 'Pumped for school'

#### 4.4.1 Seasonal sporting activities

Pre and after school programs across the three sites included Athletics, Auskick, Netball, Kids Yoga, Touch Rugby, Cricket, Football and Basketball.

#### 4.4.2 School sporting skills linked to attendance strategies

**Mullewa** The Project Officer worked together with the Principal to devise a Boys Program for boys in Year 4 to Year 12 to improve school attendance and behaviour. The rationale for focusing on boys was that the Shooting Stars program at the school provides an incentive for girls to attend but there was nothing for boys.

"It's more about getting those boys to come to school on time and behave in class." (P9)

About 20 boys are involved. Weekend camps and outings are used as an incentive for attendance and pro-social behaviour.

**Mount Magnet** GSAC Staff joined the school pick-up bus service in Term 3, which increased attendance by the teenagers at MMDHS, particularly the older boys. Corey Walsh offered football before school as an incentive to attend. Corey also offered a music class during the lunch break as an incentive for the students to stay on for the afternoon. A problem arose in that the school did not have the staff or the activities to keep the older high school students engaged all day, and sought GSAC staff to fulfil this role. The *Good Mob* program activities substituted for existing strategies at the school, rather than enhancing them. Cecilia assisted and ran cooking classes for the older girls which were well attended and these incorporated some numeracy and literacy activities.

School staff opined that better liaison between the school and *Good Mob* would help to alleviate misunderstandings and clarify expectations about strategies, planning etc. The school could then formally timetable the music and cooking classes to give consistency to the program.

**Geraldton** The combined strategy of providing transport to school for the breakfast program followed by attendance at an existing school-run Reading program in the library has been very successful. At the start there was confusion about whether the school or GSAC identified the children most at risk of non-attendance. Over the course of the year misunderstandings have been ironed out. Families now sign a contract that confirms that the agreed purpose of the bus is to build habits of attendance in families and students, and not to have a cohort of students who are ‘always’ on the attendance bus. Several students who were previously in the ‘severe’ category for attendance have improved to 80%-90% attendance. Students were dressed and ready for school at the pick-up time and some parents who were previously not engaged with their child’s attendance are now taking their children to school and no longer relying on the attendance bus.

#### 4.4.3 Homework classes

**Geraldton** After-school classes were held at Mitchell Street early in the year and moved to BPPS. Coordinated by WACRH, the focus was both educational and fun. GSAC ran rotational sporting activities at the homework class and assisted with the provision of fruit as a healthy snack for the children. During 2018 extensive planning went into developing the homework classes to optimise delivery.

**Mullewa** Homework class ran from 3:10-4:10 on Thursdays. Students were given a snack, played some games and then went to the Library. Approximately 10 students attended the homework classes. More effort will go into building the homework classes in 2019.

**Mount Magnet** After-school classes in Mount Magnet have continued to be run by WACRH on Thursdays with a focus on positive fun and social interaction. GSAC has taken over the after-school Girls’ Club which was run by WACRH for the two years prior.

In all three sites, *Good Mob* staff recognise the need to strengthen literacy and numeracy outcomes.

“We can do more on literacy and numeracy. Lots of the kids can’t read. Finding out when and how we can do it is the next step.” (P12)

“The homework classes definitely need a bit more work but I have started on that.” (P9)

“Holiday programs got a lot of attention but we can be doing more during the term.” (P13)

With guidance and support, the homework classes will continue to strengthen in 2019.

#### 4.4.4 Breakfast programs

**Geraldton** Breakfast Club which had been previously running at BPPS started at Mitchell St on May 7<sup>th</sup>. WACRH students assisted in running the program. It soon became evident that running the program from BPPS would be more efficient and the program was again relocated to the school. WACRH students wrote a report on the BPPS Breakfast Club in 2018, making a number of recommendations for improvement. The report noted that the children had a very passive role in Breakfast Club and many opportunities were missed to develop social and physical skills including fine motor skills (e.g. spreading their own condiments); social skills (e.g. independence, self-regulation, discipline); health skills (e.g. hand washing before eating; teeth brushing); health literacy (e.g. healthy food choices). At that time, the Aboriginal Education Officers at the School were not involved in the School Breakfast Program, however they have taken over the coordination role. In 2018, GSAC, WACRH and the BPPS principal meet regularly with them

to track attendance and outcomes. WACRH students from a range of professions assist the AEOs each day and focus on helping the development of social and practical skills with the children

**Mount Magnet** When the *Good Mob* program began, MMDHS had an existing breakfast program running every day, with attendances of up to 30 children. When based in Mt Magnet, WACRH students assist with the breakfast program where possible. Opportunities exist to extend the educational benefits of the breakfast program through social education, developing independence in participants and increasing healthy food awareness (see the above - BPPS Breakfast Club).

