

## 2.3 MONASH FOOTBALL (SOCCER) PLAN

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the consultation findings and submissions received in response to the recent public exhibition of the draft Monash Football (Soccer) Plan in Attachment 1.*
- 2. Adopts the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan (Attachment 2).*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's adoption of the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan (Attachment 2), following Council endorsement and public exhibition of the draft Monash Football (Soccer) Plan from 7 April to 14 May 2021.

### **BACKGROUND**

Council endorsed a draft Monash Football (Soccer) Plan (or draft plan) at its Ordinary Meeting held on 23 February 2021. The draft plan had been developed as the result of extensive consultation and collaboration with Monash football clubs that focused on strategically addressing key issues facing the sport.

The draft plan was subsequently advertised in the April 2021 Monash Bulletin distributed to every Monash household and exhibited on Council's website from 7 April - 14 May 2021. At the close of consultation, 17 individual submissions were received.

A Community Consultation Report (Attachment 1) presents the community submissions and outlines the findings of the community consultation the draft plan.

### **DISCUSSION**

In Shape Monash, respondents were required to select *agree*, *neither agree nor disagree* or *disagree* against each action and guiding principle listed in the draft plan. In addition to this, there was an open text box provided for respondents to provide qualitative feedback on the draft plan.

Overall, respondents were generally very supportive of the guiding principles and actions presented in the draft plan. For more detail, refer to Attachment 1 – Community Consultation Report.

Further to this, a submission was received from Football Victoria (FV). Where supported, FV's additional recommendations were worked into the wording of existing actions.

Themes arising from positive/supportive feedback

Open ended questions were assessed to identify common positive/supported themes mentioned in feedback. Positive comments included support for:

- Proposed facility upgrades
- Growing female participation and non-traditional modes of football
- Sport club forums process including consultation with clubs and community
- Expanded opportunities to explore new venues and participation opportunities

Themes arising from negative/unsupportive feedback

As indicated above, open ended questions were assessed to identify common negative/unsupported comments mentioned in feedback. The **unsupported** elements or concerns raised were -

- Concerns over more synthetic pitches in Monash
- That other football sites in Monash are also worthy of consideration for facility upgrade funding
- Instead of exploring the introduction of new participation opportunities that are more affordable, Council should be addressing the issue of increasing costs of already high seasonal fees and coaching programs
- A belief held that there is insufficient need to justify the cost of "high quality facilities", nor the requirement for clubs to be "successful".

Recommended changes to draft plan

All submissions were reviewed and considered in the development of the final draft Monash Football (Soccer) Plan (attachment 2). The following three amendments were made to the draft plan:

- Freeway Reserve is now included in the list of sites identified for a surface upgrade. It is noted that this site is a retarding basin and can be prone to flooding, so a long-term solution to providing a playable surface at this site is required.
- Council to review the dog off leash status of senior NPL venues as part of the 2021-25 Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- Brandon Park Reserve Pavilion moved from Action 2.4 and now listed in Action 2.3.

The final Monash Football (Soccer) Plan, inclusive of the above-mentioned additions and amendments, is now presented for Council consideration and endorsement in Attachment 2.

---

A total of 16 actions have been identified in the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan. Relevant stakeholders have been identified for each action, with a lead organisation highlighted for the delivery of each action. A proposed timeframe has been documented for each action and where required, an indicative budget has been provided.

Further detail and information on the recommended changes made to the draft plan can be viewed in Attachment 3 - Summary of updates made to Actions of the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan.

All actions are qualified by the availability of Council funding and long term financial plan.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

*A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017 – 2021* outlines Council's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the Monash community. Key pillars of the Integrated Plan relevant to the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan are:

- *Active and Healthy:* Focuses include supporting people to remain connected and engaged in their community, ensuring that community needs, both now and into the future are central to the physical design of infrastructure, encouraging and supporting regular physical activity.
- *Engaged, Confident and Connected:* A city which actively listens, engages and values community wisdom in shaping its own future. Focuses include ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be a part of the community, being responsive, flexible and creative in responding to existing and emerging community needs, providing services and activities that are accessible and affordable to people from all walks of life, reducing barriers to participation, and pursuing partnerships that benefit the community.

*Monash Council Plan 2017 – 2021* outlines the key objectives and priorities Council has for the Monash community. Of particular relevance to the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan is:

- *Inviting open and urban spaces* focusing upon improving public infrastructure, meeting places and open spaces, and providing inclusive, safe and inviting places for the community to use. Strategies include committing to long term infrastructure and renewing and maximising community and sporting facilities.

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Monash Football (Soccer) Plan will support Council's agenda for a healthy and resilient Monash Community.

Gender and intersectionality have been considered from the early stages of this work, and are strongly reflected in the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan. Gender is important to this issue because of the low rates of female participation in football (soccer). In Monash, females make up just 16% of senior football participation. The Monash Football (Soccer) Plan has a range of objectives, guiding principles, and actions, that seek to remove some of the known barriers, or introduce enablers, to ensure that the sport builds more inclusive and diverse participation.

#### ***HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS***

This report is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities ACT 2006 and does not raise any specific considerations.

#### ***CONSULTATION***

A community consultation process has been undertaken, including direct consultation (e.g. Monash Football Forum) with Monash football clubs and Football Victoria.

Further consultation findings have been used to refine and update the draft plan to ensure the final Monash Football (Soccer) Plan provides a considered strategic and sustainable approach to addressing the issues facing football whilst being considerate of club, community and State Sporting Association needs and expectations.

#### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Some of the actions documented in the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan are reliant on Council and external funding. The actions in the final plan will be prioritised based on Active Monash's Capital Works Priorities Framework and subject to Council's annual capital works planning and budget approval process.

#### ***CONCLUSION***

It is recommended that Council adopts the final Monash Football (Soccer) Plan detailed in Attachment 2. This updated version of the plan includes changes made to the draft plan in response to submissions made by Football Victoria, Monash football clubs and the broader community as part of the community consultation and engagement process.

#### ***ATTACHMENTS***

Attachment 1 – Community Consultation Report

Attachment 2 - Monash Football (Soccer) Plan

Attachment 3 - Summary of updates made to Actions of the Monash Football (Soccer) Plan