

An initiative of St Mary's Football club – the project 'Say no to racism' took place in March 2009. In the role of Football Administration & Marketing Officer for SMFC at the time: Karina Gray was successful in seeking funds through NT Government Harmony Day and reporting on the event. The following is an excerpt of the acquittal for the project:

Project title: 'Say No to Racism'

Name of organisation: Saint Mary's Football, Sporting & Social Club Inc

Name of administering body: Saint Mary's Football, Sporting & Social Club Inc

Applicant:

Name: Karina Gray

Position: Football Administration Officer

Date: 27 May 2009

On Sunday March 22nd 2009, the Saint Mary's Women's Football team travelled to the Tiwi Islands (Nguiu, Bathurst) as part of the annual Tiwi Islands Grand Final carnival. Up to 20 people from the club made the trip including coaches and officials and players. They were welcomed by local Tiwi women and two combined sides teams were formed (25 players per team) with Tiwi women (from Bathurst and Melville) and St Mary's women. The women sides played in a curtain-raiser game prior to the Men's final. The game was played in great spirit, to spread the message 'say no to racism' and showcase to the large crowd (1000-2000 people) the talent of the 'strong women' involved. The ages of the women participating in the game ranged from 13 – 45. Following the game everyone was shared a BBQ lunch, and a presentation took place, where t-shirts made especially to promote the event were distributed along with stickers and badges promoting Harmony Day. All involved had the opportunity to mingle with the crowd, meet local people and view the main game and celebrations, including traditional song and dance performed by Tiwi people.

The event was considered successful by all involved. The high level of interest and support for the game laid the foundation for similar events in the future. The young Tiwi women who play for St Mary's in the NTFL season were able to demonstrate their skills and talent to their friends and family, promoting a positive image of young women participating in sport to other Tiwi women. The women and team officials etc involved came from a diverse range of backgrounds but joined together in to promote the message 'say no to racism'. The team members who participated bonded strongly as a result of this unique experience. A set of jumpers were provided to the Tiwi women to be donated to the Sport & Recreation program, with the view to incite further games. Due to the significance of the occasion, people all around Australia were informed of game, raising the profile of women in sport and encouraging women to lead healthy lifestyles and live in harmony.

In the lead up to the event, volunteers and administration staff from the club liaised with local Tiwi people and staff to organise the event. Things to improve on include: travel logistics – given the significance of the day and limited places on transport the cost was increased and the team was unable to all travel together; promotion – some of the media articles printed misinformation about the women’s game, in future we would aim to do media releases to rectify this; and funding - given that the event was not sponsored in full, players were required to make a contribution, if the event was fully sponsored, more people may be able to participate.

Press coverage of the event was significant, with a Tiwi woman and a St Mary’s representative being interviewed on ABC TV, with the game was broadcast live around Australia. The NT News¹, The Courier Mail (Brisbane)² and the Herald Sun^{3,4} (Melbourne) highlighted game in their news reports and photos. The NT Government and Harmony Day were acknowledged, with a banner being displayed at the entrance of the oval, the logo featured on the t-shirts worn by participants, and the distribution of stickers and badges to the local crowd. See attached photos.

SMFSSC is appreciative of the sponsorship by the NT Government and the support of all involved and will work towards facilitating similar events in the future, to continue the success of this significant occasion.

¹ http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2009/03/23/40695_ntnews.html

² <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,25225619-661,00.html>

³ <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/gallery/0,22010,5038064-5006020-6,00.html>

⁴ <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/gallery/0,22010,5038064-5006020-7,00.html>

Tiwi Island footy final day



Photos by: Justin Sanson, NT News

© Nationwide News Pty Ltd

Photos courtesy of MONICA NAPPER PHOTOGRAPHY





