



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
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Australia renews support for grassroots sports development in South Africa

The South African Department of Sport and Recreation (SRSA) and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) will tomorrow renew a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will continue the fruitful partnership between the two organisations.

Australians and South Africans share a strong passion for sport, as demonstrated by the competitive rugby and cricket ties between our countries. Australia's senior men's soccer team, the Socceroos, are in a strong position to qualify for next year's FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

And even Australian sports are taking hold in South Africa, like Aussie Rules, or AFL – known in South Africa as “Footywild – the game that roars” with over 17,000 registered players. But these don't capture the entirety of our sporting relationship.

Australia and South Africa are working closely together on grassroots sports and community development, particularly in the Eastern Cape. The renewal of the MOU will continue the exchange of knowledge and resources to help develop junior sport activities for school children and community sport participation initiatives in South Africa.

In 2008, one standout example of this collaboration is the Active Community Club initiative. Currently being run in five communities in East London in the Eastern Cape by the ASC with collaboration from SRSA, and supported by the Australian Development Assistance agency – AusAID, the initiative promotes community and youth development through sport.

The renewed MOU will enable the support of programs that:

- train community coordinators on how to help communities set up and run sporting clubs;
- teach young children (aged 6-12) basic sporting skills through fun and learning; and
- promote the inclusion of people with disability in sporting activities.

The Australian Government funds many sport development and participation projects throughout the world in partnerships with local sports agencies and governments.

Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, Her Excellency Ann Harrap, said there were great synergies between what the two countries are trying to achieve.

“It is important that our countries provide valuable opportunities for the on-going learning of volunteers and technical staff and the development of communities through sport, as well as of athletes and coaches.”

“Australia is recognised as a leader internationally in developing sport programs with its partners. I'm confident that this MOU will assist in harnessing the many positive outcomes and benefits for communities at a local or national level that come through sport.”

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