

# Leading Clubs

The rules and tools for  
a more inclusive club



## Acknowledgements

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Acknowledgement also to the following State Sporting Associations and clubs for their contribution to this resource:

- Surf Life Saving Australia, its State Centres and clubs;
- Cricket Victoria;
- Gymnastics Victoria; and
- AFL Victoria.

Special acknowledgement to each of the State Sporting Associations and clubs referred to in this resource, particularly those clubs that currently incorporate inclusive practices and procedures and which have been used as examples throughout this publication.

The Inclusion Action Plan set out in this resource is based on the table in Surf Life Saving Australia's Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan, which was based on a template provided by the Australian Sports Commission.

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Enquires or comments on this resource can be directed to:  
Department of Planning and  
Community Development  
Sport and Recreation Victoria  
PO Box 2392, Melbourne 3000

Telephone (03) 9208 3333  
[www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au)

## Minister's foreword



*Leading Clubs – the rules and tools for a more inclusive club* is designed to provide clubs with the essential rules and tools for better governance.

It can also help break down barriers and attitudes that may prevent members of the community from joining your club. These include financial disadvantage, gender, age, disability, racism, or just plain bad behaviour.

Recently the Victorian Government announced that the state's 16,000 sports clubs and associations would be required to sign up to an overarching behavioural Code of Conduct or risk losing funding.

This is a push to stamp out poor spectator behaviour and violence in community sport.

*Leading Clubs* is an important tool that can help us all achieve this objective.

It explains the concept of inclusion and its value to Victorian sport and recreation clubs and how better governance can lead to an inclusive sporting club that fosters connected communities.

Being an inclusive club means being welcoming, friendly, and making people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, characteristics and attributes feel invited, valued and an integral part of the club.

It also means your club can benefit from more club memberships, draw on a wider range of community skills and networks, become eligible for more grants and grow on and off the field.

Most importantly, *Leading Clubs* will go a long way to helping your club champion good behaviour and positive support within the community.

It reflects the Victorian Government's commitment to strengthening the role of clubs in bringing the community together through sport and recreation.

Help your club become a community role model by supporting the new Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport and using this fantastic resource.



**JAMES MERLINO MP**

Minister for Sport,  
Recreation and Youth Affairs

# Executive summary



The creation of this Resource reflects the Victorian Government's position that well run sport and recreation clubs are vital community organisations that can foster good community relations. This Resource is intended to help clubs and in particular their committees of management understand their roles and governance obligations. It aims to provide clubs with tools to implement inclusive practices and effective governance.

## Inclusion and governance

Good governance is the key to the long-term sustainability of a sport or recreation club. Ensuring that a club is welcoming, diverse, friendly and values every member, participant, volunteer or other person involved in the club is one of the key roles of each member of a committee of management (as part of the club's governing body).

Good governance involves the establishment of appropriate practices and procedures for the effective operation of a club. This Resource provides plain English guidance on the good governance of sporting clubs. Further, it explains the concept of inclusion and its value to sport and recreation clubs and how inclusive clubs can foster inclusive communities.

## How do I use this resource?

This Resource is a comprehensive package of information about inclusion and governance. It explains the issues that all clubs should consider and provides simple, practical information for club members and administrators.

**It is not intended that club members or administrators read this Resource from start to finish, rather the headings are intended to guide readers through, so they can focus on the areas of particular relevance to their club.**

The Resource provides practical suggestions on how clubs can create welcoming and inclusive sporting environments and improve their governance. It sets out suggested activities ('Action Points') to give clubs ideas and tools to implement inclusive practices and better governance. Some of the Action Points involve little or no cost to the club. Sources of funding have been identified, as well as suggestions for better use of existing funds.

Readers are encouraged to use the Action Points, checklists and templates to assess or improve the structures, strategies and approaches of their club.

## What is in the resource?

The Resource describes a number of the benefits to clubs of inclusive practices. Clubs that adopt inclusive practices might find they have:

- more members;
- increased funds from fees, fundraisers or government grants;
- a wider pool of players for competitions;
- increased spectators;
- a broadened pool of volunteers;
- increased avenues to sponsorship;
- a greater representation of the local community;
- better compliance with State and Federal laws relating to discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation; and
- a stronger image and reputation within the local area.

It highlights the role of the committee of management in making each club more inclusive and demonstrates the ways in which this can be achieved.

**The key message is that inclusive practices are a crucial part of broader good governance practice. Inclusion helps sporting clubs broaden their reach and become stronger and more effectively operated. It is the committee of management of each sporting club that will lead the way.**

The Resource contains suggestions for improving the inclusiveness of sport and recreation clubs such as:

- improving the understanding of club members and volunteers about the importance of having an inclusive and welcoming club;
- providing and promoting opportunities for the whole family to get involved;
- emphasising or strengthening the social aspects of a club;
- working in partnership to develop inclusive sport and recreation opportunities;
- awareness campaigns at a local level;
- improving transport options;
- reducing costs;
- seeking funding grants from State and Federal governments to implement inclusive practices and programs; and
- creating an inclusion sub-committee which helps to develop and implement inclusive practices and procedures.

The Resource also includes practical examples of successful inclusion policies and practices, and:

- details the most common corporate structures for sporting clubs in Victoria;
- explains how good governance involves control and direction in issues of policy and strategy rather than day-to-day operations management;
- sets out best practice approaches for the composition of the committee of management;
- gives guidance to the chairperson on his/her role and the conducting of Annual General Meetings; and
- provides guidance on legal, commercial and ethical governance considerations facing committee members of sporting clubs.

### **An invaluable resource**

Sport and Recreation Victoria and Lander & Rogers expect this Resource will be an invaluable guide for clubs in breaking down the barriers to participation in sport and recreation. It will help clubs to identify how they can improve governance and operations. By following the suggestions in this resource, clubs, members and the Victorian community as a whole will benefit.

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# Introduction



The Olympic Charter states:

*“The practice of sports is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.”*<sup>1</sup>

The Victorian Government recognises that sport and recreation play an essential role in building and strengthening communities and that sport helps teach Victorians important values such as volunteerism, co-operation, leadership and teamwork.

## How does this Resource fit with the focus of Sport and Recreation Victoria?

In April 2008, the Victorian Government released *The Victorian Government’s Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*. The plan sets out the Government’s intentions in relation to community organisations, including,

*“...to assist community organisations to invest in their own capabilities and long term sustainability by broadening their services and activities, developing new skills and methods and establishing new partnerships, while remaining a diverse and dynamic sector.”*<sup>2</sup>

Sport and recreation clubs are vital community organisations and their contribution is acknowledged and valued by the Victorian Government.

The action plan clearly identifies the intention of the Victorian Government to help strengthen organisations such as sport and recreation clubs and to help them to have:

- a clear understanding of their activities, focus and roles;
- the organisational capacity to deliver those activities;
- linkages with other organisations and other sectors to achieve their goals; and
- the resources (financial and human) that will enable them to deliver an effective and valuable service or activity.<sup>3</sup>

Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) has prepared this Resource to assist clubs and administrators of clubs. It is intended to help volunteers understand their roles and obligations, particularly in relation to the governance of clubs and the implementation of inclusive practices, and to provide a tool to enable them to do so.

The provision of this Resource fits within SRV’s Strategic Plan for sport, *Sport and Recreation 2005–2010 – A Five Year Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation Victoria*. SRV sees voluntary organisations such as sport and recreation clubs as great places for community strengthening activities because they support social networks, provide opportunities to contribute to community life through participation in committees and boards of management and enable volunteering across a range of activities and situations.<sup>4</sup>

1 *Olympic Charter – in force as from 7 July 2007*, Independent Olympic Committee, p.11

2 *The Victorian Government’s Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*, Victorian Government, April 2008, p.1

3 *Strengthening Community Organisations*, see note 1, p.15

4 *Sport and Recreation 2005–2010 – A Five Year Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation Victoria*, Department for Victorian Communities, November 2005, p.11

Both the SRV Strategic Plan and *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations* are part of *A Fairer Victoria*<sup>5</sup>, a social policy statement specifically aimed at reducing the incidence of disadvantage (a major barrier to participation) in Victoria. In its Strategic Plan, SRV acknowledges the important role sport and recreation can play in this context.<sup>6</sup>

One of the key objectives of SRV's Strategic Plan is to create a culture of inclusive participation in sport and recreation in Victoria.<sup>7</sup> SRV believes clubs play a vital role in our communities and in the creation of a culture of inclusion. This Resource is part of SRV's efforts to provide clubs with the tools they need to help the Victorian Government deliver its vision.

To further support clubs' ability to achieve this objective, the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs, James Merlino, announced in October 2009 that all State Sporting Associations and clubs would be required to adopt, and implement a Code of Conduct and monitor any breaches against this Code. The Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport sets clear standards of respect in sport and ensures clubs and all supporters take an active role to stamp out inappropriate behaviour.

5 *A Fairer Victoria: Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage*, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2005.

6 *Sport and Recreation 2005–2010 – A Five Year Strategic Plan for Sport and Recreation Victoria*, – see note 3, p.10

7 *Sports and Recreation, 2005–2010 Strategic Plan 2008 Progress Report*, SRV, undated, p.5

# Chapter 1 – Inclusion and governance



## The role of the committee of management

It is important for members of a committee of management (COM Members) to be aware and understand their obligations to the club.

Therefore, it is important that COM Members understand:

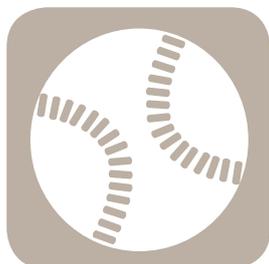
- governance and how being more inclusive can improve governance;
- the role and operation of a committee of management – including its role in guiding the club to be more inclusive;
- business plans, strategic plans and budgets;
- succession planning;
- volunteer management – induction and training;
- risk management; and
- ethics.

Each of these concepts is central to the role of a COM Member and vital to the health and well-being of a club.

This Resource explains each of these topics and provides guidance to COM Members so they can fulfil their obligations.

It also outlines where to find other sources of information, provides details about obtaining funding or grants and lists hundreds of organisations that can be contacted for help, or which clubs may be able to enter into partnerships or establish networks.

## Chapter 2 – Inclusion and Your Club



### Being inclusive won't break the budget – what your club can do

Clubs do not necessarily have the financial or human resources to implement a 'best practice' approach in all areas of club administration. Volunteer administrators are expected to comply with an ever increasing range of legislation and regulatory requirements as well as prepare for and administer each sporting season.

However, the long-term strength of a club is linked to its ability to plan its future and incorporate and implement good governance practices – that is, the ability of a club and its committee of management to work *on* its business not *within* its business. Good governance is crucial to the ongoing ability of local sport and recreation clubs to achieve their strategic goals.

The Victorian Government is committed to reducing the regulatory burden and streamlining interaction with government, building the capacity of community organisations such as clubs and enhancing their role in community life.<sup>8</sup>

This Resource is intended to provide a 'best practice' approach which will allow a club to understand its obligations and the way in which it should be structured and governed. It also offers clubs a way to understand the barriers that prevent people from being involved in a sports club and provides clubs with ideas and tools for becoming more inclusive.

Clubs are not expected to become 'model' clubs overnight. The aim is to make the appropriate improvements to the club, taking into account the people in your local community and your club's situation in relation to finances and resources, as well as the skills of the existing committee of management and club members.

Throughout this Resource, clubs are provided with suggested 'Action Points' (i.e. activities they can undertake) to improve their practices and procedures. Many of the Action Points involve very little or no financial cost to the club. Some of the Action Points are suggestions as to how to improve activities that are already being undertaken. Some Action Points will involve a cost to the club. Clubs should refer to the list in Chapter 11 (Sources of funding for inclusion projects) and their own financial position. Existing funds may be better spent on alternative activities or you may be able to apply for funding or a grant in relation to a particular inclusion project.

A club should consider the potential opportunities that can be reached through having better governance and being more inclusive. Such opportunities may be gained by making changes to the club culture, accessing funding grants to undertake particular projects, entering into partnerships, using existing community networks or engaging and embracing the ideas of current members and those of local community groups. Clubs should consider their particular needs and circumstances and use this Resource to tailor a realistic inclusion plan to suit those needs.

<sup>8</sup> *Strengthening Community Organisations*, see note 1, p. 9

## What is inclusion?

To include a person or groups of people is simply to embrace or involve and encourage the participation of all people, especially those people who are not currently club members.

There are many different definitions of 'inclusion' and no one definition is right. VicHealth defines a socially inclusive society as one:

*“where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so that they can live in dignity.”<sup>9</sup>*

Leisure Networks (a not-for-profit organisation servicing Greater Geelong and surrounding areas) defines inclusion to mean “having the option to be involved, or to participate.” According to Leisure Networks:

*“Inclusion involves the integration of people with varying abilities and backgrounds into mainstream activities within communities and associated groups. Any organisation is only as good as the contribution of the people who form the group and it is the responsibility of all members to recognise the value of each contributor.”<sup>10</sup>*

VicSport believes:

*“Welcoming and inclusive sporting environments are those that ensure everyone; participants, coaches, officials, administrators, spectators or any other person involved in, or visiting the club, is made to feel welcome, included, and valued, regardless of ability or personal attributes.”<sup>11</sup>*

People can feel excluded on the basis of their gender, race, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, nationality, ethnic background, culture, physical or mental ability or their political or religious views.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission notes that sport offers opportunities to break down barriers and encourage participation in a way that other areas of society may struggle to match.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of sport and sporting clubs, the Midland Valley Vikings Rugby League Club (the Vikings) (which encompasses people drawn from Shepparton, Benalla, Seymour, Wangaratta, Bendigo, Wodonga and district) believes being inclusive is to:

*“Create, promote and expand opportunities for every person in their community regardless of age, ability, income, education, sexual orientation, race or religion to be an active and valued participant of its club.”<sup>13</sup>*

The Vikings interpret inclusive practices to mean redefining its thought and decision-making processes to automatically include everyone in its community. This means every decision made and every process or procedure put in place is automatically non-discriminatory and encourages maximum participation, thereby using inclusive practices.<sup>14</sup>

9 see VicHealth website, heading 'Social Inclusion' at <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/>

10 *Community Inclusiveness a guide for groups*, Developed by Leisure Networks for City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe Rural Access Program, undated, p.5

11 *Inclusive clubs*, VicSport website at <http://www.vicsport.asn.au/>

12 *What's the score? A survey of cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2006, p.10

13 *Tackling Inclusion – A guide to expanding your club by including everyone*, Centre for Active Recreation Network, 2006, p.3

14 *Tackling Inclusion – A guide to expanding your club by including everyone*, see note 13, p.3

Failing to be inclusive does not necessarily mean actively excluding certain people or certain types of people. In order to be inclusive, clubs must take steps to encourage and welcome people to the club and to actively break down existing barriers that make it difficult for certain people or groups to become involved. This may mean establishing strategies, policies or action plans to ensure the club's culture is inclusive. This Resource provides practical help to become a more inclusive club.

### **What does being inclusive mean for your club?**

Being an inclusive club means being a welcoming and friendly club and making people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, characteristics and attributes feel invited, valued and an integral part of your club.

To do this, the decision-makers at a club need to be aware of its make-up and whether its members are an accurate reflection of the people in the local community. Being inclusive means recognising the barriers to participation by certain groups and systematically (and practically) breaking down those barriers to provide a welcoming and friendly club.

### **Aren't we doing that already?**

Clubs should take a 'whole-of-club' approach to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive culture. A whole-of-club approach means everyone in the club is encouraged to contribute to improving the culture – including members, administrators, volunteers, supporters and players.

Seeking more members, smiling and being polite to prospective members and keeping your doors open are the first steps to being more inclusive but there are many more steps that can, and should be taken. Being inclusive is more than just allowing people from disadvantaged groups to participate.

Clubs need to consider how they introduce people (especially potential members) – how they greet them and how they make them feel welcome.

It is important to think about the people that make up your local community, the percentage of those people who are members of your club and any barriers to the involvement of a broader range of people. Sometimes you may need to take positive action to remove the existing barriers that prevent people from joining your club. For example, some people may never have had the opportunity to play certain sports. Therefore, clubs may need to offer basic skills training to enable them to enter and enjoy the sport. A club may even discover a 'hidden talent'.

## What are the barriers to people becoming part of your club?

Different people have different experiences; actions or comments that may make one person feel uninvited may not even be noticed by another person. Therefore, clubs and their members need to think about the impact of their existing club culture, practices and procedures on all people, not just on current members or volunteers.

This Resource explains what prevents people with different backgrounds, experiences, characteristics and attributes from becoming a member of a sports club. These include:

- time and financial cost to clubs of establishing inclusive practices and programs;
- community and/or club perceptions of what people can or want to do;
- issues relating to transport and access to playing and training venues;
- the cost of joining a club and having to (usually) pay such fees upfront;
- a lack of awareness of, or access to information about, existing clubs and how to join them;
- lack of skills or doubt about skills and fitness or a lack of understanding of the rules of a sport;
- language barriers;
- the time and day sporting competitions are played or recreation activities are undertaken;
- access to facilities and venues – for example new parents, older people or people with a disability might require ramps and handrails; and
- concerns for safety, particularly in relation to travelling to and from facilities and venues.

This Resource explains how each of these barriers can be broken down.

