

1 November 2016

**To: The Standing Committee on Social Issues**

**Re: Inquiry into Childhood overweight and obesity**

**Response to Question on Notice**

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Question – (Extract from Report on Proceedings):

**The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS:** Mr Simpson, are there more or fewer young people playing sport in a competitive, organised environment than there were 25 or 50 years ago?

**Mr SIMPSON:** I would say that the pure number would be dramatically higher.

**The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS:** What about as a proportion of their cohort?

**Mr SIMPSON:** I could not tell you.

**The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS:** Would you be able to take that on notice and see if you have historical data?

**Mr SIMPSON:** I can look at some data, yes.

Response:

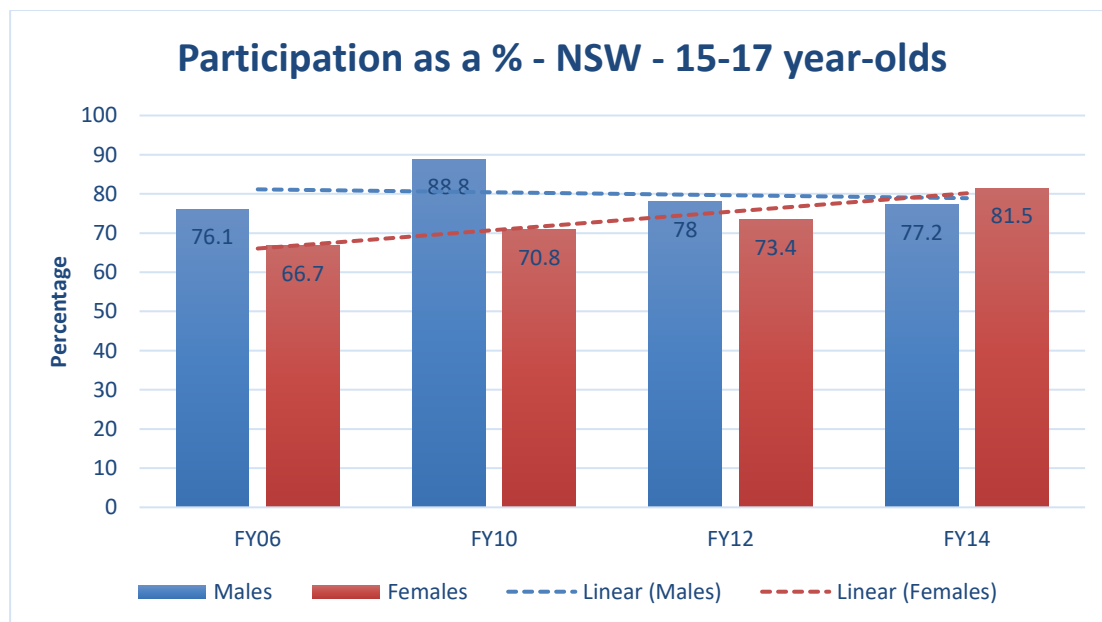
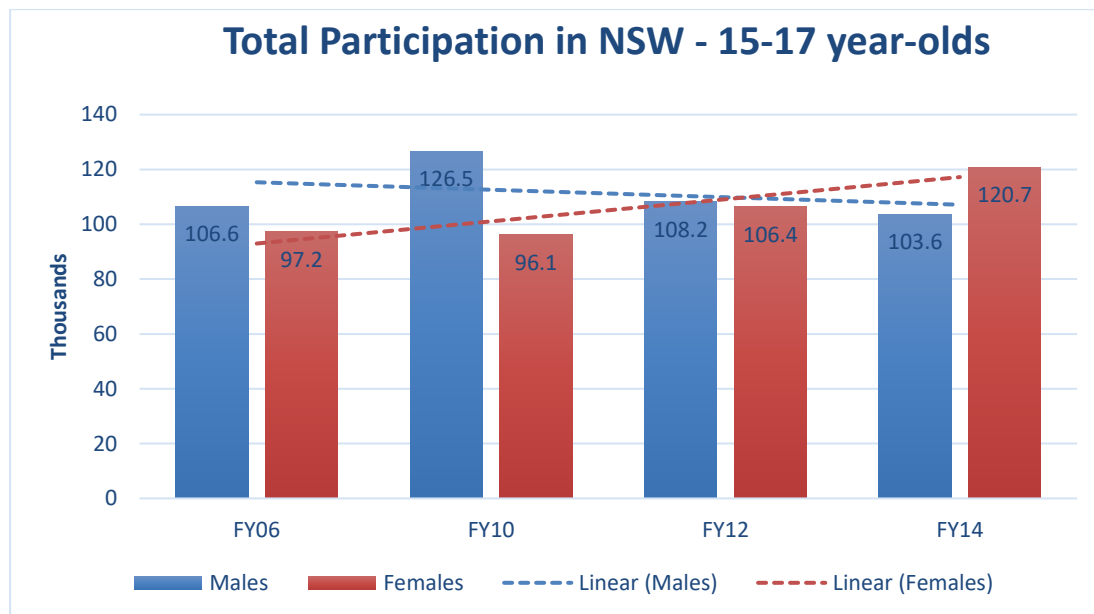
A significant amount of time was taken in searching for data that would provide the best possible information requested in the question stated above. Both the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) were consulted, with the ABS able to provide access to the most useful information. Unfortunately, however, the data available was of very limited value. The primary shortcomings were the absence of data further back than 1995-96 and also the lack of consistency in the data that was available. By way of example:

