



## Helping our Youth through Sport and Recreation

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PLEASE NOTE: THE YOUTH MINISTER'S ROUND TABLE OF YOUNG TERRITORIANS IS AN INDEPENDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS REPORT ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS OR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CDU	Charles Darwin University
HSC	High School Certificate
MBT	Mind and Body Team
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
OYA	Office of Youth Affairs
Round Table	Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians
SHAK	Safe Haven for All Kids (Red Cross)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is generally understood that mental and physical fitness contributes to the overall health of a person. The Northern Territory Government (NTG), through the goNT report (2005) stated:

*Over the last ten years, the proportion of overweight and obese adults has increased; for men, from 52% to 62%, and for women, from 37% to 45%. In the ten year period from 1985 to 1995, the proportion of 7-15 year old children who are obese has tripled. (NT Government, 2005, p5)*

Physical inactivity and diet are factors affecting obesity. In addition, social determinants such as socio-economic status, access to and affordability of sport, physical fitness, mental fitness, employment and education can affect the holistic health of a person.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Canberra stated:

*"Health behaviours of young people, including physical activity, eating habits, (tobacco, alcohol and drugs) and sexual practices are, also important determinants of their current and future health status."*  
*(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p69)*

For young people, being active is extremely important for their continued health and long-term well-being as community members. Healthy young people are also more resilient to physical and mental illness, more active in the community, have better social skills, which the Mind and Body Team (MBT) believes would decrease the impact on the health sector.

The National Obesity Taskforce has shown that childhood obesity persists into adulthood with approximately 40%-70% becoming obese adults (*National Obesity Taskforce, 2003*). Chronic obesity is a factor in many chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, kidney and heart disease. These environmental diseases present an avoidable burden on the health system.

One could conclude that by reducing childhood obesity, there will be a flow-on decrease in adult obesity. This in turn decreases chronic diseases in the community. Overall this improves community resilience and decreases the burden of disease in the community. "Research shows that \$1 invested in childhood programs returns \$8 in benefits to program participants and society as a whole" (*Rolnick and Grunewald 2003, Beckstrom 2003, Clothier and Poppe 2008*).

It has been identified by the participants of the 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians (Round Table) that obesity and physical activity is an issue concerning young Territorians.

Through consultation and research with 137 young Territorians in the Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs regions, the *Mind and Body Team (MBT)* has produced a resource to assist organisations in developing programs to encourage young people to be more active and engaged in sport and recreation activities.

The resource titled Hey You (th), Get active, get fit, get healthy aims to explore young Territorians views and preferences on physical activity, which the *Mind and Body Team* has collated through surveying. It will also provide organisations with a list of useful contacts, websites, resources and nutrition information.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

### Recommendation One

Publish MBT resource book titled; Hey You (th) Get active, get fit, get healthy and distribute to relevant interested organisations.

### Recommendation Two

The Northern Territory Government (relevant departments), should set up a working party consisting of practitioners, youth representatives and experts in the sporting fields. This working party should investigate NT youth's awareness of the importance and health benefits in regards to physical activity and possible barriers preventing participation.

### Recommendation Three

The Department of Health and Families in cooperation with other relevant departments should promote across all government and non government organisations the current and future programs involving youth and physical activity. Partnerships need to be established between NT Government and community organisations to encourage youth involvement in physical activity programs.

### Recommendation Four

Relevant departments within the NT Government need to investigate the awareness of youth in the NT, regarding the impact of health choices, for example alcohol, smoking and drug use, as well as peer and social pressures relating to these. Available resources should be taken into consideration.

### Recommendation Five

The Northern Territory Government (relevant departments), should investigate the Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003 Non-Indigenous population recommendations as to whether they have been implemented. From the implementation it should be established what results from the recommendations have impacted on youth.

### Recommendation Six

The Northern Territory Government promotes and publishes all 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians recommendations to the general public.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

### Recommendation One

Once a Non-Government organisation has received the resource book it is utilised.

### Recommendation Two

Non-Government community organisations establish and maintain partnerships with NT Government to encourage youth involvement in physical activity programs.

## INTRODUCTION

The 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians (Round Table) believes that health and well-being is an important issue affecting young Territorians. Subsequently, a team of four members were assembled who felt passionate about the importance of having a healthy mind and body. We felt that, together as a team, we could produce a positive change in the community to increase the health and well-being of young Territorians.

The team identified sport and recreation as a means to improve the health and well-being of young Territorians. As a result, research was undertaken into current sporting programs provided in the Northern Territory (NT) community. This research helped to identify any potential overlap and prevent replication of similar projects or materials already in existence.

It was identified that other community organisations had similar programs in place which targeted youth well-being through physical activities. Some of these include the Australian Red Cross through the *SHAK* facility, *goNT*, *Danila Dilba Health Service* located in Darwin and *Anglicare NT*. These organisations were approached as part of the research and consultation phase of this project.

Further, the team wanted to gain a better understanding of young peoples' perceptions of sports and recreation, including cost, affordability and access. Key interests of the Round Table Mind and Body Team (MBT) were to see if sport and recreation was an important issue affecting young Territorians and if health and well-being in general was considered as equally important.

Subsequently, the team undertook research through surveying young Territorians within the Greater Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs regions. The survey that was carried out on participants was more detailed but in this introduction an outline of the main questions is summarised below:

- What involvement have you had in identified community organisations?
- What are the perceived impacts of drinking, smoking and drug use within the community?
- What are the factors affecting a healthy mind and body?
- Sporting preferences including cost, access and duration.

In the body of the report other questions that were surveyed are explained in more detail.

These questions were investigated through surveys distributed through community organisations, and directly with young Territorians. Responses gathered from these methods were used to analyse the current participation in community organisations offering sporting programs. Furthermore to make recommendations on how these sporting programs could be enhanced in order to improve the health and well-being of young Territorians.

## DISCUSSION / MAJOR FINDINGS

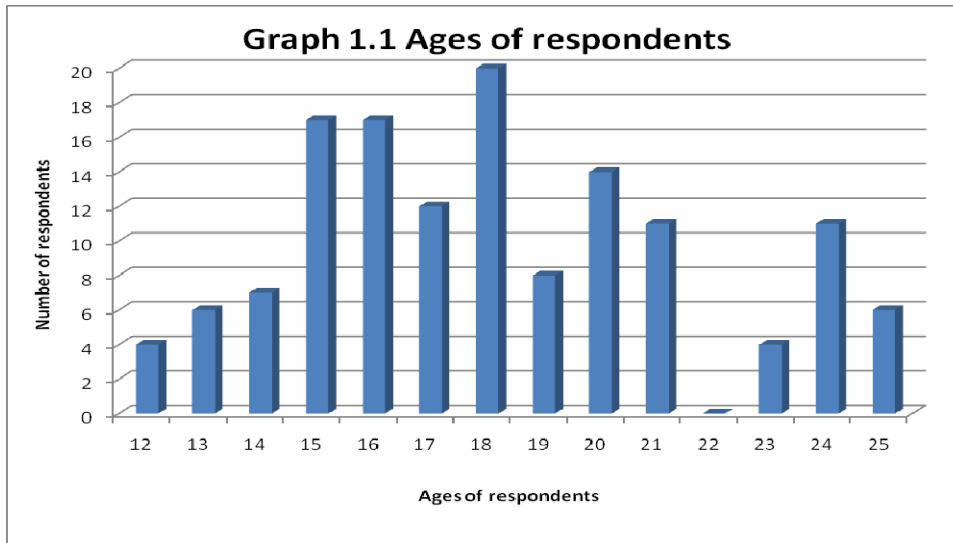
The purpose of the survey (Appendix 1) was to gather information on the following eight key components:

1. Demographic data;
2. Educational background and aspirations;
3. Employment and study status;
4. Involvement within current community organisations;
5. Drug, alcohol and smoking as an issue affecting young Territorians;
6. Factors affecting mind and body according to young Territorians;
7. Current sporting involvement and factors affecting their involvement; and
8. Interest in additional topics linked to mind and body.

The surveys provided the core data for our research and informed the development of the resource book and recommendations contained in this report.

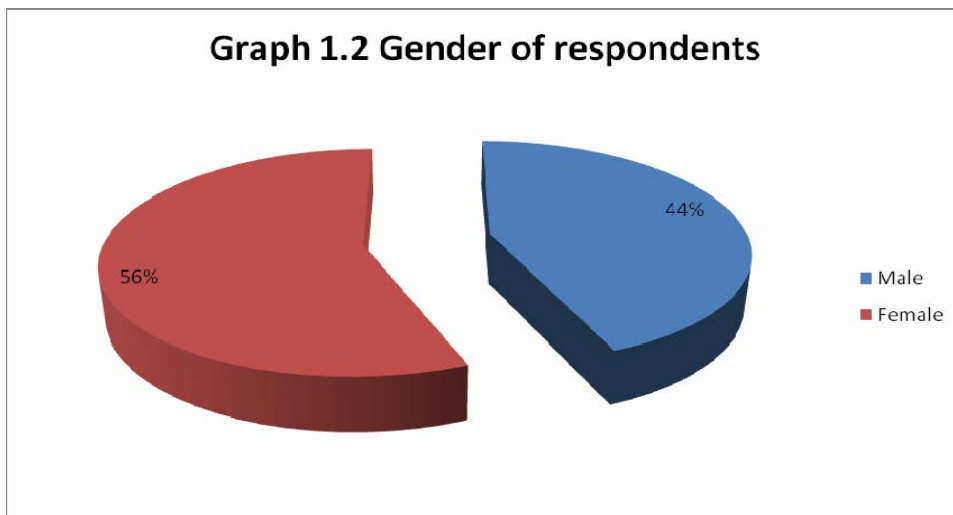
A total of 137 surveys from around the Northern Territory were received.

## 1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA



	#	%
16 – 19 (inclusive)	57	42
20 – 25 (inclusive)	46	33
12 – 15 (inclusive)	34	25
	137	100

As can be seen from the results shown, the Mind and Body Team (MBT) endeavored to gather results from a wide cross-section of the youth community.