## Why should we be more inclusive? What are the benefits?

Sport and recreation organisations that have comprehensive policies to address discrimination, harassment and vilification and that provide a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere have a far greater chance of attracting participants from a diverse range of backgrounds.<sup>15</sup>

By involving more people in your club and being more diverse and inclusive, your club will benefit. These benefits can include:

- increased number of members;
- increased funds for the club (from more membership fees, fundraisers, higher participation in social events etc);
- increased number of competitors;
- more spectators attending games;
- the availability of a new pool of volunteers for coaching and officiating in the sport and to help with the administration of the club;
- access to increased sponsorship avenues by reaching more areas and population groups within the local community;
- embracing and being more representative of the local community and helping to break down social barriers that exist within the local community;
- compliance with State and Federal laws relating to discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation; and
- strengthening the image and reputation of the club in its local area.

Ultimately, being a more inclusive club helps to ensure the welfare of your club and to sustain it into the future.

<sup>15</sup> *What's the score? A survey of cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport*, see note 12, p.19

Being inclusive helps a club meet its legal obligations including those set out under the Acts of Parliament that deal with discrimination and in the *Victorian Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*.

Damage to a club's reputation and the consequences of negative comments being spread by word-of-mouth can harm a club and scare off potential members.

By being inclusive, clubs are benefiting themselves and providing benefits to individuals and society. Personal benefits include physical health and well-being, increased self-esteem and lower stress levels. Benefits to society and the general community include improved social interaction and strengthened communities, improved access to sport and involvement of people from disadvantaged groups, improved community harmony, health prevention, increased employment and a possible reduction in crime.

### **The next step**

People from different groups may see different factors or barriers that prevent them from participating. Study your club's local community. By understanding these barriers, your club will be better equipped to establish strategies, procedures and plans to break them down.

### **Learning more about barriers**

People can feel excluded on the basis of their gender, race, age, gender identity, nationality, ethnic background, culture, physical or mental ability, political or religious views.

To learn more about the barriers that currently exist, read Chapter 4 (Why are some people less likely to join your club?)

## Chapter 3 – What Can Clubs Do?



### Understanding the importance of an inclusive and welcoming club

There are many things a club can do to become more inclusive.

Solutions will be most effective where they are implemented as part of a well-considered, well-developed strategy. In order to ensure a club becomes more inclusive, its committee of management should try to understand the local community and its diversity of people.

Trying any of the strategies or implementing any of the Action Points suggested in this Resource, will help your club increase members, volunteers, officials, spectators and participants. In addition, clubs should remember that every new member has a set of friends and networks and each of these people might be interested in getting involved in your club.

By breaking down the barriers, clubs are also providing a benefit to people who are from under-represented sectors of the public and the general community.

### Through a committed approach and attitude your club and your community will reap the rewards

#### For example: Mildura United Soccer Club

*The club invited Indigenous young people to join – seven joined at first. It took a long time to gain their trust and convince them that the club wanted them as long-term members and not just to make up the numbers for a few weeks. Their reservations were overcome by the President, committee and members, who all gave their full support. The club significantly increased the number of players it had, ranging from under-9 to A Grade adults, including a substantial increase in the number of young Indigenous players. The original seven junior players have now grown up and moved on. One became a qualified soccer coach, another played for a national team and a third was one of the lead dancers at the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony. Local schools with Indigenous students are now keen to get involved, but transport and participation costs limit how many the club can sign up. The club President and committee members have ferried players to and from isolated communities and the club paid for the petrol. However, there is a limit to what it can afford.<sup>16</sup>*

<sup>16</sup> *User-friendly Sport An ideas book to help sport and recreation clubs grow*, Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2002, p.8

### Action Point:

- Encourage members and supporters to think about what they say and do and how their actions could affect others. The committee of management should actively encourage, through the use of the ideas and practices suggested in this Resource, to think about how they can help make all people feel valued, their differences respected, and their needs met so the club is welcoming to all.
- To develop a better understanding of your local community, look around, speak to the local Council, and community groups, such as those in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks).
- Think about what people from each of the under-represented groups discussed in this Resource are looking for in a club – invite current club members to speak to the committee of management about the action it could take to be more accessible and how it could be more inviting to potential members.
- Seek the views of leaders in particular communities – e.g. Indigenous leaders, leaders of different multicultural groups located in your area or leaders of homosexual/bisexual communities.

### For example: Kingsville Tennis Club

*The club was down to a few members and had to choose between re-inventing itself or folding. A member asked some people with volunteer and management experience to join the committee.*

*The new group brought energy and experience. They asked for help from the Melbourne Sports Network<sup>17</sup> – this led to participation in the Greater Western Regional Games. The committee wanted to create opportunities for people who do not often get the chance to play tennis. They provided support for people of different physical and intellectual abilities and started a program to teach the skills required to coach people with different abilities.*

*The success of these programs boosted the club's community profile and attracted new members. New members also volunteered in the special programs. As it grew, the club had to balance its need for more facilities against its desire to keep the atmosphere friendly and informal.<sup>18</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> Melbourne Sports Network no longer exists however clubs or individuals can contact VicSport or Sport & Recreation Victoria for further details on the case study provided.

<sup>18</sup> *User-friendly Sport An ideas book to help sport and recreation clubs grow*, see note 16, p.8

## Understanding the importance of an inclusive and welcoming club

When people understand the effects of their actions or comments, they are far more likely to think about what they say, how they act and how they are affecting people around them.

Members will benefit from understanding more about the experiences of others. You will find that people of various ages, from different nationalities, with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, people with a disability, Indigenous Australians and people of different sexual orientation or gender identity all have interesting stories to tell about their lives and experiences and how this has shaped and affected them.

Simply by sharing those stories in a relaxed environment, club members are more likely to understand cultural or other sensitivities and the way in which their own actions can help to make the club more welcoming.

Placing a strong emphasis on the importance of making all new members welcome will show current members how much the club values an inclusive culture. Members should all be encouraged to make new members feel at home.

If members actively try to make all people feel that they are welcome and their contributions valued, the club and the community will benefit.

### Action Point:

- Use the services provided by your State Sporting Association such as training and awareness sessions for your members and volunteers.

### For Example:

Gymnastics Victoria provides educational opportunities to its member clubs to ensure those clubs can be confident they are creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. Gymnastics Victoria encourages its members to use the Gymnastics Australia on-line resource *Managing Inclusion in Gymnastics*.<sup>19</sup>

### For Example:

AFL Victoria operates a number of programs to help clubs be more inclusive – e.g. Indigenous Kick Start Program, Community Football, Multicultural Program, Primary and Secondary School Programs and many others. More information can be found at [www.afvic.com.au](http://www.afvic.com.au).

### For Example:

AFL Victoria offers its clubs a *Club management program* resource (in hard copy and CD-Rom) which provides information on all areas of managing a football club, including a Community Partnerships module which helps clubs explore the ways in which it can build relationships with other groups within the community.

<sup>19</sup> *Gymnastics Victoria Inclusion Policy*, Gymnastics Victoria, p.2 (Note: at the date of publication of this Resource, the Gymnastics Victoria Inclusion Policy was only in draft stage).

### For Example:

Cricket Victoria's Club Assist program provides information and resources on all aspects of club life. Its *Club Ideas and Resources Index* provides several case studies where Victorian cricket clubs have implemented programs to encourage broader participation in their club. More information can be found at [www.cricketvictoria.com.au](http://www.cricketvictoria.com.au). Cricket Victoria also offers its clubs a *Club Development Program* resource (in hard copy and on CD-ROM) which includes information and advice for clubs including strategies to improve the club and its teams, better serve volunteers and provide healthy environments.

### For Example:

Surf Life Saving Australia has an inclusion page in its website which explains the organisation's inclusive approach (*Surf life saving offers something for everyone*), sets out its Inclusion Strategy, invites surf life saving clubs to share information and provides details of two inclusion programs – *On the Same Wave* (supporting people from CALD backgrounds) and *Sport Connect* (an Australian Sports Commission program supporting people with a disability).

### Action Point:

- Consider seeking funding grants that help clubs provide relevant education sessions to volunteers and/or members (see Chapter 11 – Sources of funding for inclusion projects).
- Partner with organisations that work directly with under-represented groups in your community to arrange for speakers to attend committee of management meetings or an open forum for members or ask them to nominate a representative to join an Inclusion Committee see Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks).
- Have a 'buddy' system for new members – set clear standards as to what is required of the buddy. The new member's buddy should be responsible for introducing them to other members including key people, showing them around the facilities (toilet, canteen, equipment, etc) and how to get to/from playing and training venues as well as the location of any social functions. The buddy should try to give the new member as much information as possible so the new member feels part of the club. The buddy should make the new member feel comfortable enough to ask him/her any questions that relate to the workings of the club.

### **For example: Sunshine Heights Cricket Club**

*Recognising the rich cultural diversity of its membership and local community, the club's leadership group encourages a club culture that nurtures respect for each person's background by:*

- highlighting local media news articles in the club newsletter that promote inclusion. e.g. a racial vilification article written in *The Age*;*
- incorporating a variety of culinary options at club functions, offering food choices such as Indian, Greek, Turkish, and Italian;*
- incorporating national music and dance at functions;*
- reinforcing expectations of all players by the president, captains and coaches regarding sportsmanship, attitudes, respect for opponents and the spirit of cricket; and*
- encouraging attitudes sensitive to religious beliefs and discouraging any mocking of minority groups, particularly involving nationality, religious or other cultural practices. If this occurs, the leadership group discusses these issues as early as possible.*

*New members are inducted with a 30-minute presentation outlining the club's history, player requirements, membership costs, club highlights and other relevant information. Expectations and standards required of members are communicated from the outset.*

*Participation on the club's committee is encouraged from all demographics of the club – juniors, seniors, women, younger seniors, one-day side etc. This consultative approach enables all members to be represented in decision-making processes and fosters a feeling of ownership within the club.*

*Additional benefits derived by the club as a result of an inclusive environment include:*

- a widened club network helping the club seek grants, donations and sponsorship;*
- an entrenched feeling of mutual respect among members that the club has been able to use as a recruitment tool;*
- development of a strong standing within the local community; and*
- the club's all-embracing philosophy has introduced many people to cricket who otherwise may have taken up something else.<sup>20</sup>*

20 Case Study Sunshine Heights CC Developing a welcoming, inclusive Club environment, Cricket Victoria website, undated

## Opportunities for the whole family to get involved

There are many reasons why people may be more likely to get involved in a club if they feel invited and welcome at club games/matches/competitions and social functions or events. A comfortable, welcoming, safe and inclusive environment is far more likely to encourage the involvement and participation of families

Some parents may feel uncomfortable having their children at club functions if there is excessive drinking. The cost of each family member joining the club may be restrictive to some families. However, if the club can make it easy and comfortable for the whole family to be involved, this provides a simple way to reach many more people.

### Action Point:

- Encourage members to invite their wider family to attend club social functions or to watch games. Hold ‘family days’ which specifically cater to families and children. Encourage members to invite their friends and family so they can get to know your club.
- Consider having family-friendly pricing so it is less expensive for the whole family to attend or be involved rather than charging each individual attending or becoming a member.
- Consider your club’s definition of ‘family’ – the concept of family is constantly developing and changing. In the past a family typically consisted of a mother and father (who were married) and one, two or more children. Today it is accepted that families can include mothers, fathers, grandparents, step-parents, marriage, living together, living apart, single parenthood, children of all ages and many more. It is important clubs cater to all types of families. Do you have separate pricing policies for family attendance at games/matches/competitions or social functions? If so, does the definition of family include non-traditional families?
- Hold special events during the school holidays – perhaps a junior carnival day where teams from clubs within your area compete.
- Provide a baby’s change room for new parents and a children’s playground at your club’s venue.
- Help member parents who have children to meet and help each other. For example, by providing parents with each other’s contact details (with their permission to do so) they may be able to arrange car-pooling to transport children to and from games and training.

### **For example: Hobson's Bay Sport and Game Fishing Club Sport and Game Fishing**

*The club started in 1995 with 35 members. Following implementation of a number of inclusive programs it increased membership to 227 – with 40 percent of members being women and juniors, and the membership including 53 family groups. Some of the club's initiatives were:*

- low fees for women and juniors;*
- asking members to bring along their partners;*
- emphasising families in its promotional activities (e.g. publishing photographs of families and juniors on its webpage);*
- organising events especially for children*
  - with help from sponsors such as local businesses; and*
- offering prizes for men, women and juniors in general competitions.*

*The club also provided volunteers for the Victorian Government's Schools Recreational Fishing Program which allowed them to assist with the delivery of the program. This enabled the club to raise its profile among school age children.<sup>21</sup>*

### **Emphasising or strengthening the social aspects of your club**

For some people, one of the barriers to participation in a sports club is the concern that their skill level is not high enough or that they are not comfortable competing at the top level. By placing an emphasis on the social aspects of your club, these people may feel more comfortable and welcome at your club.

Social activities offer a relaxed environment for people to get to know each other. By offering social activities that cater to as broad a range of people as possible, your club will be more attractive to a diverse range of people.

<sup>21</sup> *User-friendly Sport An ideas book to help sport and recreation clubs grow*, see note 16, p.7

**Action Point:**

- Enter a team in a ‘social’ competition which plays at a different time from the usual competitions the club enters. The club could enter a team in the same sport (e.g. a netball club that competes in a serious competition on a Saturday may also want to enter a team in a social competition on a week night) or in a different sport (e.g. a cricket club may want to enter a soccer team in an off-season competition).
- Encourage people, and especially children, to play for the fun of the game. Consider whether winning is less important at junior levels – does the club emphasise winning or having fun?
- Build on the skills of all people – consider offering skills groups that provide people with a fun way to improve their basic skills. This could be done either as part of a social event or as part of regular training sessions.
- Hold a diverse range of social events – not just the usual post-game beers at the club house. Consider:
  - holding a barbecue on a weekend (this does not necessarily have to be on game day);
  - a ‘bring a plate’ day – some people may not be able to eat traditional Australian barbecue food. By encouraging people to bring a plate to share among each other, all members will be able to eat something and members learn more about each other by talking about their contribution;
  - hold ‘family days’ which specifically cater to families and children;
  - trivia, karaoke, disco nights or fancy dress parties;
  - organise a club visit to the movies;
  - diversity-themed events such as an annual junior carnival day where teams from clubs within your area compete for a trophy and diversity is celebrated;
  - celebrate other sports days at your club – e.g. events such as Melbourne Cup, AFL Grand Final, World Cup Soccer or Cricket, Christmas, Easter etc – provide a television for people to watch the event in an enjoyable social environment.
- Consider social activities that do not involve alcohol.
- Encourage members to invite their friends and family to social events so they can get to know your club.
- Try to make game fixtures, training sessions and committee of management meetings as flexible as possible and at different times to encourage the attendance of as many people as possible.
- Enter a ‘masters’ team in a local or regional competition or one-off events so older people can continue to participate without feeling pressure to be selected in the club’s best team.

### **For example: The Darebin Women's Sport Club**

*Over a number of years, the Fairfield Falcons Women's Australian Rules Football Team transformed itself into the Darebin Women's Sports Club. The team's performances improved throughout the 1990s, membership grew and the social activities became an important part of club life. In 1996, the Falcons won their first Victorian Women's Football League premiership.*

*In 1997, soccer was introduced and the club became the first women's sporting club in Australia to play both Australian Rules and soccer. The new sport attracted more members. By 2000, the club was fielding two teams in the Victorian Soccer Federation women's competition.*

*A cricket team was established and entered in the Victorian Women's Cricket Association competition in 2001–02.*

*What began as a women's Australian Rules Football club evolved into a multi-sport club – mainly in response to demand from members.<sup>22</sup>*

### **For example: Sunshine Heights Cricket Club**

*The club organised an annual match between Sunshine Heights Cricket Club and East Coburg Cricket Club for the 'Harmony Shield'. "Both club committees came together and decided that with similar multicultural backgrounds that this would be a fantastic initiative to promote community goodwill." (Club President Chris Hatzistavrou)<sup>23</sup>*

*Cricket Victoria now provides a perpetual shield featuring the Harmony in Cricket logo if two cricket clubs agree to play for the Harmony Shield. The winning club holds the shield until the next time the two clubs play. As part of the initiative, Cricket Victoria gives up to \$1000 to the club hosting the game to host a lunch prior to the start of the match, possibly involving local members of Parliament, local councillors, media, club sponsors and other members of the community.<sup>24</sup>*

<sup>22</sup> *User-friendly Sport An ideas book to help sport and recreation clubs grow*, see note 16, p.5

<sup>23</sup> *Past the half century and still beating strongly*, Christian Jarrad, undated

<sup>24</sup> *Harmony Shield*, Cricket Victoria website, undated

## Working in partnership

Often people find it easier and more comfortable to participate in sport in a familiar environment such as a school or with an organisation that is specifically set up for ethnic groups, Indigenous Australians or people with a disability.

For example, the Victorian Government has established the Access for All Abilities (AAA) Program. The AAA Program supports a network of community-based organisations working at a local level to facilitate and promote inclusive and accessible sport and recreation organisations. AAA Program Providers collaborate with local sports clubs and other organisations to create new partnerships and connect Victorians of all abilities to local sporting and recreation activities.<sup>25</sup>

The Centre Active Recreation Network (CARN) in partnership with the Midlands Valley Vikings Rugby League Club developed the project 'Tackling Inclusion – a model for sporting clubs'. The project increased opportunities for people of all abilities to actively participate in the club's governance, administration and physical activity programs. A key outcome of the project was the development of the guide: *Tackling Inclusion – A guide to expanding your club by including everyone*, a transferable, adaptable guide for use across all sporting and community groups. Due to its welcoming and supportive environment, Vikings Rugby League Club has experienced increased support and membership from people of all abilities into all areas of its inclusive club.<sup>26</sup>

partnering with other clubs to lighten the administrative and volunteer load and to reach like-minded people as potential members.

There are many community-based organisations supporting people who may otherwise feel excluded from the community, therefore your club can work in partnership with existing organisations.