**Mullewa** *Good Mob* began participating in the daily breakfast program in May/June and enhanced the program by providing a full cooked breakfast on Fridays. An average of 15-20 students attend.

#### 4.4.5 Challenges

- In each school, regular meetings and clear, documented outcomes will assist with planning school-based activities which is sometimes done 'on the run', leading to misunderstandings.
- Stakeholders are highly appreciative and respectful of the valuable contributions and hard work of *Good Mob*. Several suggested that more attention to planning and following processes agreed in advance would improve the program. Better planning of sessions could help ensure there is time and adequate resources to run all the activities and allow for better promotion of activities to maximise attendance.
- Procedures need to be followed consistently, for example with signed permissions for children to travel. This is followed carefully in some sites and not in others.
- The capacity to bring educational outcomes into programs is dependent on the availability of strong partners to provide input in design and implementation. In Mount Magnet and Mullewa finding appropriate partners is not always easy or possible. For example, in Mount Magnet this relies on having WACRH students whose practicum allows time to devote to before or after school programs. It is worth noting that homework classes in Geraldton are proceeding well in 2019 with substantial assistance from three WACRH academics and three students, two school teachers (including the principal), two Desert Blue Connect Educators and three GSAC young leaders. This gives an indication of the level of support required for the *Good Mob* program to extend from the sporting arena to effective, well-planned educational activities.
- There have been some behavioural challenges and some children have had to be temporarily excluded from programs due to fighting and other behavioural issues. However, this is changing over time as the programs consolidate and each site establishes expectations of participants. The capacity to exclude participants from programs is being used as motivation to improve behaviour.
- Mullewa stakeholders have suggested a need for more out of school programs that target girls.

#### 4.4.6 Recommendations

**Recommendation 8:** More attention is given to planning of school engagement programs in each site, ensuring the involvement of the school, GSAC and other partners. Additional help in Mt Magnet and Mullewa is provided to ensure meetings are regular and outcomes are documented.

**Recommendation 9:** GSAC engages (and where necessary, funds) partners or appropriate qualified people to assist with strengthening literacy and numeracy outcomes in the holiday programs, breakfast programs and homework classes.

**Recommendation 10:** GSAC engages (and where necessary, funds) partners or appropriate qualified people to assist with education about healthy eating and good food choices in holiday and breakfast programs.

**Recommendation 11:** GSAC offers support and advice to other areas wishing to engage families and individuals in similar programs.

**Recommendation 12:** GSAC adds programs for engaging teenage girls, particularly in Mullewa.

## 5. Health and Wellbeing

### 5.1 Overview

Educational activities with a health and wellbeing component for children were often incorporated into sports, recreation and holiday programs.

“James did a great job of integrating life lessons into the basketball program.... Great way to incorporate much more learning other than basketball skills e.g. respect” (Student observer July Holiday Program Mullewa)

#### Geraldton

- In addition to embedding health and wellbeing activities into Jimbanu Basketball Academy and Soccer for Change, specific sessions were incorporated into holiday programs, delivered by organisations such as Ngala, Helping Minds and Desert Blue Connect.
- ‘Yamaji Girls’ had a health and wellbeing focus on leadership, self-care and development, cyber bullying and self-esteem.

#### Mullewa

- Mullewa students engaged in the health and wellbeing activities embedded in the Geraldton holiday programs that they attended (Soccer for Change and Jimbanu Basketball Academy).
- Healthy eating is a part of the Swim for Fruit program at the pool.

#### Mount Magnet

- GSAC workers assisted WACRH to deliver the Mooditj Program in MMDHS during Term 4 (sexual health, drugs & alcohol, general health for Years 5-12), attended by approximately 20 students, once per week.