	#	%
Female	77	56
Male	60	44
	137	100

The MBT was able to source a fairly equal representation of both male and female respondents for the surveys, and the statistical data, used in this report.

**Graph 1.3 Region lived in by respondents**

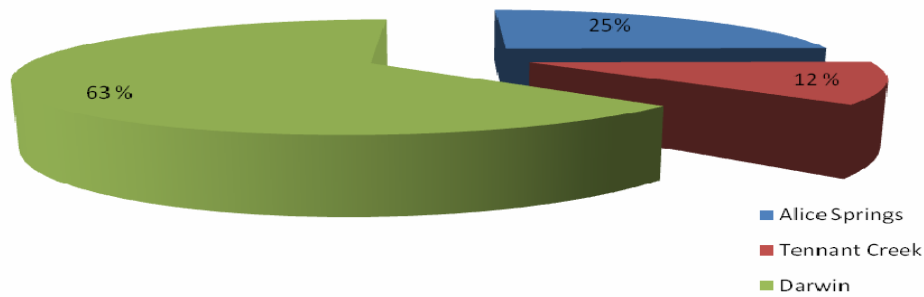


Table 1.3.1	#	%
Darwin	87	63
Alice Springs	34	25
Tennant Creek	16	12
	137	100

The MBT has ensured representation from Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek as seen in the above results. Furthermore within the Darwin and surrounding areas, numerous suburbs were represented which can be seen in table 1.3.2.

Table 1.3.2	#	%
Leanyer	10	12
Karama	8	9
Malak	6	7
Nightcliff	6	7
Anula	6	7
Casuarina	6	7
Rapid Creek	5	6
Moil	4	5
Palmerston	4	5
Tiwi	3	4
Darwin City	3	4
Wagaman	3	4
Alawa	2	2
Wanguri	2	2
Millner	2	2
Woodleigh Gardens	2	2
Gunn	2	2
Parap	1	1
Bayview	1	1
Minrama Park	1	1
Winnellie	1	1
Marrara	1	1
Fannie Bay	1	1
The Narrows	1	1
Nakara	1	1
Moulden	1	1
Jingli	1	1
Howard Springs	1	1
Wulagi	1	1
	87	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

**Graph 1.4 Cultural identity of respondents**

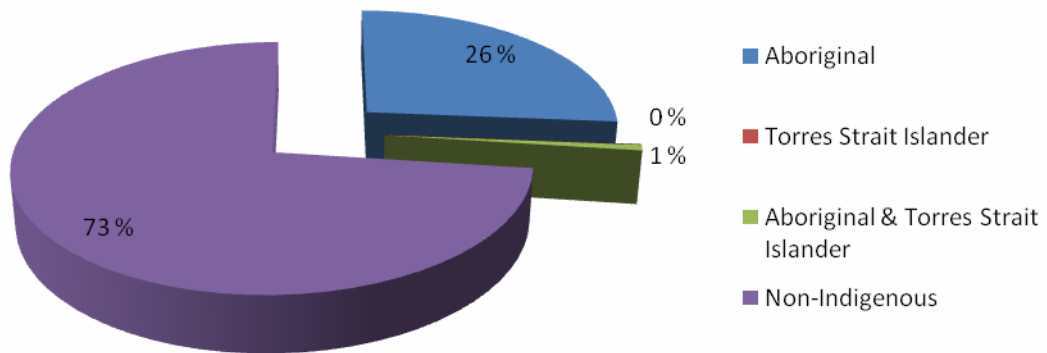


Table 1.4	#	%
Non-Indigenous	100	73
Aboriginal	36	26
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1	1
Torres Strait Islander	0	0
	137	100

It is generally understood that it can be difficult to gain Indigenous respondents for surveys such as this for many social and cultural reasons. However the MBT believed that through utilising organisations including *The SHAK* and Danila Dilba it received excellent feedback from respondents identifying as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

**Graph 1.5 Language spoken by respondents**

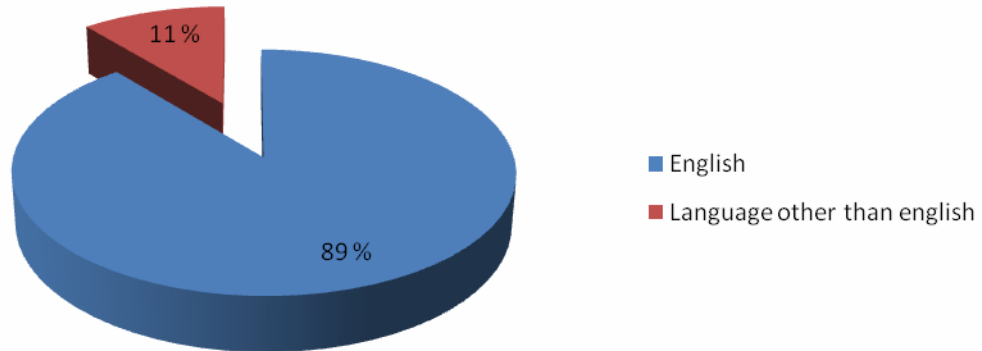


Table 1.5.1	#	%
English	122	89
Language other than English	15	11
	137	100

The NT has a diverse multicultural population, and the MBT survey showed a portion (15 respondents, 11%) of the community that spoke languages other than English. which are listed in table 1.5.2.

Table 1.5.2	#	%
Greek	3	20
Timorese	2	13.33
Other unspecified	2	13.33
Hindi	1	6.66
Tamil	1	6.66
German	1	6.66
Serbian	1	6.66
Yolngu	1	6.66
Portuguese	1	6.66
Gurindji	1	6.66
Mandarin	1	6.66
	15	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

## 2. EDUCATION BACKGROUND AND ASPIRATIONS

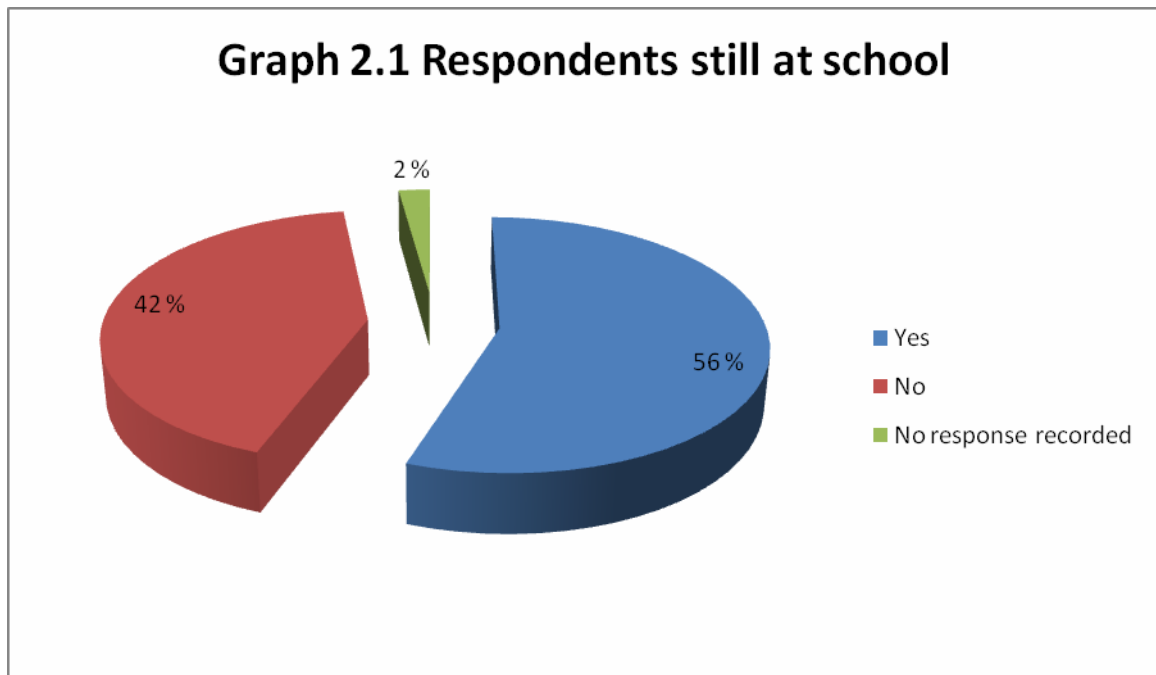


Table 2.1	#	%
Yes	76	56
No	58	42
No response recorded	3	2
	137	100

The above data shows an almost equal distribution of survey respondents being still at school (76 respondents, 56%) and no longer at school (58 respondents, 42%). It must be noted that in the surveying process no schools were approached directly. Respondents who were still at school were sourced via other avenues for example; organisations, public events etc.

**Graph 2.2 Level/s of education achieved by respondents**

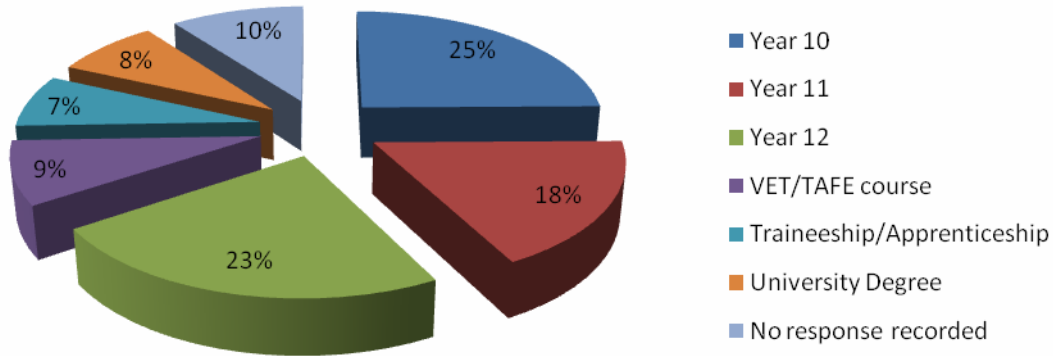


Table 2.2	#	%
Year 10	34	25
Year 12	32	23
Year 11	24	18
No response recorded	14	10
VET/TAFE course	12	9
University Degree	11	8
Traineeship/Apprenticeship	10	7
	137	100

MBT believes in hindsight this question could have been further developed. Furthermore the team's consistency of collating this question proved difficult. Some respondents recorded all level/s of education achieved. Whereas other participants only recorded one of many levels achieved. For example; Respondent (A) may have recorded Year 12 as being the level of education achieved, however she may have also completed Year 10 and 11 and not have recorded these.

