

Engaging disengaged students

Sporting Schools in

Secondary schools

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Sport Australia – Youth Participation Project



https://www.sportaus.gov.au/youth_participation

<https://www.sportingschools.gov.au/about/research>

Why involve students?

WHAT WE KNEW

- Decline in sport engagement
- Not enough physical activity



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WHAT WE NEEDED TO KNOW

WHY?



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HOW?

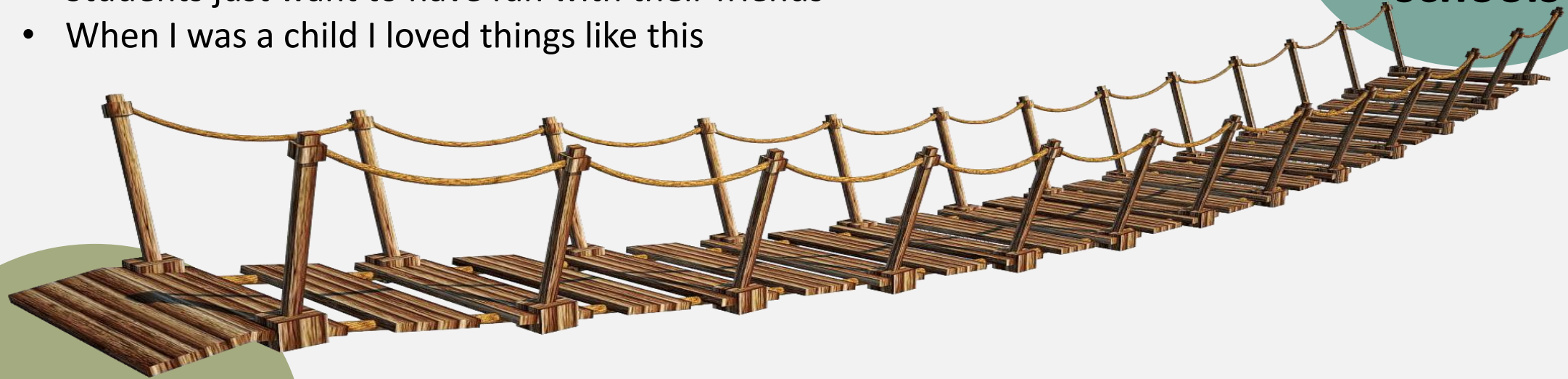


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Sport in
secondary
schools

WHAT WE HAD – ASSUMPTIONS

- Students just want to have fun with their friends
- When I was a child I loved things like this



Students
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- Funding
- Committed stakeholders (sport and schools)
- Programs to test
- Access to secondary students



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BEST TO ASK STUDENTS TO HELP US BUILD A STRONGER BRIDGE



How students were involved

RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

1. Pre / post surveys (6,600+ student surveys – 1000+ participants had matched surveys)
2. Site visits (38)
3. Focus groups with disengaged students (560+ students)

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

- Schools were able to use remanent funding to provide their own solutions
- Many provided students the opportunity to design their own programs

Research experience (challenges)

- Administration & logistics of data collection
- Objective opinions –
 - “the kids love it”
- Program implementation fidelity –
 - “I’ve never heard of the YPP?”
 - “I’ve been doing this for years”
 - (What was delivered? What were we measuring?)



Data collected– PRICELESS

“My parents educate me to do better at school than to play with my friends all day” (Year 9 Girl)

“But then I kind of hit a point where I wasn't getting any better and everyone else was, and I was being thrashed by people who had just been playing for a week, and it wasn't fun anymore” (Year 10 Boy)

“I didn't play a lot of sports when I was younger, I didn't do anything, so I don't know the rules to anything and I don't know how to play” (Year 9 Boy)

“A lot of people get frustrated, it's really competitive, especially with the girls who play outside [of school], they get really mad if you don't do it properly” (Year 7 Girl).

“I hurt myself playing, and I didn't start playing again because it got more competitive. More competitive and less social” (Year 12 Girl).

“He would take the little things, that ... We would have no idea what we're doing. He'd be like "Your hands are like a centimetre from where they should be." And that's the difference between being Tiger Woods and me” (Year 12 Boy)

“I don't like sport, but I love this” (Year 8 Girl)

“There is no point playing with students better than you because you are never ever going to get the ball, its not even going to get close to you” (Year 9 Boy)

“Just his personality, it relates to us. He takes our joke ... He doesn't take anything serious. We can joke around with him because he's young still. (He instructs) us in a way that we will understand it.” (Year 9 Boy)

“How she tells us all the steps, not just expecting you to know it and she tells you all the different aspects of (skill) and it helps so much” (Year 9 Boy)

Research impact experience (challenges)