Health and wellbeing programs for adults were organised by WACRH in Mount Magnet. These included the Red Dust Healing program which engaged up to 60 men and women in two one-day workshops (one for women, one for men) focusing on:

- Identity;
- Family roles and structure;
- Relationships;
- Drug and alcohol issues;
- Family violence;
- Grieving and loss;
- Stress and mental health issues; and
- Anger management.

The workshops also aimed to increase conversations regarding mental health problems and suicide.

WACRH also organised two days of Family Wellbeing training for adults and older teenagers, run by the Aboriginal Health Council of WA. This program had a strong emphasis on mental health and resilience. GSAC staff attended both Red Dust Healing and Family Wellbeing. Attendance was open to a larger number of community members but attendance was disappointing. GSAC staff who attended found it valuable

## 5.2 Challenges

The *Good Mob* staff recognise the need to increase the delivery of health and wellbeing sessions for youth but offering sessions outside of holiday programs has been a challenge for the team.

“I haven’t really looked into the health and wellbeing stuff... I am doing some things but to be honest I think I am not doing enough.” (P9)

Constraints include finding time, resources and necessary volunteer and/or professional help to plan and deliver sessions. There is also an issue of pitching this education at the right level and in the right way, particularly when the staff do not have strong health backgrounds themselves. Stakeholders recognise the potential for incorporating health and wellbeing into the program’s sporting activities and also note the need for caution about the style of delivery.

“I think that the level of respect [GSAC has] for running educational as well as sports programs [allows] for teaching softer skills and behavioural skills, health messages, no bullying, no smoking messages. To do it strategically, not making it an overwhelming thing for the kids. To do it gently for kids with short attention spans.” (P15)

The contracted outcomes included ‘20 activities in the three locations that include topics drug and alcohol use, smoking, child health and men’s health in partnership with GRAMS’\*. As described above, WACRH organised sessions which covered some of these areas of health. However, specific outputs have proven difficult to deliver, partly because the program has been fully focused on providing activities for children and youth. It is anticipated that health and wellbeing sessions for the older youth, mentors, staff and volunteers will be organised for 2019.

\*It is noted by the evaluation team that it is inappropriate for the GSAC contract to specify requirements to be delivered by other organisations that are not funded to deliver the specified activity.

## 6. Impacts: Reward for Effort

Several stakeholders commented that Indigenous communities are impacted by many complex social issues and any one program can address only part/s of the problem.

“...many of the issues are related to their home environment. We need to work with other organisations to address broader issues. In the big picture view, long term impact is uncertain as most kids 14 and under - there are not many teens involved - come from troubled upbringings and face complex issues in dysfunctional families.” (P14)

At the time of the evaluation, the Good Mob program had been funded for less than 12 months and the short engagement time would suggest no major impacts to report.

“[The program has led to] better relationship with the community and more participation in school events.... But in all honesty I couldn't say that was solely because of a particular program. That will be part of the reason but not the whole reason. In terms of attendance we have a transiency rate of just on 50% per year. Almost 50% of the students who start the year will not be here at the end of the year so in terms of being able to track and gather data sometimes that is hard for us... GSAC through the attendance program might have worked with 20 students over the year but those 20 students might not be here by the end of the year. So it is hard to measure impact of programs.”(P18)

However, despite the short time of implementation and the difficulty of attributing impacts to a particular program, interviewees were keen to recount the many positive changes observed during Good Mob's first months of operation.

## 6.1 Impact on individuals

The interviewees recounted many stories of the positive impact of the *Good Mob* program on the lives of individuals – children, teenagers and adults. The obvious impact is that there are now opportunities for young people to positively engage and learn, especially after school.

“Kids have somewhere to go.” (P15)

### Impacts on children

- Some young people have improved their attendance at, and interest in school.

“I saw a lot of changes in the kids at the breakfast program. They started off coming on the bus looking tired and bummed. By the middle of the year, they were up and energised. They were enjoying coming to school.” (P20 -Geraldton)

- Children are learning sporting skills, values and attitudes.

“The kids know there are base rules. They know there are expectations of their behaviour. There is less fighting now.” (P5-Mount Magnet)

- Young people from Mullewa have had the opportunity to have positive exchanges and build friendships with Geraldton participants. There have been no serious incidents, even though this group is known for fighting. (P17)

### Impacts on teenagers and young adults

- Teenagers have increased participation in sport and engagement in school.