However a fair representation of all level/s of education achieved is seen. From the data collected it shows that the majority of the respondents (90 respondents, 66%) are currently achieving academically by completing high school. Only 33 respondents (24%) are completing further studies including VET, university, traineeships and apprenticeships.

**Graph 2.3 Level/s of education wanting to be achieved by respondents**

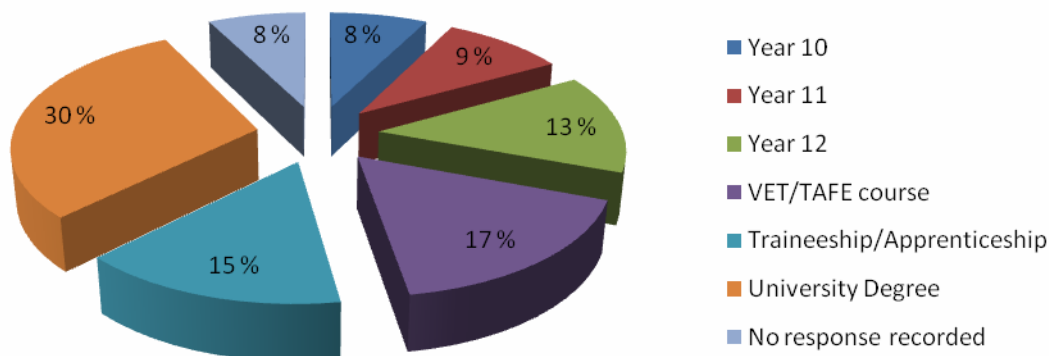


Table 2.2	#	%
University Degree	48	30
VET/TAFE course	27	17
Traineeship/Apprenticeship	24	15
Year 12	22	13
Year 11	15	9
Year 10	12	8
No response recorded	12	8
	160	100

This graph details the educational aspirations of respondents. It must be noted that the total has changed due to the fact some respondents recorded more than one level of education wanting to be achieved.

It can be seen from the previous graph 2.2, where the majority of respondents were in Year 10 (25%) and Year 12 (23%). The largest percentage of respondents in graph 2.3 wanted to achieve a University Degree (30%).

In the Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003 Non-Indigenous population, it was found to be “a positive association between levels of physical activity and education ....University educated respondents reported the highest level of participation in sufficient activity (67%).” High School Certificate (HSC) or equivalent respondents reported 61% participating in sufficient activity whereas “The proportion of sedentary respondents was highest among respondents in the less than 12 years group (19%) (*Villeseche et al, 2004, p17*).

MBT believes this correlation should be noted and efforts should be made to encourage young people to complete schooling up to Year 12 and then go on to further studies as this will potentially improve their physical activity also.

### 3. EMPLOYMENT AND STUDY STATUS

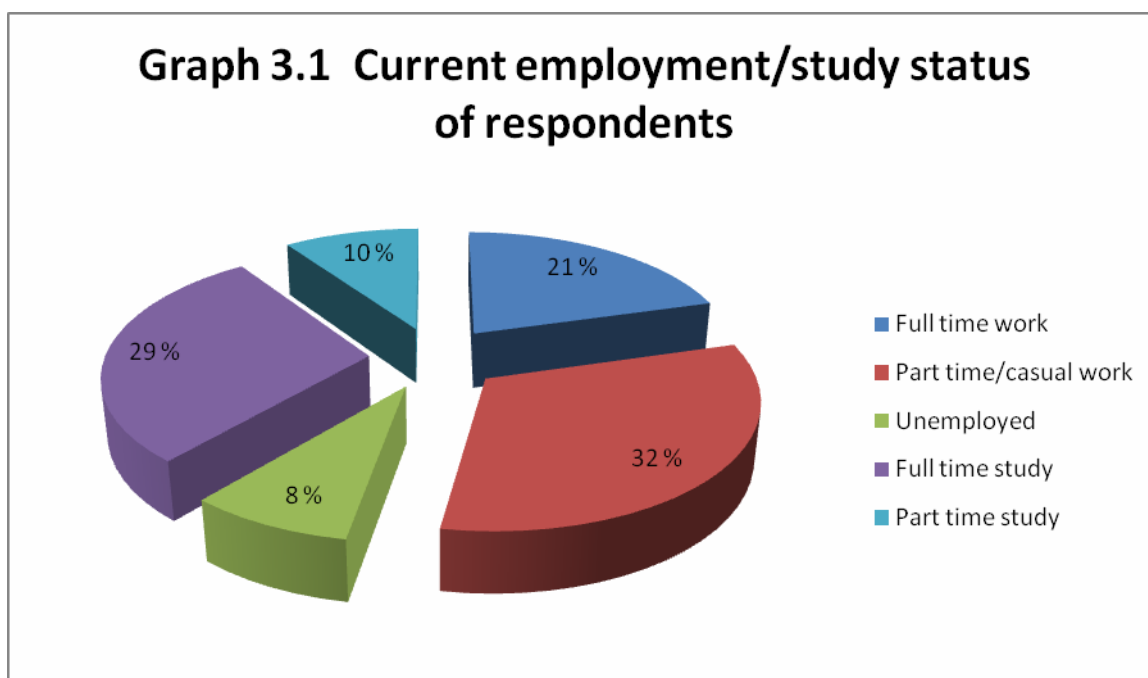


Table 3.1	#	%
Part time/casual work	53	32
Full time study	48	29
Full time work	34	21
Part time study	16	10
Unemployed	14	8
	165	100

A good representation from across the study and employment sectors was achieved. It should be noted however, the total for this graph has changed due to the fact some respondents' recorded more than one result. For example the respondent may have been studying and working.

The above data shows that a high percentage of survey participants were participating in paid employment, including part time, casual or full time work (87 respondents, 53 %).

As shown in table 3.1, survey respondents were also more likely to be undertaking full time study (48 respondents, 29%) rather than part time study (16 respondents, 10%).

#### 4. INVOLVEMENT WITHIN CURRENT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

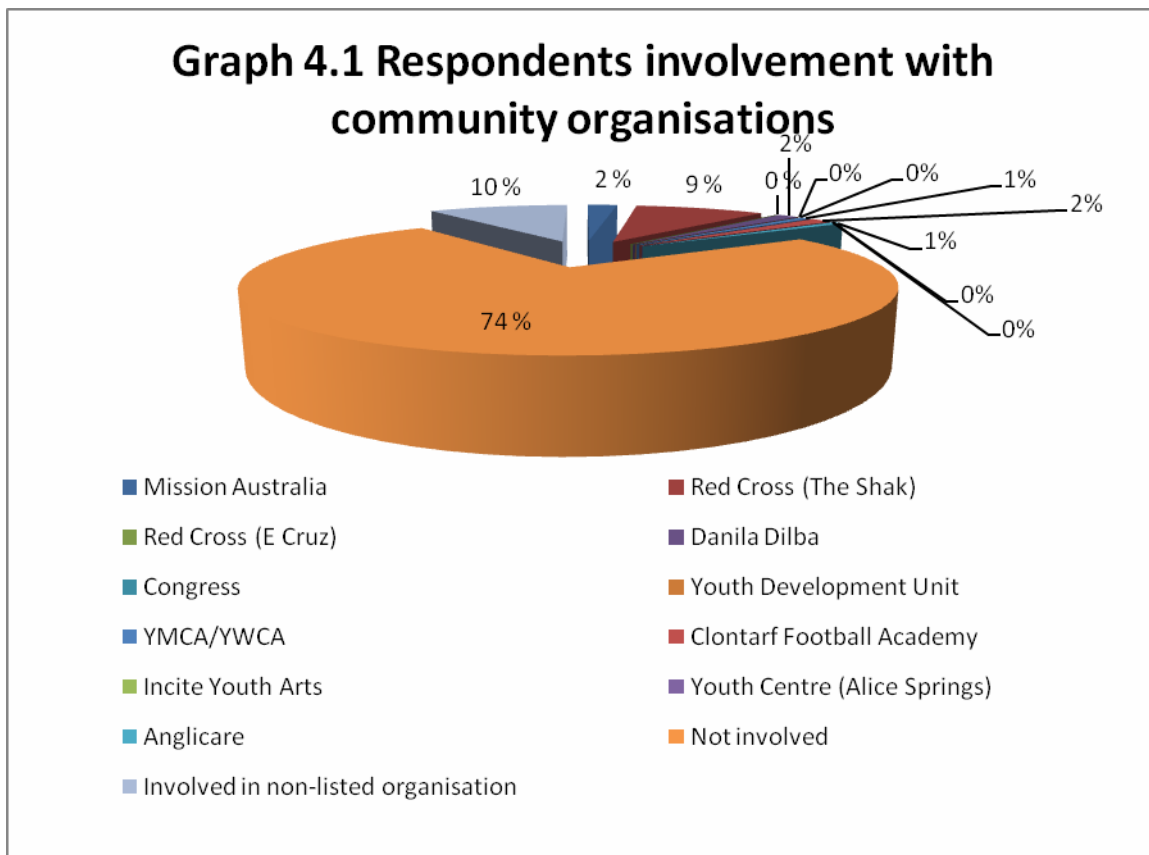


Table 4.1	#	%
Not involved	101	74
Involved in non-listed organisation	14	10
Red Cross (The SHAK)	13	9
Mission Australia	3	2
Danila Dilba	2	2
Clontarf Football Academy	2	2
YMCA/YWCA	1	1
Anglicare	1	1
Red Cross (E Cruz)	0	0
Congress	0	0
Youth Development Unit	0	0
Incite Youth Arts	0	0
Youth Centre (Alice Springs)	0	0
	137	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

The above data details the lack of respondents involvement in the organisations targeted for distribution of the survey (101 respondents, 74%). Respondents may lack knowledge of what is available through these organisations. MBT believes that the activities and programs available for youth in regards to physical activity through community organisations should be strongly promoted.

