



THE GAP FC

Technical Director of The Gap FC, Rob Askew believes that influencing the culture of clubs and altering perspectives towards female participation is key.

Women must be involved in the management of the female sections of their club so that they can control their own destiny. Importantly they must also contribute to the broader club itself. At The Gap we have people from the women's side playing important roles in key positions on the Management Committee which not only ensures that women's voices are heard but that the women's section has become integral to the club. We encourage women to be involved at that crucial level because it gives women's football credibility, influence and power and a voice that can bring female football to the forefront of thinking at management level. Beyond that through annual proactive recruitment of volunteers by promoting female football as a mission and a 'members not customers' philosophy we ensure that our numbers are sufficient across the board to insure stability if someone moves on.

Running parallel to this is developing our player base. Back in the 90's we established our own committee to run our women's football program. It was at the same time Brisbane Women's Soccer introduced U/12's and U/14's. We were one of only a handful of clubs that took action in taking advantage of the opportunity to grow female participation at junior level. Encouraged by the numbers we achieved in the under 12, 14 and 16 age groups we submitted an application for a Grant from the Brisbane City Council to build our base further. Through funding we obtained from the Council we employed two Schools Development Officers on a part time basis to promote football for girls and our club. We also conducted free school holiday coaching clinics run by then Matilda and Gap player Kim Revell. What became apparent was that the greatest appetite for football amongst the girls we encountered was in the ages of 6, 7, 8 and 9. We believe that providing a female friendly entry level to the game is key to attracting and retaining the playing numbers that will ensure long term success of women's football.

Influencing the culture of a club at its core is a priority and changing perspectives towards female participation is equally crucial.