- Communicating the research findings & student stories
- Engaging people who had influence to care, believe & change
- School community (leadership, teacher cohort & parents)
 - The value placed on sport / PA compared to academic performance or activity (no resources / interest)
 - The conversations parents / families were having with their children (or lack of)
- Student groups
 - Induce empathy in 'active' students to better understand and support the less active
 - Empowering the disengaged to get involved
- Sport and deliverers
 - Hard to change? Do we have the structure? Is this what was really wanted – to engage the disengaged?
 - Program implementation fidelity continued to be an issue

Involving youth in the project - PRICELESS

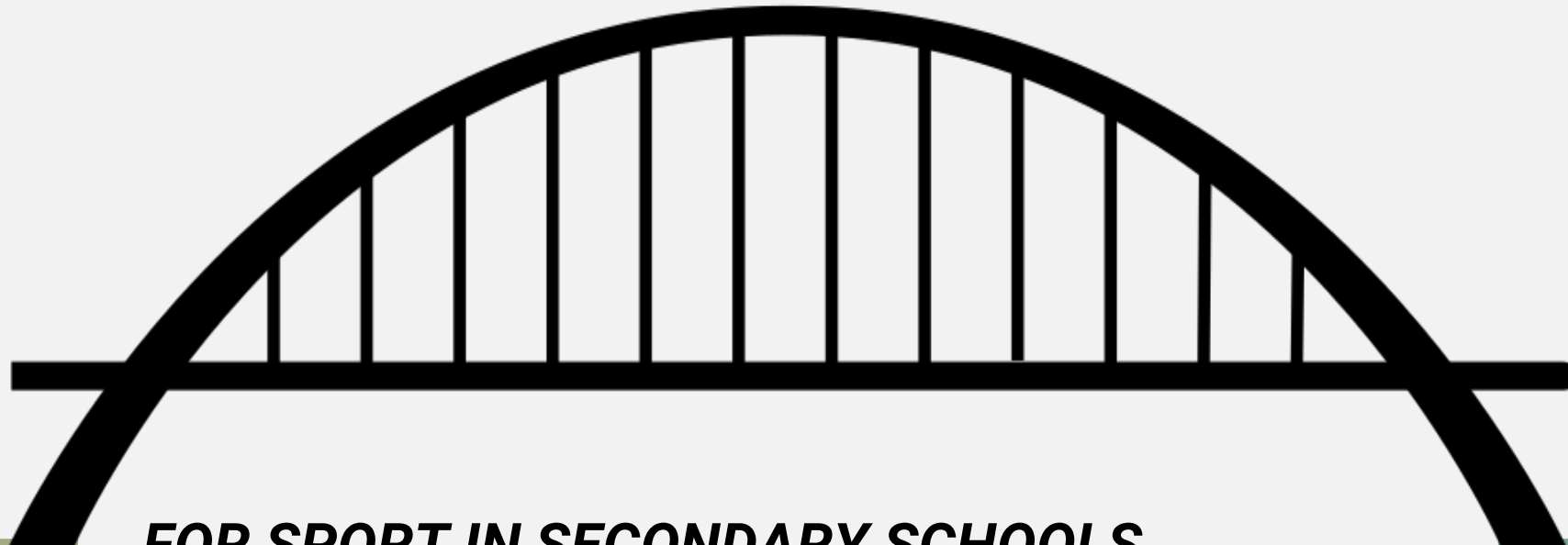
BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENTS

- Empowering process
- Engagement with sport
- Opportunity to reflect
- Opportunity to empathise
- Teachers and deliverers began to take a genuine interest in their needs

BENEFITS FOR THE PROJECT

- Evidence to challenge assumptions
 - Disengaged students are not homogenous
 - Identified and defined four distinct cohorts, their barriers and motivations to sport and physical activity
 - Motivated by fitness, health and building skill & competence
 - Needed a socially supportive group (could make new friends)
 - Needed support from family, school and deliverer
 - Began to unpack the complexity that is FUN, SKILL & COMPETITION.....

Involving youth in the project - PRICELESS



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FOR SPORT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- Shaped Sporting School Secondary policy
- Provided evidence base for sport / schools to design interventions
- Provided guidelines for implementation

**Sport in
secondary
schools**



What did we learn about including the youth voice

- Resources – to collect data at the right time / locations
- Relationships - built on shared outcome / understanding
- Research translation – to ensure it has impact
- Readiness to change – from board to executive to deliverer

What did we learn about including the youth voice

- **ASK with empathy (take off the sport loving hat)**
- **ASK and listen (genuinely & meaningfully)**
- **ASK and empower (give them a voice to tell their story)**
- **ASK and empower (them to build & make change)**
- **ASK with a preparedness to change**