“It's a challenging place but kids listen to him [Good Mob PO] and you could say that he can intervene in difficult behaviours. Kids are in his programs when otherwise they would be home smoking, watching porn.” (P15)

- Under the guidance of an older mentor 'Junior Supervisors', aged 15-17 have mentored younger people, building their leadership skills and maturity.

"We had to train them to get off their phones and watch the little kids" (P13)

- Young adults have earned respect and found their feet as elite athletes and leaders.
- Young athletes have recognised that in order to excel, it's necessary to build character and resilience as well as sporting prowess.
- In Mount Magnet, young people have had additional opportunities to travel outside of their town, meet and interact with children from Cue and Yalgoo. Seven were invited to go to Carnarvon to play football through the Steven Michael foundation; two were involved in the partnership with East Fremantle Football Club and spent a weekend in Perth participating in the Talent Day.
- Project Officers report they are seeing improved behaviour and discipline; less swearing.
- Older teenagers are starting to take on roles as leaders.
- Through cultural activities, young people have got to know who their family is and developed connections to country.
- Cross-generational projects have increased engagement of young people with elders.

#### Example

In the preparation of a painting during NAIDOC week; a community volunteer helped design the artwork; community elders advised on the design and contributed to the painting; Junior Supervisors helped the younger participants to contribute to the painting. The result was a cooperative and supportive environment that engaged three generations and produced an artwork that everyone was proud to be a part of.



**Impacts on adults:** As an employer, GSAC has given opportunities to a number of Aboriginal adults to improve their personal circumstances and in some cases, their mental health. This has occurred through:

- Practical support such as providing work experience, references, resumes, assistance with setting up bank accounts and applying for necessary Police and Working with Children Checks. During the reporting period, at least 3 individuals went on to full time work in various areas using their GSAC work history and references. One has found suitable housing which was previously out of reach.
- Providing a place where people can contribute their skills to the community through bus driving, food preparation, mentoring younger people, gardening, art, and so on. Several individuals who were previously isolated and without meaningful community connections have 'found a place' in the Good Mob program either as volunteers or in paid roles.

## 6.2 Impacts on communities

*Pride:* "Older people see their kids involved and gives them a sense of pride." (P10)

*Respect:* An unexpected outcome has been the degree to which children and parents from different cultures are interacting and engaging positively. The Healthway slogan "Respect Yourself, Respect Your Culture" was adopted for the Soccer for Change project, which received Healthway funding. The slogan resonates strongly, particularly in Geraldton, and will continue to be promoted by GSAC.

"The kids are making friends and being teammates with kids they wouldn't otherwise interact with. The multicultural focus is a really nice part of the program. The Respect Yourself, Respect your culture theme of the Healthway grant we got for Soccer for Change – some of our programs are very multicultural and we take that theme to mean respect EVERYBODY and their culture." (P17)

*Inclusivity:* It is worth of note, and commendation, that in all their programs GSAC have promoted inclusivity

"We don't care if they're black, white or brindle, we want people to feel welcome and to work together." (P3)

This extends to support of people with disability and mental illness as part of GSAC programs.

*Social engagement:* Through sporting activities adults and families have been positively impacted. For example, in Geraldton there are a number of males aged in their 20s to 40s in the basketball team, coached by Adrian Bartlett. Some of them are recently out of jail. The fees are \$350 to play and there was some concern that this cost might be too much of a disincentive. However, at the time of the evaluation interviews, the men were putting money in every week to maintain their membership. Some were bringing their children and their partners who have also joined teams. As an example of a growing willingness to contribute to the community, there has been a noticeable shift from an attitude of "What do have to do to get into a team?" to "I can help out".

In Mullewa, regular night sports for adults is bringing the community together.

"I run a program for adults on Monday nights. They are all engaged – everyone, and I don't think this town has had much of that in the past. We get the Indigenous guys and the non-Indigenous guys plus we get the farmers come in as well so everyone is slowly starting to get along, all slowly blending together. Everyone is happy,

everyone is excited about the programs, they ask when they are, they enjoy the company and being around each other.” (P9)

“So good to have something to do during the week that helps with my fitness and getting to know my community in a different and positive way – thanks.” (Community member, Mullewa)

*Family engagement:* In all sites, stakeholders believed families were more involved in their children’s sport and education. In Mount Magnet, more families are engaging in activities at the oval, either as participants or as spectators, and more parents are showing interest in their children’s sport.