## 5. DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SMOKING AS AN ISSUE FOR YOUNG TERRITORIANS

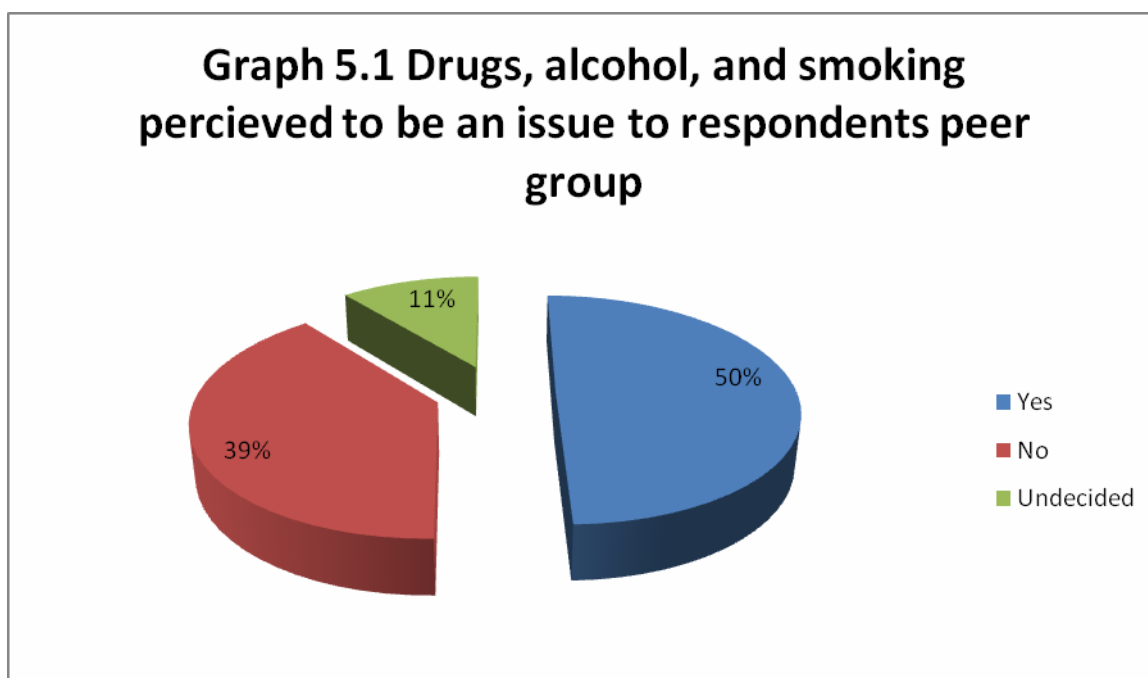
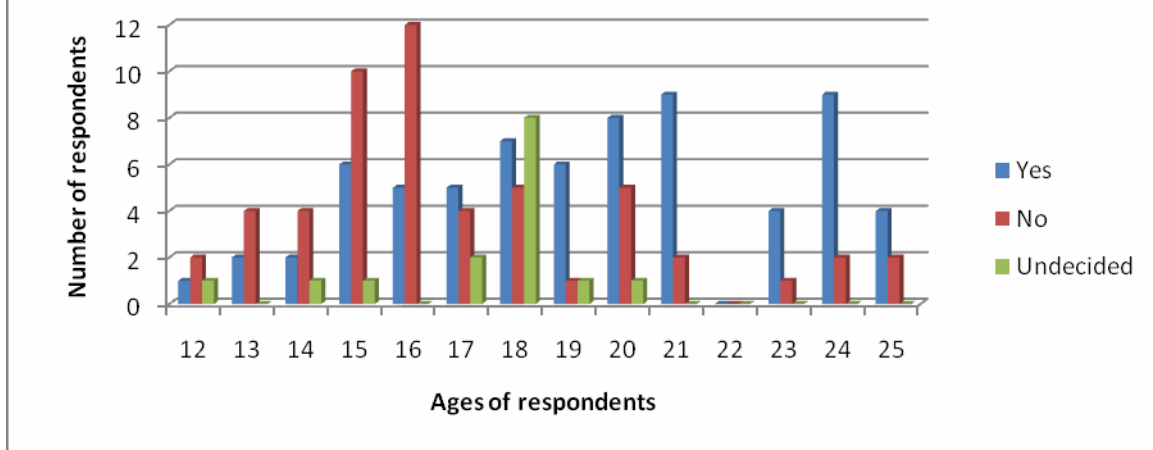


Table 5.1	#	%
Yes	68	50
No	54	39
Undecided	15	11
	137	100

Overall 50% (68) of the respondents believed that drugs, alcohol and smoking were an issue to their peer group.

Utilising the data gained in graph 5.1, MBT decided to breakdown the information into responses from the various age groups. In the following graph 5.2, it breaks down the above data in ages of respondents to consider any patterns of data which may arise.

**Graph 5.2 Drugs, alcohol, and smoking perceived to be an issue to respondents peer group**



The survey question posed to participants was *Do you perceive drinking, smoking or drug use to be an issue in your peer group?*

It is shown in graph 5.2 that a total of 47 (34%) respondents aged 18 and over believe that drugs, alcohol and smoking are an issue in their peer group compared to 21 (15%) respondents aged 12-17 (inclusive).

However there were 22 (16%) respondents aged 15 and 16 years who do not perceive that drugs, alcohol and smoking to be an issue in their peer group.

The age group recording the highest undecided response at total of 8 (6%) is the 18 year olds.

“Health behaviors of young people, including....substance use (tobacco, alcohol and drugs) are important determinants of their current and future health status. Adolescence in particular is an important state of life, when young people are establishing an identity, autonomy, intimacy and becoming comfortable with their own sexuality. Young people can be heavily influenced by their peers, and social pressures may play a part in their decision to experiment with smoking, alcohol and other drugs. The consequences of young people’s behaviors can affect their education, employment, as well as their overall health and well-being”  
*(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p69).*

MBT believes further investigation is needed to see if youth in the NT community are aware of the impact of these health choices, furthermore investigating if there are resources available to deal with peer and social pressures associated with substance misuse.

## 6. FACTORS AFFECTING MIND AND BODY ACCORDING TO YOUNG TERRITORIANS

A key interest of MBT was to see if sport and recreation was an important issue affecting young Territorians and if in general health and well-being was considered as equally important. The MBT devised a list of possible things people could regard as important to having a healthy mind and body. Participants were asked to rank five of the responses with number 1 being most important. Graph 6.1 details respondents answers according to the number 1 ranked answer. However graph 6.2 encompasses each items overall totals regardless of ranking. (For example Sports total would include all recorded responses if ranked 1,2,3,4 or 5).

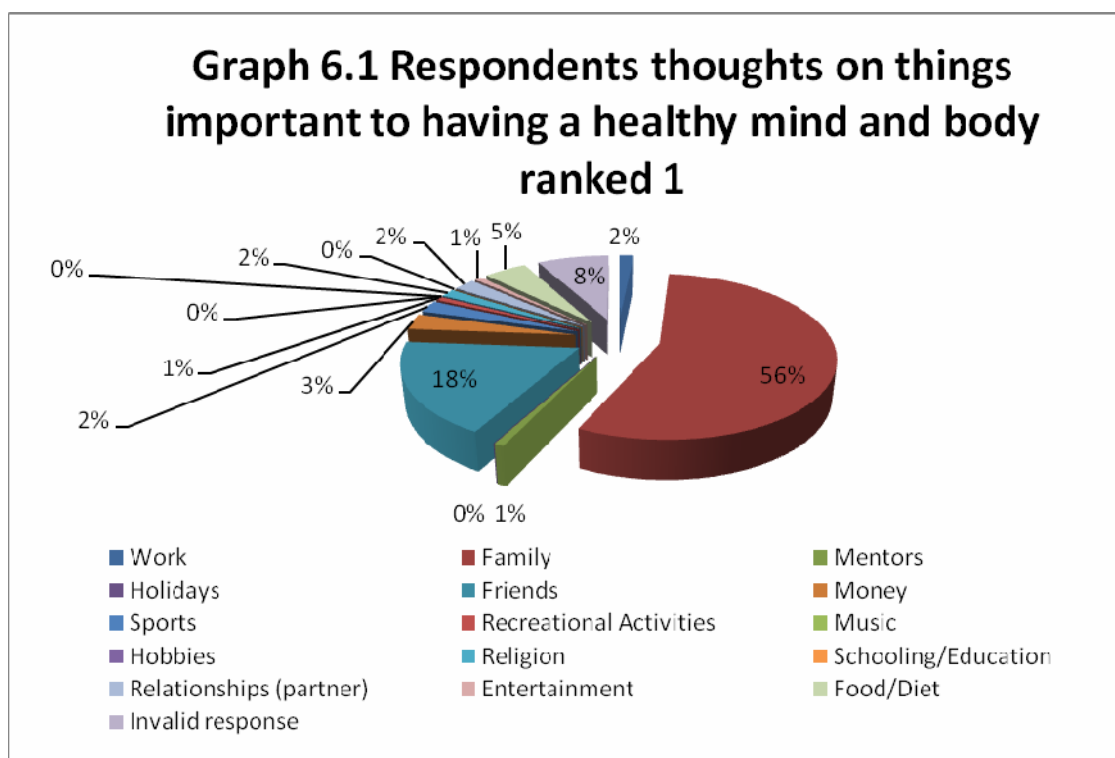


Table 6.1	#	%
Family	70	56
Friends	23	18
Invalid response	10	8
Food/Diet	6	5
Money	4	3
Relationships (partner)	3	2
Sports	3	2
Religion	2	2
Work	2	2
Recreational activities	1	1
Entertainment	1	1
Mentors	1	1
Holidays	0	0
Hobbies	0	0
Music	0	0
School/Education	0	0
	137	100

(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)

As can be seen from above data, only 3 (2%) of respondents ranked sports as their number 1 item, important to them for a healthy mind and body.

Just 1 (1%) respondent ranked recreational activities as their number 1 item, important to them for a healthy mind and body.