Similarly, you might want to consider

<sup>25</sup> *Access for All Abilities Supporting inclusiveness in the sport and recreation sector*, Department of Planning and Community Development, 2007, p.2

<sup>26</sup> *Access for All Abilities Supporting inclusiveness in the sport and recreation sector*, see note 24, p.5

**Action Point:**

- Contact one or more of the organisations listed in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks) to obtain details of existing organisations with which your club can partner in order to help it provide opportunities for under-represented groups.
- Contact AAA Program Provider – refer to contact details in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks) for an AAA Provider in your area.
- Approach the local primary and/or secondary schools to establish connections or pathways for the involvement of children – by offering free coaching or one-off sessions you may be able to reach a whole new generation of people. Ask if you can display flyers or brochures in the school.
- Offering people with a disability the opportunity to join a club, share facilities or become involved as coaches, administrators and officials can frequently be achieved within existing practices and budgets.<sup>27</sup> Consider forming a relationship with an existing sporting club which enters teams in competitions for people with a disability. The relationship could start informally with the potential to formally join together as a combined club if the relationship is successful and productive for both clubs.
- Form a relationship with an existing sport or recreation club that captures a different audience or that plays at a different time of year.

**For example: Port Fairy Yacht Club**

*South West Sports Assembly helped Port Fairy Yacht Club to develop an inclusive sailing program, purchase essential modified equipment and secure funding from Marine Safety Victoria for the development of an accessible floating jetty. These initiatives support the growth of the Active Oceans program which provides accessible water-based sport and recreation opportunities for people with a disability across the south-west region of Victoria.*

*South West Sports Assembly is a Regional Sports Assembly which has helped in both the communication of resource opportunities available in the south-west community and successfully obtaining funding and resource support from both government and the private sector for initiatives that support the development of facilities and services that are accessible.<sup>28</sup>*

<sup>27</sup> Making English sport inclusive: Equity guidelines for governing bodies, Sport England, 2000, p.19

<sup>28</sup> AAA in action, brochure produced by Community Access Unit, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development, undated, p.2.

## Awareness campaigns at a local level

One of the major challenges for clubs is to market themselves within the time and financial constraints of the club. It is important that clubs make themselves known to potential members. People who have just moved to a new area, city, town or country might be keen to become involved

in a club but do not know where to start or where to look. Catching the attention of these people, or of people who already live in the area but are looking to try a new sport, is vital to the long-term success of your club.

Try to think of as many different places as possible to advertise your club – think outside the box!

### Action Point:

- Make sure your club signage is clear and welcoming.
- Display flyers or brochures in community health centres, doctors' surgeries, libraries, schools. Think about how you want to 'sell' your club. Is it a highly competitive club that wants to attract all the best players in the area? Is a 'fair-go-for-all' more important? Are you focused on having as broad and large a membership base as possible? Is it a family-friendly club? Are the social activities and the fun that can be had at your club more important than the competitiveness of the club?
- Think about what is important to your club and the type of people you want to attract and emphasise these aspects in any advertisements.
- Talk to as many people as you can and encourage your current members to do the same – word-of-mouth is a powerful tool. Talk about what your club offers and ask how it could be more attractive. Take this information back to the committee of management – can any of it be implemented?
- Create club brochures/flyers that can be distributed to the public. When drafting the brochure, you should think about:
  - Using inclusive and gender-neutral language. Do not presume that every female has a boyfriend or a husband and do not presume that families fit a traditional stereotype.<sup>29</sup> When writing or speaking, do not make assumptions about the people you are communicating with – try to reach as broad an audience as possible.
  - The size and style of the font and the content of the information – can it be read by people with sight or learning difficulties? For more advice on specific considerations for sight-impaired people, see the Leisure Networks publication *Community Inclusiveness a guide for groups* (page 18)<sup>30</sup>.
- Advertise your club on local notice boards and at the Council using posters or information sheets or online.

<sup>29</sup> *Seeing the Invisible, Speaking about the Unspoken – a position paper on homophobia in sport*, Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, undated, p.9

<sup>30</sup> *Community Inclusiveness a guide for groups*, see note 10, p.18

- Advertise your club on the notice boards or website of community organisations that represent particular groups – e.g. organisations that support CALD people or Indigenous Australians. You may wish to ask your local Council for the details of relevant organisations in your area or consider the list of organisations set out in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks).
- Advertise your club more widely – community newspapers, local radio and radio for print handicapped are often a cost effective way of advertising your club.
- Approach local media outlets to see if they are willing to write a story on your activities (rather than a paid advertisement).
- Consider preparing brochures or posters in other languages. Think about what languages are spoken in the area you live. Translating brochures does not have to be at great expense to the club.
  - Do any current members of your club speak another language? Would they be prepared to translate the brochure or poster into that language?
  - Are there any language schools in your area? Would the students be prepared to translate club information for free? What about high school or TAFE students? Talk to your local principal to see if the language classes could get involved.
- Involve young people in the development, creation and distribution of advertising and marketing materials – young people know what young people like!

## Transport

Access to transport is one of the major barriers to the participation of many people, including some of the population groups outlined in this Resource. If your club is located close to public transport and/or has adequate car parking facilities, you should use this as a selling point to encourage people to join.

### Action Point:

- Consider where your club and its training and playing venues are located. If it is near public transport, ensure people are aware of the transport options and how to use them. Include directions (both driving and public transport directions) in any club publications and on the website.
- If your club is not located near public transport, consider whether training could be moved to an alternative venue or some sessions could be held elsewhere.
- Alternatively, consider whether players can car-pool or share transport to playing and training venues. Provide members with each other's contact details (with their permission to do so) so they may be able to arrange car-pooling for games, training and social functions.
- Where possible, when introducing new people to the clubs, accompany them on their journey to the club or facility/venue to help them to find out how to get there, explain what the activity is likely to involve and introduce them to other members, coaches and players.

### For example: Burden Park Tennis Club

*The club developed a voluntary transportation roster. Parents who were able or willing to provide transportation to and from tennis venues placed their name on a roster.<sup>31</sup>*

<sup>31</sup> *Models of club Inclusion Case Studies*, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, undated, p.3

## Cost

There are many costs associated with joining a club and playing sport – for example, membership fees, equipment, uniforms, training camps and petrol/public transport costs. Many people struggle with these costs and this often prevents them joining a club. This is particularly felt by people from under-represented groups because they often have limited income.

### Action Point:

- Consider offering the use of second-hand equipment and uniforms.
- Consider whether the club can afford to subsidise or waive membership fees in certain circumstances or offer an instalment payment plan for the payment of fees.
- Consider having family-friendly pricing so it is less expensive for the whole family to attend or be involved rather than charging each individual attending or becoming a member.
- Consider providing concessions for people living on a pension or fixed income.

### For example: Southern Pirates Cricket Club

*The club provided second-hand equipment and uniforms to juniors, sourced from older players whose uniforms no longer fit or when equipment was no longer suitable. The club also waived membership fees of any family that legitimately could not afford to pay. These strategies were instrumental in increasing the number of junior sides.<sup>32</sup>*

### For example: Burden Park Tennis club

*The club approached the local RSL, which agreed to cover the costs of uniforms as part of a sponsorship arrangement.<sup>33</sup>*

<sup>32</sup> *Models of club Inclusion Case Studies*, see note 30, p.1

<sup>33</sup> *Models of club Inclusion Case Studies*, see note 30, p.3

## Seek funding grants to implement an inclusive plan

Clubs should consider making use of government and philanthropic grants or funding programs to help introduce specific inclusive programs or practices.

### For example: Surf Life Saving Australia

*'On the Same Wave' is a partnership between Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) and the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The program provides support to young Australians of all backgrounds, to become part of the beach experience, and to engage with surf life saving around Australia. One of the main aims of the program is to develop inclusive practices within SLSA and individual surf life saving clubs to more effectively attract members from a broader Australian population demographic. The program also aims to achieve greater harmony between all beach users and promote a culture that the beach is there to share. Following the success of the pilot program in NSW, it was expanded with programs currently being run in NSW, Victoria, SA and WA and is expected to be rolled out in the Northern Territory and Tasmania.<sup>34</sup>*

### Action Point:

- For assistance finding a government grant that would enable your club to implement a particular inclusion program, visit GrantsLINK [www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au) or [www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au)
- Alternatively, you may want to contact any of the organisations listed in Chapter 11 (Sources of funding for inclusion projects).
- Your State Sporting Association or National Sporting Organisation may also be able to provide advice or assistance – see the list of SSAs and NSOs under the in Chapter 11.

<sup>34</sup> *On the Same Wave – A living in Harmony Initiative* (webpage), Surf Life Saving Australia, undated

## Creating an inclusion sub-committee

The introduction of formal inclusion policies, procedures and action plans can be time-consuming. To assist in this process, the committee of management could establish a sub-committee that is responsible for considering, developing and preparing a formal Inclusion Policy and action plan for the club.

An inclusion sub-committee could comprise of as few as one or two people or as many people as are willing to be involved. Sub-committee members do not have to be members of the committee of management.

## Who will this benefit?

Each of the groups your club aims to include as well as your club.

The inclusion sub-committee's role would be to develop a proposal and recommend it to the committee of management. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the committee of management to decide whether to implement the proposals recommended by the sub-committee. The sub-committee should have day-to-day responsibility for managing and monitoring the progress of the preparation and implementation of the inclusion action plan.

The sub-committee should, in consultation with the committee of management, set a budget – this amount could be anywhere from zero to millions of dollars. The sub-committee should consider the external funding sources identified in this Resource. You may be able to obtain funds or grants which could be incorporated into the sub-committee's budget. Similarly, you should consider partnering with other organisations. You may also find it helpful to establish information-sharing networks with other sports clubs, non-profit organisations or government bodies. The sub-committee would be responsible for ensuring the plan is put into place within the available budget.

The sub-committee could be known as the Membership and Inclusion Committee.

The best way to increase the likelihood of successfully introducing and implementing inclusive practices is to introduce a planned program of actions to be taken – the key word here is 'planned'.

A plan can be as simple or as complex as you choose and should take into account the resources, both human and financial, of your club. It is far better to successfully implement a simple, considered plan than to prepare a complex, detailed plan that your club will have no chance of putting into practice.

The plan should have clear goals and mechanisms for regularly evaluating progress towards achieving its goals.

A good starting point would be to consider the Action Points set out in this Resource.

## Chapter 4 – Why are some people less likely to join your club?



This section explains some of the barriers to participation experienced by people in our community.

### Gender

Women comprise about half the population. Despite this fact, less women than men participate in sport and women are significantly under-represented in the areas of management, coaching and officiating in sport.<sup>35</sup>

In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released data that showed:

- more males participated in sport and physical activities than females;
- males had a higher participation rate in organised sport than females; and
- participation rates of women (and men) declined with age.<sup>36</sup>

Barriers to increased female participation include:

- lack of time to balance competing priorities such as work, family obligations to children or elderly family members, household chores and social lives;
- the time commitment necessary to play regular sport;
- the need for child care provisions or arrangements including a private area to breastfeed;
- concerns about safety – for example, in getting to and from training and playing venues, attending sport held after dark or accessing areas with inadequate lighting;
- concerns about sexual harassment;

- lack of skills or doubt about skills and fitness or, at the other end of the spectrum, concerns that the level of competition will not be challenging enough;
- lack of confidence to approach or become involved in a club on their own (without an introduction from a friend, relative or person they know);
- a perception by girls and younger women that it is ‘uncool’ to play sport or playing sport is unfeminine;
- self-consciousness about body image and shape and a perception that girls and women have to look great when playing sport;
- past experiences being negative – for example, the experience had by many women during sport classes at school put them off playing sport altogether; and
- lack of information about the types of clubs that exist and how they can be involved.

Equally, if your club has predominantly female members, it may need to consider how it could include more males.

<sup>35</sup> *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport – Women Sport and the Challenge of Change*, The First International Conference on Women and Sport, Brighton, United Kingdom, 5–8 May 1994, p.1

<sup>36</sup> *Women’s participation in sport and physical activities*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, National Centre for Cultural and Recreation Statistics, 2006, p.1

## Race, culture, nationality, ethnicity or language – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CALD)

According to the 2006 Census, more than one in five Australians (22 percent) was born overseas. Indeed, the overseas-born population increased in number between 1996 and 2006 from around 3.9 million to 4.4 million<sup>37</sup> – more than the total number of people living in Sydney<sup>38</sup>. Ethnic minorities, people born in non-English-speaking countries, older people, women and people with low levels of education have been identified as more likely to have lower participation rates in sport.<sup>39</sup> But clubs have an opportunity to increase the number of their members, volunteers and participants by adopting inclusive policies so people from all backgrounds feel welcome.

Often people who have recently arrived in Australia are learning a new language, juggling family commitments, assisting with interpreting, studying and working. It is sometimes difficult for these people to make a regular commitment to play sport.

Similarly, children may experience a lack of support from parents/guardians. Sport may not be seen as a high priority for newly-arrived parents who are juggling competing priorities.

As is the case for all of us, if an experience is not enjoyable there is little incentive for continued participation. People join sports clubs to have fun, socialise, exercise, compete and stay healthy. If a participant's experience is negative, they are unlikely to become or remain a member of your club.

Many migrants and refugees have never participated in structured sport so are unfamiliar with the notion of sporting clubs and processes. Other migrants may have played in sporting teams before moving to Australia but may not know how to contact local clubs. Unclear or unfamiliar referral mechanisms might make it difficult for people to find out where to play and how to join your club.

Some barriers to greater participation of people from different racial, cultural, national or ethnic backgrounds include:

- Lack of awareness of the existence of clubs and the sporting and recreation opportunities available or how to get involved in them (or limited opportunities to do so).
- Lack of understanding of the rules or how to play certain sports.

For example, some people may have never played Australian Rules football, netball, baseball, cricket or many other sports. Not knowing the rules or how to play a game can be intimidating, especially when joining a club where the members have played for many years.

- Cultural and religious differences.

What is accepted or encouraged in Australian society may not be given the same level of support or enthusiasm by people from other cultures. For example, women from some cultures may not be allowed or encouraged to play sport, especially with strangers, or may not be able to do so without having a companion to attend with them.

<sup>37</sup> *Media Fact Sheet: More than one in five Australian born overseas: Census*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 27 June 2007

<sup>38</sup> *Australia at a Glance*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 7 February 2008

<sup>39</sup> *Migrants and Participation in Sport and Physical Activity*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, p.1

It is important to be aware of cultural appropriateness and sensitivities. Inflexibility around uniform requirements may exclude some young women from being able to play. Inflexibility around training times or playing fixtures may exclude people from certain cultures – for example some Jewish people observe the Sabbath and therefore may not be able to play games on Saturdays and some Muslim people fast during sunlight hours to observe Ramaddan and therefore may not be able to participate in certain club activities during that period.

- Language.  
Many people may not have a strong understanding or ability to speak or read English. Alternatively, some people may not be confident in speaking or reading in English, even when their skills are quite good, because it is their second language.
- Racism and discrimination including verbal and physical abuse, violence, being referred to in a derogatory way, not receiving equal playing time and being made to feel like an ‘outsider’.
- Feeling different, feeling as though they stand out or having trouble communicating or connecting with existing members.
- Having other important commitments competing for their time.
- Access to transport and knowing how to get to and from the club or its facilities can be a major barrier to participation. Clubs located near public transport may find this to be an advantage.
- Expense. An inability to pay registration fees, purchase uniforms or contribute to club fundraisers can often prevent people from playing.

- Lack of follow-on from one-off sporting experiences and grassroots community tournaments.
- Existing club cultures which may be seen as intimidating – for example, some clubs may involve a culture of drinking after games, swearing, sledging or aggressive competition. This culture may not be understood or it may be perceived by some people as being insulting or threatening.

It is also important that clubs are aware of the past experiences of people from other cultures or countries. Moving your whole life to another country (finding a job, making new friends, understanding government departments and even finding a new hairdresser) is challenging.

Some migrants are also refugees and their past may have been traumatic and characterised by persecution, displacement, loss, grief, and forced separation from family, home and belongings. Many refugees will have experienced some or all of the following:

- forced departure from their country of origin;
- conflict, organised violence and human rights abuses; or
- a dangerous escape from their country of origin, travelling long distances, sometimes by foot and in cramped conditions.<sup>40</sup>

These experiences have a profound impact on the individual, family and community and will affect how they perceive the behaviour of members and the culture of a club.

<sup>40</sup> *Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to ‘settle well’ in Australia*, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2007, p.6

## Indigenous Australians

Just over 45 percent of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over participate in sport or physical recreation activities. This compares with 64 percent of non-Indigenous Australians.<sup>41</sup>

Barriers to the increased participation of Indigenous Australians include:

- Limited access to facilities;
- Access to transport and knowing how to get to and from the club or its facilities
  - clubs located near public transport may find this to be an advantage and should promote this advantage;
- Cultural differences – Indigenous culture has a strong focus on family, (including the wider family), ancestors and their community. Indigenous people may choose not to be involved in sport or join a club if it is seen as a personal benefit only and takes that person away from their family or community;
- Lack of awareness of the diversity and complexity of Indigenous culture;
- Racism and discrimination including verbal and physical abuse, violence, being referred to in a derogatory way, not receiving equal playing time and being made to feel like an ‘outsider’; and
- Existing club cultures which may be seen as intimidating – for example many Indigenous people are softly spoken and loud speech can be interpreted as distress or anger.

By understanding and being aware of these barriers, clubs are better equipped to offer a welcoming and inclusive opportunity to Indigenous people. By making Indigenous families and communities feel welcome and invited, clubs may find they offer Indigenous people a way to spend time with family while also enjoying the benefits of sport and recreation, being a member of a club and participating in the wider community.