“More parents are getting involved. At football we’ve seen ten cars parked around the oval watching, which is great.” (P12)

“... involving the family helps a lot in understanding the kids. Things run much more smoothly at the centre when kids know I am talking to their families. To be able to tap into family as a community resource is very important.” (P15)

*Breaking down prejudice:* Changes in attitudes have been noted by GSAC staff with an example given of two petrol stations, one in Geraldton and one in Mount Magnet. Initially there was hesitation and lack of trust to provide a monthly account for an Aboriginal organisation. Since GSAC has shown it has systems and pays its bills on time there has been a big turnaround in the attitudes at those two places. These are small examples of bigger ways GSAC is raising the positive profile of Aboriginal organisations in the Midwest.

*Improving WAPOL’s understanding of engagement:* The *Good Mob* program has demonstrated a welcome and sometimes new perspective on community engagement and partnerships, notably with the Police.

“This program has been an ‘eye opener’ to many police officers. Country police officers often struggle to grasp the concept of engagement and are quick to lock up and throw in jail.” (P14)

“The work of the *Good Mob* has significantly improved the social outlook ...and improved social interaction skills especially with police officers and other community stakeholders. This change in behaviour has been supported by family members who have reported good behaviour on the increase and attendance at the local schools.” (P19)

*Economic benefits:* In Mount Magnet and Mullewa, the program has boosted local employment and increased money going into the towns for fuel, groceries, and housing. The GSAC staff themselves are role models and have experienced an increased sense of pride.

*Support and cultural advice:* The availability of a local Aboriginal community-based worker has given support and critical mass to existing programs. In addition, GSAC POs have acted as valuable cultural advisers.

“We even discuss specific kids, if we have a challenging kid we are both concerned about we sit down and discuss. Sometimes we don’t have solutions but it helps to talk together about how we work with the kids. Sometimes he helps with a plan and shares how he works with specific kids. He has been here longer than me and he knows. Culturally I also consult with him too with issues around starting a health program at the Rec Centre.” (P15)

### 6.3 Impacts on community safety

Both Mount Magnet and Mullewa Police have reported reductions in crime during the period since the Good Mob program commenced. Mount Magnet police, under the leadership of Sergeant Mike Dearnley commenced a pro-active local engagement strategy in 2017 and in 2018 the Good Mob program took over several initiatives, partnering with the Police. In an article in the Police publication *From the Line*, Sgt Dearnley said:

“I have no doubts about the merits and rewards of proactive community engagement. This approach is part of a local strategy which has seen crime drop by 33% during 2017/18 and a further 18% 2019 year to- date.”

Mullewa Police are also pursuing an active community engagement strategy including partnering with the school and *Good Mob*. Sergeant Chris North from Mullewa reported to the Interagency Group on March 21, 2019 that crime in Mullewa had dropped by 52%.

As discussed above, many factors contribute to community changes such as crime rates and it is important to use caution in attributing changes to any one program or factor. However, the fact that the Police are actively promoting and pursuing community engagement in the two towns has meant partnerships and synergies with Good Mob which may not have otherwise been possible.

While feuding continues to be a problem, the *Good Mob* programs are seen to have contributed to peaceful periods within the communities.

“Overall it has been a fantastic thing for Mount Magnet. To see the whole community at the oval, with no fighting.” (P5)

### 6.4 Developing leadership

The theme of leadership came strongly through the evaluation interviews. People spoke of the leadership shown by GSAC’s staff and Board, the *Good Mob* Project Officers, casual staff and the Junior Supervisors.

“The young people involved in GSAC are good role models for youth. For example, they are not caught up in social media and all the terrible problems that this can lead to.” (P10)

The *Good Mob* program has given the GSAC staff opportunities to grow personally and professionally, particularly the Project Officers.