Whereas it can be clearly seen that 70 (56%) of respondents felt family was the most important thing for a healthy mind and body.

Friends was the next favorite ranked option, with 23 (18%) of respondents ranking this as their number 1.

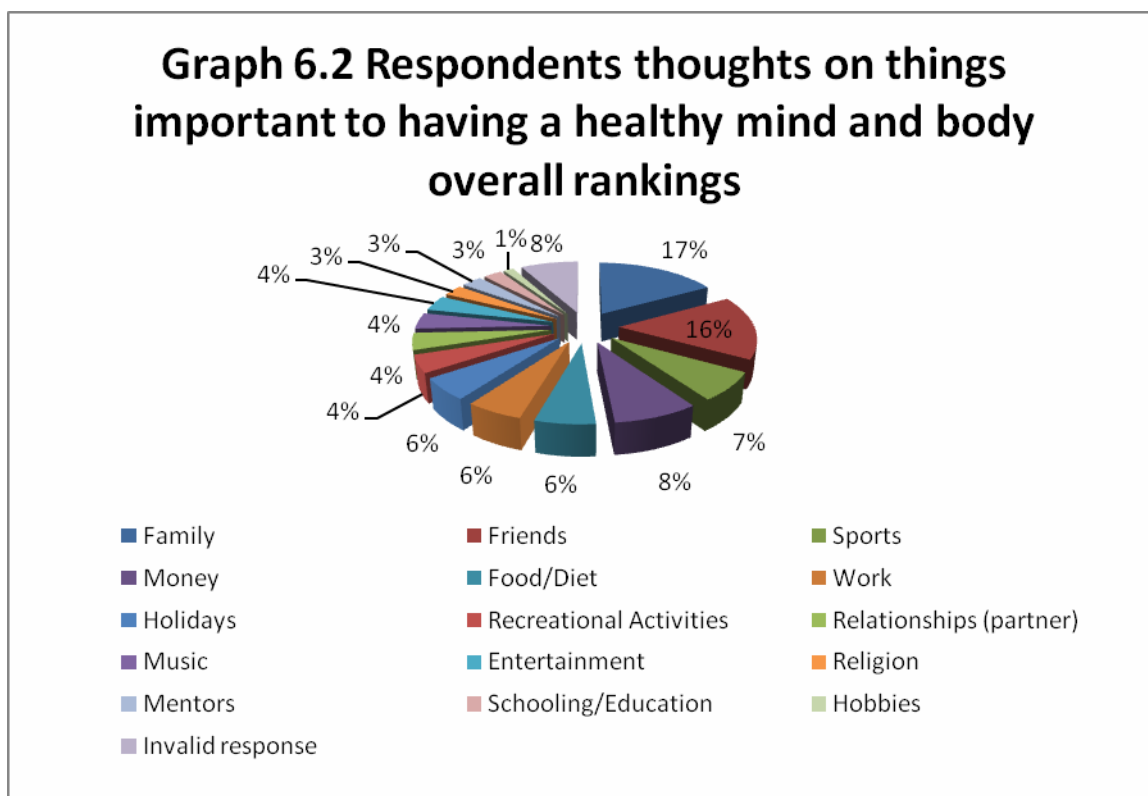


Table 6.2	#	%
Family	105	17
Friends	99	16
Invalid response	50	8
Money	52	8
Sports	44	7
Food/Diet	37	6
Work	35	6
Holidays	34	6
Recreational activities	27	4
Relationships (partner)	26	4
Music	25	4
Entertainment	24	4
Mentors	18	3
Religion	17	3
School/Education	16	3
Hobbies	9	1
	618	100

The results from graph 6.2 show that overall 44 (7%) of respondents ranked sports in the top 5 important items for having a healthy mind and body, a further 27 (4%) of respondents ranked recreational activities in the top 5 important items for having a healthy mind and body.

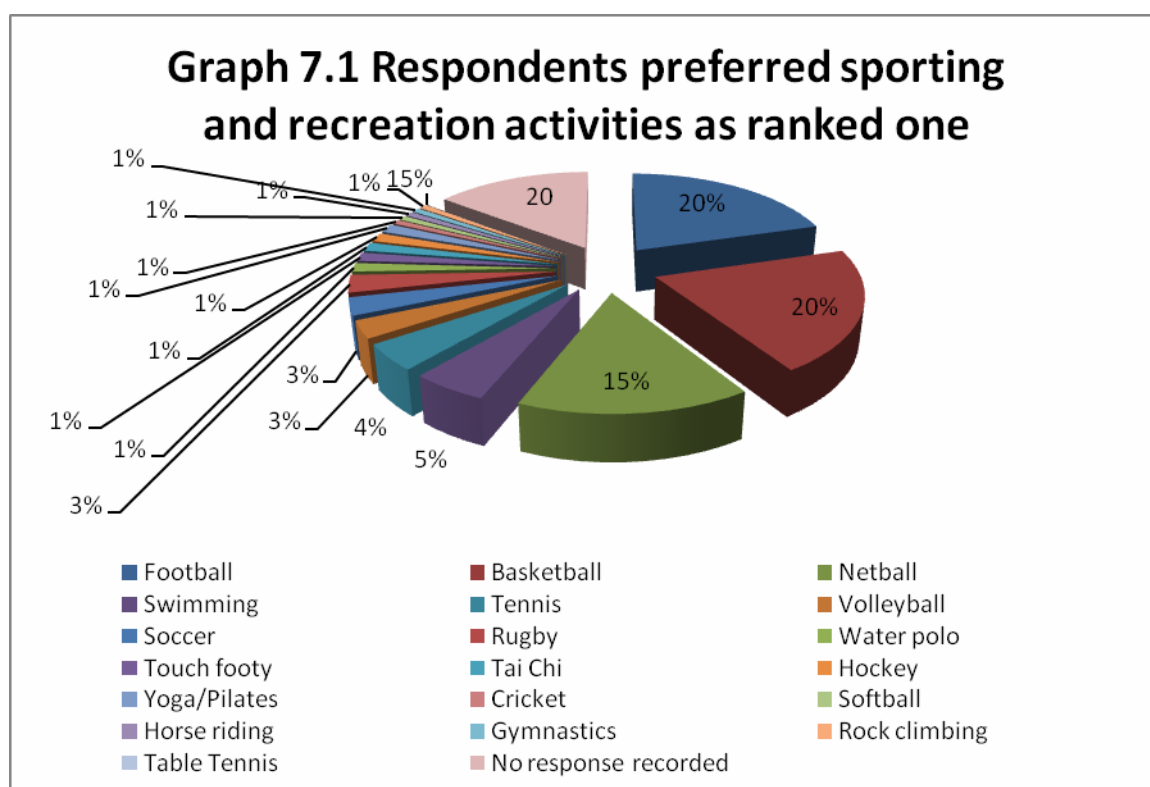
Again it can be seen that family and friends were the top ranked overall items that respondents recorded as important. Family recorded a total 105 (17%) in the top 5 with friends a close second in the top 5 with 99 (16%) respondents.

MBT believe this data represents that the NT youth surveyed are unaware of the importance physical activity plays in having a healthy mind and body balance. It must be noted that this survey sample is of small proportions and which can prove to be a limitation when interpreting data. Therefore MBT recommend further investigations to discover the overall picture of whether NT youth are aware of the importance of physical activity and the impacts on their health.

## 7. CURRENT SPORTING INVOLVEMENT AND FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR INVOLVEMENT

This section of the survey was developed to gain an understanding of respondent's current participation in sporting activities. It was also used to gather information on young Territorians' views and thoughts about physical activity to be included in the creation of the MBT resource book. Ultimately the resource book would be available for organisations associated with youth and sporting activities. It would be envisaged that the information in the resource book would influence potential future programs that community organisations might develop in regards to youth, sports and recreational activities.

Respondents were asked to rank five sports from a list with number 1 being most favoured. Graph 7.1 details respondents answers according to the number 1 ranked answer. However graph 7.2 encompasses each items overall totals regardless of ranking. (For example Football total would include all recorded responses if ranked 1,2,3,4 or 5).



MBT believed this question would be useful to organisations planning a sport and recreation program that would include a variety of sports.

Table 7.1 on the following page clearly shows the respondents dominating favourite sports of Football (28 respondents, 20%), Basketball (28 respondents, 20%) and Netball (21 respondents, 15%).

Table 7.1	#	%
Football	28	20
Basketball	28	20
No response recorded	20	15
Netball	21	15
Swimming	7	5
Tennis	6	4
Volleyball	4	3
Soccer	4	3
Rugby	4	3
Water polo	2	1
Touch footy	2	1
Tai Chi	2	1
Hockey	2	1
Yoga/Pilates	2	1
Cricket	1	1
Softball	1	1
Horse riding	1	1
Gymnastics	1	1
Rock climbing	1	1
Squash	0	0
Table Tennis	0	0
	137	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

The survey participants also had the opportunity to suggest other activities not already listed. Nine participants' listed additional activities of interest including; mountain bike riding, baseball, fishing, boxing, ballroom, jazz and hip hop dancing which are shown in table 7.1.2.