<sup>41</sup> *facts and stats Indigenous Participation*, Department of Sport and Recreation of Western Australia, undated

## Sexual orientation or gender identity

Human sexuality is complicated and heterosexuality is not the only sexual orientation. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersex (GLBTI) people form a diverse group and sexuality or gender identity is only one aspect of a person's total identity.<sup>42</sup> There is a spectrum of sexuality and a person's sexuality, or other people's perception of that person's sexuality, can be the basis of discrimination, harassment or other forms of persecution. For more information on sexual orientation and what GLBTI means, see Chapter 11 (Abbreviations – what do these words mean?)

GLBTI people can often feel uncomfortable, intimidated or unwelcome in a sport or recreation club because of the existence (or a perception of the likelihood of the existence) of an environment of hostility, discrimination, bullying, harassment and possibly violence.

Discrimination on the basis of a person's sexuality or gender identity is illegal and creates a hostile or negative environment for participants and club members. GLBTI people may feel unwelcome at a club because:

- the existence of myths and stereotypes
  - for example that lesbians and gays are sexual predators, that females who excel at sport must be lesbians or that lesbians and gays undermine team cohesion;
- as players they may feel rejected or singled out by teammates, coaches and clubs;
- players and teams (both the opposition and, sometimes, a player's own team) resort to insults, name-calling, cruel jokes, teasing and rituals that are degrading;
- they are stigmatised or experience violence; or
- club practices or policies have an adverse effect on them not otherwise felt by heterosexual people – for example, club fee structures may not include or consider non-traditional families.<sup>43</sup>

All these experiences can have a damaging affect on participants' performances and enjoyment of sport and recreation, the community perception of the club and even on its sponsorship opportunities from local business. Discrimination, bullying, harassment and violence undermine the potential of sport and recreation to contribute to the development of individuals and the community.

<sup>42</sup> *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Equality* website page, Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>43</sup> *Seeing the Invisible, Speaking about the Unspoken – a position paper on homophobia in sport*, see note 28, p.5–6 and Executive Summary

## Disability or mental illness

As the Victorian Government's Disability Online website explains, there are many different types of disability. A disability can be caused by a genetic condition, an illness or an accident, and includes:

- intellectual disability;
- physical disability;
- sensory disability;
- acquired brain injury;
- neurological impairment;
- dual disability (one of the above and a psychiatric disability);
- disabilities that are unrelated to ageing;
- any combination of these;<sup>44</sup> or
- mental illness.

Each person's experience of disability is different. Experiences are influenced by what happens in your life, your access to information, services, opportunities, the environment where you live, and the attitudes of people in your community.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, what may prevent one person with a disability from joining a club or participating in sport may not be a problem for another.

When considering the needs of all people, clubs should think about what prevents people with a disability or mental illness from participating in sport or joining a sports club.

For example:

- a lack of confidence in their skills – people might enjoy a sport but may not feel they are skilled enough to join a team or club;

- self esteem issues – people might not feel confident enough to join a club where they do not know other members;
- access to transport and knowing how to get to and from the club or its facilities;
- people may be intimidated or feel excluded by use of jargon; or
- people may find groups threatening.

Other barriers may include:

- community perceptions – for example many people assume people with a physical disability do not want to or cannot play particular sports or that people with a psychiatric disability are dangerous;
- the effect of medication or illness may prevent regular attendance or full participation – people with a disability may not be able to attend each training session or game and this may make them feel as though they would be letting the team or the club down;
- the need for alterations to buildings, venues or equipment or the lack of adaptive devices or adapted equipment;
- the need for assistance from a carer or support worker may result in both the person with a disability and the carer having to pay for membership; alternatively, the person's carer may not be available to attend the club at the relevant times;
- people with a mental illness can experience a distortion in the way they think, feel or behave. In other words, their perception of an issue may differ from the vast majority of their teammates. This significantly interferes with their relationship, their work and their enjoyment of life<sup>46</sup> – including their ability to become or remain involved in a sport or recreational club.

<sup>44</sup> Disability Online – information for people with a disability, their families and carers, Office for Disability, Department of Planning and Community Development, Victorian Government

<sup>45</sup> Disability Online – information for people with a disability, their families and carers, see note 43

<sup>46</sup> *What is Mental Illness?*, The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre Multilingual Information Series,

Often simple actions or changes in the attitude and approach of members can make a club a lot more accessible and inclusive.

## Age

The importance of the role sport and recreation plays in the development and well-being of all people should not be underestimated.

*“The life skills learned through sport help empower individuals and enhance psychosocial well-being, such as increased resiliency, self-esteem and connection with others. These features of sport are beneficial to people of all ages, but they are especially vital to the healthy development of young people.”<sup>47</sup>*

Many of the barriers to increased participation by young and older people can be easily overcome and clubs should consider what they can do differently to open up their club to these people.

Young people and older people often face challenges which may prevent them from participating in sport:

- transport – especially young people who are not yet able to drive or older people who no longer have a licence or a car. If facilities and venues are not close enough to walk or ride to or not close to train/tram/bus stops, the young or the old may not be able to access them.
- young people are often under the guidance or care of family members or guardians and these people often have to juggle their own commitments or concerns. Young people will usually need parental consent to join a club. Some parents may be reluctant to grant such consent because of concerns about the safety of children, the culture of the club, or they may be unable to take the children to competitions or training.
- younger people and older people may have trouble reading or understanding advertisements for clubs or club notices/information.
- a lack of confidence in a particular skill or a lack of general self-confidence.
- community perceptions or pre-conceived ideas of their own or those around them:
  - perceptions of young people that females should play ‘female sports’ or males should play ‘male sports’ – lack of ability or confidence to play what they want to play; and
  - perceptions of elderly people or others around them that certain activities are dangerous or that older people should ‘take it easy’.
- peer group pressure as to whether it is ‘cool’ to play sport or which particular sport young people should play or recreational activity they should undertake.
- lack of friends to accompany them.
- concerns about whether they are physically able to play or participate in certain sports.
- worrying that other kids are bigger or stronger and they might get hurt.

<sup>47</sup> *Sports as a Tool for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals*, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003, p.2

## Financial disadvantage

Becoming a member of a sport or recreation club usually involves some cost. Sometimes people facing financial pressure will sacrifice club membership for more urgent needs. Unfortunately, this means that many people who are most in need of the social benefits of belonging to a club are no longer able to be involved.

Young people are often reliant on their parents or have a limited income and older people might be on a pension and therefore also have a limited income.

Rural communities often experience higher costs than people living in cities – basic necessities such as food, petrol and clothing can be more expensive in rural areas.

In order to help people afford the cost of being a member, clubs should consider ways in which it can make membership more affordable. For example:

- concession pricing for people on low or fixed incomes;
- offering payment plans for membership fees/subscriptions to allow people to spread the cost over a year; or
- having a second-hand uniform or equipment exchange or sale system.

## Chapter 5 – How can being more inclusive improve your club’s governance?



### Governance means:

*“Providing overall direction to the organisation, overseeing and controlling the executive actions of management, and satisfying legitimate expectations of accountability and regulation...”<sup>48</sup>*

Governance is not about being immersed in the day-to-day operations of an organisation – it involves dealing with the higher order issues of policy and direction for the enhancement of organisational performance<sup>49</sup>.

The governance of a club should be controlled and directed by the committee of management while the management and operational roles should be undertaken by the administrators (who are often volunteers).

The duties and obligations upon COM Members of a sport or recreation club (including not-for-profit clubs) are the same as those that apply to a director of any commercial entity. Therefore, it is vital that all COM Members are aware and understand what is required of them under the law.

### What are the benefits of good governance?

Good governance is the key to the long-term sustainability of a club. Effective governance will mean:

- increased membership and growth of the club – a well-run, organised club is likely to attract new members;
- increased numbers of volunteers as, once effective governance procedures are in place, the role and commitment of each volunteer can be clearly defined and quantified;
- improved management will result in the club being more efficient;
- better communication with members and volunteers;
- improved stability – the stronger your club is, the less likely its existence will be threatened by any of the problems and challenges faced by all clubs (for example current problems include lack of facilities, drought-related issues and the challenges of finding enough volunteers);
- access to increased sponsorship avenues because sponsors are more likely to associate with a healthy, successful and well-run club; and
- strengthening the image and reputation of the club.

Ultimately, ensuring a club has the best governance practices helps to ensure its welfare and to sustain it in the future.

It is acknowledged that it may take some time to initially put into place the structures and procedures that will ensure your club has effective governance. However, in the long-term it will save your club (and its volunteers) time, because the club will operate more efficiently and effectively.

<sup>48</sup> *Board Performance of Australian Voluntary Sport Organisations*, Russell Hoye, Griffith University, August 2002, p.9

<sup>49</sup> *Board Performance of Australian Voluntary Sport Organisations*, see note 47, p.14–15

## Chapter 6 – Governance structures and legal obligations



### Structure of clubs

The structure of a sporting organisation is vital to its wellbeing and ongoing off-field success. This applies equally to professional leagues and sports teams across Australia, and the world, and to local sport and recreation clubs such as cricket, football, baseball, bushwalking, netball and the many other clubs in our community.

In Victoria, sport and recreation organisations are usually established as one of three structures:

- an unincorporated association;
- an incorporated association, incorporated in Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic)* (the *Associations Incorporation Act*); or
- a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in Australia under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* (the *Corporations Act*).

Most Victorian sport and recreation clubs are registered as incorporated associations.

**For more information in each of the three structures identified above, see Annexure A.**

#### Action Point:

- Consider the structure of your club:
- Is it an unincorporated association?
  - Is it an incorporated association?
  - Is it a company limited by guarantee?

Is this the best structure for your club?  
Should changes be made?

### The club's legal obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act

Incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act is a simple and inexpensive process and it provides protection to the club, its committee of management and its members. However, the members of a committee of management of an incorporated association are responsible for ensuring that the club complies with its obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act.

**The key obligations are set out in Annexure B.**

### Working with Children Check

The Working with Children (WWC) Check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. The WWC Check helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work.

A person who works or volunteers with children may need to apply for a WWC Check. Committees of management should ensure that any staff or volunteers who need a WWC Check have been granted a WWC Check. From 30 June 2009, a person undertaking child-related work (including volunteering) for a recreational or sporting club will need to have obtained a satisfactory WWC Check.<sup>50</sup>

More information can be obtained at: [www.justice.vic.gov.au](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au)

<sup>50</sup> Working with Children Check website, Department of Justice, Victoria

## The role and function of the committee of management

The committee of management is responsible for controlling the business of the club. It must act in accordance with the relevant law and the constitution, rules, by-laws/regulations and policies of the club.

A committee of management performs the same role for the club as a board (or board of directors) does for a company. The title given to the committee of management can vary – for example: board of management, board, committee, council etc. Regardless of the name given to the body responsible for the management of the club, its obligations should remain the same.

Similarly, the members of a committee of management may be referred to as committee members or directors. Throughout this Resource we have referred to the members of a committee of management as committee of management members or COM Members.

First and foremost, COM Members must undertake all activities in the best interests of the club. This requires taking into account the interests of individual members and the local community but, ultimately, the committee of management must be focused on the objectives of the club as defined in its constitution.

The Australian Sports Commission's governance principles set out the role of the board/committee of management of a club. It states that the board should:

- confirm the broad strategic directions, values and ethical framework of the club;
- outline the role of individual COM Members, particularly their legal duties;
- specify the delegation of its chairperson, executive officer (whether paid or volunteer) and board;
- appoint, dismiss, direct and support its management;
- approve, monitor and review the (financial and non-financial) performance of the club;
- ensure an effective system of internal controls exists, that appropriate policies on key issues are in place and that these can be applied to members, volunteers or participants;
- develop a grievance procedure for complaints within and against the club;
- ensure financial and non-financial risks are appropriately identified and managed;
- ensure the club complies with all relevant laws, codes of conduct and appropriate standards of behaviour; and
- ensure board performance evaluation occurs regularly.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Governance Principles A good practice guide for sporting organisations*, Australian Sports Commission, undated, p.5–6, 8

COM Members should meet regularly – ideally meetings should take place once a month. Where a club does not have a chief executive officer or other management positions (either paid or voluntary), management and operational tasks should be delegated to a range of people, including members of the management committee or members of sub-committees. In this case, COM Members must ensure they separate their strategic committee roles and responsibilities from their individual operational responsibilities.<sup>52</sup>

**More about the role and function of the committee of management in Annexure C, including information on:**

- size and composition;
- processes;
- the chairperson; and
- the conduct and content of Annual General Meetings.

**Action Point:**

Consider the size and composition of your committee of management:

- Are there too many COM Members or not enough?
- Is the committee of management inclusive and representative of your local community?
- Should changes be made to ensure the club has an effective and properly supported committee of management?

## **What obligations does the law impose on COM Members of clubs?**

The law imposes obligations on COM Members under the Associations Incorporation Act and under the common law.

**More information on the legal obligations with which COM Members must comply are set out in Annexures D and E.**

## **Good governance and inclusive practices**

One of the duties of a COM Member is to ensure the club implements good governance practices and procedures and this includes inclusive practices and procedures.

## **Inclusive committees of management**

One of the main roles of the committee of management is to set objectives, define policy, create plans and develop the strategic direction of the club.

In order to guide a club to become inclusive and welcoming, a committee of management should consider how it can develop inclusion policies and incorporate inclusive practices into the strategic direction of the club.

<sup>52</sup> *Governance Principles A good practice guide for sporting organisations*, see note 50, p.6

It is the responsibility of a club's committee of management to provide guidance and direction to its members in all areas so the culture of the club becomes inclusive and welcoming. Committees of management should learn about, and understand, the range of tools available to help with this process and be aware of the organisations and networks that can help, including State and Federal government bodies and local community agencies.

A successful and sustainable club should be:

- sensitive to the environment in which it operates;
- cohesive, with a strong sense of unity and an ability to create a community for members, participants, sponsors and the local community with a distinct persona and culture; and
- build constructive relationships with organisations around it.<sup>53</sup>

Changing the culture of a club should be approached from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective. Therefore, the club's committee of management should lead by example and ensure the committee of management itself is inclusive, diverse and representative of all people in the local community.

Wider diversity in the characteristics, experiences and background of people on the committee of management will ensure it has a more diverse range of opinions on which to draw when developing the future of the club and strengthening its position. A more diverse and inclusive committee of management will provide a club with new insights and perspectives. It will open the club to other communities and provide it with the opportunity to develop or strengthen its contacts and networks among other groups in the community.

Bringing diversity to committees of management can bring new voices, varying opinions and, inevitably, different approaches and solutions to the decision-making process:<sup>54</sup>

*"It is far easier to reach consensus on the direction to head in if everyone is starting from the same place. However, this is not an effective way to run a committee of management. Indeed, a boardroom is no place for bland one-size-fits-all decision making. Strategies and directions should be decided upon only after rigorous debate and the input of a range of people with different views and ideas. Only then can a board ensure it has reached the very best decision."<sup>55</sup>*

Having a diverse committee of management makes a statement about the club's willingness to actively engage, include and take into account the views and experiences of all its stakeholders and its local community.

<sup>53</sup> Report SCORS Governance Review, Department of Sport and Recreation Western Australia, Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS), 2006, Executive Summary

<sup>54</sup> Women on Board – Help Sheet 17 Getting more Women on – Passing the torch to others, Department of Planning and Community Development, Office of Women's Policy, undated, p.2

<sup>55</sup> Women on Board – Help Sheet 17 Getting more Women on – Passing the torch to others, see note 53, p.2

In addition, clubs with an inclusive approach to membership of the committee of management, may find that they have a larger pool of people from which to draw when seeking new members.

It has also been found that increased diversity of committees of management can result in higher levels of fundraising success and improved attitudes of community members towards those organisations.<sup>56</sup>

It is the responsibility of a committee of management to learn about, understand and become aware of the range of supportive tools, organisations and networks that currently exist among State and Federal governments and local community agencies.

#### **Action Point:**

- Committees of management should actively seek to recruit people with different backgrounds, experiences and characteristics including:
  - people with a disability;
  - people with a different nationality, ethnicity, culture, religious or political viewpoint from those currently on the committee of management;
  - Indigenous Australians;
  - people with a different sexual orientation or gender identity from those currently on the committee of management;
  - people who are younger or older than current members of the committee of management; and
  - women.
- Use the Victorian Government's Diversity Register ([www.dvc.vic.gov.au/diversityregister](http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/diversityregister)) to access a register of people interested in, and available to, take up board/management committee appointments.

- The Diversity Register includes the Victorian Women's Register, the Indigenous Boards and Committees Register, the Victorian Multicultural Register and the Disability Register. The registers helps clubs (and other organisations) find board/management committee candidates that reflect the diversity of Victorian communities.
- Use the Women On Boards website ([www.womenonboards.org.au](http://www.womenonboards.org.au)) to post details of your club's vacant management committee position to attract applications from women.
  - Invite current club members from an under-represented group to speak to the committee of management about the action it could take to be more accessible and how it could be more appealing.
  - Create a formal inclusion plan which aims to ensure the committee of management is representative of all groups of people (see Chapter 7 – Creating an inclusion action plan).

