PARTICIPATION VERSUS PERFORMANCE:

Managing (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport

- FULL RESEARCH REPORT -

Research Team

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This report was prepared by the research team:

Chief Investigators:

Professor Ramón Spaaij .... Victoria University
Professor Karen Farquharson .... Swinburne University of Technology
Dr Sean Gorman .... Curtin University
Dr Ruth Jeanes .... Monash University
Associate Professor Dean Lusher .... Swinburne University of Technology

Partner Investigators:

Carmel Guerra OAM .... Centre for Multicultural Youth
Shelley White .... VicHealth
Erin Ablett .... Australian Football League

Research Assistants:

Dr Jonathan Magee .... Victoria University
Ryan Storr .... Victoria University
Georgia McGrath .... Monash University
Caitlyn MacKenzie .... Swinburne University of Technology

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Abbreviations

AFL	Australian Football League
ARC	Australian Research Council
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMY	Centre for Multicultural Youth
ERGM	Exponential Random Graph Models
FFA	Football Federation Australia
FFV	Football Federation Victoria
NSO	National Sporting Organisation
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SRV	Sport and Recreation Victoria
SSO	State Sporting Organisation

Managing racial, ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the three-year research project titled 'Participation versus performance: Managing (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport' (2014–2017). The research was conducted collaboratively by Victoria University, Swinburne University, Curtin University and Monash University, in partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Australian Football League (AFL) and Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY). This study fills a significant gap in understanding diversity in junior sport and, specifically, the relationship and tensions between diversity and the pursuit of performance and competition in junior sport. Junior sport is an important activity through which children and young people learn about social norms and develop attitudes towards people with diverse backgrounds and abilities. How diversity is managed in junior sport can affect how participants are socialised to understand and respond to diversity throughout their lives.

The research focuses on how different forms of diversity are understood, experienced and managed by junior sports participants within the context and social network of their club and sport. Instead of isolating one type of diversity, the study covers a broader spectrum of (intersecting) social relations and markers of differentiation that are relevant to understanding diversity in sport and society, including race/ethnicity, gender and ability.

Method

The study comprises four phases. Phase 1 involved 101 in-depth interviews with junior sports participants (including committee members, coaches, volunteers, parents and players). Phase 1 was conducted at nine clubs in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria. Phase 2 involved a survey of 450 club members from the selected clubs, and social network analyses (SNA) of four clubs. Phase 3 involved observations at a sub-sample of two junior sports clubs during one season, as well observation of related club materials, cultural artefacts and social media platforms. Phase 4 involved a policy analysis of government, peak-body and club policy documents.

Key Findings

The Phase 1 findings show that junior sports clubs and their individual members have different experiences and understandings related to diversity, and that these are influenced by the club culture and broader social environment. Diversity initiatives are often driven by a 'champion' with a particular diversity focus (for example, they might have a child with a disability who plays at the club). The work and commitment of such champions present opportunities for particular marginalised populations to participate in club sport. Although the champions are making some progress, the lack of support from club committees is often a challenge to ongoing institutional change.

The interviews highlight that clubs' responses to diversity are driven by local needs. For example, clubs with high numbers of members from newly arrived migrant backgrounds might implement policies and strategies targeting this population. In this way, clubs are responding to local needs rather than promoting diversity per se. Moreover, the orientation of individual clubs to either participation ('sport for all') or performance (winning) was critical to how clubs viewed and prioritised diversity. The clubs that actively promote diversity are more likely to relate to participation and social aspects of sport, but face the challenge of being perceived as 'less serious' and disinterested in winning.

In Phase 2, individual-level predictors (e.g. gender, age) of various attitudes were examined. The survey findings suggest that gender is a predictor of attitudes to participation, adherence to gender roles and masculine violence. For example, being a female significantly predicts pro-participation attitudes, which suggests females are more likely to have the attitude of giving everyone a go rather than playing to win. Younger males are more likely to agree positively with statements on the issue of masculine violence on the sporting field. This suggests there may be greater adherence or acceptance by young people more generally for gendered (male) violent behaviour.

The SNA reveals differences between each club. In relation to participation versus performance, the clubs range from strongly endorsing performance/winning to supporting 'sport for all'. Regardless, the SNA suggests there may be a little contestation around performance versus participation even in clubs strongly endorsing participation. Additionally, high-performing players at any club were seen to have a greater influence within the club community than low-performing players, regardless of the club's focus on participation or performance.

Conclusions

This research suggests that clubs understand diversity in many different ways. There is not a distinct and clear definition of diversity from lead organisations. Clubs tend to consider and act on individual axes of diversity, such as cultural or gender diversity, in isolation. More intersectional understandings of and approaches to diversity were virtually non-existent in the junior clubs in this study. Most clubs recognised the benefits of diversity, with regard to increased membership and volunteers, club capacity and sustainability, as well as delivering social and health benefits to the community.

However, junior clubs frequently felt overwhelmed by and under-resourced to deliver on calls to actively promote and support diversity. Capacity was a key issue, with clubs concerned about engaging with diversity and threatening their core operation due to a lack of volunteers. Whilst individual champions are key to diversity work, they face considerable pressures and constraints. The findings reveal a tension between the promotion of diversity and inclusion on the one hand, and the focus on performance on the other hand. Clubs have limited resources and may see diversity as peripheral to, or diverting resources from its core business.

Recommendations

Recommendations are suggested to continue making junior sport a diverse and inclusive environment. These recommendations target clubs, National Sporting Organisations (NSO) and State Sporting Organisations (SSO), as well as other stakeholders, such as local government. The recommendations include the following:

- ✅ Encouraging and supporting conversations about diversity
- ✅ Developing a differentiated approach
- ✅ Strengthening the club-level relevance of diversity policies
- ✅ Being flexible in the promotion of diversity to and within community sports clubs
- ✅ Valuing and supporting diversity champions within clubs
- ✅ Getting 'best players' onside
- ✅ Engaging coaches as key actors in diversity practice
- ✅ Critically examining club culture and norms
- ✅ Diversifying club leadership structures
- ✅ Addressing tension between participation and performance
- ✅ Sharing local knowledge and experience.

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Introduction

What is Diversity?

Diversity is a term used in a range of public and private institutions to describe institutional goals, values and practices. The assumed benefits of diversity to organisational performance are well documented, and include increased sales revenue, more customers and greater relative profits (Herring, 2009). The international and Australian sport sectors increasingly voice the need to promote and manage diversity (e.g. Cunningham, 2015). Yet, diversity management is contentious (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000; Embrick, 2011). Research shows that diversity policies do not necessarily result in commensurate changes in actual practices and behaviours within organisations (Ahmed, 2012), and sport organisations are no exception in this regard (Spracklen, Hylton and Long, 2006; Spaaij et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding its common usage in public and organisational discourse, the term 'diversity' holds multiple overlapping and conflicting meanings (Prasad, Pringle and Konrad, 2006). In a broad sense of the term, diversity occurs when people of varied backgrounds in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, ability or other observable or unobservable social factors are present and interact. Diversity can celebrate difference, but it also serves to mark out those who are perceived to be 'different' from the majority or from any in-group for differential treatment in a way which can be detrimental to equality and wellbeing.

The definition and measurement of diversity are contested. There is no consensus on what diversity means, nor is there consensus about what the main dimensions of diversity are and how to measure them (Dickie and Soldan, 2008; Harrison and Sin, 2006). For some, diversity is a matter of demography or representation; for others, it is also about respecting and valuing differences (Prasad et al., 2006). Either way, a common problem with defining diversity is that it tends to fix and essentialise differences by presenting them as stable and unchanging, rather than capturing the fluid nature of social identities and boundaries. From a sociological perspective, a key point is that diversity is socially constructed: it is a result of the definitions that people in a network of social relations (e.g. a sports team or club) make. Diversity, then, must be understood and analysed in relation to a social network or context in which definitions arise and are used, and whose members are likely to have unequal definitional power. This approach recognises that certain kinds of difference are likely to have greater salience in some places and in certain situations than in others.

One important area of contention in academic and political debates on diversity is whether to treat all differences as meriting equal attention or whether some differences are likely to present more severe forms of disadvantage and social exclusion than others (Cooper, 2004; Prasad et al, 2006). Building on critical diversity literature, our position in this study is that diversity is a more relevant concept if it focuses on 'those differences that have been systematically discriminated against, irrespective of whether or not they receive legal protection' (Prasad et al., 2006, p. 3).

The focus of this research is on how forms of diversity that have historically faced discrimination and disadvantage are understood, experienced and managed by junior sports participants—players, parents, volunteers, committee members and others—within the context and social network of their club and sport. In addition, the focus is not solely on one type of diversity, such as gender or cultural diversity, but rather covers a broader spectrum of (intersecting) social relations that are relevant to understanding diversity in sport and society.

The Study

<u>Research question and objectives:</u>

The research question this project addresses is twofold: how is diversity managed in junior sports clubs and to what extent is including people with diverse backgrounds and abilities compatible with promoting sporting excellence and competitiveness? The research has been designed to achieve four objectives:

A   Identify how diversity is understood, experienced and managed in junior sport, including identifying good practice in this domain

B   Discover the extent to and ways in which different axes of diversity intersect and conflict with one another in junior sports club settings

C   Assess the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks and strategies in nurturing social and cultural diversity in junior sport in practice

D   Develop guidelines that junior sports organisations may use to inform their decision-making and practices around managing diversity.

Why does junior sport have a tension between participation and performance?

The recent AusPlay survey indicated that nearly 3.2 million children (69 per cent) participated in organised sport or physical activity outside of school hours in the year October 2015 to September 2016 (Australian Sports Commission [ASC], 2016). Community sports clubs were the primary avenue for children to be active, with peak participation occurring in the 9-11 years age range before a decline in participation as children got older and moved into the youth phase of life (ASC, 2016). Boys were more likely to participate in junior sport than girls but girls were slightly more likely to participate than boys in the 9-11 years age range. Overall, $2.3 billion was spent on fees for children's participation in the year October 2015 to September 2016, with association football (soccer) the most popular participation sport for children (ASC, 2016). Across Victoria, participation in sport and recreation clubs for those aged four years and over has increased to 8.3 per cent of the population (Eime, 2016). Club membership in organised sport in Victoria peaked at ages 10-11 years, with almost one-third (28%) of the participants aged 10-14 years – the age group that also displayed the highest rate of continuous participation in sport programs (Eime, 2016). Key factors regarding why children participate in junior sport are well established and centre on associated physical and mental health benefits, as well as improved self-esteem, social skills and self-confidence (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity and Payne, 2013; Eime, Harvey, Charity, Casey, van Uffelen and Payne, 2015). Generally speaking, sport participation has many different psychological and social health benefits for both children and adults (Eime, 2016).

Junior sport is in part delivered by local voluntary community sports clubs that are a major site for socialisation and community-building for many children, parents, volunteers, coaches and spectators. Community junior clubs rely on a volunteer workforce to perform a variety of roles, including coaching and officiating, to enable children to participate in sport and develop a lifelong interest in sport participation. Furthermore, sport participation has the capacity to socialise young people to understand social norms around key life issues like racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination (Anderson, 2010) whilst also learning about, and shaping attitudes toward, people with diverse backgrounds and abilities (Spaaij and Anderson, 2010). On a broader level, sport participation also plays a role in preparing children to become 'good citizens' by learning respect for rules and authority, fair play, self-efficacy and so forth (Coalter, 2007, 2013).

By its very composition, sport is inherently competitive, with vivid and tangible outcomes of success and failure. Subsequently, the pursuit of excellence and the goal of winning can be advanced as clubs seek to recruit the best players possible to increase the potential of success in competitive contests. Therefore, this pursuit of excellence works against the participation purpose of community sport by excluding people with diverse backgrounds and ability levels, as they decrease the chances of success (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014; Spaaij et al, 2014). If a club's major imperative is to win, they will likely resist policies that promote diversity of ability, especially the recruitment of new players who have had little previous exposure to the sport, and particularly so if they are from marginalised or excluded communities (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014; Spaaij et al, 2014).

Given the importance attributed to ability, diversity of ability must be taken as qualitatively different from diversity by race/ethnicity or gender, as the promotion of diversity of ability runs counter to the overarching goal of promoting sporting excellence. However, for community sports clubs, participation can be a core value: the policy ideal is that all people (and particularly children and young people) should have the opportunity to play regardless of how skilled they are (though participation may be less of a focus with age). This provides a conundrum in terms of diversity management and, consequently, a tension exists between club priorities regarding performance (winning) and participation (recreation) (Spaaij et al., 2014).

Despite this inherent tension, sport also has the capacity to contribute to wider social inclusion and it has become an important site to engage marginalised groups and individuals (see for example, Coalter, 2007, 2013; Kelly, 2011; Spaaij, 2013; Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014). For example, research indicates the inclusive capacity of sport for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (Jeanes, O'Connor and Alfrey, 2015; Spaaij, 2012, 2015; Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014), girls and women (Elling and Knoppers, 2005; Kelly, 2011; Knoppers and Elling, 2001; Pfister, 2010) and individuals with disabilities (Fitzgerald, 2008; Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014; Thomas and Smith, 2008), to name a few. Thus, community junior sport clubs should be in a position to provide opportunities for children to participate in sport regardless of cultural heritage, racial background, gender or playing ability. However, there is a strong argument that sport differentiates, excludes and marginalises specific groups from participation and does so through explicit and active mechanisms like institutional racism and gender-based violence or more subtle and even hidden processes like access, selection and being made to feel welcome (Elling and Knoppers, 2005; Elling and Claringbould, 2005; Lake, 2013; Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014). Not everyone feels welcome in sport: emphasis on performance and winning can exclude those who have lesser ability, are perceived to be weaker, and are considered to be detrimental to performance, winning and success. Thus, as junior clubs seek to use sport for wider social purposes by increasing its diversity there is a real and tangible conflict and tension at play.