Table 7.1.2	#	%
Dance (ballroom, jazz and hip hop)	2	22%
Baseball	2	22%
Mountain bike riding	2	22%
Fishing	2	22%
Boxing	1	11%
	9	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

**Graph 7.2 Respondents preferred sports and recreation activities overall ranking**

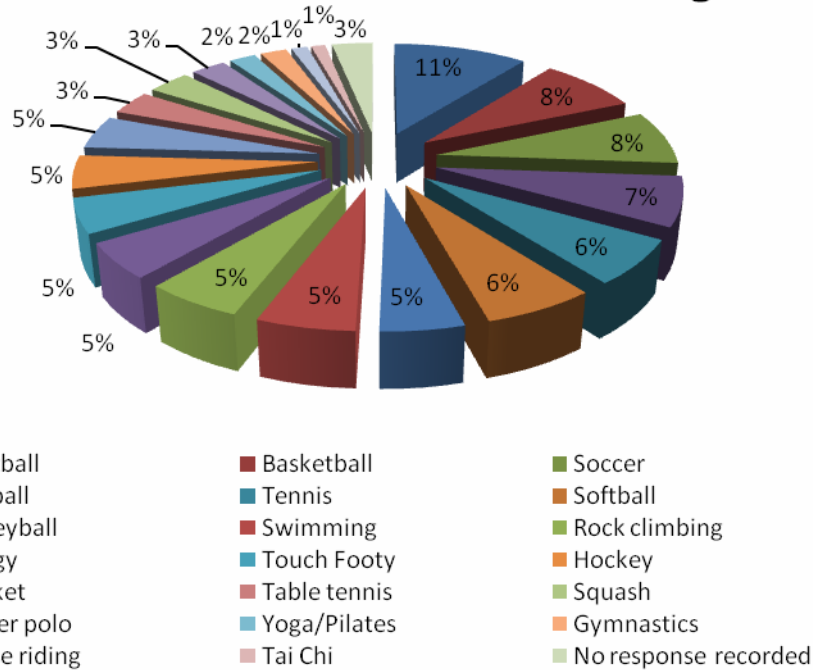


Table 7.1	#	%
Football	66	11
Basketball	49	8
Soccer	47	8
Netball	43	7
Tennis	39	6
Softball	39	6
Swimming	34	5
Rock climbing	34	5
Rugby	31	5
Touch footy	30	5
Volleyball	29	5
Hockey	29	5
Cricket	27	5
Table Tennis	21	3
Squash	21	3
No response recorded	20	3
Water polo	17	3
Yoga/Pilates	13	2
Gymnastics	13	2
Horse riding	8	1
Tai Chi	7	1
	596	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

A total of 66 (11%) of respondents ranked football in their top 5. A further 49 (8%) of respondents ranked basketball in the top 5. Soccer was also popular with 47 (8%) respondents recording this sport in the top 5. When graph 7.1 and 7.2 are compared the difference in percentage between sporting preferences is reduced when the overall representation is considered.

From this sample of data it can be concluded which sporting and recreational activities are a popular choice. It can also be concluded which activities are least popular and would highlight potential limited interest if included in an organisations planning of a program.

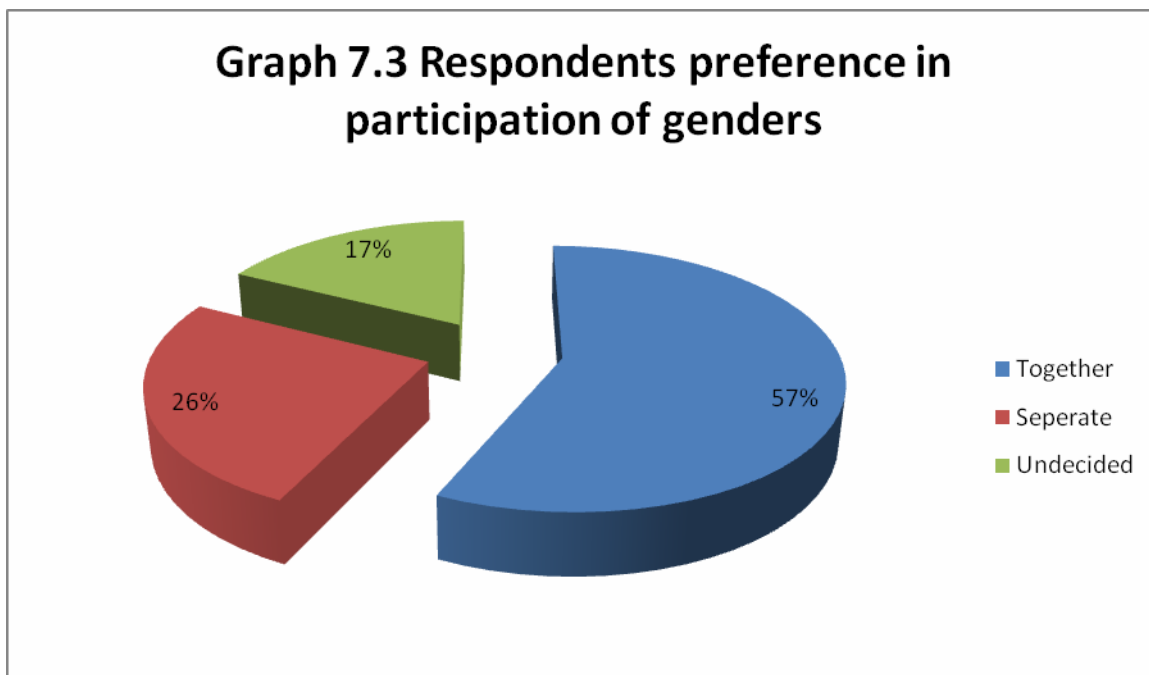


Table 7.3	#	%
Together	78	57
Separate	35	26
Undecided	24	17
	137	100

For some cultural and religious groups within the NT it may be seen as inappropriate for mixed gender sporting activities to be run. It was therefore decided by the MBT to explore this concept.

From the respondents surveyed it can be seen that 78 (57%) did not have an issue with mixed gender activities, although a significant number of respondents, one in four young people 35 (26%) indicated a preference for separate male and female activities.

Any sporting or recreation program should take into consideration their potential audience and cater for their needs, so that no-one feels excluded or uncomfortable.

**Graph 7.4 Respondents currently playing sports**

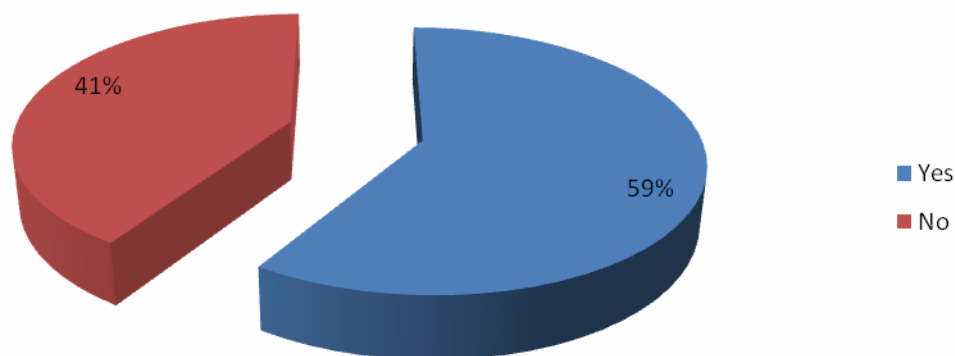


Table 7.4	#	%
Yes	81	59
No	56	41
	137	100

A total of 81 (59%) respondents identified that they currently played a sport.

However in hindsight it should have been further investigated as to how many times a week, the intensity and duration of the physical activity undertaken by participants. These factors are crucial to indicating whether sufficient physical activity is being undertaken.

“The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommends that people put together at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week, in addition to their normal everyday activities. It is important to note that the 30 minutes need not be consecutive, but can be accumulated in lots of 10 minutes. Further health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of moderate and/or vigorous physical activity” (NT Government, 2005, p6).

Therefore it is unknown whether these individuals meet the recommended minimum physical activity guidelines.

Recommendations from Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003 included:

“Develop intersectoral strategies and programs to increase Territorians’ levels of participation in regular moderate physical activity.”

Secondly “Promote current physical activity guidelines through a mass media campaign, with a particular emphasis on the concept of accumulation of activity.”

MBT believes these prior recommendations specifically need to be evaluated on their outcome and success.

**Graph 7.5 Cost of sports preventing respondents playing**

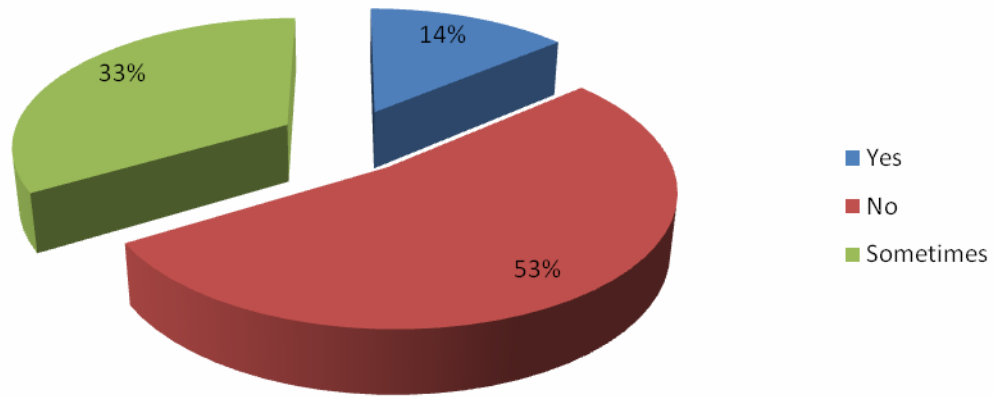


Table 7.5	#	%
No	72	53
Sometimes	46	33
Yes	19	14
	137	100

MBT wanted to explore cost as a possible barrier for not participating in physical activity. This therefore could impact on an organisation’s choice to charge money for particular activities.

Only 19 (14%) of survey respondents believed cost to be an issue. A total of 72 (53%) respondents thought cost was not an issue; however a significant number of survey participants (46 respondents, 33%) reported cost was an issue sometimes.

The responses to this question would highly depend on the participant’s employment status. Considering 87 respondents (53%) were participating in some form of paid employment (full time, casual or part time) this could explain why 72 respondents (53%) believed the cost of sports was not issue or barrier to participating, whereas only 14 respondents (8%) were unemployed. If the survey was distributed more widely to sections of the population who were unemployed or on government benefits then money could be more likely to be an issue.

Other barriers and reasons for not participating in physical activity were explored in the Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003.

The majority of the respondents (53%) to this survey commented on “lack of time” as the reason for not being more active, followed by “I am active enough” (21%) and “no motivation/can’t be bothered” (16%)

The following graphs 7.6 through to 7.9 explore specific operational details of a potential program developed by an organisation.