<sup>56</sup> W. A. Brown, *The prevalence of inclusive governance practices in nonprofit organisations and implications for practice*, Arizona State University, undated, p.4

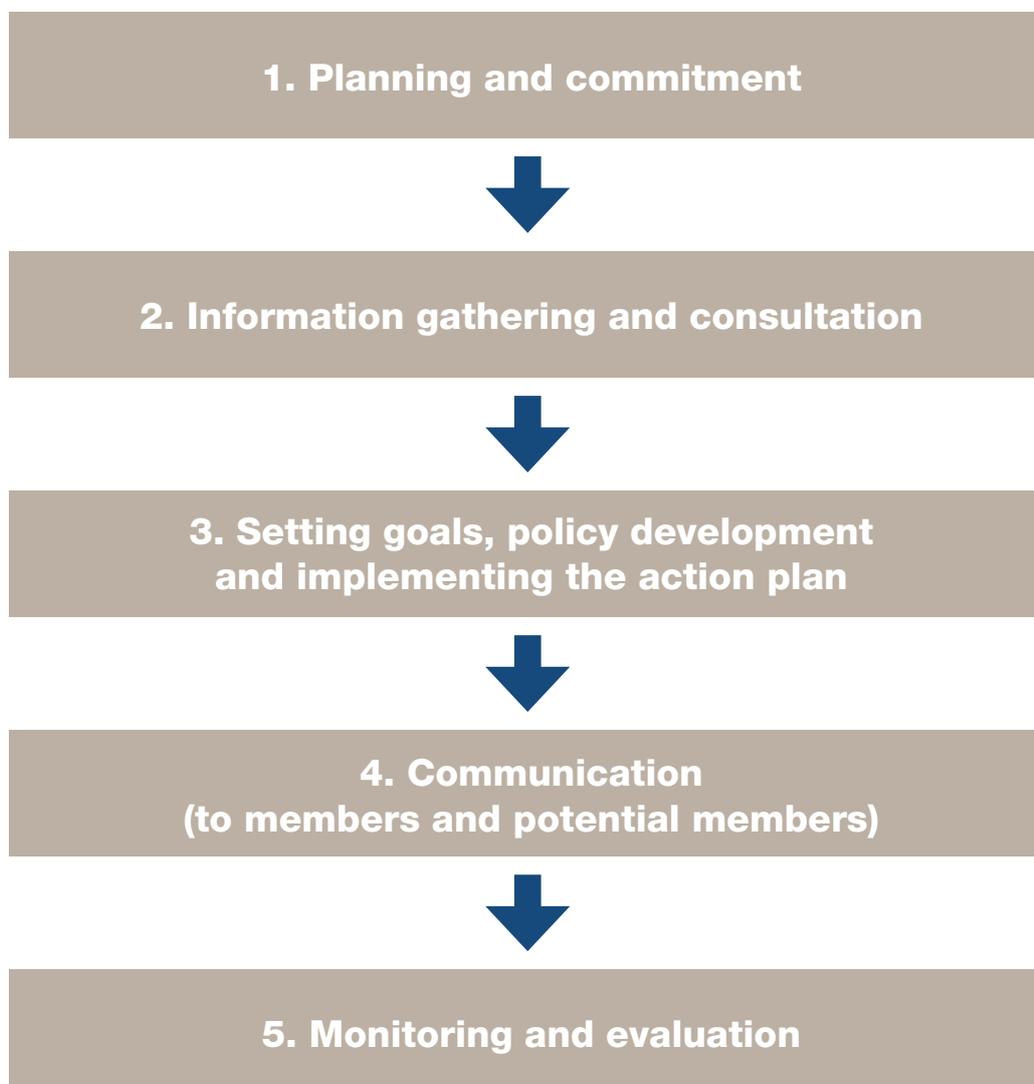
## Chapter 7 – What can the committee of management do?



One of the easiest ways to introduce inclusive practices and procedures into a club is to create and use an inclusion action plan. An inclusion action plan gives a club and its members goals and strategies and allows all members to feel a part of the plan.

### Creating an inclusion action plan

There are several stages of activity involved in creating and implementing a successful inclusion action plan.



The process that clubs should undertake in relation to each of these stages is described in the following pages.

## Planning and commitment

What is it the club is trying to do? What does the committee of management want to achieve? The committee of management should consider the goals it is trying to achieve, how it will do so (what procedures it will put into place to reach its goals), who (at the club) will be responsible for each action and how it will measure whether goals have been achieved.

It is better to successfully implement a simple plan than to prepare a detailed plan that the club will not have the resources to put into practice. Therefore, consider which groups are under-represented in your club and which under-represented groups make up the population in the geographical area in which the club is located. Clubs may not be able to properly address these issues until they have gathered sufficient evidence and consulted members and the wider public (see stage 3).

Clubs should consult with representatives of the relevant under-represented groups. For example, if the local community has a large Sudanese population but your club currently only has two Sudanese members, those members should be given the opportunity to be on (or involved in the work of) the Inclusion Committee or be given the chance to suggest a person from outside the club who could make a useful contribution. Ideally there should be at least one representative of each of the under-represented groups identified in this Resource on your Membership and Inclusion Committee.

It is important to the success of the plan to have the support of the club's administrators (volunteer or paid) and its members. Informing members of the committee of management's intention and offering them an opportunity to be a member of the Inclusion Committee or provide information to it or make some other contribution will allow members to feel involved in the process and therefore more likely to support and embrace the plan.

Consider making a public statement of the club's commitment to being more inclusive supported by the committee of management and a resolution of members at the next Annual General Meeting. The statement could be released on the club's website, in its newsletter or in any other manner you consider appropriate. The statement should signify the club's intention to become an inclusive club and to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment so that all members are aware of its commitment.

For example:

*"The [insert name] club aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive club so that all members feel valued and respected and have fun."*

The club should consider its goals and bear these ideas in mind throughout the process. Goals do not need to be set until after stages 1 and 2 are complete, so that you have had the opportunity to gather relevant data and information relating to your community from members and the wider public.

### Action Point:

- Establish a Membership and Inclusion Committee:
  - ensure that members of under-represented groups are appointed to the committee or invited to act as a consultant to the committee;
  - ideally there should be at least one representative of each of the under-represented groups identified in this Resource.
- Consider which groups are under-represented in your club and which under-represented groups make up the population in the geographical area in which the club is located.
- Consult with representatives of the relevant under-represented groups – these could be from within the club’s membership or from outside the club.
- Make a public statement of the club’s commitment to being more inclusive supported by the committee of management motion a resolution of members at the next Annual General Meeting. Release the statement on the club’s website, in its newsletter, give it to new members as part of a ‘welcome pack’ or, make it public in any other appropriate manner.

### Information gathering and consultation

Collect accurate information to establish how the club currently makes potential and current members feel welcome and valued.

Review the barriers to participation explained in this Resource. Assess the club’s current position and practices and identify which of the barriers exist at the club. Make a list of the areas where the club already has practices in place to overcome particular barriers and where it could improve.

Collect information from external sources on what prevents people from participating – approach your local council or the groups referred to in Chapter 11. Try to get a clear picture of the size and make-up of your community.

Make the consultation as wide as possible and talk to as many people as possible. By working with organisations or people who represent each of the groups you will gain an invaluable insight into how your club is perceived and how it can be improved so it caters to the needs of each group.

- Try to gather information which tells you:
- the extent to which each of the groups you are targeting currently participates in club activities and compare this number with the proportion of that target group in your local community;
  - the barriers to participation which exist in relation to your sport or recreation activity and your club; and
  - ideas on how these barriers can be broken down and participation can be increased.

Collection of data should not begin until its purpose and use is clearly determined. Much of this information already exists. To save time, see Chapter 11 for a list of publications.

**Action Point:**

- Contact organisations listed in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks).
- Use this Resource to understand the barriers to greater participation and how these barriers can be overcome.
- Invite people to talk to the Membership and Inclusion Committee to provide suggestions on actions the club can take or procedures it can put in place to overcome barriers to participation. Invite as diverse a range of people as possible to speak to the committee.
- For specific advice on actions to take in relation to each group, read some of the publications referred to in Chapter 11 (Other sources of information).
- Use the Internet to gather information and suggestions.
- Use information already gathered by other organisations – for example, Regional Sports Assemblies, local councils, neighbourhood houses – making contact with these groups early in the process may also lead to useful partnerships in the future.

## Setting goals, policy development and implementing the action plan

### Goals

The goals of the club will depend on its needs and those of its local community.

Select the club's goals and actions points carefully – consider its ability to complete the actions and achieve the goals. It is far better to successfully achieve one or two goals than to only partially achieve a large number of goals.

Examples include:

- an increase, by reference to numbers or percentages, of the representation of people with a disability or women who are members of the club;
- if the research shows that 25 percent of the population of the local community is of Greek origin, then you may wish to aim to increase the membership of Greek people in the club so that 25 percent of its members are people with a Greek background;
- increase the number of Indigenous volunteers so that the proportion of Indigenous volunteers is the same as the proportion of Indigenous players;
- ensure that people remain active in the club as they get older even if they are no longer selected in the club's 'best team'; or
- set a goal of at least 50 percent of the club's committee of management being female.

## Inclusion Policy

Introduce an Inclusion Policy that all members and volunteers understand. Ensure it is readily available to all members or potential members. The policy should:

- set out the name of the club and an inclusion mission statement stating its intention – this could be the sample public statement referred to earlier, i.e.  
*“The [insert name] club aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive club so that all members feel valued and respected and have fun.”*
- explain who the policy applies to – i.e. all members of the club and participants in club activities;
- the rationale for the policy;
- the aims of the club in relation to inclusion and being more inclusive, including which groups of people it intends to actively include; and
- explain any complaint procedures or disciplinary consequences which may arise as a result of behaviour that is discriminatory or which constitutes harassment, bullying, vilification or victimisation.

Many State Sporting Associations and some Regional Sports Assemblies have a sample Inclusion Policy on their website. Clubs should contact their relevant State Sporting Association or Regional Sports Assembly and ask for a sample policy which could be adopted or adapted to suit the individual club. A list of State Sporting Associations and Regional Sports Assemblies is provided in Chapter 11 (Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks).

## Inclusion Action Plan

An essential part of the process in making a club more inclusive is to plan how to put intentions into practice. An Inclusion Action Plan is an essential tool for introducing the necessary changes to a club.

The plan should address the club’s specific areas of need and set out the actions to be taken to achieve its goals.

A sample Inclusion Action Plan is provided in the following pages. It can be used as a template for your club. As an example, the sample sets out two goals and the steps that need to be taken to reach those goals.

Once you have identified the club’s inclusion goals, it will need to develop strategies for implementing each of these goals. The Action Points provided throughout this document will help identify the actions needed to implement each of the club’s inclusion goals.

For each action the club should identify a mechanism to determine whether that action point has been achieved. For example, if the Action Point is to ‘consult with representatives of each under-represented group targeted by the club’, the Performance Measure might be ‘prepare a summary or report of information or suggestions obtained from representatives’.

The plan should also identify the people the club is aiming to include (the target group), when each action will be completed and the person or people on the Membership and Inclusion Committee or within the club responsible for ensuring the goal is achieved.

The Inclusion Action Plan should be reviewed and updated regularly by the Membership and Inclusion Committee (or the committee of management) to reflect on the club's progress. The regularity of the review will depend on the timeframes set within it for the completing the actions and achieving the goals. The Membership and Inclusion Committee should also provide regular progress reports to the committee of management.

While some of the actions identified in this Resource may involve some cost to the club, many of the suggestions can be put into place for little or no cost. In preparing a Inclusion Action Plan, bear in mind the financial resources of the club and set an appropriate budget. If your club has no spare funds, there are still actions that can, and should, be taken to make your club more inclusive.

## Other relevant documents

You may also want to consider introducing or revising other relevant documents, such as:

- **Member Protection Policy (MPP)** – the purpose of a MPP is to protect the health, safety and well-being of all members of the club and those who participate in the club's activities, both sporting and otherwise. It should provide the procedures that support the club's commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour. A MPP assists in ensuring that every person involved in the club is treated with respect and dignity and is safe and protected from abuse or other inappropriate behaviour. The club must ensure there is a procedure for dealing with complaints under the MPP or work with its State Sporting Association or National Sports Organisation to establish a referral process whereby all complaints are referred to either the State Sporting Association or National Sports Organisation.
- **Code of Conduct** – sets out the club's expectations as to the conduct of its members. It aims to ensure the club's core values, reputation and positive culture are maintained. The adoption, implementation and monitoring of breaches against the Code of Conduct is mandatory for all Victorian State Sporting Associations and clubs.

More information on MPPs and Codes of Conduct are provided in Chapter 8 (The operational role of the committee of management: Ethics).

You also might want to review your club's constitution, by-laws, mission statement and other policies and procedures in light of what you have learnt in this Resource.

## Communication

It is essential to communicate the club's Inclusion Policy to its members and the local community. This will mean club members and the general public are aware of the actions the club is taking to make it more inclusive and accessible and to increase the diversity of its membership.

Communicating the policy and achievements of the club should be one of the goals in the Inclusion Action Plan.

By promoting the actions the club is taking (or has taken) people will become aware of the attitude and approach of the club, making it more attractive. You may even find that current members are proud of the club's progress.

It is important to bear in mind that the club will need to implement different methods of communication in order to reach different groups – it should take into account the diversity of its target groups and tailor its awareness campaign appropriately.

This process is not as daunting as it may seem – simply refer to the Action Points in Chapter 3 (Awareness campaigns at a local level) and decide which actions would work best in the local community. Consider trying several methods of raising the profile of the club and the efforts it is making to be more inclusive. Remember to keep a record of what has been done and what benefits/feedback the club receives.

The club should report any success stories to its State Sporting Association to share its success and receive recognition for its efforts.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The final stage in the process is to monitor and evaluate the club's progress. Essentially, this involves keeping records of whether the goals were achieved (or partially achieved or not achieved), whether the planned completion times were met and any important developments. Records should be reviewed to see if the club can learn any lessons which could be put into place in the future.

Monitoring and evaluation should be an ongoing process. A thorough review and evaluation of the Inclusion Action Plan and the achievements (or areas of improvement) of the club should be undertaken annually or biannually. This could be undertaken by the Membership and Inclusion Committee or one or more members of the committee of management.

## Sample Inclusion Action Plan

Goals	Action points	Performance measure	Target group (I.E. People the club is aiming to include)	When the action will be completed **	Person responsible	Achievement			Comment
						Yes	No	In progress	
Issue a public statement showing the club's commitment to being inclusive	Consult with representatives of each group targeted by the club	Prepare a summary or report of the input and suggestions of the representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Women;</li> <li>– People with different sexual orientation or gender identity;</li> <li>– CALD;</li> </ul>	Within 3 months: (insert due date)	Person or people on the Membership and Inclusion Committee or committee of management or within the club that is/are responsible for ensuring goal is achieved				
	Prepare a public statement of the club's commitment to being more inclusive	A draft statement is to be created, and agreed upon, by the Membership and Inclusion Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– People with a disability;</li> <li>– Younger;</li> <li>– Older; and</li> <li>– Indigenous Australians.</li> </ul>	Within 4 months: (insert due date)					
	Committee of management to consider statement and approve at a committee of management meeting and the club to approve through a membership resolution at the next Annual General Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Committee of management consideration</li> <li>– Committee of management approval</li> <li>– Membership resolution</li> </ul>		Within 6 months: 30 June 2009  (Depending on date of AGM)					
	Release statement on club's website or in its newsletter	Commitment made by club by releasing statement publicly.		Immediately after approved at AGM					

Goals	Action points	Performance measure	Target group (I.E. People the club is aiming to include)	When the action will be completed **	Person responsible	Achievement			Comment
						Yes	No	In progress	
At least 50 percent of club's committee of management to be female	Use the Victorian Government's Diversity Register to access details of potential candidates	Prepare list of potential candidates	Women	Within 6 months: 30 June 2009	Person or people on the Membership and Inclusion Committee or committee of management or within the club that is/are responsible for ensuring goal is achieved				
	Contact candidates, ask them to submit an application and prepare a shortlist for the committee of management to consider	Submit list to committee of management for consideration of candidates and the election/ appointment process		Within 9 months: 30 September 2009					

Goals	Action points	Performance measure	Target group (I.E. People the club is aiming to include)	When the action will be completed **	Person responsible	Achievement			Comment
						Yes	No	In progress	
	Hold elections in accordance with the club's constitution at the club's AGM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– At least 10 percent of the committee of management to be female within 1 year</li> <li>– At least 25 percent to be female within 2 years</li> <li>– At least 50 percent within 3 years</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Within 1 year</li> <li>– Within 2 years</li> <li>– Within 3 years (Dates dependent on date of AGM)</li> </ul>					

## Chapter 8 – The operational role of the committee of management



### What is the operational role of the committee of management?

A committee of management is responsible for controlling (rather than carrying out) the operations of the club. The committee of management should put in place appropriate procedures and policies so the operation of the club can be carried out by the appropriate people.

In practice, at local club level, the members of the committee of management are often directly involved in the management of the club. In this situation, it is important that the committee members are aware of the importance of ‘wearing a different hat’ when undertaking each role.

The committee of management is responsible for ensuring the club has an appropriate business plan, strategic plan and budget. It should direct and guide the succession planning of the club. The committee of management should ensure that volunteers, who are vital to club operations, feel welcome and are sufficiently trained. The committee of management is responsible for the identification and assessment of risk and for directing the ethics and the ethical conduct (which includes adopting inclusive practices) of the club. Finally, the committee of management should develop policies and procedures which will help it become more inclusive. Each of these responsibilities is discussed in more detail in this Resource.

In exercising its operational functions, the committee of management should always consider the effect of its actions and how inclusive practices can be applied that benefit the club.

### Business plan, strategic plan and budgets

The committee of management should direct the business and strategic direction of the club by implementing a business plan, strategic plan and planned budgets. These documents do not need to be complicated.

A business plan summarises the organisation’s key business principles and identifies key position statements across the organisation.