Why is there a need to manage diversity in junior sport?

Managing diversity is an important challenge for groups, organisations and communities. How diversity is dealt with at a societal, institutional and local level affects an individual's opportunities and wellbeing. Sport is one area where diversity has become a policy buzz word. In countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia, social policy actors draw attention to sport as a policy tool that can be used to strengthen public values such as social inclusion (Donnelly and Coakley, 2002; Kelly, 2011; Spaaij, 2013). Within this context, diversity can be seen to represent one of the most significant issues confronting sport today (Cunningham, 2011; Gasparini & Cometti, 2010) and consequently a sizeable body of scholarship has emerged on various aspects of diversity in sport, such as organisational change (Spracklen et al., 2006), organisational cultures and practices (Doherty, Fink, Inglis & Pastore, 2010) and gender diversity in sport governance and leadership (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2013; Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008). Within this body it has been argued that it is necessary for managers, coaches and other professionals in sport to understand the effects and drivers of diversity and inclusion so that the sports workplace can be more inclusive of all (Cunningham, 2015).

The diversity management field is concerned with investigating the ways sport organisations manage and take advantage of diversity (Cunningham, 2011; Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999). Less is known about diversity within the community sport sector; most research focuses on diversity in professional sport and sport bodies. This approach looks to diversity as a potential source of increased revenue and other contributions to organisational performance, but only through particular types of diversity: participation that supports performance, i.e. 'high performing' diversity. Moreover, by focusing on organisational policies and programs, this approach fails to produce a deep understanding of the extent to and ways in which these initiatives filter through to the grassroots level to affect local participants' social norms and attitudes.

Fundamental to diversity within sport is the increased adoption of policies and programs aimed at promoting safe and inclusive sporting environments. The status of diversity in the policy frameworks of sport organisations is not necessarily matched by an equivalent status in the way in which diversity is managed in practice (Spracklen et al. 2006). Investigating UK policies designed to make sport more diverse and inclusive, Long, Robinson and Spracklen (2005) questioned whether such policies were superficial and often little more than a paper trail. Within Australian sport, and specifically the Australian Football League (AFL), Corboz (2012) notes that the AFL's Respect and Responsibility program highlighted issues of exclusion without any deeper structural or cultural change occurring. For example, Corboz (2012) found the program focused on 'violence (including sexual violence, domestic violence etc.) without also addressing how disrespectful behaviour towards women reproduced violent cultures' (p. 7). As a result, some players disengaged from the Respect and Responsibility program and felt targeted as perpetrators rather than change makers. In a similar vein, Spaaij et al. (2014) found that while many SSOs have introduced policies committed to diversity, many struggled to enact these policies in practice, especially at the community sport level. Even where a diversity program is successfully implemented, Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes (2014) report that provision for children with disabilities to play cricket was considered outside or beyond the core activities of the mainstream cricket club. Therefore, the promotion of diversity through the introduction of policies designed to encourage greater inclusion does not necessarily guarantee their implementation or success.

Diversity discourses in Australian sport

Recent research has uncovered three conflicting diversity discourses in the Australian sport sector: the business case, the social justice case and the no-need-to-manage case (Spaaij et al., 2014). These three cases constitute discourses through which diversity in Australian sport is understood. The dominant diversity discourse articulated in that research was the business case, which values diversity as a contribution to organisational performance. In other societal domains, such as the business sector, the business case for diversity is sometimes referred to as 'a normalised Mega-Discourse that enshrines the achievement of organisational economic goals as the ultimate principle and explanatory device for people in organisations' (Litvin, 2006, p. 85). Spaaij et al. (2014) found that, with few exceptions, community sports clubs view diversity from a business-driven perspective which recognises diversity as a potential benefit or cost to their organisation. Put differently, diversity in Australian sport is not so much a commonly held ideal but a situational response to specific opportunity or demand. Although the clubs defined diversity broadly, in practice they used the business rationale to either elect not to engage with diversity management or to engage with a narrow version of diversity management, usually engaging people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

In contrast, the social justice case recognises that people are not treated equally and argues for active intervention to effect change in institutions and society towards being more just (Coleman and Glover, 2010). A social justice case for diversity could be found at some community sports organisations, often coexisting and intertwined with business-oriented arguments. For proponents of the social justice rationale, encouraging diversity within sports clubs is, first and foremost, 'the right thing to do' (Spaaij et al., 2014). Furthermore, the third diversity discourse – the no-need-to-manage case – does not consider diversity as a priority but rather as something of an add-on to the core business of the club that rendered few benefits to the club's successful operation (Spaaij et al., 2014). Although there may not necessarily be overt discrimination or differential treatment in these organisations, they make no outward moves to welcome, let alone value or celebrate, difference. This is reflected in comments such as diversity being 'not for us', 'too much to take on' and something that they put in the 'too hard basket' (Spaaij et al., 2014).

These diversity discourses can exist in tension or competition with one another but, as noted, also intersect in complex ways. Even if sports organisations and clubs are keen to embrace diversity and actively pursue and promote it, the need to manage it in a way that ensures that all individuals, regardless of cultural heritage, gender or playing ability, are welcomed and provided with an equitable opportunity to participate is a challenge that many clubs find daunting (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014; Spaaij et al., 2016).

Participation versus performance:

What did the research involve?

The project used a mixed-methods approach that involved four integrated phases conducted over a three-year period:

Phase **1** In-depth interviews with junior sports participants (committee members, coaches, volunteers, parents and players) in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.

Phase **2** Survey and social network analysis (SNA) (of individual clubs).

Phase **3** Observations at a sub-sample of junior sports clubs.

Phase **4** Policy analysis (government, peak-body and club policy documents).

Interviews (qualitative) → Survey/SNA (quantitative) → Interpret the connected results → Policy analysis (qualitative) → Interpret the connected results

Interviews (qualitative) → Observations (qualitative) → Interpret the connected results
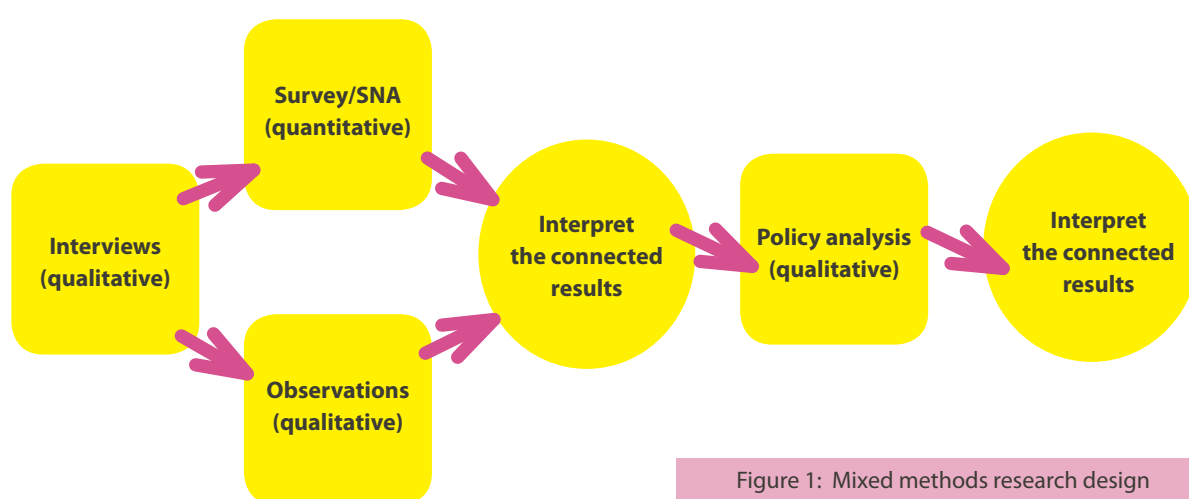
Figure 1: Mixed methods research design

Club sampling and recruitment

The research used purposive sampling to select and recruit community sports clubs for inclusion in the study. The clubs – nine in total – were chosen because they possessed certain characteristics that made them well suited for addressing the research aims, based on the following sampling criteria:

- The club organises junior sports competitions for children and young people in one or more of five mass participation sports: Australian Rules football (henceforth: football), Association football (henceforth: soccer), netball, cricket and basketball

- The club is based in Victoria

- The club has a minimum of 80 members (in order to enable SNA)

- The club is recognised by the relevant NSO and/or SSO as being engaged in diversity work with regard to cultural diversity, gender and/or disability (in order to allow for the identification of good practices).

The final sampling criterion is of critical import when interpreting the findings presented in this report. The data presented were collected from a purposive sample, as opposed to a cross-sectional or representative sample of community sports clubs. More specifically, the sample comprised clubs that were recognised by the relevant NSO and/or SSO as being relatively active in promoting diversity. Research shows that diversity management is not being adopted widely among local sports clubs in Victoria (Spaaij et al., 2014), and the clubs examined in this study are thus (relatively) atypical or outlier cases that potentially contain good practices in this domain. These cases are especially important for the purpose of this study as they reveal more comprehensive information than the potentially representative case.

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An initial database of clubs that met the sampling criteria was compiled by the research team in consultation with the partner organisations and relevant SSOs. The database was informed by the results of a pilot study the research team conducted in the years leading up to this project (Spaaij et al., 2014; Jeanes et al., 2017).

A diverse sample of junior clubs was deliberately created with regard to geographical location, types of sport, areas of diversity in which the clubs were active, socio-economic status (SES) and membership size. Clubs were invited to participate in the research through a formal invitation letter that described the research aims and methodology and the nature of participation. The club committees were required to approve the clubs' participation in the project which, for de-identification purposes, were then assigned a pseudonym.

Table 1: Outlines some basic characteristics of the nine clubs, as well as the pseudonyms used to refer the clubs in this report. The geographical areas in which the clubs were located ranged from very low to very high in terms of SES as ranked by the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011).

Club pseudonym	Location	Type(s) of sport	Data collection phase(s)
Lions	Metropolitan Melbourne	Basketball	1
Firebirds	Outer Metropolitan	Football, Netball	1, 2, 3
Giants	Metropolitan Melbourne	Soccer	1, 2
Tigers	Outer Metropolitan	Football	1, 2
Vixens	Regional/rural Victoria	Football, netball	1
Sharks	Regional Victoria	Soccer	1
Rangers	Metropolitan Melbourne	Cricket	1
Eagles	Metropolitan Melbourne	Cricket	1
Kangaroos	Metropolitan Melbourne	Soccer	1, 2, 3

Figure 2: Data samples

This figure summarises the connections between the data collected in the four phases. It shows that while the sample for the policy analysis strand was separate, comprising a wider range of policy documents, the samples of the other methods (interviews, survey/SNA and observations) are nested within that of the others (Yin, 2006). The data samples and procedures for each research component are explained in detail in the next chapters of this report.

Observations
(2 clubs, 200 hours)

Surveys/SNA
(4 clubs, n = 450)

Interviews
(9 clubs, n =101)
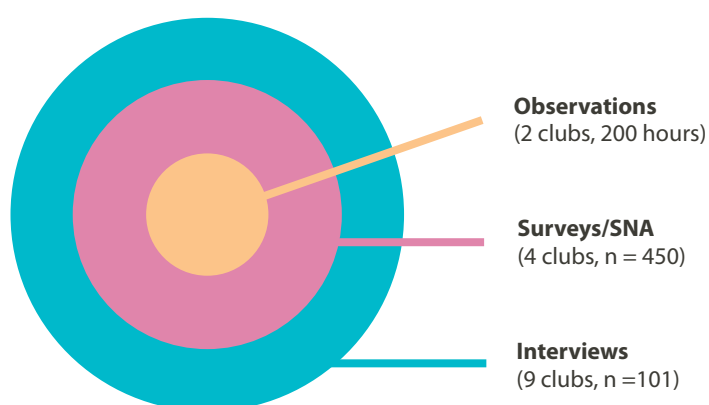
Ethics approval for this research was initially obtained from La Trobe University (Human Ethics Committee Application No. 2010–13) on 11 September 2013. A submission to Victoria University then followed and the proposed research project was accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (22 January 2014).

The next sections present an overview of the aims, methods and findings of each of the research components.

Participation versus performance:

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Phase ⓵ : Interviews

Aims

Phase 1 of the research aimed to identify how diversity is understood, experienced and managed within junior sports participation, and to assess the application and effectiveness of existing policy frameworks and strategies within these local settings.

Method

A pilot interview study was initially conducted to develop and test the appropriateness and relevance of the interview questions (Spaaij et al., 2014). Based on the pilot study results, the interview guide was refined and a number of questions were reformulated and added. In addition, ongoing discussion and reflection within the research team allowed for researcher triangulation, as investigators who are experts on specific aspects of diversity (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, disability, Indigenous) were given the opportunity to provide feedback, advice and input into the development of the interview guide.

Face-to-face interviews were then conducted at each case study club in one-on-one or one-on-two (paired) situations. The purpose of the interview was explained to each participant(s) and a consent form was then signed by both the researcher conducting the interview and the adult subject. In the case of subjects under 18 years, informed consent was acquired from both the participant and their parent/guardian. All participants were guaranteed anonymity, and consent to withdraw from the research at any point was made available to each interviewee. It should be noted that no subject did withdraw their interview data. Interviews were conducted mostly around club venues and sites but some were held in other locations, including cafés and participants' homes and workplaces.

