

2.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SPORTS CLUBS: COMMUNITY LEADERS UNITED BY SPORT AND CHANGING THE GAME - PROGRESS REPORT
(TE, SH and LF: F16-84811)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the progress made towards making sports clubs more welcoming and inclusive through the Community Leaders United by Sport and Changing the Game initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Sports clubs are an integral part of communities and provide opportunities to improve individuals' physical and mental health. They are also a focal point for shaping community attitudes about a range of issues that extend beyond sport. Community sports clubs play a pivotal role in both broader health promotion and reinforcing community values - where clubs provide meeting places, support networks and community involvement. Sports clubs can sometimes give rise to unhealthy environments that can discourage people from participating, deter broader community engagement, and perpetuate unhealthy attitudes and behaviours.

Monash Council is currently delivering two community development initiatives within sports clubs to make them more inclusive and welcoming places, so that more residents can enjoy their benefits. The first is the Community Leaders United by Sport (CLUBS) program. According to the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation *This Girl Can – Victoria* initiative, nearly half of all Victorian women (aged 25+) believe sporting clubs are intimidating, and a third of women do not believe they are welcoming to people like them. Women and girls are far less likely to take part in team sports than men and boys, and are vastly underrepresented in coaching and committee positions.

The CLUBS program seeks to address the lower rates of participation by women and girls in sports clubs, particularly in leadership roles, and challenge gender stereotypes. CLUBS has been funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) through the Gender Equality in Victorian Sport and Recreation Pilot Program. Monash Council has partnered with Link Health & Community and Monash University in delivering the program.

The second initiative is Changing the Game. This program is taking a holistic approach by working with the entire club; committees, players and parents/member communities to develop conviction at the individual level

and at the organisational level within clubs. The program aims to empower leadership groups to demonstrate and promote healthy cultural change. Two Club Forums will be offered to all Monash sporting clubs, as well as professional development workshops with a focus on the reduction of harm from Alcohol & Other Drugs, and from gambling.

This progress report presents a summary of the work and impact of these two programs to date, noting that they are both currently ongoing.

DISCUSSION

Community Leaders United by Sport (CLUBS)

Council was one of three Victorian Councils to receive funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) to pilot a gender equality in sport program. As a result, in November 2018, a CLUBS Project Officer was employed, and a Governance Group formed comprising key Council Officers and project partners from Link Health & Community, Monash University and SRV.

In December 2018 ten sports clubs from eight different sporting codes within Monash were selected in a competitive expressive of interest (EOI) process of 17 applicants to take part in the CLUBS program. Each club nominated 2-3 culture change 'champions' to participate, which included at least one current player and committee member to ensure both a top-down and bottom-up approach to change.

From January 2019 the champions first took part in one of three focus groups, split by role in the club and gender, to identify the key strengths and barriers in clubs to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for women and girls. A key goal of this process was to address the current lack of evidence that draws on the voices of women and girls.

The focus groups revealed different priorities between male and female champions. Themes that emerged included:

- Male champions identified physical infrastructure was the key issue in retaining and recruiting women and girls;
- Female champions identified club culture as the most critical aspect in making them feel welcome;
- A lack of crowd support at women's games;
- A lack of equal access to equipment and expertise;
- Unsavoury 'banter' from male teammates;
- Cost of fees and inconvenient scheduling of matches and training as barriers for women; and
- Women lack confidence to join a club or take up leadership positions.

In order to address these barriers, tailored leadership training was developed and implemented from February 2019 in conjunction with project partners. Over five sessions culture change champions were provided with capacity building, tools and resources to both understand these concerns and then address them in their clubs. They had the opportunity to network and hear from each other as well as a number of experts about ways to make their clubs more inclusive, and gained practical skills in areas such as governance, grant writing and club promotion.

The ten clubs are currently working internally on developing strategies to make key changes within their club. Some clubs have already progressed significantly, creating their own gender equity committees, running events on improving confidence for women and girls, reviewing club communications to ensure equal representation of men and women, contributing to their newsletter on their learnings from the leadership training, and starting a mentoring program for women in their club. Some champions have gained the confidence and motivation to put up their hand for the first time to join the committee.

Other progress to date includes:

- Presenting the project at the 'Together for Equality and Respect' Community of Practice on evaluation;
- Supporting Waverley Hockey Club's inaugural Women's Q&A on building confidence;
- Presenting the findings at the Gender Equality in Victorian Sport and Recreation Pilot Program Workshop;
- Being invited to present at Hockey Victoria's Change Our Game Club Ambassadors Meeting;
- Being invited to discuss the program with Tennis Victoria; and
- Generating interest in the program from a variety of organisations including corporate leadership and community health.

Clubs will be supported by the CLUBS Project Officer and other Council Officers to continue this work and champions have the option to continue meeting as a group to keep learning and sharing with each other through a Community of Practice. Evaluation has been ongoing throughout the project and will continue to ensure Council understands the best way to support other clubs within Monash in the future. Council Officers have also been invited by State Sporting Associations to present the key findings of the CLUBS project and discuss how it could be implemented in other sporting clubs across Victoria.

Changing the Game

Due to the successful funding application and the current delivery of the CLUBS program, Changing the Game has been updated and structured to

compliment the positive delivery of CLUBS and support sustainable environment change within local sporting groups.

In April 2019, City of Monash delivered a club forum focused on the prevention of alcohol harm to 28 representatives from 17 different sports clubs. This included a presentation by VicHealth on the rates of risky drinking for young males, as well as the Alcohol & Drug Foundation informing clubs on how best to adhere to their responsible service of alcohol. This presentation detailed the Duty of Care to their members and the importance of applying the Good Sports program at their club.

Following this session, sporting clubs that were present at the forum will have access to, and are currently going through training workshops on the Responsible Service of Alcohol and Mental Health First Aid.

This will support achieving Council's key goals on improving sporting club's capacity to create supportive and welcoming environments.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The goals of the CLUBS program and Changing the Game align with the commitment to improving the health and resilience of individuals and communities through proactive services and programs in council's key documents including *A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021*.

The CLUBS program also aligns with the *Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020* and Victoria government priorities of preventing violence against women and building inclusive sport and recreation environments that support women and girls to play and be involved in sports they love in a safe, supportive and empowering environment.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The CLUBS program is contributing to an improved sense of community by fostering new relationships between sports clubs, Council, and project partners. It seeks to improve community health and wellbeing by increasing opportunities for women and girls to access welcoming sports clubs, and has contributed skills development for the individual 'champions' who have undertaken leadership training.

Changing the Game is focused on supporting a long term culture change where the view on sports is shifted away from the consumption of alcohol and gambling and back as an outlet for physical activity, social inclusion and community spirit. Council is committed to supporting clubs identify sustainable, alternative sources of income/revenue so that they are no

longer reliant on sponsorships and other sources of revenue from gambling-related activities.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and in particular with the following right of taking part in public life.

CONSULTATION

Consultation with participating clubs has been a key part of co-designing the CLUBS program to meet their needs. Consultation with project partners has occurred through ongoing Governance Group meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria for CLUBS concludes on 30 June 2019. Council has funded Changing the Game until 30 June 2020.

CONCLUSION

CLUBS and Changing the Game are two initiatives implemented within sports clubs in Monash that seek to enable clubs to be the most inclusive and welcoming places that they can be. Although both projects are currently in progress, strong relationships have been fostered and positive changes are already occurring within clubs.