The strategic plan complements the business plan and sets out the major objectives of the club, the strategies that will be put in place to achieve the objectives, how these strategies will be implemented and how the success of these strategies will be assessed. The strategic plan should include financial requirements and targets.

A simple budget will allow COM Members to see the financial consequences of the planned activities. It should set out each income (e.g. membership fees) and expenditure item (e.g. lease or upkeep of facilities or the cost of social activities) of the club and all liabilities likely to be incurred by the club (e.g. GST) in the upcoming financial year. This will allow the committee of management to assess the likely state of its cash flow throughout the year. When preparing the budget, the previous year’s budget can be used as starting point provided the figures are reviewed. Any new activities, an increase or decrease in membership or new costs or expenses faced by the club must all be taken into account.

#### Action Point:

- Does your club have a business plan?
- Does your club have a strategic plan?
- Does your club prepare a formal budget each year?

The committee of management should consider the benefit of each, prepare relevant plans/budget and implement.

## Succession planning

Succession planning is essentially planning for the future of your club. It involves putting a plan in place so that when the current important personnel of the club finish their involvement, those who succeed inherit a functioning club. This is especially important for clubs where administrators are volunteers. Because there is usually a high turnover of volunteers, it is important that the club documents its plans for the future.

By having a well-defined succession plan, new COM Members and administrators will be able to do their job more effectively. A well organised club, with a clear succession plan is more likely to be able to retain volunteers because their individual workload will be less. If people have to 'reinvent the wheel' every year, they are more likely to become frustrated and tire of contributing.

As part of a club's succession plan, election of committee of management members should be staggered. If all members of the committee of management are up for election at the same time, it is possible that an entirely new committee of management will be elected. This would mean that the collective knowledge of the committee of management would disappear and the new committee of management might be left to start from the beginning. By electing half or a third of the COM Members each year, and allowing each COM Member to act for a two or three year term, there will always be an overlap and the corporate knowledge of the committee of management should be retained.

You may also want to consider setting a limit on how long each COM Member can serve. For example, you may want to impose a limit on COM Members of three consecutive terms and then require COM Members to have at least 12 months break before they can be eligible for re-election. This allows COM Members and the committee of management to maintain a fresh approach.

Succession planning is particularly important in relation to the committee of management of your club but succession plans can also be developed in relation to key personnel (other than COM Members) such as coaches, administrators, officials and other volunteers.

Having clear job descriptions and information handbooks which introduce new people to the club will help retain key personnel.

The succession plan can be incorporated into your club's strategic plan or governance policy. The succession plan can be simple – but it should identify the key people within your club and establish a plan for replacing those people should they leave the club. The plan should identify how the club proposes to retain the corporate knowledge when individuals end their involvement.

### Action Point:

- Prepare a succession plan.
- Review your club's constitution – if the term of each COM Member ends at the same time, consider making changes to the constitution so elections are staggered.

## Volunteer management – induction and training

Volunteers are the people delivering the services and activities of a club. They are vital to the survival and wellbeing of all sport and recreation organisations, but especially grassroots level clubs. The services provided by volunteers include match day organisation, coaching, officiating and administrative roles such as being a COM Member or member of a sub-committee such as the Membership and Inclusion Committee.

Most clubs have a high turnover of volunteers (including volunteer COM Members). This means that the individuals involved in the operation of the club will most likely change every year or two (or sometimes more often). Therefore, the club needs to be set up so new volunteers are immediately clear of their duties, responsibilities and obligations and carry them out appropriately.

Making it easier for people to participate as volunteers is likely to increase the number of people who will be able to offer their assistance as organisers, administrators, officials and coaches.

Volunteers are vital and it is important they feel welcome and valued and enjoy being part of the club. First impressions do count and if volunteers do not feel welcome and wanted, they may not return.

All new volunteers should receive an induction pack so they understand their roles and responsibilities and learn about the club. The induction pack may include this Resource and should provide volunteers with sufficient information to allow the volunteer to properly undertake his/her role and to understand the club itself. Such information should include a clear description of their role, who they are accountable to and who they can speak to if there are any problems, questions or concerns.

Volunteers should also be given a tour of the facilities, a list of relevant contact details and introduced to other members.

Training should be provided so the volunteer feels confident he/she can perform the services required.

You may be able to find additional volunteers to help your club at local universities, TAFEs or training schools or by just asking. Word-of-mouth is often the most powerful tool. Often members, former members, supporters and their families and friends will be willing to help out if they know it is needed. Information on volunteering can be found at: [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)

Ensure you thank your volunteers and recognise their contribution to the club.

## Volunteer protection legislation

A volunteer is not liable for anything done in good faith by him or her in providing a service in relation to community work organised by a community organisation. This means that where a volunteer is undertaking work for a club that is an incorporated association (or a body corporate under the Corporations Act) at the direction, or with the authority of the club, the volunteer is protected from being personally sued.

The expression 'community work' includes any work done for a sport or recreation club.

Exceptions apply where the volunteer was acting outside the scope of his/her work, was acting contrary to instructions or was under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

So, where volunteers are:

- acting in good faith;
- providing a service in relation to the community work of the club;
- acting within the scope of the authority and within the scope of the work given to them;
- not acting contrary to instructions; and
- not under the influence of alcohol or drugs,

they can carry out their voluntary activities without worrying about being personally sued.

However, clubs should be aware that any liability resulting from an act or omission of a volunteer will instead become the responsibility of the club and the club will pay any compensation if a successful claim is made. Therefore, there is an ongoing need to clarify (in writing) the scope of work of each volunteer. In addition, it is vital that the club obtains and maintains sufficient insurance to protect it in case a claim is made against the club or one of its volunteers.

Clubs should be aware that the volunteer protection legislation does not apply where volunteers are undertaking a service performed for a community organisation that is an unincorporated association. Therefore, it is important for clubs to be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act or the Corporations Act so its volunteers are protected.

If your club has any questions or concerns about the protection of volunteers, it should obtain legal advice or contact its State Sporting Association or National Sporting Organisation for assistance.

### Action Point:

- Take active steps to make new volunteers welcome and wanted – take them on a tour of club facilities and introduce them to other members.
- Prepare volunteer induction packs – include a clear description of the role, who the volunteer is accountable to, information about volunteer protection legislation, a list of relevant contact details and who they can speak to if there are any problems, questions or concerns (much of this information can be taken from this Resource.)
- Provide training to volunteers so they understand how to perform their role.
- Try to allow volunteers the opportunity to do as much or as little as they want to so they feel like a valued volunteer, no matter what size contribution they make.
- Consider how people can contribute in ways other than playing the sport or participating in the recreational activity – committee of management or sub-committee member, book keeper, equipment manager, event organisation, fundraising or sponsorship are just some of the roles volunteers can undertake.

## Risk management

The Australian Standard on Risk Management (AS/NZS4360: 2004) defines risk as *“the chance of something happening that will have an impact upon objectives”*. It is measured in terms of consequence and likelihood. The Standard defines risk management as *“the culture, processes and structures that are directed towards the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects.”*

In order to properly carry out their role, COM Members must identify and manage financial and non-financial risks to the club. Failure to do so might mean that a COM Member has not exercised appropriate care, skill and diligence, (one of a director/COM Member’s common law duties.)

The committee of management should conduct a simple risk assessment and management process to identify any risks to the club and put in place a plan to deal with or reduce the likelihood of those risks. The risk assessment process is simply a brainstorming session. The committee of management should use its experience and the information in this Resource to help it identify the risks. A risk assessment (or audit) should be carried out annually.

Examples of risks that sporting clubs are likely to be exposed to include accidents and physical harm (of players and, potentially, of members and volunteers around club facilities), risks associated with keeping children safe, maintaining the good reputation of the club, loss of income of the club and loss of organisational knowledge when volunteers or other staff/administrators leave the club.

The risk management plan should identify the risks the club faces, assess the potential impact (consequence) of each risk and identify the likelihood of that risk occurring. The committee of management should then consider what action should be taken to manage the risk. The committee of management should ask itself:

- can any procedures be put in place to reduce the likelihood of each risk occurring?
- can any procedures be put in place to reduce the impact of the consequences if a risk does occur?
- if so, what procedures should be put in place and who is responsible for ensuring this happens?

This process should be properly documented and a risk management plan created as a result. A sample Risk Assessment Audit Table is provided in this Resource. A committee of management is not expected to remove or reduce every single risk facing the club. It should focus on the risks that are most likely to occur or will have the most drastic consequences if they do occur and put in place procedures to reduce the impact or reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of these risks.

A good starting place is to consider whether your club currently has in place each of the structures, procedures, plans and policies suggested in this Resource. Use this Resource to identify risks to your organisation and then create a plan to decide how to deal with those risks.

## Insurance

Insurance is a risk management tool. It does not prevent a risk from occurring but it may reduce the impact if it does occur. Insurance should never be the only risk management tool on which a club relies.

It is important that your club has appropriate types and levels of cover in place. Each club should consult its State Sporting Association or National Sporting Organisation or an insurance broker to obtain advice on insurance. Some State Sporting Associations provide clubs with a way to access group discounts on insurance.



## Ethics

Committees of management should take positive steps to actively promote ethical behaviour and decision making within their organisation. Good governance ultimately requires people of integrity to ensure that the reputation of an organisation is managed, protected and enhanced.<sup>57</sup>

Committees of management should guide members of the club and lead by example. It should ensure the club has quality decision-making processes in place, that the COM Members themselves have the highest integrity and ethical standards and that the members are all encouraged to meet the same standards. The committee of management must always be, and be seen to be, putting the club ahead of individuals.

Clubs have legal and ethical obligations in relation to harassment, discrimination and child protection, establishing appropriate standards of behaviour and providing safe, respectful and appropriate environments. In order to meet these legal and ethical obligations, sporting clubs should have a **Member Protection Policy**. The policy should apply to everyone who is involved in, or connected with, the club – this includes members, volunteers, COM Members, support personnel, coaches, officials, administrators, employees and, where possible, parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors. More information can be found on Member Protection Policies in Chapter 7 (Setting goals, policy development and implementing the action plan).

An essential part of promoting ethical behaviour in the club is to implement a Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct will inform COM Members, administrators, volunteers and members of the acceptable standards of personal behaviour. The Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs, James Merlino announced in October 2009 that all State Sporting Associations and clubs would be required to adopt, and implement a Code of Conduct and monitor any breaches against this Code. This requires either adoption of the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport, or if a sports' National Sporting Organisation currently has a Code that satisfies all the elements of the Victorian Code of Conduct, the State Sporting Association may adopt this Code and consequently clubs can adopt the State Sporting Association Code.

Failure to adopt, implement and report breaches against the Code may result in a club or State Sporting Association's loss or rejection of Victorian Government funding. For more information on the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport and supporting educational material refer to: [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au).

*“Each State Sporting Association and/or National Sporting Association should have its own Member Protection Policy which may already apply indirectly to all clubs in that sport and to the members of those clubs. Each club should consider adopting its SSA or NSO's Member Protection Policy so that members of the club are directly bound by the relevant Member Protection Policy. The Code of Conduct can form part of the club's Member Protection Policy.”*

<sup>57</sup> *Governance Principles A good practice guide for sporting organisations*, see note 50, p.23

In addition, the Australian Sports Commission has prepared a checklist of essential and important features of a Member Protection Policy (see [www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)).

Clubs can also find more information at the Play by the Rules website: [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au).

Failure to maintain the highest ethical standards in a club can result in a hostile environment, low morale, high turnover of volunteers/members, diminished reputation and exposure to liability.

Once way of actively promoting ethical behaviour is to take positive action to ensure your club is inclusive. This can be done by establishing a Membership and Inclusion Committee, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Creating an inclusion sub-committee) or introducing inclusive policies and practices that will help to break down the barriers to participation in your club of a diverse range of people.

## **Inclusion in governance**

One of the obligations of the committee of management, as outlined in this Resource is to develop inclusion policies and incorporate inclusive practices into the strategic direction of the club. To learn more about how committees of management can be more inclusive and how a committee of management can guide its club to become more inclusive, read Chapter 6 (Inclusive committees of management).

## Chapter 9 – How is the government helping?



The Victorian Government recognises the demands on volunteer committee members and administrators in local sport and recreation clubs and is taking action to reduce the regulatory burden.

One of the five themes of *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*<sup>58</sup> is 'reducing the regulatory burden and streamlining interaction with government'. The Victorian Government is committed to reforming the key acts underpinning the establishment and operation of not-for-profit organisations (which includes sports clubs).

The Government has introduced changes to the current law to ensure that, where possible, legislative requirements have been minimised or improved.<sup>59</sup> During 2007, two reviews were undertaken in consultation with the not-for-profit sector examining the current regulation of community organisations and the opportunities to strengthen accountability and reduce red tape. The reviews have led to new Victorian Associations Incorporation legislation and amendments to the Victorian *Fundraising Appeals Act 1998*.<sup>60</sup>

The main elements of the new laws relating to incorporated associations, are:

- reducing the administrative and regulatory burden on not-for-profit associations to allow them to focus on delivering services; and
- enhancing rights of members of incorporated associations and the supervisory role of the Registrar of incorporated associations.<sup>61</sup>

The Victorian Government has made a number of changes to the *Fundraising Appeals Act 1998*, including:

- increasing community and donor confidence in the fundraising sector through improved transparency and accountability; and
- reducing the regulatory burdens arising from the Act.

<sup>58</sup> *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*, see note 1, p.9

<sup>59</sup> *The Victorian Government's Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*, see note 1, p.10

<sup>60</sup> *Annual Statement of government intentions*, February 2008, Victorian Government, p.15

<sup>61</sup> *Annual Statement of government intentions*, see note 59, p.15

## Chapter 10 – What does the law say?



### **Inclusion**

It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability, age, race or sex. In Victoria, the law expressly recognises the rights of people with a disability, people from diverse cultures or backgrounds, people of different races and people with different religious beliefs. It acknowledges the importance of mutual respect, understanding and valuing diversity.

This Resource provides a brief outline of the relevant legislation, particularly where it affects sport and recreation clubs.

#### ***Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA)***

The Federal DDA aims to eliminate discrimination against people on the grounds of disability including in relation to clubs and sport, ensure that people with a disability have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community and promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that people with a disability have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

Under the DDA, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of that person's disability by excluding them from a sporting activity (including an administrative or coaching activity). However, the DDA provides an exemption so that actions are not unlawful where:

- the person is not reasonably capable of performing the actions required in relation to the sporting activity;
- if participants are selected by a method which is reasonable on the basis of their skills and abilities relevant to the sporting activity and relative to each other; or
- a sporting activity is conducted only for persons who have a particular disability and the excluded person does not have that disability.

Similarly, it is unlawful for a club or its committee of management to discriminate against a person on the grounds of that person's disability or a disability of any of the person's associates. Some exceptions apply.

#### ***Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) (ADA)***

The Federal ADA aims to eliminate discrimination against people on the grounds of age, ensure that everyone has the same rights to equality before the law regardless of age and promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that people of all ages have the same fundamental rights.

#### ***Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) (RDA)***

Under the Federal RDA it is unlawful for a person to discriminate based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. It is also unlawful for a person to do an act which is reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person where that act is done because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person.

### ***Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) (SDA)***

The Federal SDA recognises the need to prohibit discrimination against people on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy including in the activities of clubs.

The SDA provides an exemption so that it is unlawful to exclude persons of one sex from participation in a competitive sporting activity in which strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant. However, this exemption does not allow you to exclude people from participating in coaching, umpiring or administration of persons engaged in a sporting activity on any basis. Similarly, you may not exclude children who are under the age of 12 years from participating in a sporting activity on any basis (including on the basis of strength, stamina or physique). Certain exemptions also apply in relation to membership (or application to membership) of a club.

### ***Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth) (HREOCA)***

The Federal HREOCA established the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). HREOC is an independent organisation established to promote and protect human rights in Australia. It investigates and conciliates complaints of discrimination which are based on race, sex, disability or age.

### ***Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic) (EOA)***

Under the Victorian EOA you must not discriminate against a person by refusing or failing to select them in a sporting team or by excluding them from participating in a sporting activity.

However, a person of a particular sex or with a particular gender identity may be excluded from participating in a competitive sporting activity in which the strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant. This exemption does not allow you to exclude children under the age of 12 years from participating in a sporting activity. Participation in a competitive sporting activity can be restricted to people who can effectively compete, people of a specified age or age group and/or people with a general or particular impairment.

In addition, a club or COM Member must not discriminate against a member of a club or an applicant for membership. However, the EOA does allow for certain express exceptions (as set out in the EOA).

### ***Disability Act 2006 (Vic) (DA)***

The Victorian DA aims to reaffirm and strengthen the rights and responsibilities of people with a disability and is based upon the recognition that this requires support across the government sector and within the community. One of the objectives of the DA is to advance the inclusion and participation in the community of people with a disability.

### ***Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 (Vic) (MVA)***

The Victorian MVA recognises and values the cultural, religious, racial and linguistic diversity of the people of Victoria. It:

- acknowledges the entitlement of people to mutual respect and understanding;
- recognises the importance of promoting and preserving diversity and cultural heritage;
- recognises the importance of Victorians working together; and
- acknowledges the entitlement of all Victorians to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the social cultural, economic and political life of Victoria.

### ***Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic) (RRTA)***

The Victorian RRTA promotes racial and religious tolerance by prohibiting certain conduct involving the vilification of persons on the ground of race or religious belief or activity and provides a means of redress for victims of racial or religious vilification.

### ***Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic) (Charter)***

The purpose of the Charter is to protect and promote human rights by setting out the human rights that the Victorian Parliament seeks to protect and promote and imposing an obligation on all public authorities to act in a way that is compatible with human rights.