From the qualitative incursion, junior player interviews ran for approximately 10–20 minutes and adult interviews 30–90 minutes on average. A total of 101 interviews were conducted, with 10% of participants aged 10–14, 20% aged 15–19, 10% aged 20–24, 20% aged 25–34, 20% aged 35–44 and 20% aged 45–54. Approximately 60% of subjects were male and 40% were female.

The focus of the interviews was to initially acquire each subject's personal and sporting history and then investigate their commitment and attitudes to diversity, and perceptions and experiences of (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity at their club. Further questions explored any specific actions or initiatives the individual had taken to promote diversity at the club (both within the junior sections and, if applicable, within the club more broadly), and their perceptions and experiences of resistance to diversity were required as part of the interview. Questions either pertained directly to the theoretical framework outlined in the following section (e.g. what things have you done to make people from different backgrounds feel comfortable at the club? Do you think your efforts have changed the club at all?), or were framed in a more general way (e.g. how would you describe what diversity is at the club?). Lastly, subjects were asked for their views on whether key stakeholders, such as SSOs, assisted the club to introduce and implement diversity and inclusion policies, and what the effects of such assistance (if any) had been. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts were entered into Nvivo 11 data analysis software and coded using thematic analysis techniques. All research team members independently read a proportion (10%) of the transcripts and coded passages of text firstly using an open (or initial meaning code) and secondly an axial (or categorisation of open codes) coding scheme. For example, the statement 'We've only got so many people doing things and it's becomes about the amount of work you put in and what comes back out … getting disability teams up and running is a lot of work and it will likely not lead to that many members' was initially coded as resistance. After similar statements related to the theme resistance were open coded, all the statements under this code were then coded a second time to further categorise the statement. Dialogue among the research team resulted in intersubjective agreement on the interpretation of the identified passages and codes. Two of the research team then coded the transcripts line by line whilst a third investigator reviewed the coding to come up with an agreed set of codes and sub-codes.

Findings

Interview data explored individuals' perceptions, experiences and understandings of diversity within sporting clubs. The 101 individual interviews explored the various ways clubs approach diversity work and resulted in an increased understanding of diversity and inclusion within sporting clubs. The findings highlight the wide range of differing views and approaches to diversity, as well as the different strategies and challenges experienced by individuals and clubs working in this space.

Participation versus performance:

Several key findings emerged from the analysis:

- Each junior club experienced diversity differently and each club demonstrated different approaches and levels of commitment to diversity.

- Commitment to and action toward diversity was highly dependent on the commitment and initiative of an individual 'champion' rather than being institutionalised throughout junior club structures. Often, diversity initiatives would be driven by a champion who is committed to promote a particular aspect of diversity.

- Committee-level commitment to diversity was often verbalised but largely reliant on a champion to action.

- Understandings of diversity were broad and significantly differed between individuals and junior clubs. This was often dependent on the broader club culture and context.

- Junior clubs would focus upon aspects of diversity that were present in their cultures and contexts while ignoring (sometimes unintentionally) other aspects of diversity.

- The position of a junior club in regards to participation or performance significantly influenced the approach of the club towards understanding and managing diversity.

Each of these findings is discussed in turn.

Commitment to diversity

The junior clubs in the research project demonstrated varying levels of institutional commitment to diversity, with some clubs having more commitment to diversity than others, but overall there was not a consistent approach across all clubs to diversity commitment and practice. It was apparent that junior clubs recognised the benefits of diversity to clubs, e.g. with regard to increased membership and volunteers, club capacity and sustainability, as well as delivering social and health benefits to the community. Most junior clubs who demonstrated commitment to diversity did so from a business case perspective, while others committed to diversity from a social justice orientation to promote inclusion for all. The club fabric and broader social environment underpinned junior clubs' approach to diversity. Many committee and club members recognised changing community norms and demographics and the need to accept and value difference, thereby self-positioning the club as a key tenet at the heart of the local community, welcoming all members of that community, regardless of individual background or personal circumstances. Junior clubs, however, tended to consider and act on individual axes of diversity in isolation, such as cultural diversity or gender diversity, and were not inclined to see different forms of diversity as being inter-related or as part of a broader diversity agenda.

In doing so, their actions were informed by a narrow conception of diversity, with a more intersectional approach to diversity virtually non-existent in any of the junior sport clubs we interviewed. Further, despite junior clubs committing to diversity or having an avowed policy position, fragmentation within club cultures was still evident, particularly with issues such as perceived masculine dominance. As a result, these perceptions translated from discursive examples and practice that manifested into things such as racial and cultural stereotyping. Such fractures could be seen to work against diversity, inclusion and a 'fair go for all', despite the best of institutional intentions and club commitment. As an example, the Firebirds netball president indicated that 'basically netball attached onto the football, well, the male football club', and the feeling of being the poorer relation in this arrangement meant that:

'I personally believe that football is recognised more than a netball club. We do not get enough sponsorship compared to football clubs which I'm sure is similar to everywhere… Same as publicity, there is more publicity on the football in the local area than the netball, even though there's so much more netball games a day [at the club], there's ten days on the netball compared to four football games.'

This broader perception within the club environment had a ripple effect on the junior sections, with the girls' netball teams perceived to be less important than the boys' football teams. Recognising this issue, the president of the football club commented that:

'I guess once upon a time the club as I said earlier the club was just a boys' club, it was a boys' football club, that's what it was, and now things have changed' and indicated that the club was *'still changing that theory of "it's a men's club at a football club"* into a, *"no it's actually just a community club" and that's what we aim to be.'* **(President, Firebirds).**

A further example of the divide can be seen at the Vixens, which is based in the country. It appears that while the club has worked hard in the diversity space, the tension at the club could be characterised as being gender related as well as arising from cultural/racial issues. Like the Firebirds, the Vixens is a combined football and netball club. For the president of the football club, the issue is one whereby the netballers (read: girls and women) need to become more socially active within the football club that they are part of.

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The president of the Vixens sees that this could be of mutual benefit to both entities, but feels the netball club is reluctant to participate in the social side and the operational aspect when fundraisers are organised.

'They don't really get themselves involved, socially. When I took over the junior presidency I really tried to get them in, I tried to bring them into our meetings and they never come (sic). This is my first year at seniors and I've made them, not made them, asked them to do teas, I've asked them to do the bar, you know when we've got a band going. There's 200 girls over there, and we're only talking about ten or 12 coming back to our rooms. They just play their game and go home.'

He speaks of the divide between the football and netball in terms of the social aspect of the club:

'Footy mums are probably better than the netball ones. They hang around a bit more. Netball, they just do their thing and go. I don't know how they explain that one. Probably a couple of our committee men here have got both, you know girls and boys.'

Further to this, there is a distinct multicultural mix within the club's immediate social environment. This has created multiple challenges to recruit and retain junior players, according to the football president:

'Well we probably haven't done enough. We've probably let just things roll, [at] the footy club, this is where people should mingle. You know this is the main sporting team of the town so 'you come to us'. So, yeah, probably when you think about it we probably have not done enough to get out there amongst the Asians. We have really worked with the Pacific Islanders, and we've got a good relationship. That relationship's not too bad. Yeah, but the Asians are just hard to crack. '

A key issue at this club in the last few years has been its engagement with the local Aboriginal community. Despite having a long history of Aboriginal involvement with the club, the Vixens is struggling with recruiting and retaining Aboriginal junior players. The Aboriginal players and residents interviewed for this study suggest that the issues at the club stem from broader community tensions that they believe have led potential Aboriginal players to become frustrated and move to other teams in other towns to play, or to simply stop playing altogether. One Aboriginal player explains:

'The only option that they're left with [is] to tell these guys 'enough's enough'. This is what we want, this is what we need [to continue participation at the club] and it would not only be better for our mob but it would better the football club itself. They would find a lot of Aboriginal people will come back to the club and they will play for this club and they will start to win games, they'll start to move up the ladder, they'll start breaking down barriers.'

Diversity champion

In junior clubs, diversity programs were often driven by a champion who had a particular interest in one or more aspects of diversity. For example, the inaugural President of the Kangaroos was credited with establishing the club in 2008 as 'one of the members of the… club suggested having something for girls and suggested soccer. So I got very involved in actually setting it up, having a daughter who also loved her sport and want ed to play in that' (Inaugural President, Kangaroos). However, his daughter left in 2011, at a time when the current president joined the club. The new president had transitioned from 'watching parent' to coach to committee member to now president, driving the club in terms of enhancing the membership base by increasing participation numbers. Wider club members like coaches, parents and players indicated how central the president was to the club's functioning and sustainability and held the view that without his considerable efforts, such as organising training, ordering equipment, liaising with the local council and SSO and formal committee work, the club would not survive and thrive the way it does. The Tigers also had a similar diversity champion who visited local schools to run footy clinics which then turned the club around from having a reducing membership base to a burgeoning one.

Regarding diversity champions, however, it has to be stated that there are reverse effects of the reliance on them to promote and deliver diversity change, and the Firebirds is a clear example of this in two ways.

Participation versus performance:

Firstly, the diversity champion can be considered to be 'doing their thing' rather than doing a 'club thing', even if they have the support—more so verbal than resource-based—of the committee. These diversity champions and their diversity initiatives can become isolated and detached from core club business even if the committee values their contributions. At the Firebirds, the president indicated that all-abilities football was 'a special group in the club, they've come down and just want to be accepted in society and want to be doing the things that they see some of these guys out here doing…so we deal with them accordingly and they have functions here' (President, Firebirds). The original all-abilities co-ordinator had a strong passion for disability through her professional employment and took it upon herself to establish the all-abilities team, but from the outset found that the overall club culture was not best suited to all-abilities football 'as a whole it is about the winning, the premierships, the flag…where I'm talking Colts to your seniors, that's what they're there for you know. The all-abilities is very removed from that' (original all-abilities co-ordinator, Firebirds). Despite the president indicating broader support for the all-abilities team, the co-ordinator was left somewhat isolated in her role and struggled to gain much support from the wider club:

> *There were so many hats I was wearing to get the team started and so those first sort of two or three years it was more just about getting the team [out], I'd run the canteen, get the food for the team, get the uniforms, there was so much going on…there was one year there that I seemed to be doing everything.*(original all-abilities co-ordinator, Firebirds)

Additionally, junior clubs' over-reliance on an individual diversity champion is precarious should the champion feel a sense of being over-burdened and being unable to cope, have to give up their role due to external circumstances (e.g. due to changing employment) or feel the sense of isolation and lack of recognition from the broader club, particularly the committee. In such cases, this nature of diversity work can cause diversity champions to question their own involvement and commitment, something which occurred at the Firebirds, as the original co-ordinator of the all-abilities team found the role too exhausting and demanding so removed herself from it. On reflection, the 'role ended up being a lot more than just the helper… It was, yeah it was a really big job' (original all-abilities co-ordinator, Firebirds) that was taxing in logistical and organisational terms, but also confronting in dealing with issues arising from the behaviour of individuals with disabilities. All-abilities football continued at the Firebirds, as the original co-ordinator had managed to garner enough support people to take on the various duties, re-emphasising the 'ripple effect'. Whilst club champions are fundamentally critical where diversity work is concerned, there needs to be a broader understanding of the pressures and strains placed on diversity champions and also how appearing to leave them to 'do their thing' can create a sense of isolation and worthlessness. Further, junior clubs also need to consider how perilous it is to adopt the champion position when it comes to implementing diversity for the medium to long term in case that champion leaves.

On the other hand, the work of diversity champions can potentially have a 'ripple effect' by inspiring other club members to engage in similar behaviours (Cunningham and Melton, 2014). Their ability to instigate such a ripple effect appears to be mediated by both their position in club social networks (trust, etc.) and their ability to build partnerships with schools (especially special schools in the case of disability), local councils and other community organisation stakeholders. The importance of this champion to some junior clubs is vital; without their commitment, a particular diversity axis would not be present and a particular marginalised population would not experience sport participation at the club.

Committee-level engagement

Committee-level commitment to diversity was a challenge for many junior clubs for many reasons. At three clubs a committee-driven approach was notably absent, as change was driven by individual champions committed to a particular diversity axis. Though champions are a valuable club asset, at times there was a lack of communication between the champion and committee, with a Rangers coach stating that 'even though [volunteers are] on the Committee they're not told what's actually happening'. Thus, even when a diversity champion is making positive change, there can be a disconnect between them and the wider committee. This was seen in the Firebirds all-abilities team, where over time assistance came from parents and other family members of all-abilities players rather than the broader club. Although this assistance permitted the all-abilities team to establish and grow 'with our own support people…it was about everyone having a go' (original all-abilities co-ordinator, Firebirds), it is fair to indicate that despite stated committee support the all-abilities team was a club within a junior club that operated almost independently from core club business. While the co-ordinator was nominated for the committee as part of broader committee support for the all-abilities team, it was clear that 'my portfolio was the all-abilities' (original all-abilities co-ordinator, Firebirds) with little crossover between both. The lack of commitment to diversity demonstrated by most of the club committees is believed to have an impact on the degree a junior club can sustain structural and cultural changes. As seen above, there are challenges in relying upon a club champion. Thus, there is a need for club committees to engage more directly with diversity in order to implement ongoing change.

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Contextualised understandings of diversity

Whilst operating in the diversity space, there were considerable differences across the junior clubs with regard to the way they understood, experienced and managed diversity. Junior clubs' understanding, experiences and attitudes to diversity are highly contextual. Diversity as a concept was interpreted in many different ways both within and across clubs. Individuals at clubs were often confused about diversity language and what diversity actually is. The individual context and culture of each club tended to set the parameters for what diversity was, which in turn dictated the practical response to diversity within each club. For example, at the Lions Basketball Club, the self-identified white, middle class club was transformed into a more culturally diverse club through local population changes with the arrival of migrants from Horn of Africa who were low SES.

The Firebirds Football and Netball Club was historically regarded as a masculine dominant club, but a committee-led drive to alter that placed gender diversity more to the fore than in previous times. Being located in a cosmopolitan area that housed same-sex couples meant that at the Kangaroos Soccer Club there was extensive awareness around gender diversity, cultural diversity and homophobia. Underpinning this individual club context, however, was a wide and varied interpretation of what diversity was and how it related to the club and its members, with common open-ended interpretations offered, such as, 'open to everyone', 'welcoming of all', 'a mix of social classes', 'cultural diversity, accepting different cultures', 'different groups' and 'all-inclusive'. Practical examples, however, did feature how diversity was implemented and managed.

The Lions Basketball Club, which had members from the Horn of Africa, whose families did not own a vehicle, implemented a 'parent taxi share scheme' to transport such players to and from training and game venues. Another club, the Kangaroos Soccer Club, had a similar taxi pooling system that was based on keeping friendship circles together after grading rather than grading on ability levels, which could have threatened a team's existence. A further example was how the Giants Soccer, Tigers Football, Kangaroos Soccer and Eagles Cricket clubs all implemented a subsidised fees policy to allow low SES members to participate in the club due to limited available finance within the family circle. The Firebirds Football Netball Club also organised a 'whole of club Guernsey presentation night' so that girls' and women's football teams, as well as all-abilities footballers, were present alongside boys' and senior men's teams, rather than each holding their own separate evenings.

The broad range of definitions and the varied examples of diversity practice indicate a wide interpretation of the concept of diversity that then results in an equally wide range of practical responses to diversity engagement, policy and practice in junior sports clubs. However, there were individual cases where some club members were unable to provide a definition of diversity and had no base upon which to understand it at their junior club, highlighting the complexities of defining, understanding and managing diversity.

Local needs drive engagement with diversity

Related to the previous point is that with varying interpretations of what diversity was, a mixed approach to instilling diversity policy featured within certain clubs, favouring only those diversity and inclusion policies regarded as specific to their needs, rather than a holistic approach per se. As an example, the Giants Soccer, Kangaroos Soccer and Eagles Cricket clubs all adopted a club policy of equal pitch time to prevent situations where the more talented players received more game time than the least talented players. However, these clubs often found that opponent clubs did not have such a policy and preferred to keep the best players playing all the time to guarantee maximum chances of winning. Not only did this result in the potential for demoralising, heavy defeats, it also caused internal friction as to why this diversity policy existed when it seemingly placed the club and its teams at a disadvantage. The typical reaction to this was for these clubs to remain firm in their inclusion policies through equal participation and to 'not be like them' (opponent clubs who placed winning and performance above all else)

> *I think there are some clubs that the competitive juices can get out of control a bit and you just think... but everybody... it's just a matter of the gap between how long they take their competitive instincts before participation kicks back in again. I don't think [there are] too many clubs that participation dominates competitiveness. It's always competitiveness first, and there's just a gap between where does participation catch up. And for us, I think we do pretty well, but there are times where you just think, really? They're only 12 years old, you know.* ' (President, Eagles Cricket Club)

This is another example of the tensions that face community junior sports clubs with regard to providing inclusive participation opportunities that seemingly appear at odds with performance objectives and the dominant winning culture that permeates broader sport. Overall, it appeared that whilst clubs engaged with diversity, it was more of an isolated or targeted response than a holistic one. The Giants Soccer Club considered itself engaged with diversity policy and practice, yet it had no policy in place for, or practical response to, providing opportunities to individuals with disabilities or engaging with newly arrived migrants from African nations. The all-abilities football team at the Firebirds Football Netball Club compiled their own code of conduct that was adapted from the broader club's code of conduct to allow for certain behavioural issues of some all-abilities players, yet did not have an equal game time policy, so the more talented players dominated game time. Therefore, the local needs of the junior club were responded to rather than diversity per se.

Participation versus performance:

Participation versus performance

The orientation of individual clubs with regard to the participation versus performance spectrum was critical in how junior clubs viewed and prioritised diversity. While participation and performance are not mutually exclusive, a tension existed between the promotion of diversity and inclusion on the one hand, and the focus on performance on the other hand. Most junior clubs positioned themselves towards the participation end of the spectrum, with the core aim to provide opportunity to participate in the sport and enjoy the benefits that brings. However, this philosophy was compromised where teams had less ability and also by scoreboard pressure, especially in the case of opponent clubs who possessed a focus on fielding the best team possible to win. Junior clubs promoting diversity were generally regarded as not serious, not interested in winning and as having no interest in harnessing talented players—they were therefore perceived as being appropriate for those who 'are no good'. This challenged junior clubs, particularly in relation to how parents, as volunteer coaches with little experience, dealt with the impact of such competitive conditions and the non-inclusive cultures portrayed by opponent, win-centric clubs. Interestingly, at the Kangaroos, a coach relayed the following situation:

'We had one kid who four weeks ago quit which was… we had discussed this at training and at the game, we were really shocked that another parent would allow their daughter to quit with four weeks to go when we needed the numbers to see the season through because she was sick of losing, which was interesting. And it became one of these discussions that that's a really bad lesson to teach your child because if you do something, you commit to it and then you see it through until the end and then you don't come back next year but you don't quit with four weeks to go.' (Coach, Kangaroos Soccer Club)

The fragility of demarking participation from performance was evident and is best summarised by these comments:

'Overall the club philosophy is about giving people as much time on the pitch as possible, that that's spread fairly amongst the kind of things, but some coaches apply that differently and it's not really policed in that sense, so if some girls are regularly being benched it's hard to manage that unless parents are telling us and ultimately the coach decides. There will be some pressure put on that coach about fairness, but ultimately they may have a different thing about trying to get as… make their team as competitive as possible. It's no point playing every week where you're getting thrashed seven nil if you've got half your team, your best players on the bench because you're doing that spreading that fairly.'
(President, Kangaroos)

And again:

'We have flurries of moments where we're too competitive, and then we have enough people around us and enough common sense to pull back and realise that [chuckles].'(President, Eagles)

However, promoting participation instead of performance in a competitive format caused friction with some coaches. At the Sharks, a newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) recognised how some coaches were fragmenting the club by advocating a different philosophy to the club's, which created a situation for players whereby 'no one wanted to come here' (CEO, Sharks). Thus, he instilled a revamped and more inclusive code of conduct for coaches based on a 'no-nonsense approach' (CEO, Sharks) that resulted in the replacement of coaches who directly conflicted with this new approach; this action, however, saw an increase in participation through the club's new found inclusive approach. The Kangaroos and Eagles also reported similar situations: the Kangaroos removed a coach because of their performance-driven focus, whilst at the Eagles a fair play policy on equal participation resulted in some coaches being asked to leave the club as 'you make decisions that are not all just about winning' (coach, Eagles). These examples highlighted explicitly the tensions that community sports clubs experience when seeking to enact diversity change to make the club all-welcoming and inclusive with a greater emphasis on participation than performance. Resistance to diversity change was thus a key challenge that junior clubs faced, particularly with regard to problems arising from fractured club cultures and performance over participation.

Beyond this, junior clubs faced further difficulty when individual coaches moved towards the performance end of the spectrum as a response to the competitive nature of sport and thus clashed with or even went against the club's directives on equal pitch time and participation over performance. In some instances this forced clubs to cease with certain coaches, but that in turn then created further problems and pressures on the club to attend to one of its core business activities: having enough coaches to deliver training and match day games. This was summarised by the Kangaroos Soccer Club President, who very much instilled the participation policy within the club, attempting to 'keep on top of that sort of stuff all the time, but you're relying on volunteers and…it's not easy, that stuff.' Fundamentally, capacity and capability issues were a key factors in diversity management, as the strict application of any diversity and inclusion policy, such as equal pitch time, could place too much of a perceived constraint on volunteers. There were fears that volunteers would decide to cease involvement with the junior club, thus threatening the junior club's core operation and existence, especially in the case of team managers and coaches, who are tasked more with the practical delivery of the club. Therefore, it is critical that clubs understand the difficulties in promoting participation over performance in a competitive environment like sport, where some club members could perceive winning to be the junior club's core business.

Managing (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport

Participation versus performance.

Phase ②: Survey & Social Network Analysis

Aims

Phase 2 of the research aimed to provide a cross-sectional questionnaire relating to issues of diversity and social networks at four case study clubs. This aspect of the research had two components that were conducted as a single, integrated research questionnaire:

(a) Survey:

Questions asked participants about their attitudes towards diversity (including participation and performance) as well as their views on the club's approach to diversity. This dataset (pooled across all clubs) will be analysed using standard statistical techniques using SPSS, looking for overall patterns in responses, and how these relate to demographic details such as gender, ethno-cultural background and (dis)ability.

(b) Social network analysis (SNA):

Social network questions will also be asked of the entire research sample to examine patterns of social relationships of participants within their clubs. The networks examined were friendship, trust and advice, but also negative interactions, such as whom participants have differences of opinion with. SNA analyses were conducted separately by each club. How diversity operates within a club was then informed by examining social relationships within that club. The networks in this study were modelled using cutting-edge statistical models for social networks—specifically, exponential random graph models (ERGM). ERGMs enable the research team to move beyond simply drawing network pictures, and instead permit inferences to be made of how and why the network processes which develop and sustain networks have arisen. ERGM statistically examined all of these social relational possibilities simultaneously to unpack the complexity of social interaction, and show which types of social interaction occur with regularity within a particular social context such as a sports club. The network models examined each club as a separate and unique social context. As the number of observations is not the number of individuals within the club, n, but instead the number of possible relations between them, n(n-1), for a club of 100 people the number of data points is 100 (100-1) = 9,900, which gave each analysis considerable statistical power. Network visualisations were produced using the Pajek software and the ERGMs were done in the PNet software.

Method

The selection of the four case study clubs to conduct this phase of research was determined by initial findings uncovered in the interviews and participant observation phases. Questionnaire data was collected at club venues either after training or on game day. The purpose of the survey was explained to each subject and a consent form was then signed by adult subjects. In the case of subjects under 18 years, informed consent was acquired from either their parent or guardian. All subjects were provided with a list of club members' names and a code which they used if they wished to refer to a club member colleague during the survey for anonymity purposes.

Not everyone from each club participated, so there may be some views from each of the clubs that we have not heard. For most social surveys in any context, it is rare to get everyone from a community sports club, organisation or some other group to participate. Given that we need to obtain consent from young people under 18 and also their parent/guardian, getting high participation rates was difficult. This is particularly an issue for social network results because missing data is more problematic in SNA than standard survey data and associated statistics because SNA aims to give a system-wide perspective of a club. If parts of the system are missing from the analysis there can be problems.
This is data we have, and we report on it below.

Findings

We present the survey and social network data per club together to provide a more holistic overview of what is happening at each club. Importantly, we do not just look at the network visualisations (i.e. network maps, such as Figures 1 and 2) but rather apply statistical models for social networks that help us to make sound claims regarding why people make social network ties with others (see Lusher, Koskinen & Robins, 2013). As such, we are running statistical analyses on these networks. For both the standard survey data and the network analyses there was variability across the four clubs we examined.

Survey results

The descriptive statistics and statistical analyses give us a picture of who responded for each club and what they said. Overall, 450 participants (63.1% male; 62.4% under 18 years of age) completed the survey. There was an average age of 21.0 years, an average club membership length of 4.4 years, and an average socio-economic score of 986.89. This socio-economic score is a measure used by the ABS (SEIFA) and is based upon home postcode, with an average of 1,000 (and a standard deviation of 100) and higher scores representing higher SES. (See table of results over page.)

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Phase 2 Survey Results

	Overall sample	Firebirds Football Netball Club	Giants Soccer Club	Tigers Football Club	Kangaroos Soccer Club
# Survey respondents	450	162 (36.0%)	84 (18.7%)	138 (30.7%)	66 (14.7%)
Adults	169 (37.6%)	131 (80.9%)	13 (15.5%)	18 (13.0%)	7 (10.6%)
Children	281 (62.4%)	31 (19.1%)	71 (84.5%)	120 (87.0%)	59 (89.4%)
Age of children (average in years)	13.59	14.32	13.66	13.83	12.63
Male	284 (63.1%)	92 (56.8%)	75 (89.3%)	112 (81.2%)	5 (7.6%)
Female	166 (36.9%)	70 (43.2%)	9 (10.7%)	26 (18.8%)	61 (92.4%)
Network size	360	160	81	119	63
Roles					
Committee	29 (6.4%)	12 (7.4%)	8 (9.5%)	7 (5.1%)	2 (3.0%)
Parents	16 (3.6%)	1 (0.6%)	5 (6.0%)	5 (3.6%)	5 (7.6%)
Coaches	29 (6.4%)	9 (5.6%)	3 (3.6%)	13 (9.4%)	4 (6.1%)
Players	400 (88.9%)	150 (92.6%)	71 (84.5%)	120 (87.0%)	59 (89.4%)
Other	14 (3.1%)	6 (3.7%)	6 (7.1%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (1.5%)
Sports played					
Football	200 (44.4%)	116 (71.6%)	84 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Netball	45 (10.0%)	45 (27.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Soccer	204 (45.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	138 (100%)	66 (100%)
>1 sport	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
# Disabilities	12 (2.7%)	3 (1.9%)	3 (3.6%)	5 (3.6%)	1 (1.5%)
# Dominant culture	312 (69.3%)	135 (83.3%)	48 (57.1%)	95 (68.8%)	34 (51.5%)
Births overseas					
Participant	50 (11.5%)	3 (1.9%)	7 (8.3%)	35 (25.4%)	5 (7.6%)
Mother	139 (30.9%)	23 (14.2%)	33 (39.3%)	62 (44.5%)	21 (31.8%)
Father	140 (31.1%)	30 (18.5%)	31 (36.9%)	61 (44.2%)	18 (27.3%)
Average Age (years)	21.02	26.90	17.56	18.28	16.74
Average socio-economic score	986.89	987.74	996.13	941.63	1023.12

We examined individual-level predictors (e.g. gender, age) of various attitudes (e.g. pro-performance, gender equality) that participants within community sports club held, using linear regression models. We found that gender (i.e. being female) significantly predicted pro-participation attitudes (i.e. giving everyone a go rather than playing to win). We also found that gender (this time, being male) significantly predicted adherence to strict gender roles. Regarding the endorsement of girls/women being treated the same as boys/men at the club, significant predictors were being male and having a non-Anglo Australian ethno-cultural background. On the issue of masculine violence (e.g. 'it's natural for men to get into fights'), those who were more likely to agree with such statements were males, but also younger participants. This latter finding is a little

Participation versus performance:

worrying and suggests greater adherence or acceptance by young people more generally for gendered (male) violent behaviour. Regarding homophobia, significant predictors were, again, being male and being younger. Again, gender is an issue here for homophobia, but also youth. Finally, when examining pro-disability attitudes with statements such as 'I would be happy to have players with a disability on my team, even if it would limit my team's chance of success', it was found that females were significantly more likely to agree.

Social Network Analyses (SNA)

The figures below show example network visualisations of friendship (Figure 1) and difference of opinion (Figure 2). Notice that there are many more ties for the friendship network, which indicates that there are more positive relationships (e.g. friendship, trust, give support to) at the club than disagreements (e.g. differences of opinion). We do not present network visualisations of all networks for all four clubs here due to space limitations. In summary though, this pattern of there being more positive and less negative social relationships is found across all four clubs examined here.

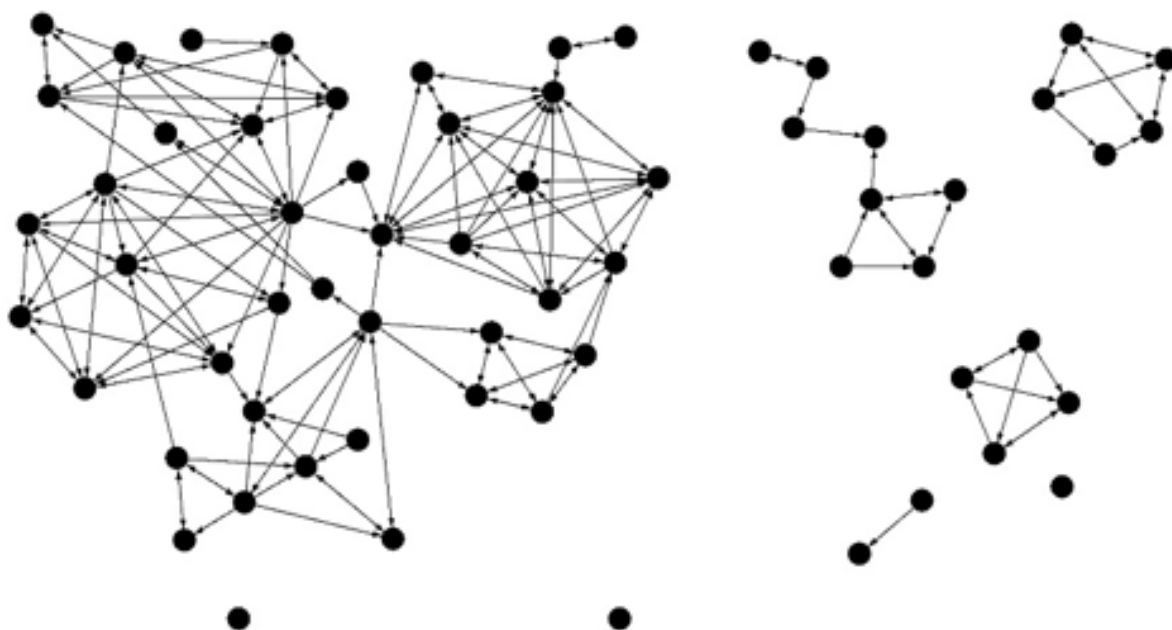Figure 1: Friendship ties at Kangaroos Soccer Club

Figure 2: Differences of opinions at Kangaroos Soccer Club

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Club survey and social network results

Firebirds Football Netball Club

The Firebirds had a total of 162 survey respondents, with the majority being over 18 years of age (n = 131; 80.9%) and male (n = 92; 56.8%). The average age of survey respondents was 26.9. On average, respondents had been members of the club for 4.51 years. The club's predominant sport was footy (n = 116; 71.6%), followed by netball (n = 45; 27.8%). The Firebirds comprised 150 players (92.6%), 12 committee members (7.4%), nine coaches (5.6%), one parent (.6%) and six people in an 'other' role (3.7%). Three respondents reported being born overseas (1.9%), while just under 20% had a parent born overseas (mother: n = 23; 14.2%, father: n = 30; 18.5%). Three respondents from the Firebirds reported a disability (1.9%), while 135 respondents (83.3%) reported that they belonged to the dominant culture. The average socio-economic score for the Firebirds was 987.74. The network size for the Firebirds was 160. Survey respondents from the Firebirds comprised 36% of total respondents from the overall study.

Importantly, the Firebirds score was significantly higher than all other clubs on endorsing a pro-performance perspective (as opposed to giving everyone a go). As noted, the Firebirds had a much higher percentage of adults compared to the other three clubs, and also the club was significantly different to other clubs in that it had a greater than expected proportion of people from the 'dominant' Anglo ethno-cultural background. Participants from Firebirds rated their general health as significantly lower than all other clubs, and their combined satisfaction with life, sports club and community was significantly lower than the Tigers and the Kangaroos. On the issue of gender equality, the Firebirds scored significantly lower than all other clubs on females being treated equally to males at the club. The Firebirds scored significantly lower than the Kangaroos on being happy to have a player with a disability on the team. The Firebirds was significantly lower on homophobia than the Tigers. Overall, in the Firebirds there is a co-occurrence of a high representation of males, less equal gender attitudes and higher pro-performance attitudes, suggesting there may be a link between beliefs around masculinity and sporting performance.

The social network data for the Firebirds suggests that older people are seen to set the culture of the club. With regards to trust, older people at the Club are more trusted, and people are more likely to trust others of similar ages to themselves. At the Firebirds, people are more likely to provide support to others who support performance rather than participation, and there is a separate effect of providing support to others, with similar views on performance versus participation. Older people at the Firebirds are both more likely to say they have differences of opinions with others, and also be the people that others nominate as having differences of opinion. Further, beyond these effects, people also have differences of opinion

with others who are of a similar age to themselves. For the Firebirds, for all networks except 'difference of opinion' (i.e. culture setting, friendship, trust, provide support to, and gives you help) players who were nominated as the 'best players' in the team were also more likely to be nominated for these five networks.

Giants Soccer Club

The Giants had a total of 84 survey respondents, with the majority being under 18 years of age (n = 71; 84.5%) and male (n = 75; 89.3%). The average age of survey respondents in the Giants was 17.56. On average, respondents had been members of the club for 5.28 years. The club's only sport played was footy, and membership comprised 71 players (84.5%), eight committee members (9.5%), three coaches (3.6%), five parents (6%) and six people in an 'other' role (7.1%). Seven respondents reported being born overseas (8.3%), while just under 40% had a parent born overseas (mother: n = 33; 39.3%, father: n = 31; 36.9%). Three respondents from the Giants reported a disability (3.6%), while 48 respondents (57.1%) reported that they had an Anglo ethno-cultural background. The average socio-economic score for respondents from the Giants was 1057.10. The network size for the Giants was 81. Survey respondents from the Giants comprised 18.7% of total respondents from the overall study.

The Giants participants were significantly more likely to have parents who were born overseas and rated themselves significantly higher on feeling safe walking alone in their community during the day compared to the other three clubs. Participants from the Giants felt less socially included at the club than participants from the Kangaroos. Finally, people at the Giants scored significantly higher than people from the Firebirds on feeling uncomfortable around people who are different to them.

At the Giants, those people who are seen to set the culture of the club are those who strongly value participation over performance, and further, such people are more commonly perceived as giving assistance to others. Yet, when we examine who people trust, it is people that strongly value performance over participation—so there are mixed views within this club. Additionally, people from the Giants were more likely to have differences of opinion with other people who had low SES. In regards to friendship, people are more likely to be friends with other people who hold similar views to themselves regarding pro-performance perspective. So this appears to be a club where there are mixed views and subcultures around the issue of performance versus participation. Again, as for the previous club, at the Giants, for all networks except 'difference of opinion' (i.e. culture setting, friendship, trust, provide support to, and gives you help), players who were nominated as the 'best players' in the team were also more likely to be nominated for these five networks.

Participation versus performance:

Tigers Football Club

The Tigers had a total of 138 survey respondents, with the majority being under 18 years of age (n = 120; 87%) and male (n = 112; 81.2%). The average age of participants from the Tigers was 18.28. On average, respondents had been members of the club for 3.63 years. The club's only sport played was soccer, and the participants interviewed comprised 120 players (87%), 13 coaches (9.4%), seven committee members (5.1%), five parents (3.6%) and one person in an 'other' role (.7%). Roughly a quarter of respondents reported being born overseas (n = 35; 25.4%), and just over 44% had a parent born overseas (mother: n = 62; 44.5%, father: n = 61; 44.2%). Five respondents from the Tigers reported a disability (3.6%), while 95 respondents (68.8%) reported that they belonged to the dominant culture. The average socio-economic score for the Tigers was 996.13. The network size for the Tigers was 119. Survey respondents comprised 30.7% of total respondents from the overall study.

The SES of the Tigers was significantly lower than all other clubs. Further, the Tigers was significantly more likely than all other clubs to more strongly endorse biological determinism (i.e. that race determines people's abilities). The Tigers participants scored significantly higher on homophobia than all other clubs. The Tigers scored significantly higher than the Firebirds and Giants on feeling satisfied with being part of the local community.

SNA results show that at the Tigers, people choose as friends other people with similar views on performance versus participation, which indicates potential sub-groups or factions who have similar views. With regards to who is most trusted, people who place greater value on performance are more likely to be trusted within the Tigers. With regards to having differences of opinions with others, older people are less likely to say they disagree with others, but older people are more often the person that others say they disagree with. Further, there is greater disagreement between people of different levels of SES. For the Tigers, as for the previous two clubs, for all networks except 'difference of opinion' (i.e. culture setting, friendship, trust, provide support to, and gives you help), players who were nominated as the 'best players' in the team were also more likely to be nominated for these five networks.

Kangaroos Soccer Club

The Kangaroos had a total of 66 survey respondents, with the majority being under 18 years of age (n = 59; 89.4%) and female (n = 61; 92.4%). The average age of survey respondents in the Kangaroos was 16.74. On average, respondents had been members of the club for 3.63 years. The club's only sport played was soccer and it was a girls-only club. The Kangaroos comprised 59 players (89.4%), two committee members (3%), four coaches (6.1%), five parents (7.6%) and one person in an 'other' role (1.5%). Five respondents reported being born overseas (7.6%), while just over 30% had a parent born

overseas (mother: n = 21; 31.8%, father: n = 18; 27.3%). One respondent from the Kangaroos reported a disability (1.5%), while 34 respondents (51.5%) reported that they belonged to the dominant culture. The average socio-economic score for respondents from the Kangaroos was 1023.12, and the network size was 63. Survey respondents from the Kangaroos comprised 14.7% of total respondents from the overall study.

The Kangaroos had a significantly greater representation of females (92%), had a significantly higher SES than the other clubs, scored significantly lower on strict gender stereotypes and homophobia, and higher than the Firebirds on how satisfied they were in feeling part of their sports club. Participants at the Kangaroos were also more likely to feel included at their club than participants from the Firebirds and Giants. The Kangaroos participants were also significantly more likely than participants from the Firebirds and Giants to be happy to have a player with a disability on the team, even if it would limit the team's chance of success. The Kangaroos was also significantly lower than all other clubs on buying into the argument of biological determinism (i.e. race determining people's abilities). Importantly, the Kangaroos was significantly different from all other clubs in that they rated lower on performance orientation of winning games, and instead were more likely to support giving everyone a go.

The network data for the Kangaroos shows us that in choosing friends, the most popular people at the Kangaroos come from non-dominant ethno-cultural backgrounds, and separately, people who have lower SES are more popular friendship choices. At the Kangaroos, people who are trusted are those who, again, come from non-dominant ethno-cultural backgrounds. Further, people are more likely to trust others of a similar age, and also similar SES, to themselves. Participants who come from non-dominant ethno-cultural backgrounds are more likely to be the recipients of the provision of support. People who give help at the Kangaroos are more likely to come from non-dominant ethno-cultural backgrounds, and separately, they are also more likely to come from lower SES backgrounds. Interestingly, people who are more likely to say that they have a difference of opinions with a greater number of others are those people who endorse a pro-performance perspective (rather than pro-participation, which appears to be a strong ethos of this club). As such, there may be a little contestation at this club around the issue of performance versus participation, even though it is strongly pro-participation.

Again, as in all other clubs, at the Kangaroos, for all networks except 'difference of opinion' (i.e. culture setting, friendship, trust, provide support to, and gives you help), players who were nominated as the 'best players' in the team were also more likely to be nominated for these five networks. In general, this suggests that the high performing players at any club, regardless of its focus on pro-participation or pro-performance, have a greater influence within the club than low performing players.

Phase ③: Observations

Aims

Phase 3 of the research aimed to complement the interviews, survey and social network analysis by providing further, detailed insights into how junior sport participants are socialised into ways of managing diversity as it unfolds on the ground. Research relationships with players, parents, coaches and other key club personnel were developed, and resulted in the sharing of stories and informal discussions in a more natural setting where the respondent was comfortable and at ease.

Method

Two clubs (the Firebirds and Kangaroos) were approached with an offer to take part in the observation phase of the project and agreed to do so following Committee approval. The researchers then attended practice sessions, game day matches and relevant social functions and club meetings during one full season. Related club materials and cultural artefacts were also examined as part of the observations, with a particular focus on the clubs' website and social media platforms. Observations were recorded using written field notes. These observation notes were then were entered into Nvivo 11 software and analysed using the coding techniques described in Phase 1.

Findings

The observation phase provided an opportunity to document firsthand the relationships, practices and behaviours in relation to diversity and social inclusion/exclusion in the club setting. The observations provided further insight into the findings from the interviews, also highlighting some disparity between what people say and how they behave.

Several key findings emerged from the analysis:

- Firstly, there are plenty of opportunities for participation in a wide range of different sporting activities.
- Junior clubs varied in the degree to which they focused upon participation or performative aspects of the sport.
  However, performance pressures existed at both junior clubs in different ways.
- Similar to the findings from the interviews, the observations also highlight the importance of a champion who was the significant force driving diversity work within junior clubs.
- Both junior clubs attempted to create welcoming and inclusive environments, yet observations revealed many social divisions and fractured (sub) cultures.
- Finally, clubs utilised websites and social media to varying degrees. The online presence of each club reinforced the position of the club in terms of focus on participation or performance and also highlighted some of the social divisions mentioned above.

 (Each of these findings is discussed in turn.)

Opportunity for participation

Both clubs provided plenty of opportunity for junior members to participate in sporting activity. At the Firebirds, on training nights the secondary oval housed the boys and girls junior football teams as well as the all-abilities team, whilst the junior and senior netball teams were located at the adjoining netball courts. Rotating teams on and off ovals and courts was an organisational practice that guaranteed that all teams were allocated a training venue and time across multiple venues. A similar situation occurred at the Kangaroos, with multiple teams sharing one soccer pitch for four hours each training night. Game days provided comparable organisational challenges for both clubs with regard to venue allocation and fixture allocations, but both clubs deserve credit for managing to provide participation opportunities for a large number of junior members to partake in sport through training and games. This is especially so as both clubs relied exclusively on volunteers to overcome this organisational challenge.

Pressure of performance

Performance pressure existed at both clubs beyond this participation factor but in different ways. At the Firebirds it was evident that the older the junior players got, the more intense training became, with greater emphasis placed on competitiveness and winning. A key factor in this can be attributed to a comment made by the senior men's coach after training one night:

'Look we are a seniors team so we are all about winning but with the juniors they will be more about participating at the other end of the scale which is fine but all in I still want winners from them, the juniors, I need winners.' (Observation notes, 21/7/15).

The club President supported this stance agreeing that:

'It is cheaper to produce our own players than buy them in'. (Observation notes, 21/7/15)

This mandate conflicted with the Under 18s coach's personal philosophy on developing all players rather than just those with talent. This coach indicated that on a participation versus performance spectrum the club was 'three quarters into…wanting to win,' and specified that, at the high end of junior participation, other coaches:

'Leave out six players … for instance, guys that have been training, training, training, but just don't have the ability that some of these other people do. They'll just leave them out. And then you'll lose them from the club, because they walk away from that experience. 'Cause they're not getting a fair go.' (Coach, the Firebirds)

At the Kangaroos, there was a more tangible atmosphere of participation over performance and a keen sense that the club was there to provide opportunities for all players regardless of their ability, and that match day results were much less important than at the Firebirds. For instance, the Firebirds players were often observed congratulating the opposition on good play or after a win, and this included during a grand final match (Observations, 11/9/16). Additionally, sportsmanship in the form of showing respect for the referees and injured opponent players was seen to be highly valued and was reinforced by coaches stating 'the girls should be so proud of their excellent display of character on and off the field' (Online Observations, 24/2/17). To reinforce this 'sport for all' focus, the committee had a long discussion over their inclusion policy and the importance of coaches performing inclusive practice, yet acknowledged the difficulties of doing so in a performance-driven sport. A committee member indicated that 'our girls play it for as much as the social as anything else' (Committee Meeting notes, 30/1/17), placing performance as a distant, secondary objective.

Other discussion centred on the recognition that the coach is the interface between the club, its inclusive philosophy, and the player and parent groups, so if certain coaches did not adhere to the inclusion policy then the club philosophy was not being applied and the club goals of inclusion were not being achieved. A particular issue was a lack of adherence to the equal game time policy, as some coaches played their strongest team throughout so that their team won their game. This was viewed very negatively by the committee: '[Committee] Talked about how they got rid of one coach who didn't fit into the philosophy and also how another doesn't really fit and if they should give him another chance or get someone new' (Committee Meeting notes, 30/1/17).

The Kangaroos also experienced difficulties with opponent clubs who had a performance-driven philosophy which conflicted with their own, which often resulted in high scoring and demoralising defeats and caused some parents to question the Kangaroos' club philosophy. At times, the participatory focus of the Kangaroos was challenged by parents of the opposition with observation notes stating 'When the girls got the first goal the opposition parents started getting really narky … and bagging out umpires' (Observation notes, 11/9/16). In such cases, one coach concluded that his opponent coach 'lacked perspective in life' (Kangaroos coach) by instilling a performance-driven culture in junior girls' sport. Despite this, some parents removed their child 'because [the Kangaroos] wasn't serious enough and they weren't developing as much as they wanted' (Kangaroos coach). These excerpts demonstrate the difficulties that junior sports clubs face when they seek to focus on inclusive participation opportunities rather than performance-driven results, in what essentially is a competitively organised and framed sport where certain opponents simply play to win.

Importance of a diversity champion

The Kangaroos provided a notable example of a 'champion of change' with regard to valuing and managing diversity in junior sport. The president was a long-standing club member and the key organiser behind the scenes at training and at games. The president was observed 'continually running around talking to the parents' on a training night (Observation notes, 14/4/16) and his omnipresence could also be seen on game days where he would 'spend…a lot of time running around keeping things going, talking to parents and players and even umpiring the second game' (Observation notes, 10/10/16). There is

no doubt that without the commitment of this champion the club would not be able to operate and function the way it does, and many girls would not have experienced participation opportunities at the club. However, our findings also indicate the aforementioned precariousness of relying heavily on an individual champion. It was widely agreed by club members that should the president have an extended period of absence from the club or worse still, leave the club, the club's operations and diversity work would be severely tested.

Social divisions

Key figures at the Firebirds indicated in interviews that they were a welcoming, inclusive club with a friendly, family environment, where each section of the club, whether it was junior boys' football or senior women's netball, was treated equally, with no section dominant. The president indicated that in his tenure he had worked hard to drive change and turn what was a 'boys' club' into a welcoming club for all members. Observations reveal that fractured (sub) cultures existed at the club, with a male-dominated atmosphere still being enacted at the club, especially in the club rooms. Netball players were particularly critical of the club rooms as a male-dominated space. Observations revealed that no netball players visited the club rooms after training. Additionally, the club rooms themselves were decorated with memorabilia and other mementos that focused upon the (men's) football teams' premierships and successes. While there was an information board for the netballers, it had not been updated since 2012, and there were no memorabilia celebrating the all-abilities team.

Similar patterns of social division were observed on social nights, when food was served as a club bonding exercise. Most netball players left straight after the training and did not enter the club rooms. On the other hand, women's football players did attend the social nights, yet there was generally little interaction between the women's team and the male players. Additionally, on social nights many of the roles undertaken in the club reinforced gendered stereotypes, such as 'our women in the kitchen [are] cooking dinner' while the 'older men are having a few beers' at the bar (Observation notes, 23/7/15). Similar social divisions were evident when it came to shared outdoor space. It was indicated that the all-abilities players were an accepted part of the club and received equal access to the training oval and were to share it evenly with a junior boys' team. Observations revealed that the junior boys' team took up at least three quarters of the oval, with the all-abilities team pushed into a corner. Overall, whilst interview data indicated an all-inclusive, welcoming club environment at the Firebirds, observations noted that the club actually comprised fractured subcultures within it, whereby football dominated and, within that, senior male football usurped all other sections of the club.

Online platforms

Analysis of the clubs' website and social media platforms provided further insight into the above findings. While the Kangaroos updated their online platforms intermittently, the Firebirds regularly provided information and updates via social media. For the Firebirds, a Facebook page was regularly engaged with to present game results, list upcoming game times and congratulate individual players. The competitive nature of the Firebirds could be clearly seen on online platforms, where a significant focus was on celebrating on-field successes. For example, observations noted that 'footy players often get a Facebook mention when they've done particularly well, been selected or won awards' (Online observations, 6/11/16). In comparison, players from other sections of the club did not get the same recognition, despite similar significant achievements: 'at the All Abilities Trivia Night two players were congratulated for getting selected for the regional Development Team, but this didn't go up on the Facebook page' (Online Observations, 6/11/16).

Prior to 2015 the majority of Facebook posts by the Firebirds were related to men's football, with other sections of the club mostly absent from online recognition. However, this changed in 2016 alongside success in the women's football competitions, with the 'women's footy team dominat[ing] the Facebook posts' and '[overall] the women's footy was posted about more' (Observation notes, 6/11/2016). Recognition of junior football and junior netball, however, was very limited.

In comparison, the Kangaroos had much less of an online presence. The club website was used as a form of communication, especially coaches' reflections on matches and club administration. Coach reflections were a few paragraphs written 'by each coach about the games, scores, great play and skill development' (Online observations, 6/11/2016). Additionally, on the website, the club's constitution very prominently stated the club aims of inclusion and participation, and provided links and information on SSO campaigns, such as the 'Don't Stand By – Stand Up' racism campaign (Online Observations, 6/11/2016).

Participation versus performance:

Phase **4** : Policy Analysis

Aims

Phase 4 of the research aimed to examine the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks in nurturing diversity in junior sport in practice.

Method

Twenty-seven policy documents were analysed from key governing bodies, including the Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government, and the NSOs and SSOs representing the five sports included in this project. The policy analysis assessed what policies and plans sports organisations had published, whether they mentioned diversity and, if so, in what ways. Interview data (details discussed in Phase 1) was analysed to assess how the clubs were using and otherwise engaging with these diversity policies and plans. Like the interviews, the documents were entered into NVivo 11, a qualitative data analysis software package, and analysed thematically (see Waller, Farquharson & Dempsey, 2016).

Findings

The policy analysis explored how lead organisations at the national level (ASC, Australian Football League [AFL], Cricket Australia, Netball Australia, Basketball Australia and Football Federation Australia [FFA]), and at the state level (Sport and Recreation Victoria [SRV], Vicsport, Cricket Victoria, Netball Victoria, Football Federation Victoria [FFV] and Basketball Victoria) engaged with diversity and/or promoted diversity initiatives. It was particularly concerned with the types of support for diversity that could be used at the club level.

Several key findings emerged from the analysis:

- Lead organisations were concerned with increasing sport participation, to support talent identification but also to increase participation figures for their sport, however, this did not necessarily lead to diversity-promoting initiatives by government bodies or NSOs.

- Some sports did have specific strategies for attracting diverse participants, but few had policies for managing diversity at the club level other than codes of conduct.

- There was a disconnect between NSO and SSO diversity initiatives and resources and their utilisation at the club level. Clubs were typically unaware that there were resources available, and if there were aware, frequently found the resources available to be lacking or expressed that they did not actively engage with them.

- Finally, diversity was seen as desirable by government, NSOs and SSOs, either explicitly or implicitly, because it was seen as being a way to increase participation and identify new talent. In other words, diversity was desirable because it was thought to be good for business.

(Each of these findings is discussed in turn.)

Managing (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport

Talent identification

National policies have long been structured with an eye to talent identification, however, there was a shift in 2010 with *Australian Sport – The Pathway to Success* (ASC, 2010), which argued for an increase in sport participation as a way to bolster communities along with providing increased opportunities for talent identification:

'Fundamental to this new approach is moving away from the divisive community versus elite sport debates of the past and developing a collaborative, efficient and integrated national sports system focused both on growing participation for the benefit of our community as well as the high performance system.'

The plan was about 'Doubling our talent identification program – ensuring that our future champions are both discovered and assisted to reach their full potential' (ASC, 2010, p. 2). Implicit is that participation is good for one's health, but having a broad participation base is also crucial for talent identification purposes.

This connection between grassroots participation and talent identification was further institutionalised with the *Australia's Winning Edge* (ASC, 2012) plan: 'While *Australia's Winning Edge* is focused on high performance sport, the connection this has to grassroots participation is well established. Participation will continue to be a key focus area for Australian, state and territory governments' (p. 3). This was echoed in later ASC documents, such as *The Future of Australian Sport* (ASC, 2013) and *Play. Sport. Australia* (ASC, 2015a). *The Future of Australian Sport* (ASC, 2013) has a specific discussion about the changing demographics of Australian society. This discussion mentions gender, age, cultural background and migration, and the importance of sports engaging with different demographics if they are to remain relevant and successful. The other documents do not focus on diversity as a source for growth.

NSO plans are similarly focused on broad participation as a means to improve talent identification. For example, in the *Whole of Football* (ASC, 2015b) the FFA states:

'In this virtuous ecosystem, as our number of participants grows and their experience improves, the benefits will be seen in growing support of our Top Tier clubs and in a prodigious pipeline of elite players.' (p. 13)

Like most of the ASC documents, this plan also does not deal at all with diversity or inclusion. Any mention of gender or disability is tailored around elite level play and talent pathways. The imperative for talent identification, then, would support the promotion of diverse participation for all. However, most of the documents did not identify specific strategies to attract diverse communities, they simply asserted the need for broad-based participation.

Inclusion strategies

Of the sports focused on, two have explicit inclusion strategies at a national level: Cricket Australia and Netball Australia. The AFL have an extensive range of policies aimed at encouraging inclusion, such as their *Respect and Responsibility* policy, but no overarching strategy focusing explicitly on inclusion. Basketball Australia, similar to Football Federation Australia, mentions the need for inclusion and diversity but does not have a separate strategy for this area. At a state level, Basketball Victoria has a comprehensive inclusion strategy which supports associations to development programs for people with disabilities. Netball Victoria has a general strategy that can be applied to attract people of all ages, abilities or disabilities, or cultural background.

Of all the sports though, Cricket Australia provides the most resources; it has strategies for the inclusion of four marginalised population groups: the *National Female Cricket Strategy,* the *Multicultural Cricket Strategy*, the *National All Abilities Cricket Strategy*, and the *Indigenous Cricket Strategy*. The early part of each strategy is the same. It focuses on growing cricket and then how each group will be targeted as participants before then being funnelled into competitive pathways to produce national teams. This is to broaden the participation base and then taper into elite sport. Each strategy is essentially the same, but with different target groups identified.

All the inclusion strategy documents identify concrete actions that clubs can take to improve access and reach out to diverse communities. For example, the National Female Cricket Strategy Cricket Australia suggests that clubs run the MILO in2CRICKET Skills program for girls in co-ed and girls-only schools. This program runs over four weeks and aims to develop cricketing skills. This would provide an introduction to cricket for girls who may not otherwise think of playing. In a similar vein, Netball Australia's strategy suggests that clubs 'Encourage your community to get involved in netball and to find their local Club by distributing your registration flyers to local schools, libraries, local councils and community groups' (Netball Australia, 2016, p. 5). These were typical of the types of actions clubs could take to attract diverse participants. Most were specific actions that clubs could undertake in order to attract new members.

The business case for diversity

Underpinning all of the strategies that promoted diversity was the idea that promoting diversity was good for sport. Diversity was touted as being important for a number of reasons. For example, the ASC suggested that clubs need to make sure that their sport survives the technology revolution:

'Market forces are likely to exert greater pressure on sport into the future. As technology diversifies broadcasting mediums the entertainment quality of sport is likely to continue to grow and generate increased revenue. In some sports, elite athletes will have considerable pay rises and large sponsorship deals, although this may not occur in other sports. Those sports with higher salaries may draw athletes away from sports with lower salaries.' (ASC 2013)

Cricket was hoping to broaden its base in order to increase its reach:

'Cricket Australia's vision is to be - Australia's favourite sport and a sport for all. To ensure the game is reflective of the current and future Australian population, our sport has developed customised strategies for female, multicultural, Indigenous and all-abilities communities that aim to increase their involvement and participation at all levels of cricket. From grass roots level through to high performance pathways, we are focused on increasing our game's accessibility to each of these four communities.' (Cricket Australia, 2014, p. 2)

Basketball Victoria's Inclusion Resource makes the business case explicit when it discusses 'What is in it for you?' (Basketball Victoria, 2010):

Benefits to your Association / Club could be:

- More members
- Greater pool of volunteers (including the participants' family and friends)
- Bring some new ideas to the table, from a wide range of people from differing backgrounds
- Greater respect and recognition from the wider community by being more accessible. This recognition can come from local councils, media and possible sponsors
- Additional usage of the venue
- Additional competition and league participation opportunities (growth). (p. 3)

Basketball Victoria was the most explicit in its discussion of the business case for individual clubs, but these factors were also present in the other documents promoting diversity.

Participation versus performance:

What the clubs thought

There was a disconnect between lead organisations (ASC, NSOs, SSOs) and community clubs, with club leadership teams being largely unaware of whether their NSOs/SSOs had specific strategies and policies to support diversity, and whether resources were available that they could access. When asked about their lead organisation, many clubs said that the code of conduct came from the lead organisation, but they were not sure what else they did in the area of diversity. This is captured in the following quote from a member of the Giants:

'Well I thought the codes of conduct for the clubs come from them, I suppose, so it comes down from above and it's right across the board, as it should be. It should be the same rule with every club and every person because, yeah... yeah, but as far as... I don't know a lot about... I know of the FFV, but what they actually do behind the scenes, I'm sure they do a lot. (Chuckles). I'm sure they do a lot.'

For this club the FFV existed, but their role was not clear. It would not have occurred to this interviewee and many others to look to their SSO for advice on how to manage diversity.

Some clubs reported feeling overwhelmed by, and under-resourced to deliver on, policy calls to actively promote diversity and inclusion. A typical example would be where an SSO develops a diversity policy document and emails it to a club, expecting them to act. The club gets the email but either does not read it or reads it but does not act on it. The SSO feels they have done their duty by creating the policy document and disseminating it. The clubs, if they do read the email, consider it not to be what they need, as they need resource assistance and guidance on diversity and not a policy on it. Further to that, when diversity policy directives arrive, clubs feel overwhelmed, at-capacity and under-resourced to develop initiatives anyway, as getting teams on the field is the priority, not diversity. The relationships with peak bodies was described by a committee member at the Firebirds:

'… [the ASC website is] the last thing that I would be looking at, unless I needed something for it and that's what I said, like with the Netball Victoria and that. I would only [go to the website] if I needed something, would go looking for it, it's not that… but in saying that, people can't continually… you can't send a hundred emails out in a day to address everything.'

This quote shows the feeling of being constantly emailed, and not having the resources to 'address everything'. Similarly, a club official at the Eagles said:

'If I've got time, I'm probably focussed on trying to get an upgrade for some facility or another from the council, or chasing up players for the weekend. I'm not searching the website for new policy initiatives.'

Clubs also expressed that developing club level policy was something that was important, but difficult. A typical view was:

'Well one of the things that I've been pushing on our Committee, which is you know volunteers, is to strengthen our documented policies, and we actually a few months ago appointed somebody who's new to the Committee to actually review all of our policies and identify where we had gaps in them, and an inclusion policy I don't think is… we don't actually have a written down inclusion policy, and we should have. The issue is how do you do it? ' (Committee member, Lions)

Later in the interview this person also said:

'… I would love to get more from [SSO] on policies such as… and I think every… like in every sport, every club under the banner should pretty much have the same policies on things like, well inclusion and you know disability, and you know on OH&S, and you name it. You know, they basically should come from them, and it doesn't. And I think they're under resourced. Well people say they're under resourced.'

There were similar discussions about other SSOs. Clubs did not want to hear from SSOs about new policy initiatives but at the same time wanted them to provide sample policies that could be adopted. In the diversity area they felt pressure to do something about diversity, but also a lack of concrete support to guide them on what they should do. This was largely borne of the policy analysis, which indicated that while some sports had strategies to promote diverse memberships, there was little support to manage diverse memberships once that had been achieved. The main tool for actively managing diversity at the club level was the code of conduct. Sporting associations provided codes of conduct that were adopted by clubs. All codes of conduct require that members and volunteers refrain from abusive language and/or aggression towards teammates or opposing players.

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Codes of conduct were present in all junior clubs in our study. They were the main policies that clubs used to manage diversity on the ground. We have not provided an analysis of specific codes of conduct from our participant clubs here as the clubs have been anonymised. However, all clubs had codes of conduct that were meant to guide behaviour. Codes of conduct were mostly general, though some had provisions specifically prohibiting certain types of misconduct, such as racial vilification.

All codes had a reporting process to deal with code of conduct breaches. The policies defined the issues and the processes to follow for resolution. These processes were akin to that of the AFL's National Vilification & Discrimination Policy and usually involved lodging a complaint. The complaint was then either dealt with informally or investigated by a tribunal, which gave a finding and punishment if the complaint was upheld. This process was heavily criticised by clubs for being a) too formal, as legal representatives are involved, b) costly, also because legal representatives are involved, and c) too stressful for the junior player bringing the complaint. The upshot of having such policies in place is that at the community sport club level there is a preference to deal with matters 'club to club' rather than through formal reporting. At times, there was no action taken by the club at fault and a significant issue, like racial vilification, was not acted upon because of the policy in place and the problems associated with activating a case (that may not be won).

Interviewer: *So if you report that someone has racially vilified a player on your team, what happens; what's the process?*

Respondent: *They generally they'll write a report and they'll talk to the club, and the club will often deny it, or it just gets dealt with. We've never taken anything to a tribunal. You can. There is a process where you can take it to a tribunal. We've never gone that far, mainly because the kids don't want to do it, you know. But I'm very much wanting to... I write a report each time, so I think they need to know that it's happening. And you know I really wish that there was something coming out from [SSO] to all clubs saying that you know this is occurring and this is not on ... I haven't heard anything for that. But you know it would be an interesting thing to ask them.* (Committee member, Lions)

This exchange both outlines the process and highlights some of the challenges. A key challenge is that the children being vilified (or otherwise abused) do not want to pursue it through the formal process, mainly because it draws attention to them and keeps the abuse alive. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that anything positive will come from the report. It also highlights that the club would like their SSO to take a stronger stand against vilification, with the expectation that doing so would reduce the behaviour, but that has not happened.

Summary

Phase 4 of the research aimed to examine the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks in nurturing diversity in junior sport in practice. We found that diversity was promoted in some of the policy documents from national and state level organisations as being good for sport. The documents evoked a business case for diversity: increasing diversity increases your talent pool, brings in extra funding from memberships and provides a new source of volunteers. The key focus was on talent identification, but the other benefits were also seen as important.

We found that most of the government- and national-level documents analysed put forward strategies to increase participation across the board, but there were few references to increasing participation of diverse groups, although it was implicit that diverse communities were an important source for increased participation. Cricket Australia, Basketball Victoria and Netball Australia had inclusion plans or strategies that offered tips for clubs that wished to attract diverse participants. One sport, Australian football, had policies for dealing with code of conduct infractions, but no particular strategies for attracting diverse participants.

However, few of the documents promoting diversity provided specific strategies for attracting particular diverse groups. Only one document, the *Basketball Victoria Association Inclusion Resource*, provided a rationale and guidelines for clubs on starting teams for people with a disability. The Cricket Australia documents were the most comprehensive in their guidelines for attracting a variety of diverse groups.

The actual management of diversity at the club level was guided by codes of conduct and processes for managing misconduct. Clubs expressed that the policies and processes were lacking. They wanted additional training and resources for managing diversity on the field. They expressed feeling under-resourced and overwhelmed when issues occurred. A source of stress was the vilification process in particular, which was unwieldy and rarely led to a positive outcome for the child who had been vilified.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that additional resources for managing diversity need to be tailored for the type of diversity being managed, and need to be accessible to clubs that wish to access them.

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Conclusions

This study has provided an in-depth exploration of the ways in which diversity is experienced, understood and managed in junior sport. The results help to address a gap in the scientific literature and enhance the sector's knowledge and capacity to develop further policy actions, training and community capacity building aimed at promoting diverse and inclusive sporting environments. The previous chapter has presented the main findings from each phase of the research. Based on the synthesis of findings from these four phases, we are able to identify a number of overarching conclusions.

How clubs understand and experience diversity

Diversity as a concept was interpreted in many different ways both within and across the community sports clubs in this research project. Individuals within the clubs (i.e. players, volunteers, committee members) were often confused about the language of diversity and how diversity actually related to them within the context of their club. The particular context and culture of each club tended to set the parameters for how diversity was understood and experienced, which in turn dictated practical responses to diversity within each club. This localised response should be understood within the wider sport policy context. Clubs' awareness and use of national and state policies around diversity in community sport was generally limited. There was no distinct and clear definition of diversity from lead organisations that governed the sports that the clubs offered, such as relevant NSOs and SSOs. This then left it open to how clubs on the ground defined, engaged with and acted upon diversity.

The clubs tended to consider and act on individual axes, such as cultural diversity or gender diversity, in isolation and were not inclined to view different forms of diversity as being inter-related or as part of a broader diversity agenda. In doing so, their actions were informed by a relatively narrow conception of diversity, with more intersectional understandings of and approaches to diversity being virtually non-existent within the sport clubs in this study.

Perceived priority and ability to engage with diversity

The clubs in the research project demonstrated varying levels of institutional commitment to diversity. Overall, there was not a consistent approach across all clubs to the promotion of diversity and inclusion of people of all backgrounds and abilities, nor was there consensus across the clubs that diversity management was an important objective. Most clubs recognised the benefits of diversity to clubs, for example with regard to increased membership and volunteers, club capacity and sustainability, as well as delivering social and health benefits to the community. Yet, even in those clubs that expressed their commitment to diversity, it was frequently reported that they felt overwhelmed by, and under-resourced to deliver on, policy calls to actively promote diversity and social inclusion. There was some criticism directed at NSOs and SSOs over their lack of direction and support for clubs in this space but also of those NSOs and SSOs that were seen to take a lead but leave it up to clubs to be proactive in finding the information and then engaging with it. Most clubs felt they were already at-capacity and to take on another task like this was perceived to be beyond their means. They considered capacity and capability as a key issue in diversity management, expressing that it would likely add to the workload of already overburdened volunteers, which could threaten the club's core operation and, thus, existence. Clubs and their volunteers were not necessarily resisting diversity but were implementing diversity in ways that they believed the club could cope with.

