

Media Release:

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Territorians No Couch Potatoes

The stereotypical image of Territorians as couch potatoes may need to be replaced following an Australian Sports Commission (ASC) survey that reveals Territorians have higher than average rates of participating in regular exercise.

The ASC's Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) shows the Northern Territory has a total participation rate of 80.5 per cent, slightly higher than the national average of 79.4 per cent with Aussie Rules, tennis, touch footy, golf and the rugby codes the most favoured of the organised activities.

Territorians are well above the national average of 43.5 per cent when it comes to participating regularly with a rate of 48.2 per cent, the second highest in the country behind the ACT, with non-organised activities such as walking, aerobics/fitness, cycling, swimming and running the highest participated.

The Northern Territory Government through the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) has a strong commitment to providing new and improved facilities alongside developing programs that promote active participation and link pathways for Indigenous and remote communities to all sports.

NRETAS Executive Director of Sports and Recreation Steve Rossingh said the increased need for recreation facilities and programs has been recognised and are being implemented across the Territory.

"The \$2.2m Active Remote Communities Grant program aims to increase the participation and involvement by Indigenous people living in remote communities by providing targeted physical activity and events, along with a network of Community Sport and Recreation Officers based at remote communities.

"The ERASS report shows participation by Territorians in organised physical activities is above the national average at 39.8 per cent, and indicates that the financial assistance provided to local sports and recreation clubs or organisations is working," Mr Rossingh said.

"Through our Sports Development Program we assist sport and active recreation organisations to develop and improve participation structures relevant to their needs.

"Direct financial assistance is also provided through the Grass Roots Grants, which are designed to provide opportunities for Territorians to participate in sport and recreation and to help strengthen sporting organisations' capacity to deliver services and programs that make for a more active Territory.

"The results of the ERASS survey confirm that Territorians are becoming more active participants in physical activity – and that our commitment to bringing these same opportunities to remote areas is working."

The ERASS 2007 Annual Report shows over 7.1 million Australians aged 15 years or over participated in regular physical activity, an increase from 5.6 million in 2001 whilst the Northern Territory's figures are also on the rise with 122,000 Territorians participating regularly in physical activity, an increase from 113,000 people in 2001.

ERASS is a joint initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and the state and territory government agencies responsible for sport and recreation. For more information about ERASS or to view a copy of the 2007 Annual Report go to www.ausport.gov.au/information/scors/ERASS.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Steve Rossingh on 8982 2369

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