“I have learned a hell of a lot, like new sports, getting up and talking in front of people, I have got more confident. It’s all on me and I am the boss. I do it all and it is pushing me. I am learning new stuff every day. It is really important this whole job. It is bringing me out of my shell a little bit. Now I see myself as a role model to others and even with the kids, the kids are all over me and I get a hello from everyone, even if I go to town in the shop and buying groceries and stuff people will stop to smile and wave and stuff...I think I am a leader and a role model for these younger kids.” (P9)

Stakeholders are deeply appreciative of the young leaders they see developing within GSAC through the Good Mob program. One stakeholder stated

“GSAC needs to actively nurture this next generation and not get lost in only delivering programs and activities.” (P10)

The organisation has grown into a regional leadership role, with growing professionalism and experience to share.

“Overall, this program has raised our capacity and our profile. We’ve gone from doing a bit here and there to the group that others look to for advice. We’ve had enquiries from as far away as Perth and Albany about how to do things. We have a long history now. We put in the long hard yards volunteering for years. Now we’re seeing the reward for effort.” (P17)

“[GSAC is] a consistent presence and listens to the community.” (P10)

It is important to recognise that the Aboriginal leadership has modelled a different way of doing things, one that is arguably much more effective than when programs are occurring through a non-Aboriginal organisation. This reflects the understanding of the Aboriginal community, and the ability for effective engagement. Of particular note and importance is the respect that has come from programs that are inclusive of everyone in the community. While we have no "measure" of this, this seems to have turned around the mindsets of some community members and likely will be an important contributor to overcoming racism in townships where some of the locals have longstanding underpinning negative attitudes to Aboriginal people.

As noted by numerous sources, effective engagement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies is often challenged by ‘... the need for leadership, trusting relationships and willingness to share power; the requirement to reshape accountabilities and align organisational structures; the need for an organisational culture that supports such ways of working; and better evaluation of what works.’<sup>4</sup> A further innovative aspect of GSAC’s leadership is ‘boundary spanning’.

Boundary spanning is reaching across borders, margins, or sections to 'build relationships, interconnections and interdependencies' in order to manage complex problems. Boundary-spanning individuals develop partnerships and collaboration by 'building sustainable relationships, managing through influence and negotiation, and seeking to understand motives, roles and responsibilities.', Boundary-spanning organizations create 'strategic alliances, joint working arrangements, networks, partnerships and many other forms of collaboration across organizational boundaries.'<sup>5</sup>

The long-term placement of the GSAC EO at DSR has provided an excellent opportunity for ‘boundary spanning’ between Aboriginal community priorities and government agencies, particularly in the sporting area. The employment of an Aboriginal Research Assistant at WACRH who then took on the role of Chairperson of GSAC has given both WACRH and GSAC an opportunity for further boundary spanning: GSAC has developed relationships and understanding in the health, education and research arenas and WACRH has achieved unprecedented engagement with and understanding of local Aboriginal priorities, aspirations and issues.

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<sup>4</sup> Hunt J. Engaging with Indigenous Australia— exploring the conditions for effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. October 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Promoting Health Across Boundaries. What is boundary spanning? [Internet]. Accessed on 27/03/2019. Available from <http://www.phab.us/about/what-is-boundary-spanning/>

There is no doubt that the *Good Mob* program has enabled GSAC to grow into an effective, highly respected organisation with huge potential for further development. However, this comes with risks, if more and more is expected and the organisation takes on an increasing load. One stakeholder commented

“I wouldn’t want to see GSAC too stretched as people want them to do more and more. I’ve seen this with other Aboriginal corporations and they can implode.” (P10)

Another stakeholder expressed concern that towns and communities in the Midwest will become too reliant on GSAC. This stakeholder would like to see GSAC developing its network further to build skills more broadly across the community, to ensure sustainability and broad development so that GSAC is not positioned to be the only player. One way this could happen would involve GSAC linking community members directly to partner organisations such as DSR so that for example, DSR resources could be extended to train more basketball coaches in the community.

“GSAC can contribute to reducing the chasm between town leadership and community leadership.” (P7)

**Recommendation 13:** GSAC continues to actively nurture the young leaders who are coming through the organisation as staff and trainees.

**Recommendation 14:** GSAC is mindful of the need to consolidate and strengthen existing programs and act cautiously around new opportunities that could over-extend it as it manages increased demands and expectations being placed on it by partners and communities.