**Graph 7.6 Respondents preferred total hours per week of program**

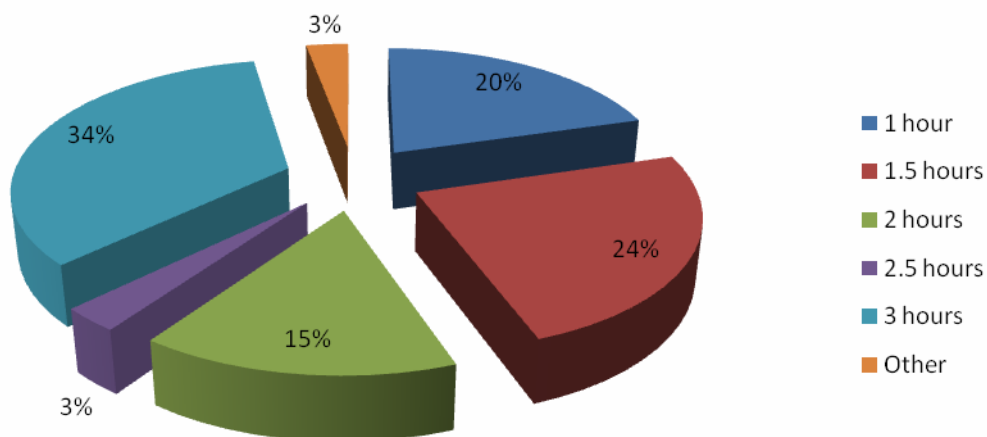


Table 7.6	#	%
3 hours	47	34
1.5 hours	33	24
1 hour	28	20
2 hours	21	15
2.5 hours	4	3
Other	4	3
	137	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

This survey question asked respondents: *If a sports program was developed, how many hours a week should it run?*

A number of survey respondents (47 respondents, 34%,) recorded 3 hours as their preferred number of hours per week a possible program should operate.

Whether the total hours should be split into sessions during the week is examined in following graph 7.7.

**Graph 7.7 Respondents per week attendance of program**

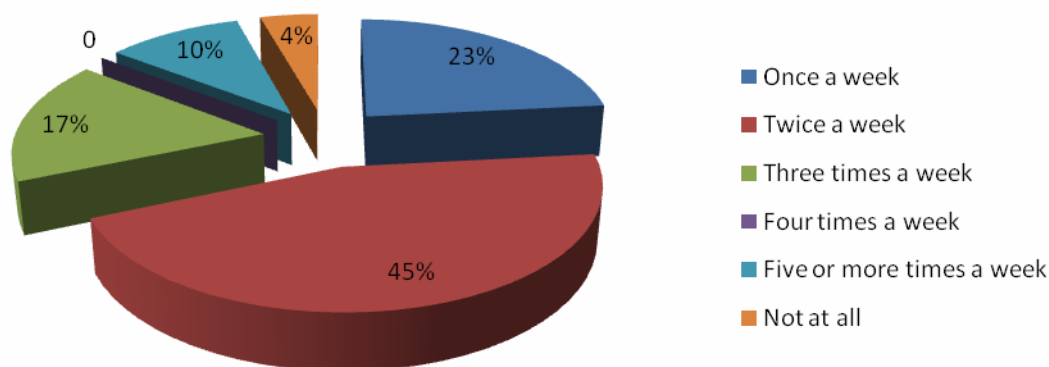


Table 7.7	#	%
Twice a week	62	45
Once a week	32	23
Three times a week	23	17
Five or more times a week	14	10
Not at all	6	4
Four times a week	0	0
	137	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

This survey question asked respondents: *How many times a week would you attend?*

Twice a week was the preferred option with 62 (45%) respondents recording this answer.

A number of survey respondents (47 respondents, 34%,) recorded 3 hours as their preferred number of hours per week a possible program should operate in graph 7.6. Drawing from this conclusion it would be ideal to split the 3 hour total per week into the preferred twice a week; resulting in two sessions of one and a half hours each.

Overall out of the 137 survey respondents, only 6 (4%) believed they would not attend a potential sporting program. Therefore over 96% of those surveyed would attend a program one or more times a week. This is a strong indication if an organisation was to develop a youth focused sport and recreational program there would be a good response in attendance.

**Graph 7.8 Best time for program to operate for respondents**

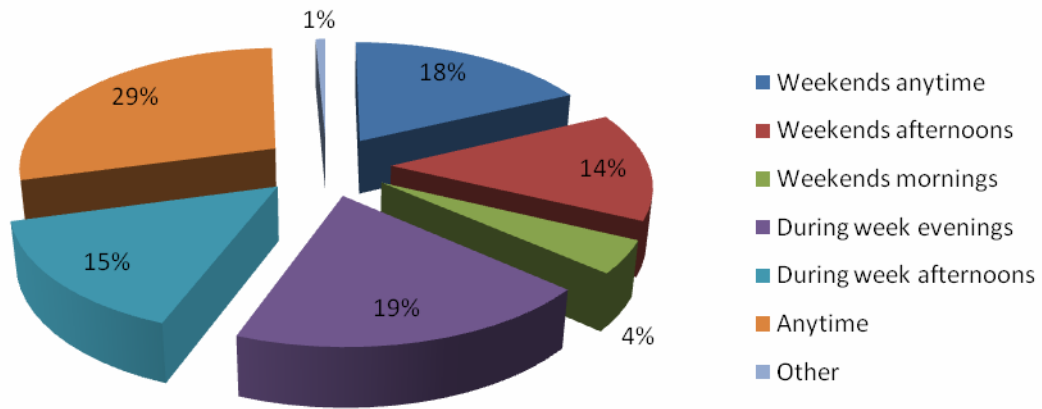


Table 7.8	#	%
Anytime	40	29
During the week in the evenings	27	19
On weekends anytime	25	18
During the week in the afternoons	21	15
On weekends afternoons	20	14
On weekends mornings	6	4
Other	1	1
	137	100

This survey question asked respondents: *What is the best time to run the sports program?*

The purpose of this question was to source respondents' typical availability for sporting activities. A number of respondents (40 respondents, 29%) were inclined to be available anytime. However the subsequent popular times, were during the week on evenings (27 respondents, 19%) or on the weekends anytime (25 respondents, 18%).

Every respondent would have varying commitments, and due to this MBT thought it would be ideal to operate the two suggested sessions during different times to accommodate more participants.

**Graph 7.9 Respondents overall preferred duration of program**

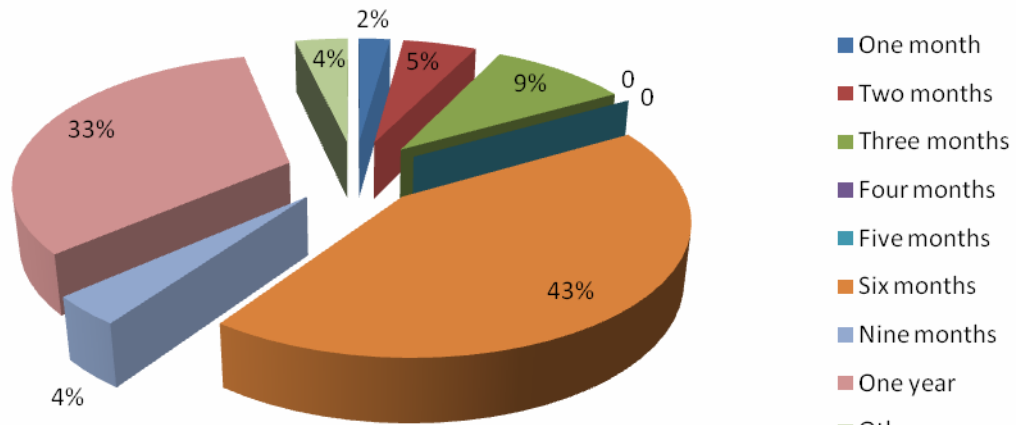


Table 7.9	#	%
Six months	59	43
One year	45	33
Three months	13	9
Two months	7	5
Nine months	5	4
Other	5	4
One month	3	2
Four months	0	0
Five months	0	0
	137	100

A significant number of respondents, 59 (43%) believed six months was the ideal duration for the total program. Closely ranked second was one year, with a total of 45 (33%) respondents.

Other suggested durations of the possible program included the following comments:

- *Depends on success*
- *For good*
- *As long as necessary*
- *Ongoing*

## 8. INTEREST IN ADDITIONAL TOPICS LINKED TO MIND AND BODY

It was considered by the MBT whether a potential program developed by an organisation would focus solely on sport and recreation activities or could involve other topics of interest to youth that are associated with a healthy mind and body.

It was decided to survey respondents to see if any interest was shown in topics listed including; mental health, body image, self esteem, leadership, diet and healthy eating, and sexual health. It was also an option for respondents to answer if they were just interested in sport.

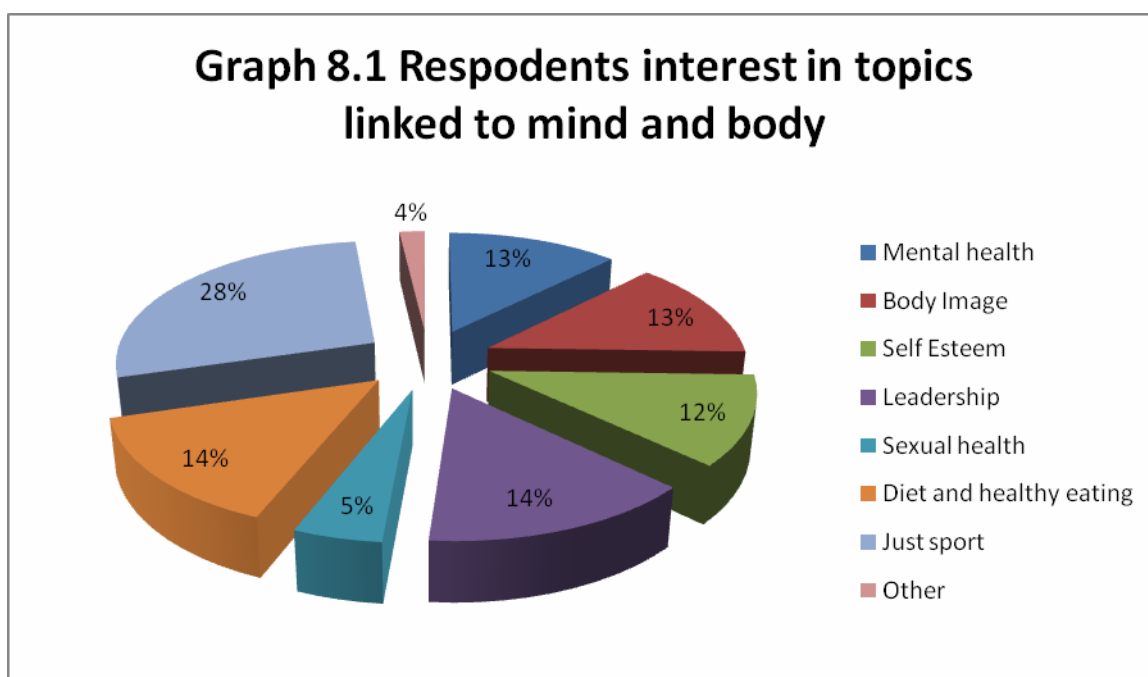


Table 8.1	#	%
Just sport	60	28
Mental health	27	13
Body Image	28	13
Leadership	31	14
Diet and healthy eating	31	14
Self esteem	25	12
Sexual health	10	5
Other	4	4
	216	100

*(Please note: percentages have been rounded.)*

Survey respondents were able to record more than one answer, this explains a greater total.

