

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

NAME: Gail Aiken

POSITION: Managing Director

ORGANISATION: mpowerdome Pty Ltd

SUBMISSION1: I applaud the exhortation that there must be a whole of nation response and, as a business owner, have dedicated the past thirteen years to research and development of programs, services and a flexible facility concept as a means of offering solution to the global epidemics of obesity and a rapidly growing mature aged population. In this regard, I support the Taskforce Priorities for action and major imperatives, particularly points 3 through 7 and draw attention to our program for pre-schoolers which received academic validation in June 2008 from Associate Professor Jeff Walkley of the RMIT, Melbourne University.

It is important to note that the order of the research; (1) programs, (2) services and (3) facility is critical to the impact and viability of such a facility upon a community.

mpowerdome has been trialing a mixture of program content for pre-schoolers at the Canberra facility for the past 2 and a half years. When participants have been compared with pre-schoolers who have not been through the program the results have been staggering. This program is designed to facilitate the fundamental movement skills that would enable a pre-schooler to participate in sport or physical activity with confidence and competence. The delivery of the program recognizes the value and benefit of having a significant other engaging in the program with them and in that grandparents are increasing in their number as primary carers of grandchildren, an opportunity was begging to impact two priority age cohorts toward lifestyle choices that would contribute toward quality of life. The program meets Every Chance to Learn: Curriculum framework for ACT Schools, Preschool to Year 10 and can be readily mapped to comply with the curriculum framework for other States and Territories, as required. We also offer programs for over 50's "Keenagers" that enables on sell to grandparents so that they have opportunity to participate in something more specific to their age and mobility.

mpowerdome obtained a small grant as a Health Promoting Facility and, as such, encourages restraint from smoking and alcohol consumption. ACT Health contribute their expertise on nutrition and other services while the Heart Foundation, Diabetes ACT and Arthritis ACT also contribute their expert input to complement the many programs that we deliver. The facility caters to huge numbers which provides opportunity for these health professionals to speak to people on mass.

This facility delivers programs for schools on mass and programs for the workplace, however, there remain transport challenges for both these groups which continue to be worked through with government and the respective transport services.

The intent to reshape urban environments towards healthy options through consistent town planning etc, should also take into account that while appropriate infrastructure investment is good to encourage walking, cycling, nutritious food supply, recreation, etc. many people will not

engage because they do not want to do it alone. A facility that provides the social connection point and then offers such activities in and around the facility, has greater likelihood of gaining a sustained participation. I would welcome the conduct of research on this matter to gauge the validity of this observation.

The critical aspect of such a facility concept is providing a quality program that captures and influences parent/grandparent and child, at such a young age, that habit is more likely because of a positive and productive experience that equips them for quality of life.

In the latter part of 2008, the University of Canberra, asked if they might bring a visiting academic from Singapore to mpowerdome for a tour and information on the total concept. As a result, I am in discussions concerning the training, delivery and rollout of this program in Singapore. I would welcome an opportunity to show you mpowerdome so that you can understand more of its versatility.

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit