

PARTICIPATION VERSUS PERFORMANCE:

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

- SUMMARY REPORT -

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

Please cite this report as:

Spaaij, R., Farquharson, K., Gorman, S., Jeanes, R., Lusher, D., Guerra, C., White, S., & Ablett, E. (2018). *Participation versus performance: Managing (dis)ability, gender and cultural diversity in junior sport*. Summary report. Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth.

Published March 2018.

ISBN: 978-0-646-98336-3

This work is copyright. Apart for any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1988, no part of it may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher and authors.

This research was generously funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme (Project Number LP130100366) and by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

Images in this report have been supplied by AFL, VicHealth and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.



MONASH
University



VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA



Curtin University



VicHealthTM



The Research

Research objectives

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 of Technology, Curtin University and Monash University, in partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Australian Football League (AFL) and the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY).

Australian communities are becoming increasingly diverse: nearly half of Australians are born overseas or have one or more parent born overseas, increasing numbers of people are (openly) identifying as LGBTI and an increasing number of people report having a disability (ABS, 2016). Furthermore, the gulf between medium to high socio-economic communities and those from low socio-economic backgrounds continues to widen. To develop a society that is inclusive and celebrates diversity it is important that young people have opportunities to experience positive contact with people who are different to themselves. 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. Historically, junior sport has also been an area where diverse young people have struggled to gain access and feel included. 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. How diversity is managed in junior sport can affect how participants are socialised to understand and respond to diversity throughout their lives.

The research examines how different forms of diversity are understood, experienced and managed by junior sports participants. Diversity occurs when people of varied backgrounds and abilities in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, (dis)ability or other observable or unobservable social factors are present and interact. 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 research question this project addresses is twofold:

- How is diversity managed in junior sports clubs?
- To what extent is including people with diverse backgrounds and abilities compatible with promoting sporting excellence and competitiveness?

The following key findings emerged from the research:

- 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 in isolation, such as cultural or gender diversity.
- Most clubs recognise 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.
- Junior sports clubs frequently feel overwhelmed by and under-resourced to deliver on calls to actively promote and support diversity. Capacity is perceived as a key issue, with clubs expressing concern about engaging with diversity and threatening their core operation due to a lack of volunteers.
- Individual champions are often the key to diversity work in junior sports clubs, yet they face considerable pressures and constraints.
- Clubs engaging with diversity experience tensions 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 their core business, even though these organisational goals can be complementary.

The implications of these findings and our recommendations are discussed further in this summary report.

What did the research involve?

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

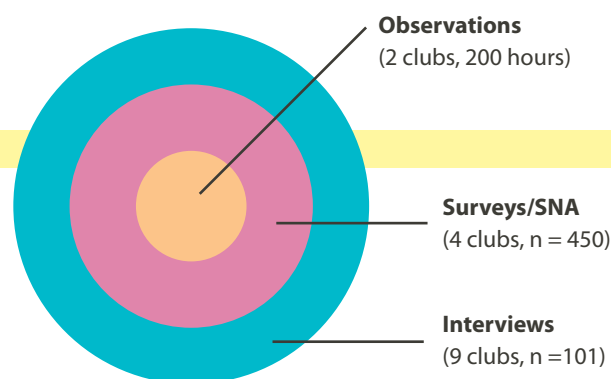
- Phase 1** In-depth interviews with junior sports participants (committee members, coaches, volunteers, parents and players) in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.
- Phase 2** Survey and social network analysis (SNA) (of individual clubs).
- Phase 3** Observations at a sub-sample of junior sports clubs.
- Phase 4** Policy analysis (government, peak-body and club policy documents).

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods generated detailed information on how diversity was understood, experienced and managed in the sports clubs; enabled the project to identify which policies, strategies or techniques for diversity management worked well; and determined what junior sports participants experienced in managing diversity.

The clubs involved in this project - nine in total - covered five mass participation sports: Australian Rules football (henceforth: football), Association football (henceforth: soccer), netball, cricket and basketball.

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
Kangaroos	Metropolitan Melbourne	Soccer	1, 2, 3
Eagles	Metropolitan Melbourne	Cricket	1

Figure 1. demonstrates the connections between the data collected in the four phases. It shows that the samples for the interviews, survey/SNA and observations are nested within that of the others.



Key Findings

Phase 1 Interviews

Interview data explored individuals' perceptions, experiences and understandings of diversity within sporting clubs. The 101 interviews explored the various ways that 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.

Several key findings emerged from Phase 1:

- 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 promoting a particular aspect of diversity.
- The committee often indicated verbally that they supported diversity but did not translate this into action.
- Understandings of diversity were broad and differed significantly between individuals and junior clubs. This was often dependent on the broader club culture and context, for example, clubs located in multicultural areas tended to have greater understanding and engagement with multicultural diversity.
- Junior clubs would focus upon aspects of diversity that were present in their cultures and contexts while ignoring (sometimes unintentionally) other aspects of diversity. For example, clubs with established female teams considered they were 'doing' diversity without considering other aspects, such as disability or culture.
- The position of a junior club in regards to participation or performance significantly influenced the approach of the club towards understanding and managing diversity.

Phase 2 Survey and Social Network Analysis

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 and social network analysis (SNA). 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.

Social network questions examined 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 for each club. We present the survey and social network data per club together to provide a more holistic overview of what is happening at clubs. For both the standard survey data and the network analyses there was variability across the four clubs we examined (see the full report for more details).

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 length of club membership 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 1000 (and a standard deviation of 100) and higher scores representing higher SES. (See table 1 for more details).



The survey findings show that:

- Females were more likely to support a culture of participation within clubs (i.e. giving everyone a go rather than playing to win).
- Gender (this time, being male) significantly predicted adherence to strict gender roles, for example, agreeing with statements such as 'women should expect to do most of the childcare' or disagreeing with 'it is ok for a man to cry in public'.
- Males from non-Anglo Australian backgrounds were more likely to endorse girls/women being treated equally as boys/men at the club.
- 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.
- Regarding homophobia, significant predictors were being male and being younger.
- When examining pro-disability attitudes (e.g. '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 females who were significantly more likely to agree with such a statement.

Table 1 - details of survey participants

Overall sample		Sports played	
# Survey respondents	450	Football	200 (44.4%)
Adults	169 (37.6%)	Netball	45 (10.0%)
Children	281 (62.4%)	Soccer	204 (45.3%)
Age of children (average in years)	13.59	>1 sport	1 (0.2%)
Male	284 (63.1%)	# Disabilities	12 (2.7%)
Female	166 (36.9%)	# Dominant culture	312 (69.3%)
Network size	360		
Roles		Births overseas	
Committee	29 (6.4%)	Participant	50 (11.5%)
Parents	16 (3.6%)	Mother	139 (30.9%)
Coaches	29 (6.4%)	Father	140 (31.1%)
Players	400 (88.9%)	Average age (years)	21.02
Other	14 (3.1%)	Average socio-economic score	986.89

The social network analysis found 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).** The findings show that a pattern of more positive and less negative social relationships is found across all four clubs examined here.
- **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.** Respondents typically considered the teams' best players as culture setters, friends and trusted people, and regarded them as providing support to other members. In the recommendations, we discuss how this finding indicates an opportunity for clubs to consider high performing players as champions or allies for culture change.

Phase 3 Observations

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.

Several key findings emerged from the analysis:

Junior clubs varied in the degree to which they focused upon participation or performance aspects of the sport. However, performance pressures existed at both junior clubs in different ways. For example, one club had an equal game time policy for all junior players, but when they adhered to this and rotated high ability players, the coaches received heavy criticism from parents who argued that the team was no longer competitive. At the second club, a junior coach discussed that whilst he supported an open selection policy, coaches associated with the senior teams consistently pressured him to play the 'best' players to ensure talent progression into the senior sides.

- 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. Champions within clubs included club presidents, a coordinator of an all-abilities team who worked in the disability sector, a junior coach and a club secretary.
- Both junior clubs attempted to create welcoming and inclusive environments, yet observations revealed many social divisions and fractured (sub) cultures. For example, at one club, women and girls generally did not attend club social events, whilst the all-abilities section organised separate social activities that were not well supported by the rest of the club.
- 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.



Participation versus performance:



Phase 4 Policy Analysis

Phase 4 of the research aimed to determine the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks in nurturing diversity in junior sport in practice. The policy analysis assessed what policies and plans sports organisations had published, whether they mentioned diversity and, if so, in what ways. It specifically focused on examining the types of support for diversity that could be used at the club level.

Several key findings emerged from the analysis:

- Leading organisations (Australian Sports Commission, National Sporting Organisations [NSOs]) 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. Few had policies for managing diversity at the club level other than codes of conduct.
- There was a disconnect between NSO and State Sporting Organisation (SSO) diversity initiatives, and resources and their utilisation at the club level. Clubs were typically unaware that there were resources available, and if they were aware, frequently found the resources available to be lacking specific guidance 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.

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 of diversity in isolation, such as cultural diversity or gender diversity, 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 in 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, and also of those NSOs and SSOs that were seen to take a lead but leave it up to clubs to be proactive in finding and then engaging with information. Most clubs felt that 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, with the potential to threaten the club's core operation, and thus, existence. Clubs and their volunteers were not necessarily resisting diversity but encouraging diversity in ways that they believed the club could cope with.

Participation and performance

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, a club's 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.

Most clubs positioned themselves on 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. On average, we found that males were more likely to: support a pro-performance stance, be homophobic, endorse stricter gender roles (while believing there is gender equality) and endorse violence as a natural masculine trait. In addition, males were 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 higher on average than female responses. Clearly, there may be contextual factors which drive the attitudes of males in some clubs in certain directions, 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, diversity champions within clubs were 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. In some clubs, the contributions of these individual champions are vital; without their commitment and persistence, new sport participation opportunities may not have been 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 that a range of factors influence 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 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 greater influence within the club than low performing players. In clubs where the attitudes of so-called best players are specifically against diversity, clubs may have 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.



Good practices



Management and Structure

- Changing club culture and ensuring policy and ethos translates to the grassroots. One club committee had restructured its large club into a series of small sections, with a committee member responsible for each. The committee member was responsible for managing and communicating with the volunteers and coaches in their sub-section. This made the task less onerous and ensured better communication and compliance with club ethos.
- Internal assessment of where the club was at, what its faults were, what was being done incorrectly and how it could improve, especially in terms of recruiting and retaining players from different cultural backgrounds, and increasing parental engagement and volunteerism.



Promoting disability participation

- Clubs have actively engaged with different disability related stakeholders and sought alliances, partnerships and advice as to how to establish an all-abilities section and recruit participants to all-abilities teams.
- There have been varied ways in which clubs act proactively. With regards to engaging with SSOs, some clubs have simply emailed the relevant SSO officer for information whilst other clubs have attended a Disability Gala / Festival Day. At other clubs, a parent of a club member who has a sibling with disabilities has engaged with the local special school the sibling attended and recruited a teacher to come along and runs all-abilities sessions. Often at clubs these individuals are considered 'champions' as they take on the role of promoting and managing provision for individuals with disabilities



Supporting low income families and young people

- One committee had successfully organised a ride share program amongst parents to support young people lacking in family support or families without transport options.
- One club recycled kit and equipment to support families unable to afford the cost of equipment.



Engaging with culturally diverse communities

- Regular social events that are culturally sensitive and offer opportunities to celebrate diverse cultures, such as cultural themed food nights.
- Production of newsletters and marketing in relevant languages for the local community.
- Recruitment of a teacher from a local primary school to act as a cultural intermediary for newly arrived migrant young people.



Promoting gender equity

- Several clubs suggested the importance of gender balance on their committee if they were seeking to develop and increase female participation, and would actively seek and encourage female members within the club and female parents to take up roles on the committee. Offering opportunities for mentoring and support were important to encourage this uptake.

Recommendations

The research findings inform the following recommendations that can contribute to continue making junior sports clubs, and community sports clubs more generally, a diverse and inclusive environment.

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 improving diversity literacy in the sport sector.

✓ 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. For those clubs in the study who were seeking to engage with diverse groups for the first time, building relationships with local schools was a key way for many of them to engage with a broader range of participants. Having policies and resources that are flexible to support the differing positions of clubs would be beneficial.

✓ 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 them to assist with this. This guidance could include how to build relationships with schools and community groups to attract more diverse participants, and details of specific training and resources available to support coaches and club volunteers.

✓ 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. There were several examples of clubs within the study who, in engaging with a wider participation base in their local community, had grown their membership extensively and also improved the performance of their junior teams. The business case can potentially help reduce barriers and resistance to engaging with diversity.

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. Champions can be various individuals, ranging from members of the club committee through to coaches and parents. It's important to find out who has a passion and commitment to diversity within the club. A whole-of-club approach is desirable, but champions may need support to engage other stakeholders in the club.

**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 as diversity champions or allies could be a useful strategy to foster and advocate for whole-of-club commitment to diversity. Best players could do this in different ways, including openly welcoming and supporting diverse players, showing support for equity policies, such as equal game time or condemning negative attitudes and behaviour towards diverse groups.

**Engaging coaches as key actors in diversity practice**

Coaches are a key part of diversity management in community sport. Clubs require support to educate their coaches on diversity, and what that means for how and what they coach. The coach is the interface of diversity practice and clubs are judged by players and parents on diversity by the actions (positive or negative) of the coach. Clubs need to be able to provide resources and training for their coaches on how they deal with diversity and the recommendations for this. Similarly, all coaches and volunteers may benefit from inductions which state and outline the club's approach to diversity and what the recommendations for this will be (e.g. equal game time regardless of ability). Coaches and volunteers should be aware they are 'buying into' this ethos when committing to the club. This needs some level of ongoing monitoring to ensure that coaches and volunteers continue to adhere to the club ethos.

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 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)?

**Diversifying club leadership structures**

Diversity across the club structures is a key way that clubs can both ensure institutional level commitment to diversity and ensure 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.

**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. There were examples of clubs who successfully combined both. One club in the study, for example, won a state competition after enforcing equal game time policies. 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.



Sharing Good Practice



Sharing local knowledge and experience

Community sports clubs recognise the value of greater sharing 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 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 strategise and tailor what is best for them.

For more detailed recommendations that are specifically directed at sports clubs, NSOs and SSOs, and other stakeholders, we refer the reader to the full report.