A total of 60 (28%) respondents were interested in just a sporting program with no additional topics included.

All other topics were closely matched between 12% and 14% with the exception of sexual health where only 5% (10) respondents recording interest in this topic. It can be concluded that this topic was of limited interest to the survey group in a program like this.

## CONCLUSION

The focus of this report was to determine the current attitudes of young Territorians in relation to factors affecting physical health and the impact sporting programs might have in improving health outcomes. The report also looked at access of sporting programs, including young Territorians' perception of how such programs should be provided.

There are currently in place a number of programs provided by non-government organisations in the community which are being accessed by 22 (16%) of the young Territorians surveyed. However, it appears that many young Territorians are unaware of these programs as 101 (74%) respondents did not participate in organisations, or the programs offered did not target their particular needs. MBT believes that there is a distinct need to promote what is available for youth in regards to existing physical activity through community organisations.

It also appears that cost is one factor for some young Territorians' surveyed in their decision to participate in physical activity (47% of respondents). It needs to be investigated what are the other reasons for NT youth not participating in sufficient physical activity. Furthermore investigations need to be carried out into whether young Territorians are fully aware of the importance of physical activity and the future impacts on their health. MBT surveyed 137 youth, of which only 44 (7%) respondents ranked sport as being one of their top five important items for a healthy mind and body. Additionally only a further 27 (4%) respondents ranked recreational activities as being one of their top five important items for a healthy mind and body.

MBT views that there has been some development made towards plans for physical activity improvements for Territorians' through the Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003 Non-Indigenous population. Several recommendations were made in this survey including: "develop intersectoral strategies and programs to increase Territorians' levels of participation in regular moderate physical activity and promote current physical activity guidelines through a mass media campaign, with a particular emphasis on the concept of accumulation of activity."

MBT considers these recommendations important yet need to be evaluated as to whether the outcomes have been achieved and what results have been established.

Drugs, smoking and alcohol are prominent issues affecting young Territorians. Exactly 50% (68) of respondents reported perceiving these as issues in their peer group. A further 11% (15) of respondents were undecided on the issue, with 39% (54) respondents reporting these to be no issue to their peer group.

MBT believes further investigation is needed to see if youth in the NT community are aware of the impact of these health choices, investigating if there are resources available to deal with peer and social pressures associated with substance misuse.

As seen the MBT survey respondents 81 (59%) currently participated in sporting activity. However as previously discussed these respondents may not comply with the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians. The time duration of

physical activity, regularity, intensity are all factors that would need further investigation.

Ultimately it is highly important that young Territorians' are aware of the benefits and importance of regular moderate physical activity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

### Recommendation One

Publish MBT resource book titled; Hey You (th), Get active, get fit, get healthy and distribute to relevant interested organisations.

### Recommendation Two

The Northern Territory Government (relevant departments), should set up a working party consisting of practitioners, youth representatives and experts in the sporting fields. This working party should investigate NT youth's awareness of the importance and health benefits in regards to physical activity and possible barriers preventing participation.

### Recommendation Three

The Department of Health and Families in cooperation with other relevant departments should promote across all government and non government organisations the current and future programs involving youth and physical activity. Partnerships need to be established between NT Governments and community organisations to encourage youth involvement in physical activity programs.

### Recommendation Four

Relevant departments within the NT Government need to investigate the awareness of youth in the NT, regarding the impact of health choices, for example alcohol, smoking and drug use, as well as peer and social pressures relating to these. Available resources should be taken into consideration.

### Recommendation Five

The Northern Territory Government (relevant departments), should investigate the Northern Territory Physical Activity Survey 2003 Non-Indigenous population recommendations as to whether they have been implemented. From the implementation it should be established what results from the recommendations have impacted on youth.

### Recommendation Six

The Northern Territory Government promotes and publishes all 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians recommendations to the general public.

## RECOMMENDATION FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

### Recommendation One

Once a Non-Government organisation has received the resource book it is utilised.

### Recommendation Two

Non-Government community organisations establish and maintain partnerships with NT Government to encourage youth involvement in physical activity programs.

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## APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY



This survey is being conducted to find out what young Territorians think about a program being developed, which would focus on the **importance of a healthy mind and healthy body through sports**. We are members of the 2008 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians. This survey forms a very important part of gathering feedback from young people for our project. By completing the survey questions you will help us to gain information about how young people view the concept of a sport and education program and how they think it would best be run. All survey participants will be kept anonymous.

**For each question please indicate by ticking the appropriate box/es or by filling out the answer in the space provided.**

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What suburb do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you identify yourself as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- Aboriginal
  Torres Strait Islander  
 Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
  Neither

5. What is your main language spoken at home?

<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify:
----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------

Yes  No

6. Are you still at school?

7. What level/s of education have you achieved?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	VET / TAFE course/s
<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traineeship/Apprenticeship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	University Degree

8. What level/s of education do you want to achieve?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	VET / TAFE course/s
<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traineeship/Apprenticeship
<input type="checkbox"/>	Year 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	University Degree

9. What is your current employment/study situation? (tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Studying full time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time/casual work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Studying part time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	

10. What are your current living arrangements?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Living at home with parents/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living alone
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living with partner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Boarding school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living with other family (eg. Grandparents/Uncle/Aunty)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

11. Are you currently involved with any of the following community organisations?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission Australia	<input type="checkbox"/>	YWCA / YMCA
<input type="checkbox"/>	The SHAK	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clontarf Football Academy
<input type="checkbox"/>	E-Cruz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Danila Dilba		

12. Do you perceive drinking, smoking or drug use to be an issue in your peer group?  Yes  No

13. What do you think is important to have a healthy mind and healthy body?

*(Please rank your top five. Number 1 being most important through to 5 being less important)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schooling/Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relationships (partner)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Holidays	<input type="checkbox"/>	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hobbies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food/Diet

Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. If a sports program was developed, would you prefer to have males and females participating together or separately?  together  separate

15. What sport/s do you enjoy playing or would be interested in trying?

*(Please rank your top five. Number 1 being your favourite through to 5 being least favourite)*

	Tennis		Volleyball		Touch Footy		Tai Chi
	Basketball		Softball		Soccer		Hockey
	Netball		Table Tennis		Horse Riding		Yoga/Pilates
	Cricket		Water Polo		Swimming		Squash
	Football		Rugby		Gymnastics		Rock Climbing

Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you currently play any sports?  Yes  No

17. Does the cost of playing a sport prevent you from participating?

Yes  No  Sometimes

18. If a sports program was developed, how many hours a week should it run?

	1 hour		2.5 hours
	1.5 hours		3 hours
	2 hours		Other please specify:

19. How many times a week would you attend?

	Once a week		Four times a week
	Twice a week		Five or more times a week
	Three times a week		Not at all

20. What is the best time to run the sports program?

	On weekends anytime		During the week in the afternoons
	On weekends afternoons		Anytime
	On weekends mornings		Other please specify below
	During the week in the evenings		

21. If the program was developed, how long should it run for?

	One month		Nine months
	Two months		One year
	Three months		Other please specify
	Six months		

22. Would you like to see any of the following topics included in a healthy mind and body program?

	Mental Health		Leadership		No, just sport
	Body Image		Sexual Health		Other (please specify below)
	Self Esteem		Diet and Healthy Eating		

*If you have any Questions or Queries or would like further information regarding this project or survey please contact Office of Youth Affairs on (08) 8999 3862, free call 1800 652 736 or email oya@nt.gov.au*

**THANK YOU** very much for completing this survey :0)

## EVALUATION

At our first meeting, we thought we knew what we were getting ourselves into. We thought we knew exactly what we were going to do and how we were going to achieve it. An ambitious timeline was set and we all promised to keep in touch.

However, outside of the comfort of the Lake Bennett Resort, real life caught up with us. We had differing and competing commitments, such as employment changes, Year 12 exams, family tragedies, interstate and overseas travel, job promotion, loss of personnel, communication difficulties and a change in homes. We realise that those ambitious plans weren't going to happen overnight.

But our passion remained. We still wanted to help improve the quality of physical health and resilience within young Territorians.

We effectively re-focussed our project and what we wanted to achieve. We scaled back our outcomes to more obtainable goals. With this, we reformulated our idea and developed a survey to provide a dataset.

The survey went well – it was fortunate our team was (then) spread around the Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs regions. Time was always a factor, again with competing commitments and travel being the main challenges. However, we persisted as a team and this report has finally come to fruition.

We are sincerely grateful for the continued support from the Office of Youth Affairs team in keeping us on track, in providing a supportive ear in times of need and in developing our project management skills. Importantly, we thank our families, friends, partners, colleagues and bosses during these testing but exciting twelve months of our Round Table term.

It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to have participated!