In order to better understand clubs' perception that engaging with diversity was beyond their means, some of the underlying assumptions need to be taken into account, especially with regard to the relationship between participation and performance. While participation and performance are not mutually exclusive, our findings reveal a tension between the promotion of diversity and inclusion on the one hand, and the focus on performance on the other hand. In some of the community sports clubs included in this research, diversity is clearly afforded less priority than performance and is not considered a club's core business. This is evident in, for example, the way these clubs prioritise resource allocation. Clubs have limited resources. They may see diversity as peripheral to, or diverting resources from, its core business (i.e. getting teams on the park/court and not running up a debt). The clubs thus had a particular understanding of what constituted their core business and what constituted organisational success.

Participation versus performance:

Most clubs positioned themselves towards the participation end of the spectrum, with the core aim of providing the opportunity to participate in the sport and enjoy the benefits that brings. However, this philosophy was compromised where teams had less ability and also by scoreboard pressure, especially in the case of opponent clubs who possessed a focus on fielding the best team possible to win. Clubs promoting diversity were generally regarded as not serious, not interested in winning and as having no interest in harnessing talented players— they were therefore perceived as being appropriate for those who 'are no good'. This is a particular challenge facing community sport clubs who aim to provide opportunities for all participants, regardless of ability, and seek to instil a participation rather than performance based ethos and culture.

Across the clubs, the survey results indicate that gender and a range of attitudes about diversity were strongly related. That is, on average, we found that males were more likely to support a pro-performance stance; more likely to be homophobic, endorse stricter gender roles (while believing there is gender equality), and endorse violence as a natural masculine trait; and be less likely to hold pro-disability attitudes. Of course, this does mean that all males endorse such views at levels greater than all females, but that in general male responses were, on average, higher than female responses. Clearly there may be contextual factors which drive the attitudes of males in some clubs in certain directions rather than others, and differences between clubs highlight the impact such contextual factors may have. Nonetheless, these findings highlight that gender can intersect with a range of diversity attitudes and can potentially be a key constraint to diversity within community sports clubs– the particular context of a community sports club may also enable or constrain such effects.

Moving from individual to whole-of-club commitment and action

Although club committees showed varying degrees of engagement with diversity, the work of a club champion was the driving force behind a club's diversity initiatives. The work of champions can potentially have a 'ripple effect' by inspiring other club members to adopt similar behaviours (Cunningham and Melton, 2014). In some clubs, the contributions of these individual champions are vital; without their commitment and persistence, new sport participation opportunities may not be created for people with diverse backgrounds and abilities. However, there are important challenges and limitations to the reliance on individual champions to promote and deliver diversity initiatives within clubs. Club champions

can face considerable pressures and constraints, and many reported feeling isolated and unsupported within their club environment. The champion role is often fragile, especially when it comes to developing and implementing diversity initiatives for the medium to long term.

Overall, the findings suggest that experiences of diversity at junior sporting clubs are varied and there are a range of factors influencing the way diversity is managed, understood and experienced. Importantly, the findings were drawn from a purposive sample: a set of community sports clubs that were recognised by the relevant NSO and/or SSO as being relatively active in promoting diversity. It would be reasonable to expect that other clubs, including those that do not (yet) engage with – or possibly even resist – diversity, experience comparable or more accentuated issues and challenges with regard to the inclusion of people with diverse backgrounds and abilities. We saw from the social network analysis that the best players in teams were more likely to be considered by others as culture setters, friends, and trusted people, and were more likely to be seen as providing support to others. This suggests that the high performing players at any club, regardless of its focus on pro-participation or pro-performance, will have a greater influence within the club than low performing players. In clubs where the attitudes of such best players are specifically against diversity, there may be difficulty in pushing a diversity agenda and having it accepted across the club. This raises the issue that clubs need to be aware of and understand the influence that its best players have on their club.

In the next chapter, we build on the conclusions to propose a series of practical recommendations for the community sport sector so that they may act upon the knowledge gained from this study.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings from this study, the following table lists a range of recommendations that can contribute to making local clubs diverse, inclusive environments. The recommendations are themed across the areas of policy, key champions, club culture and sharing good practice. The recommendations are specifically directed at sports clubs, NSOs and SSOs, regional sports assemblies and regional sports associations, as well as other stakeholders, including LGAs, health agencies and community organisations.

Policy

Encouraging and supporting conversations about diversity

Conversations about diversity are not common within community sports clubs and there is a general confusion about what diversity means (both conceptually and practically) and how clubs wish to engage with diversity. These conversations should ideally take place at all levels of sport. Currently, policy documents produced by NSOs and SSOs are not always explicit in their focus on diversity or what this means in practical terms 'on the ground'. Discussions at all levels of sport as to what diversity is and what should be promoted in sport are critical to the improvement of diversity literacy in the sport sector.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs/ Regional Sports Assemblies	Recommendations for other stakeholders: LGAs, regional sports associations, health agencies, community organisations
Club committee and diversity champions to encourage intra-club and inter-club conversations on what diversity is and what it means for the club. This should provide a basis to develop and tailor approaches for how best to support diversity work within individual clubs.	Consider at an organisational level what is understood by diversity and what priority is placed on it within the organisation and why. Consider how a commitment to diversity could be best communicated to clubs/ associations/members.	Facilitate discussions amongst key stakeholders, including clubs, local government, SSOs and NSO to discuss how diversity is understood, what it looks like within sport and the recommendations for translating diversity work into best practice.

Developing a differentiated approach

Community sports clubs are at differing levels of engagement with diversity and vary greatly in the extent to which diversity work is embedded within their structure and culture. Some clubs may need more support than others. For example, clubs may need support to begin to engage with diversity, whereas others may require assistance with creating broader institutional buy-in across their clubs or extending to other areas of diversity. Having policies and resources that are flexible to support the differing positions of clubs would be beneficial.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Identify what the club's current commitment to diversity is and whether there is a desire to change this in the future, and what strategies and resources may be required to do this.	Understand where clubs are positioned within diversity work and if possible tailor support to focus on this. Consider where limited resources may be best utilised in relation to a club's engagement with and commitment to diversity.	Recognise that different resources and support may be required depending on where clubs sit within their commitment to diversity.

Strengthening the club-level relevance of diversity policies

Diversity policies are variable across sports, and their uptake at the club level is generally low. Embedding a practical commitment to diversity within formal policies and strategies would be a valuable addition for cementing diversity as an important priority. To be useful and relevant to clubs, such policies and strategies need to move beyond general 'blanket' statements and codes of conduct to provide more specific guidance on how clubs can engage with diversity, and the support and resources available to assist them with this.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Develop a diversity policy that frames the ethos and commitment to diversity within the club as well indicating how this aligns to codes of conduct. Ensure this is readily available and accessible for all club members.	Seek to embed a commitment to diversity within strategic plans. Provide clear advice and guidance on how diversity is understood within the sport and what this could potentially mean for practice within clubs.	Encourage SSOs and NSOs to outline and specify their practical commitment to diversity within strategic plans.

Participation versus performance:

Being flexible in the promotion of diversity to and within community sports clubs

Flexibility in how diversity is promoted to clubs and within clubs is important. Whilst recognising that clubs may base their engagement with diversity on social justice principles, the business case – which posits that diversity may enhance the club's membership, position in the local community and performance – can be persuasive in gaining support and developing whole-of-club engagement. The business case can potentially help reduce barriers and resistance to engaging with diversity.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Recognise that different benefits may need to be highlighted to gain broad support for diversity across the club. Consider what could be key 'selling points' for diversity within the club (e.g. increased membership, higher numbers of volunteers, larger talent pool, enriched interpersonal experiences).	Support clubs in recognising both the business and social justice advantages of engaging with diversity. Ensure that policies and strategies developed reflect these perspectives. It may be valuable to develop and showcase best practice examples to clubs that have experienced benefits from engaging with diversity. It may also be useful to provide clubs with resources on the benefits that they can use to leverage support amongst club members.	Promote both the business and social justice benefits of diversity. It may also be useful to provide clubs with resources on the benefits that they can use to leverage support amongst club members.

Developing and Managing Diversity Champions

Valuing and supporting diversity champions within clubs

Individual club champions play a key role in diversity promotion and management in community sport. Identifying champions, considering what resources and support may be available to support them in this role, and celebrating their achievements are important tasks. Institutional level support is vital but can require time to establish. Supporting the diversity champion to engage with their club committee to begin to develop institutional support for diversity would be beneficial. A whole-of-club approach is desirable, but champions may need support to engage other stakeholders in the club.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
At the club committee level, seek to recognise diversity champions and engage with them and ensure they have opportunity to provide input into committee meetings and strategic decision-making. Consider ways as a committee to support the champion and engage others with diversity work. Provide recognition of the work the champion undertakes (e.g. newsletter, regular emails with key personnel etc).	Identify key champions and, where possible, offer support and advice to guide them in their role. Consider ways to support them to encourage more members of the club to support and engage with diversity. Provide recognition/ awards for the work of diversity champions.	Consider what resources and support could be developed to support champions, particularly focused on assisting them to gain more support within their clubs. Provide recognition/ awards for the work of diversity champions.

Getting 'best players' onside

The SNA data has revealed that 'best players' have higher status and standing within clubs and greater networks. Enlisting support from best players to promote and engage with diversity could be a useful strategy to foster the whole-of-club commitment to diversity advocated. These players can potentially be role models for change and have influence within the club.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Identify potential best players and establish their willingness to support diversity initiatives and work within the club. Encourage them to advocate in their activities for the importance of diversity work within the club.	Promote the idea of diversity advocates within clubs and suggest best players are often well placed to perform this role and be listened to.	Promote the idea of diversity advocates within clubs and suggest best players are often well placed to perform this role and be listened to, and can therefore become champions of change.

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Club Culture and Balancing Participation and Performance

Critically examining club culture and norms

Critically examining club culture and norms is important to understand how diversity work may translate into practice. This process could be useful even with clubs that consider they are doing diversity well. The SNA data reveals that certain attitudes, particularly those around dominant masculinity, are evident within clubs. Considering what are the key values and beliefs within a club, and how these are reflected across membership, are important exercises. This helps reveal both the overt and hidden elements of culture that may be hindering diversity. Key questions to consider could include: what teams/players are prioritised and celebrated within the club? How welcoming are the facilities for all groups? How is space allocated and occupied within the club, and how does this influence who feels welcome using it (e.g. club rooms, main ovals)? Are social nights open to all at the club and constructed in a way to be appealing to diverse members? What promotion and attention is given to different sections of the club through various promotion channels (e.g. is it mostly first-team achievements that are promoted)?

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Consider within the club committee and across members what are the dominant ethos and values of the club and what members are prioritised within the clubs. Consider potential ways of ensuring that all teams and groups are an embedded part of the club and are given recognition.	Facilitate critical reflection on club culture, potentially through forums and discussions outlined in Recommendation 1. Provide clubs with a diversity 'health check' of key questions to consider and what support is available to help them respond to the answers.	Promote critical reflection within clubs and across clubs to outline how shifts in culture have occurred and what mechanisms were required to do this.

Diversifying club leadership structures

Diversity across the club structures is a key way that clubs can both insure institutional level commitment to diversity and enhance their sustainability. Supporting diverse club members to engage in coaching, management and committee level roles is important within this process. Existing volunteers and committee members may need to actively encourage, support and mentor potential volunteers from diverse communities in the club.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Examine levels of diversity within club's structure and identify potential volunteers amongst diverse groups within the club. Offer mentoring to diverse volunteers/ coaches if required. Ensure diverse opinions are canvassed on key decisions within the club.	When working with and supporting clubs ensure that they consider how they could increase diversity within participation and also within the club management and organisation. Sharing best practice examples in this area may again be valuable. Encourage clubs to recognise that diverse volunteers may not readily come forward or feel comfortable taking on these roles so may need greater support and encouragement.	Promote the importance of diversity at all levels of the club and not only within participation. Provide guidance to clubs on how diverse volunteers can be supported and mentored to take on key roles within the club.

Participation versus performance:

Addressing tension between participation and performance

There are clear tensions between an ethos of participation and performance in community sport. There is a perception that clubs who are 'doing diversity' do not perform well. Changing this perception is important, particularly illustrating that participation and performance are not mutually exclusive. Collating case studies and examples where clubs have successfully combined both performance and participation orientations would be valuable for illustrating practically how this can be done.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Consider the underlying ethos of the club and whether it aligns to participation or performance, and whether this is reflected in practices across the club. Where participation ethos is not prioritised consider how this could be advocated for and embedded within the club.	Provide examples to clubs of cases where participation and performance ethos has been successfully combined.	Encourage SSOs and clubs to consider how participation and performance can be combined and promote the benefits of a participation ethos within clubs.

Sharing Good Practice

Sharing local knowledge and experience

Community sports clubs recognise the value of sharing greater knowledge and practices across clubs working with different forms of diversity (e.g. girls' participation, all-abilities). This would enable clubs to see how different dimensions of diversity have been established in other clubs, and to learn how other clubs have addressed any challenges or issues. Club forums, both physical and online, may provide useful platforms for sharing good practice and help clubs to strategise and tailor what is best for them.

Recommendations for Clubs	Recommendations for NSOs/SSOs	Recommendations for other stakeholders
Highlight and share good practice with other clubs and raise awareness amongst SSOs and local government staff of the work being done in this area. Consider how good practice in one area of diversity (e.g. cultural diversity) could be applied or adapted to other areas that the club may be interested in connecting with.	Explore possibilities for facilitating interaction between clubs and allowing the sharing of good practice.	Explore possibilities for facilitating interaction between clubs and allowing the sharing and dissemination of good practice.

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