### ***Consequences of failing to meet obligations under these laws***

Failure to comply with the obligations set out in these Acts could result in a complaint being made about the club to HREOC or the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission. Following investigation of a complaint, the Commissioner may require the club to explain its actions or decision (or lack of action/decision) and/or demonstrate how it took reasonable precautions to prevent discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation occurring.

### ***More information***

For more information on the legal responsibilities of clubs under these Acts, contact your State Sporting Association, National Sporting Organisation, HREOC, the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission or seek legal advice.

## **Governance**

### ***Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic)***

The obligations on clubs as incorporated associations and the affect of the Associations Incorporation Act on clubs and COM Members have been discussed in Chapter 6 (What obligations does the law impose?).

### ***Corporations Act 2001(Cth)***

A club that is incorporated under the Corporations Act must comply with the requirements of that Act. Most Victorian sport and recreation clubs are incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act rather than the Corporations Act. Therefore, this Resource does not provide detailed advice on obligations under the Corporations Act. Information on the Corporations Act can be obtained from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Advice on the Corporations Act should be obtained from a lawyer or your State Sporting Association or National Sporting Organisation.

Other legislation that may affect clubs includes:

- **Fundraising Appeals Act 1998** (Vic) – this Act regulates fundraising in Victoria and requires all fundraisers to become registered fundraisers. Applications to become a registered fundraiser can be submitted, using the appropriate form, to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The Act defines fundraising as when any persons or organisations, including a business, collect money for a beneficiary, cause or thing, rather than solely for profit.

Certain organisations are exempt from the requirement to register as a fundraiser, including clubs that receive less than \$10,000 gross in a financial year from fundraising, and use only unpaid volunteers.

In addition, some activities do not require a club to be registered as a fundraiser, for example:

- raffles, lotteries or other similar activities (however, raffles and bingo require a separate permit from the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation); or
- fundraising events that are internal to a club and targeted at past and present members and their relatives.

Clubs should note that, in relation to activities that do not require them to register as fundraisers, they must still keep accurate financial records of their activities.

- **Trustees Act 1958** (Vic) – where a club operates a trust, obligations will arise under the Trustees Act. A board of a company trustee of a trust could equally apply the above inclusion and governance principles, subject to the provisions of its trust deed.
- **Wrongs Act 1958** (Vic) – Part IX of the *Wrongs Act 1958* provides protection to volunteers who are providing a service in relation to community work organised by a community organisation. For the purposes of this legislation, community work includes any work done for the purpose of sport, recreation, tourism or amusement. Further information has been provided in this Resource in Chapter 8 (Volunteer management – induction and training)

For more information on the legal responsibilities of clubs under these Acts, contact your State Sporting Association, National Sporting Organisation, the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria or consult a lawyer.

## Chapter 11 – Where can I get more information?



### Other sources of information

- *Culturally Inclusive Planning for Sports (CIPS) Toolkit*, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues: [www.cmy.net.au](http://www.cmy.net.au)
- *No limits Involving people with a disability in your sport*, NSW Sport and Recreation, 2004, [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au)
- *Tackling Inclusion – A guide to expanding your club by including everyone*, Centre for Active Recreation Network, [www.thecentre.vic.edu.au](http://www.thecentre.vic.edu.au)
- *Community Inclusiveness a guide for groups*, Developed by Leisure Networks for City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe Rural Access Program, [www.geelongcity.vic.gov.au](http://www.geelongcity.vic.gov.au)
- *User-friendly Sport An ideas book to help sport and recreation clubs grow*, Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2002, [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au)
- *Playing Fair: Guidelines for Tackling Discrimination in Sport*, Sport and Recreation Victoria – a comprehensive resource for sporting bodies that details ways to set up equal opportunity policies and grievance resolution processes. It can be purchased for \$11 from Information Victoria Bookshop 1300 366 356
- *Multicultural Resource Kit for State Sporting Associations*, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, undated [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au)
- *Play by the Rules* provides information and online learning about how to prevent and deal with discrimination, harassment and child abuse for the sport and recreation industry. [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)
- Australian Sports Commission – see ‘clubs and administrators’ tab on the right– hand side at [www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

- *Governance Principles A good practice guide for sporting organisations*, Australian Sports Commission, undated.
- Equal Opportunity Commission [www.equalopportunitycommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.equalopportunitycommission.vic.gov.au).
- State Sporting Association and National Sporting Organisations – ‘Clubs’ section on their websites.

### Groups to contact for help, to establish partnerships or networks

Information on each of these organisations has been obtained from their own websites and from the publications referred to in this Resource.

### Non-Government Organisations

- Access for All Abilities (AAA) is an inclusive program funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria. AAA aims to promote positive community cultures and values. It aims to build the capacity of the sport and recreation sector to provide increased active participation opportunities for people of all abilities. AAA supports a network of community-based organisations working at a local level to facilitate and promote inclusive and accessible sport and recreation organisations.

Program providers collaborate with local sports clubs, leisure facilities, recreation providers, State Sporting Associations and disability organisations to create new partnerships and connect Victorians of all abilities to local sporting and recreation activities.

The SRV website [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au) provides a list of Access for All Abilities program providers, and examples of the program in your local area (see list over page for individual providers).

<b>Access for All Abilities (AAA) Program Provider</b>	<b>Local governments areas covered</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
City of Port Phillip (JCAAA)	Port Phillip and Bayside	(03) 9209 6777
City of Stonnington	Stonnington and Glen Eira	(03) 8290 1333
City of Casey	Casey	(03) 9705 5200
Cardinia Shire Council	Cardinia	1300 787 624
Leisure Link Up (Options Victoria)	Greater Dandenong, Frankston, Mornington Peninsula and Kingston	(03) 9574 2233
Eastern Recreation and Leisure Services Inc	Manningham, Whitehorse, Maroondah, Boroondara, Monash and Knox	(03) 9855 9977
Hume City Council	Hume	(03) 9205 2200
Moreland City Council	Moreland	(03) 9240 1111
Banyule City Council	Banyule	(03) 9490 4222
Nillumbik Shire Council	Nillumbik	(03) 9433 3111
Whittlesea City Council	Whittlesea	(03) 9217 2170
City of Darebin	Darebin	(03) 8470 8888
City of Yarra	Yarra	(03) 9205 5555
Brimbank City Council	Brimbank	(03) 9249 4000
Moonee Valley City Council	Moonee Valley	(03) 9243 8888
Shire of Melton	Melton	(03) 9747 7200
Hobsons Bay City Council	Hobsons Bay	(03) 9932 1000
Maribyrnong City Council	Maribyrnong	(03) 9688 0200
The State Council of YMCA of Victoria Inc	Wyndham, Yarra Ranges and Melbourne	(03) 9403 5000
Leisure Networks	Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Colac–Otway and Queenscliffe	(03) 5224 9922
South West Sports Assembly	Corangamite, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Glenelg and Warrnambool	(03) 5561 1689
Central Highlands Sports Assembly	Ballarat, Pyrenees Shire, Moorabool, Golden Plains, Hepburn Shire, and Ararat	(03) 5331 6966
Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly	Horsham, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack, and Northern Grampians	(03) 5382 4599
Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly Inc Sports Focus	Greater Bendigo, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander, Central Goldfields, Loddon and Campaspe	(03) 5442 3101
Mallee Sports Assembly	Swan Hill, Mildura, Buloke and Gannawarra	(03) 5021 3464

Access for All Abilities (AAA) Program Provider	Local governments areas covered	Telephone
GippSport	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, LaTrobe, South Gippsland, Wellington, East Gippsland	(03) 5135 8335
The Centre	Alpine, Indigo, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi and Strathbogie	(03) 5721 0210 (Wang)
Action for Community Living – Inclusive Leisure Victoria	Statewide	(03) 9489 2999
Rideability Victoria	Statewide	(03) 9486 5755
People Outdoors	Statewide	(03) 9350 5116

- **Leisure Action**, a service of Scope works closely with people with a disability, local government, community recreation and sporting providers, and other specialist services to enhance participation in community life. It is a statewide service working across the metropolitan and regional areas of Victoria which aims to provide information, advice, training and support to recreation, cultural and sporting organisations, to help with the development of planning appropriate policies, programs and services to support the inclusion of people with a disability.  
Website: [www.scopevic.org.au](http://www.scopevic.org.au)  
Telephone: 9843 3000
- **Yooralla Recreation** helps people with a disability to encourage active involvement in a range of recreational experiences. It also runs various workshops and courses, and is involved in joint projects with community groups.  
Website: [www.yooralla.com.au](http://www.yooralla.com.au)  
Telephone: 1300 9667 2552
- **Inclusive Leisure Victoria** is funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria and is a statewide information and advocacy network of people with a disability, their carers and advocacy groups in relation to recreation, sport, physical activity, tourism and the arts. Inclusive Leisure Victoria aims to promote the rights of people with a disability to fully participate in the social and cultural life of Australian society and to support recreation planning and development that leads to more inclusive communities for people with a disability.
- **VicSport** is the peak body for sport in Victoria. It is an independent, non-government member-based organisation representing Victoria's sport and active recreation sector. VicSport's website provides information on being a welcoming and inclusive club and provides links to useful resources.  
Website: [www.vicsport.asn.au](http://www.vicsport.asn.au)  
Telephone: 9926 1376

- **Regional Sports Assemblies** have a particular focus on grassroots clubs and aim to strengthen the capacity of rural and regional communities to respond to sport and active recreation issues at the grassroots or local level.
  - *Central Highlands Sports Assembly*, Ballarat  
Website: [www.chsa.org.au](http://www.chsa.org.au)  
Telephone: 5331 6966
  - *Valley Sport*, Shepparton  
Website: [www.valleysport.net.au](http://www.valleysport.net.au)  
Telephone: 5831 8456
  - *Leisure Networks*, Geelong  
Website: [www.leisurenetworks.org](http://www.leisurenetworks.org)  
Telephone: 5222 3911
  - *Mallee Sports Assembly*, Mildura  
Website: [www.malleesportsassembly.org.au](http://www.malleesportsassembly.org.au)  
Telephone: 5021 3464
  - *Centre Active Recreation Network*, Wangaratta  
Website: [www.thecentre.vic.edu.au](http://www.thecentre.vic.edu.au)  
Telephone: 5721 0200
  - *Sports Focus*, Bendigo  
Website: [www.sportslink.org.au/loddoncampaspe](http://www.sportslink.org.au/loddoncampaspe)  
Telephone: 5442 3101
  - *GippSport*, Moe/Newborough  
Website: [www.sportslink.org.au/gippsland](http://www.sportslink.org.au/gippsland)  
Telephone: 5135 8335
  - *South West Sports Assembly*, Warnambool  
Website: [www.southwestsport.com.au](http://www.southwestsport.com.au)  
Telephone: 5561 1689
  - *Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly*, Horsham  
Website: [www.wrsa.org.au](http://www.wrsa.org.au)  
Telephone: 5382 4599
- **Neighbourhood houses** are local community organisations providing a range of low cost social, education and recreational programs. Neighbourhood houses are also known as community houses and learning centres. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) funds 349 neighbourhood houses across Victoria. Find your local neighbourhood house at: [www.anhlc.asn.au](http://www.anhlc.asn.au)  
Telephone: 9654 1104
- **Migrant Resource Centres** provide a range of settlement and support services for refugees and migrants. Migrant Resource Centres help migrants and refugees improve their ability to participate in Australian communities while respecting and supporting people to maintain their individual culture and heritage.
  - *Diversitat*, Geelong West  
Website: [www.diversitat.org.au/](http://www.diversitat.org.au/)  
Telephone: 5221 6044
  - *Gippsland Multicultural Services*, Morwell, Sale and Wonthaggi  
Website: [www.gmsinfo.com.au/](http://www.gmsinfo.com.au/)  
Telephone: Morwell 5133 7072  
Sale 5143 8880  
Wonthaggi 5672 5424
  - *Migrant Information Centre*, Eastern Melbourne, Box Hill  
Website: [www.miceastmelb.com.au](http://www.miceastmelb.com.au)  
Telephone: 9285 4888

- *Migrant Resource Centre*,  
North West Region  
Website: [www.mrcnorthwest.org.au](http://www.mrcnorthwest.org.au)  
Telephone: St Albans 9367 6044  
Broadmeadows 9351 1278  
Laverton 9369 2932
- *New Hope Migrant and Refugee Centre*  
Website: [www.newhope.asn.au](http://www.newhope.asn.au)  
Telephone: Prahran 9510 5877  
Oakleigh 9563 4130  
East Bentleigh 9576 4038  
Mornington 5973 5398  
Ascot Vale 9376 5244  
Footscray 9687 4500  
Frankston 8781 5911  
Werribee 9974 1700
- *South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre*  
Website: [www.sermrc.org.au](http://www.sermrc.org.au)  
Telephone: Dandenong 9706 8933  
Narre Warren 9705 6966  
Oakleigh 8574 4600
- *Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre*  
Website: [www.spectrumvic.org.au](http://www.spectrumvic.org.au)  
Telephone: Preston 9496 0200  
Coburg 9384 7900  
Broadmeadows 9301 7400
- *The Westgate Migrant Resource Centre*, Altona North  
Website: [www.wmrc.org.au](http://www.wmrc.org.au)  
Telephone: 9391 3355
- **Disability Rights Victoria** is an advocacy organisation which works with, and on behalf of, adults with a disability. It aims to ensure that all Victorians with a disability enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other members of society and are able to participate in all aspects of community life.  
Website: [www.advocacyhouse.org](http://www.advocacyhouse.org)  
Telephone: 9489 2999
- *Outer Southeast Outreach Service*  
Website: [www.drc.org.au](http://www.drc.org.au)  
Telephone: 9791 4870
- *South West Advocacy Association Inc*, Warrnambool  
Website: [www.southwestadvocacy.org.au](http://www.southwestadvocacy.org.au)  
Telephone: 5561 45841
- *Barwon Disability Resource Council*, Geelong  
Website: [www.bdrc.org.au](http://www.bdrc.org.au)  
Telephone: 5221 8011
- *Disability Advocacy and Information Service*, Wodonga  
Website: [www.disability-advocacy.com.au](http://www.disability-advocacy.com.au)  
Telephone: (02) 6056 2420
- *Gippsland Disability Resource Council*, Moe  
Website: no website  
Telephone: 5127 9171
- *Regional Information and Advocacy Council*, Shepparton  
Website: [www.riac.org.au](http://www.riac.org.au)  
Telephone: 5822 1944 (Shepparton)  
Telephone: 5443 0550 (Bendigo)  
Telephone: 5021 0265 (Mildura)
- *Grampians Disability Advocacy Association Inc*  
Website: [www.grampiansadvocacy.org](http://www.grampiansadvocacy.org)  
Telephone: 5352 2722 (Ararat)  
Telephone: 5333 7344 (Ballarat)  
Telephone: 5381 2400 (Horsham)
- **Disability Advocacy Resource Unit** (DARU) can put people in touch with a wide network of disability advocacy organisations in Victoria. It provides regular publications by email and provides professional development and training opportunities to assist disability advocates.  
Website: [www.daru.org.au](http://www.daru.org.au)  
Telephone: 9639 5807

- **Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities** is a community-based organisation that represents the rights and needs of people with a disability from non-English speaking communities, and their family and friends. They can provide advice to help make information and consultations easily accessible.  
Website: [www.adec.org.au](http://www.adec.org.au)  
Telephone: 9480 1666 or 1800 626 078 (toll free)
- **Diversity and Disability** provides self advocacy support to people with a disability from CALD backgrounds. It can provide advice to help make your information and consultations accessible to people with a disability from a CALD background. The service covers the local government areas of Brimbank, Melton, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Melbourne City councils.  
Website: [www.mrcnorthwest.org.au](http://www.mrcnorthwest.org.au)  
Telephone: 9367 6044
- **All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services** provide services in more than 100 languages and dialects. It provides services to all State and Federal government departments, hospitals, schools, non-profit organisations and to some of Australia's largest organisations and corporations.  
Website: [www.allgraduates.com.au](http://www.allgraduates.com.au)  
Telephone: 9605 3000
- **VITS** (Victorian Interpreting and Translating Services) Language Link accredited translation service, language interpreters. Its service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help clients with their education, health, legal and mental health interpreting and translation service requirements.  
Website: [www.vits.com.au](http://www.vits.com.au)  
Telephone: 9280 1955
- **Victorian Council of Deaf People** is a consumer-managed state wide advocacy and information agency that can provide support and information to organisations wanting to further their knowledge about deafness and deaf people.  
Website: [www.vcod.com.au](http://www.vcod.com.au)  
Telephone: Contact the National Relay Service on 133 677 and quote 9521 2466
- **Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd** is a state wide organisation with strong links to Aboriginal Cooperatives in Victoria.  
Telephone: 9416 4266
- **Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria** is the peak body for community mental health rehabilitation and support services in Victoria. It can provide advice on making consultations and information accessible to people who have a psychiatric disability.  
Website: [www.vicserv.org.au](http://www.vicserv.org.au)  
Telephone: 9519 7000
- **The Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council** is a consumer and survivor advocacy organisation for people with a mental illness. It can provide advice on making consultations and information accessible to people with a mental illness.  
Website: [www.vmiac.com.au](http://www.vmiac.com.au)  
Telephone: 9380 3900
- **Blind Citizens Australia** is a national advocacy organisation for people who are blind and vision-impaired, specialising in individual and systemic advocacy and providing consultation to government, community and private organisations. It can provide advice and assistance in preparing materials for people with a vision impairment.  
Website: [www.bca.org.au](http://www.bca.org.au)  
Telephone: 1800 033 660