- In the data sets from 1995-96 and 1996-97 there is information relating to 5-14 year-old children. This age range is not reported in any subsequent data sets. The only other age range capturing young people reported on in 1995-96 is 15-24 year-olds.
- Data on participation in 'organised' sport is captured for 15-17 year-olds by state in only one data set, being 2011-12. The remainder of the data sets are either not broken down by state, or are for the 15-24 age range making meaningful and reliable comparison impossible.

Therefore, whilst the question requested data from an 'organised environment, 25 or 50 years ago' it is unfortunate that the only reliable data that can be provided for a longitudinal comparison relates to **15-17 year-old youths in NSW that participated in sport and physical recreation at least once in the last 12 months.**

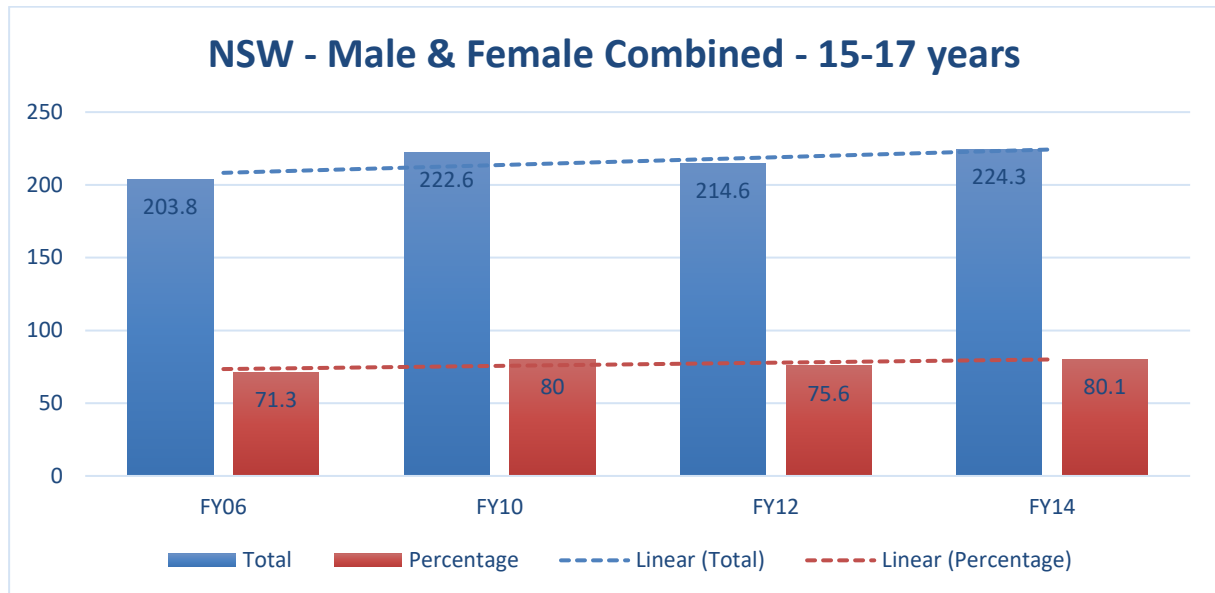
The data available on the measure stated in bold (above) was sourced from ABS reports for the financial years 2005-06 (earliest available), 2009-10, 2011-12 and 2013-14 (latest available).

The data is presented below:



The data shows an interesting trend over the eight-year measurement period. Clearly, both in terms of raw numbers and as a percentage of the population cohort, participation amongst female 15-17 year-olds is increasing. This is captured well by the red trend lines. For males it would appear that the FY10 data set is somewhat of an outlier, with the remaining figures almost stagnant across the period.

The table below shows the cumulative (male and female) data both in raw numbers and as a percentage:



In both measures shown above the trend is positive, however the data presented on the previous page would suggest that this is being driven by the increased participation by females.

It is regrettable that the data available did not allow for a comparison of this same measure 20, 30 and 50 years prior, and further that more information was not available for a younger age bracket to better analyse the trends among children. Comparative data was available for the 18-24 age range back to 1998, but as the focus of this Committee is 'childhood' overweight and obesity I have assumed that this age range is out of scope in providing this answer.

It is hoped that the above provides some information of value.

Darren Simpson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sport NSW