



SPORTS 4 BUSH KIDS!

by Mount Isa Branch of the Air

Mount Isa Branch of the Air (Mount Isa BOTA), held its annual Sports 4 Bush Kids (S4BK) week from Sunday 27th November until Friday 2nd December 2022. S4BK started in 1999 for kids who lived remotely in communities, on cattle stations and in contracting camps around the Camooweal, Mt Isa and Gregory districts, families came together to participate in swimming lessons and other activities as an end of year function.

Fast Forward to 2022.....

Families came from as far as Western Australia, the Desert Channels of South Australia, the Northern Territory and of course all over QLD's northwest to attend. Participants were predominantly Mount Isa School of the Air (MISOTA) students and other members of their family who may have moved onto boarding schools or Western Alliance, this year S4BK also included prospective MISOTA students – beginning their School of the Air journey in 2023, and children from other distance educations from around QLD. Our ICPA Families attending this event were members stretched over many ICPA branches and included Mount Isa BOTA, Julia Creek, Richmond, Cloncurry, Boulia – Bedourie – Birdsville, Longreach, McKinlay and Territory Wide.

It safe to say, there was absolutely no accommodation available in Mt Isa that week!

The huge week started with families travelling to and arriving in Mt Isa and visiting the Registrations Office at our new headquarters, Mount Isa Rugby Union Club. With a steady flow of registrations, membership renewals and merchandise being put through the till by the S4BK committee along with the volunteers signing up to help out, the new headquarters

allowed for plenty of catchups between coaches, parents and govies as well as safe and fun playtime for the kids.

With Monday designated to the Mount Isa School of the Air (MISOTA) Christmas Activity Day, we kicked off bright and early on Tuesday morning with a huge selection of sports and activities on offer for all ages. Kids from pre-kindy up to high school were able to attend sports and activities as they liked or wanted to 'have a go' at.

The Sports on offer for our 2022 S4BK were – Remote Are Family Service (RAFS) Playgroup, Sports Awareness, Touch football, Soccer, Cricket, Dance, Netball, Yoga, Basketball, Swimming, Tennis and Speech & Drama.

With some 144 registrations for 2022, participants were roped into their appropriate age and/or skill level, Minis – Pre-Kindy, Kindy, Prep and Yr 1; Junior – Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4; Senior – Yr 5, Yr 6 and high school aged kids.

While the morning sports, Touch, Cricket and Soccer, Sports Awareness and RAFS took place at the Rugby Union grounds, after smoko we hit the ground running to other facilities across Mt Isa. This made for a handful of committed Dads who were scratching their heads at the chaos this week caused, a lot of extra cars on the road around Mount Isa, some serious carpooling between families, bakery and Maccas stops for on the run lunches, strict time schedules and a few extra or less kids per family than normal! All in the name fun for our Bush Kids!

The coaches to teach our many sports on offer to our bush kids came from a number of different walks of life. They included QLD NRL, Cricket QLD, MISOTA, Ms. Julie's swim school, Mt Isa School of Dance, Somerville House – Brisbane, Marist College Ashgrove, Townsville Grammar School, Stuartholme School – Brisbane, RAFS, Theresa Bassingwaithe tennis, Sally Knight Speech and Drama,

NW Soccer, Netball Mt Isa and Yoga Hub Mt Isa. They all had their work cut out for them with large groups of different ages and skillset levels to work with but like true professionals, they kept the kids extremely busy, engaged and constantly learning with even a few parents, govies and MISOTA teachers joining in the fun along the way! Thank you coaches, you were amazing with our bush kids!



Extended thanks to our 2022 sponsors: Austral Resources, Australian Country Choice, Bezuma Pastoral Co., Causeway, Elders – Alice Springs, ICPA QLD, Kickgate Veterinary, James Cook University, Marcus Oldham, McMillan Pastoral, MDH Pty Ltd, Mitech, NAPCO, North Line Copper, Nutrien – Cloncurry, Paraway Pastoral, QH20 Water, S.Kidman, Big D's Butchery, Mt Isa Cattle Yards, Somerville House, Townsville Grammar School, MISOTA, Stuartholme School, Marist College Ashgrove & Georgina Pastoral

James Cook University (JCU) and Big D's Butchery Mt Isa sponsored our event with a great variety of fresh fruits and Christmas Hams for smoko breaks and it was prepared and presented by a lot of different volunteers throughout the week, all willing to help our small S4BK committee out where ever they could. Water supplies for the week were very kindly donated by QH20 water Mount Isa, and even though our early December week in Mt Isa was unseasonably cool, fresh iced cool water was consumed at a rate of knots! Our wonderful ICPA Mt Isa BOTA ladies had the coffee cart in full swing at the S4BK headquarters each morning and did a great job to keep the spectators & volunteers caffeinated and hydrated.

S4BK was definitely a roaring success in 2022 and while we were glad to pack up and lock up the headquarters on Friday, we have already started planning for 2023! We hope every single family involved this year had a chaotic but fun week and that every child took away at least something that they didn't know before. If each child only took away one new skill this week, that's a win for us all!

We would like to thank each and every Mt Isa BOTA/S4BK Committee member who gave their input and time to pull this together, every family who participated in one way or another, our awesome coaches and helpers, our super volunteers, and our valued sponsors, all for getting on board. We'd love to see you all again in 2023!

Without your support, events like these simply couldn't happen and for that, we are forever grateful! If you think that Sports for Bush Kids is something you would like to be part of as a coach or a sponsor in 2023, get in touch with our branch – Mount Isa BOTA.

MORE THAN AN EDUCATION

FINANCIAL SUPPORT available for families.

- ✓ **EDMUND RICE BURSARIES** to support families in financial need.
- ✓ **50% BOARDING DISCOUNT** for first 20 new Year 7 & 10 Boarders for 2024*.
- ✓ **LIVING AWAY FROM HOME ASSISTANCE** for Isolated Children & other support.

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 📞 07 4939 9300
 ✉ enrolments@sbc.qld.edu.au