## 7. Conclusion and recommendations

In developing the *Good Mob* program, GSAC has expanded its objectives beyond sport and physical activity to include school programs and a much broader approach to wellbeing that includes community participation and engagement. In the first year of the *Good Mob* program, there have been many outstanding achievements, particularly impressive when GSAC had received very little government funding for 8 months and so had to scale up in multiple sites from a “standing start”. By hiring staff with sound community knowledge and interest in sport and Aboriginal development and building an organisation that people are proud to be associated with, GSAC is creating the conditions for *Good Mob* to make a real difference to the lives of the children, youth and families of the Midwest. The *Good Mob* program is actively developing leadership at all levels and GSAC is developing strong partnerships based on trust and mutuality.

While a strength of the *Good Mob* program has been Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing and leadership. There are some opportunities to consolidate and add structure. This could occur through adding training for staff in areas which are not their current strength and through embedding systems which are not reliant upon a single individual. Developments in this way could also help take some load off the Executive Officer who has shouldered a huge workload with organisational development and oversight as well as active involvement in programs. Additional attention and support for the *Good Mob* workers in Mt Magnet and Mullewa could also help strengthen aspects of the child development programs which are proving so successful in Mitchell St.

The next years will give GSAC the challenge to consolidate, train and invest in the staff, expand the *Good Mob* program and deepen the impact on individuals and communities. This evaluation points to areas which will strengthen the program. Future evaluations will ascertain the take-up of these recommendations and measure change in individuals and communities over time.

## 7.1 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** The organisation employ an office assistant to assist the EO, for example with input of financial data, particularly during school holiday programs and other high-intensity periods.

**Recommendation 2:** GSAC prioritises and plans a staff training program based on identified needs including a focus on leadership skills, staff supervision of casuals, planning, organisational policies, procedures and the range of performance indicators.

**Recommendation 3:** GSAC recognises the importance of dedicated time for training related to organisational requirements and achieving KPIs beyond sport (for example, educational outcomes).

**Recommendation 4:** GSAC maximises opportunities to share expertise and resources (e.g. checklists) within the team across the three sites. Video link or teleconferencing should be considered to reduce costs and increase *Good Mob* meeting opportunities. The involvement of casual staff in team meetings could help ensure there is a common understanding and that GSAC administrative processes are understood and followed.

**Recommendation 5:** *Good Mob* staff contact key partners well in advance to plan programs so that programs linked with schools are developed before the term begins. The *Good Mob* encourage partner organisations to communicate and confirm their interest in program involvement prior to program scheduling.

**Recommendation 6:** *Good Mob* senior management identify how more support can be provided to the remote sites in terms of planning, ideally by being directly involved in program scheduling or delegating it to a staff or subcontractor with relevant skills.

**Recommendation 7:** GSAC and partner organisations explore ways to jointly plan and deliver programs to ensure better integration and use of resources.

**Recommendation 8:** More attention is given to planning of school engagement programs in each site, ensuring the involvement of the school, GSAC and other partners. Additional help in Mt Magnet and Mullewa is provided to ensure meetings are regular and outcomes are documented.

**Recommendation 9:** GSAC engages (and where necessary, funds) partners or appropriate qualified people to assist with strengthening literacy and numeracy outcomes in the holiday programs, breakfast programs and homework classes.

**Recommendation 10:** GSAC engages (and where necessary, funds) partners or appropriate qualified people to assist with education about healthy eating and good food choices in holiday and breakfast programs.

**Recommendation 11:** GSAC offers support and advice to other areas wishing to engage families and individuals in similar programs.

**Recommendation 12:** GSAC adds programs for engaging teenage girls, particularly in Mullewa.

**Recommendation 13:** GSAC continues to actively nurture the young leaders who are coming through the organisation as staff and trainees.

**Recommendation 14:** GSAC is mindful of the need to consolidate and strengthen existing programs and act cautiously around new opportunities that could over-extend it as it manages increased demands and expectations being placed on it by partners and communities.

## Appendix 1

Organisations with Representatives Interviewed for the *Good Mob* Evaluation

Organisation	Number of interviews
GSAC Board	1
GSAC / Good Mob staff	9
Department of Communities	1
Shire of Mount Magnet	1
COGG Mullewa (Youth programs)	1
BPPS	1
MMDHS	1
WAPOL Mullewa	1
WAPOL Mount Magnet	1
WACRH	1
DSR/DLGSC	1
Just Mary financial services	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>