- **Vision Australia** can help produce materials in languages other than English, in Braille and in audio format if the print text is provided. Its website contains fact sheets about accessible information.  
Website: [www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au)  
Telephone: 1300 847 466
  
- **Vision Australia Radio** (formerly 3RPH) is a network of community radio stations across Melbourne, regional Victoria and southern NSW. The service provides news, information and entertainment for people who are unable to read standard printed material.  
Website: [www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au)  
Telephone: 1300 847 466
  
- **Standards Australia** produces the Australian Standards which detail technical specifications and standards that need to be considered when designing premises.  
Website: [www.standards.org.au](http://www.standards.org.au)  
Telephone: (02) 9237 6171 (general enquiries)
  
- **W3C The World Wide Web Consortium** (W3C) oversees international standards on design. Its website provides a range of resources about designing accessible sites.  
Website: [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org)

## State Sporting Associations

Organisation	Web	Phone
AFL Victoria	<a href="http://www.footballvic.com.au">www.footballvic.com.au</a>	8663 3000
Archery Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.archeryvictoria.asn.au">www.archeryvictoria.asn.au</a>	9753 5243
Athletics Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.athsvic.org.au">www.athsvic.org.au</a>	9428 8195
Australian Karate Federation (Vic) Inc	<a href="http://www.karatevictoria.com.au">www.karatevictoria.com.au</a>	9338 2882
Aust/Vic Biathlon Assoc Inc	<a href="http://www.biathlon.asn.au">www.biathlon.asn.au</a>	5968 3880
Badminton Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.badmintonvic.com.au">www.badmintonvic.com.au</a>	9686 4777
Baseball Victoria	<a href="http://www.baseballvictoria.com.au">www.baseballvictoria.com.au</a>	9645 8000
Basketball Victoria	<a href="http://www.basketballvictoria.com.au">www.basketballvictoria.com.au</a>	9927 6666
BMX Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.bmxv.com.au">www.bmxv.com.au</a>	0448 400 423
Bocce Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.bocce.net">www.bocce.net</a>	9850 4562
Boccia Victoria	<a href="http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bocciavc">home.vicnet.net.au/~bocciavc</a>	9366 8489
Boxing Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.boxingvic.org.au">www.boxingvic.org.au</a>	9510 5874
Calisthenics Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.calisthenics.asn.au">www.calisthenics.asn.au</a>	9562 6011
Canoeing Victoria	<a href="http://www.vic.canoe.org.au">www.vic.canoe.org.au</a>	8846 4120
Confederation of Australian Motor Sport Limited	<a href="http://www.cams.com.au">http://www.cams.com.au</a>	1300 883 959
Cricket Victoria	<a href="http://www.cricketvictoria.com.au">www.cricketvictoria.com.au</a>	9653 1100
Cyclesport Victoria	<a href="http://www.vic.cycling.org.au">www.vic.cycling.org.au</a>	8480 3000
Dancesport Victoria	<a href="http://www.dancesport.org.au">www.dancesport.org.au</a>	9467 6565
Equestrian Federation of Australia (Vic Branch) Inc	<a href="http://www.efav.com.au">www.efav.com.au</a>	9013 0707
Football Federation Victoria	<a href="http://www.footballfederationvic.com.au">www.footballfederationvic.com.au</a>	9474 1800
Victorian Soaring Association	<a href="http://home.vicnet.net.au/vicsoari">http://home.vicnet.net.au/vicsoari</a>	0425 719 212
Gymnastics Victoria	<a href="http://www.gymnasticsvictoria.org.au">www.gymnasticsvictoria.org.au</a>	9214 6020 (ext. 1)
Handball Federation of Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.handballvictoria.com.au">www.handballvictoria.com.au</a>	
Hockey Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.hockeyvictoria.org.au">www.hockeyvictoria.org.au</a>	8379 4280
Ice Skating Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.iceskatingvictoria.org">www.iceskatingvictoria.org</a>	
Indoor Sports Victoria	<a href="http://www.indoorsportsvictoria.com.au">www.indoorsportsvictoria.com.au</a>	9720 9600
Judo Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.judovictoria.com.au">www.judovictoria.com.au</a>	0419 550 526
Lacrosse Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.lacrossevictoria.com.au">www.lacrossevictoria.com.au</a>	9926 1390
Life Saving Victoria	<a href="http://www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au">www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au</a>	9676 6900

Organisation	Web	Phone
Modern Pentathlon – Victoria	<a href="http://www.pentathlon.org.au/">www.pentathlon.org.au/</a>	5249 1374
Motorcycling Victoria	<a href="http://www.motorcyclingvic.com.au">www.motorcyclingvic.com.au</a>	9673 0600
Netball Victoria	<a href="http://www.netballvic.com.au">www.netballvic.com.au</a>	9321 2222
Orienteering Victoria	<a href="http://www.vicorienteeing.asn.au">www.vicorienteeing.asn.au</a>	8846 4140
Pony Club Association of Victoria	<a href="http://www.ponyclubvic.org.au">www.ponyclubvic.org.au</a>	8685 8925
Pool Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.poolvictoria.org.au">www.poolvictoria.org.au</a>	0425 876 773
Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board of Victoria	<a href="http://www.sport.vic.gov.au">www.sport.vic.gov.au</a>	9208 3507
Rowing Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.rowingvictoria.asn.au">www.rowingvictoria.asn.au</a>	9820 8888
Royal Victorian Bowls Association Inc	<a href="http://www.bowlsvic.org.au">www.bowlsvic.org.au</a>	9819 6177
Skate Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.skatevictoria.com.au/">www.skatevictoria.com.au/</a>	5622 0095
Sporting Shooters' Association	<a href="http://www.ssaavic.com.au">www.ssaavic.com.au</a>	8892 2744
Surfing Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.surfingaustralia.com">http://www.surfingaustralia.com</a>	5261 2907
Swimming Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.swimmingvictoria.org.au">www.swimmingvictoria.org.au</a>	9686 5222
Table Tennis Victoria	<a href="http://www.insports.com.au/ttv">www.insports.com.au/ttv</a>	9682 2011
Taekwondo Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.tkdvic.com.au">www.tkdvic.com.au</a>	9703 0635
Tennis Victoria	<a href="http://www.tennis.com.au/vic">www.tennis.com.au/vic</a>	8420 8420
Tenpin Bowling Association of Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.victenpins.com.au">www.victenpins.com.au</a>	5823 1841
Triathlon Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.trivic.org.au">www.trivic.org.au</a>	9904 4877
Fencing Victoria	<a href="http://www.fencingvictoria.org">www.fencingvictoria.org</a>	9897 3160
Judo Victoria	<a href="http://www.judo.victoria.com.au">www.judo.victoria.com.au</a>	0419 550 526
Victorian Amateur Pistol Assoc Inc	<a href="http://www.vapa.org.au">www.vapa.org.au</a>	9398 5351
Victorian Croquet Association Inc	<a href="http://www.croquetvic.asn.au">www.croquetvic.asn.au</a>	8361 8887
Diving Victoria	<a href="http://www.divingvictoria.com.au">www.divingvictoria.com.au</a>	9686 7534
Victorian Flying Disc Association	<a href="http://vfda.asn.au">vfda.asn.au</a>	
Victorian Golf Association	<a href="http://www.golfvic.org.au">www.golfvic.org.au</a>	9889 6731
Victorian Ice Hockey Association Inc	<a href="http://www.icehockeyvictoria.org.au">www.icehockeyvictoria.org.au</a>	9723 6527
Victorian Little Athletics Assoc Inc	<a href="http://www.littleathletics.com.au">www.littleathletics.com.au</a>	9867 7800
Victorian Parachute Council	<a href="http://www.apf.asn.au">www.apf.asn.au</a>	
Victorian Rogaining Assoc Inc	<a href="http://vra.rogaine.asn.au">vra.rogaine.asn.au</a>	
Victorian Rugby League Inc	<a href="http://www.sportingpulse.com/assoc">www.sportingpulse.com/assoc</a>	8412 4900
Victorian Rugby Union Inc	<a href="http://www.vicrugby.com.au">http://www.vicrugby.com.au</a>	9529 1377

Organisation	Web	Phone
Victorian Snowsports Association Inc	<a href="http://www.vsa.org.au">www.vsa.org.au</a>	9457 5672
Victorian Softball Association	<a href="http://www.victoria.softball.org.au">www.victoria.softball.org.au</a>	9360 0817
Victorian Synchronised Swimming Inc	<a href="http://www.vssi.org.au">www.vssi.org.au</a>	0432 287 902
Touch Victoria	<a href="http://www.victouch.com.au">www.victouch.com.au</a>	9206 6755
Victorian Water Polo Inc	<a href="http://www.vicwaterpolo.asn.au">www.vicwaterpolo.asn.au</a>	9926 1552
Victorian Weight Lifting Association	<a href="http://www.vicweightlifting.com">www.vicweightlifting.com</a>	9819 5599
Victorian Wrestling Association	<a href="http://www.wrestlingvictoria.com">www.wrestlingvictoria.com</a>	0408 127 227
Volleyball Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.volleyballvictoria.com.au">www.volleyballvictoria.com.au</a>	9794 0009
Women's Golf Victoria Inc	<a href="http://www.womensgolf.org.au">http://www.womensgolf.org.au</a>	9523 8511
Yachting Victoria	<a href="http://www.vic.yachtingvictoria.org.au">http://www.vic.yachtingvictoria.org.au</a>	9597 0066

## Local Government

Name	Region	Phone	Web
Alpine Shire Council	Bright	(03) 5755 0555	<a href="http://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au">www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au</a>
Ararat Rural City Council	Ararat	(03) 5355 0200	<a href="http://www.ararat.vic.gov.au">www.ararat.vic.gov.au</a>
Ballarat City Council	Ballarat	(03) 5320 5500	<a href="http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au">www.ballarat.vic.gov.au</a>
Banyule City Council	Ivanhoe	(03) 9490 4222	<a href="http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au">www.banyule.vic.gov.au</a>
Bass Coast Shire Council	Wonthaggi	1300 226 278	<a href="http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au">www.basscoast.vic.gov.au</a>
Baw Baw Shire Council	Warragul	(03) 5624 2411	<a href="http://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au">www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au</a>
Bayside City Council	Sandringham	(03) 9599 4444	<a href="http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au">www.bayside.vic.gov.au</a>
Benalla Rural City Council	Benalla	(03) 5760 2600	<a href="http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au">www.benalla.vic.gov.au</a>
Boroondara City Council	Camberwell	(03) 9278 4444	<a href="http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au">www.boroondara.vic.gov.au</a>
Brimbank City Council	Sunshine & Keilor	(03) 9249 4000	<a href="http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au">www.brimbank.vic.gov.au</a>
Buloke Shire Council	Wycheproof	1300 520 520	<a href="http://www.buloke.vic.gov.au">www.buloke.vic.gov.au</a>
Campaspe Shire Council	Echuca	(03) 5481 2200	<a href="http://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au">www.campaspe.vic.gov.au</a>
Cardinia Shire Council	Pakenham	1300 787 624	<a href="http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au">www.cardinia.vic.gov.au</a>
Casey City Council	Narre Warren	03 9705 5200	<a href="http://www.casey.vic.gov.au">www.casey.vic.gov.au</a>
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Maryborough	(03) 5461 0610	<a href="http://www.centralgoldfields.com.au">www.centralgoldfields.com.au</a>
Colac–Otway Shire Council	Colac	(03) 5232 9400	<a href="http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au">www.colacotway.vic.gov.au</a>
Corangamite Shire Council	Camperdown	(03) 5593 7100	<a href="http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au">www.corangamite.vic.gov.au</a>
Darebin City Council	Preston	(03) 8470 8888	<a href="http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au">www.darebin.vic.gov.au</a>
East Gippsland Shire Council	Bairnsdale	(03) 5153 9500	<a href="http://www.egipps.vic.gov.au">www.egipps.vic.gov.au</a>
Frankston City Council	Frankston	1300 322 322	<a href="http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au">www.frankston.vic.gov.au</a>
Gannawarra Shire Council	Cohuna	(03) 5456 5222	<a href="http://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au">www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au</a>
Glen Eira City Council	Caulfield	(03) 9524 3333	<a href="http://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au">www.gleneira.vic.gov.au</a>
Glenelg Shire Council	Portland	(03) 5522 2200	<a href="http://www.glenelg.vic.gov.au">www.glenelg.vic.gov.au</a>
Golden Plains Shire Council	Bannockburn	(03) 5220 7111	<a href="http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au">www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au</a>
Greater Bendigo City Council	Bendigo	(03) 5434 6000	<a href="http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au">www.bendigo.vic.gov.au</a>
Greater Dandenong City Council	Dandenong	(03) 9239 5291	<a href="http://www.greaterdandenong.com">www.greaterdandenong.com</a>

Name	Region	Phone	Web
Greater Geelong City Council	Geelong	(03) 5272 5272	<a href="http://www.geelongcity.vic.gov.au">www.geelongcity.vic.gov.au</a>
Greater Shepparton City Council	Shepparton	(03) 5832 9700	<a href="http://www.greatershepparton.com.au">www.greatershepparton.com.au</a>
Hepburn Shire Council	Daylesford	(03) 5348 2306	<a href="http://www.hepburnshire.com.au">www.hepburnshire.com.au</a>
Hindmarsh Shire Council	Nhill	(03) 5391 4444	<a href="http://www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au">www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au</a>
Hobsons Bay City Council	Altona	(03) 9932 1000	<a href="http://www.hobsons.vic.gov.au">www.hobsons.vic.gov.au</a>
Horsham Rural City Council	Horsham	(03) 5382 9777	<a href="http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au">www.hrcc.vic.gov.au</a>
Hume City Council	Dallas	(03) 9205 2200	<a href="http://www.hume.vic.gov.au">www.hume.vic.gov.au</a>
Indigo Shire Council	Beechworth	(03) 5728 8000	<a href="http://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au">www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au</a>
Kingston City Council	Cheltenham	1300 653 356	<a href="http://www.kingston.vic.gov.au">www.kingston.vic.gov.au</a>
Knox City Council	Wantirna South	(03) 9298 8000	<a href="http://www.knox.vic.gov.au">www.knox.vic.gov.au</a>
Latrobe City Council	Morwell	1300 367 700	<a href="http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au">www.latrobe.vic.gov.au</a>
Loddon Shire Council	Wedderburn	(03) 5494 1200	<a href="http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au">www.loddon.vic.gov.au</a>
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Kyneton	(03) 5422 0333	<a href="http://www.macedon-ranges.vic.gov.au">www.macedon-ranges.vic.gov.au</a>
Manningham City Council	Doncaster	(03) 9840 9333	<a href="http://www.manningham.vic.gov.au">www.manningham.vic.gov.au</a>
Mansfield Shire Council	Mansfield	(03) 5775 8555	<a href="http://www.mansfield.vic.gov.au">www.mansfield.vic.gov.au</a>
Maribyrnong City Council	Footscray	(03) 9688 0200	<a href="http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au">www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au</a>
Maroondah City Council	Ringwood	1300 882 233	<a href="http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au">www.maroondah.vic.gov.au</a>
Melbourne City Council	Melbourne	(03) 9658 9658	<a href="http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au">www.melbourne.vic.gov.au</a>
Melton Shire Council	Melton	(03) 9747 7200	<a href="http://www.melton.vic.gov.au">www.melton.vic.gov.au</a>
Mildura Rural City Council	Mildura	(03) 5018 8100	<a href="http://www.mildura.vic.gov.au">www.mildura.vic.gov.au</a>
Mitchell Shire Council	Broadford	(03) 5734 6200	<a href="http://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au">www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au</a>
Moira Shire Council	Cobram	(03) 5871 9222	<a href="http://www.moira.vic.gov.au">www.moira.vic.gov.au</a>
Monash City Council	Glen Waverley	(03) 9518 3555	<a href="http://www.monash.vic.gov.au">www.monash.vic.gov.au</a>
Moonee Valley City Council	Moonee Ponds	(03) 9243 8888	<a href="http://www.mvcc.vic.gov.au">www.mvcc.vic.gov.au</a>
Moorabool Shire Council	Ballan	(03) 5366 7100	<a href="http://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au">www.moorabool.vic.gov.au</a>
Moreland City Council	Coburg	(03) 9240 1111	<a href="http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au">www.moreland.vic.gov.au</a>
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Rosebud	1300 850 600	<a href="http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au">www.mornpen.vic.gov.au</a>

Name	Region	Phone	Web
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Castlemaine	(03) 5471 1700	<a href="http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au">www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au</a>
Moyne Shire Council	Port Fairy	(03) 5568 0555	<a href="http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au">www.moyne.vic.gov.au</a>
Murrindindi Shire Council	Alexandra	(03) 5772 0333	<a href="http://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au">www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au</a>
Nillumbik Shire Council	Greensborough	(03) 9433 3111	<a href="http://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au">www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au</a>
Northern Grampians Shire Council	St Arnaud	(03) 5495 1500	<a href="http://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au">www.ngshire.vic.gov.au</a>
Port Phillip City Council	St Kilda	(03) 9209 6777	<a href="http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au">www.portphillip.vic.gov.au</a>
Pyrenees Shire Council	Beaufort	(03) 5349 1100	<a href="http://www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au">www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au</a>
Queenscliffe, Borough of	Queenscliff	(03) 5258 1377	<a href="http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au">www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au</a>
South Gippsland Shire Council	Leongatha	(03) 5662 9200	<a href="http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au">www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au</a>
Southern Grampians Shire Council	Hamilton	(03) 5573 0444	<a href="http://www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au">www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au</a>
Stonnington City Council	Prahran	(03) 8290 1333	<a href="http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au">www.stonnington.vic.gov.au</a>
Strathbogie Shire Council	Euroa	(03) 5795 0000	<a href="http://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au">www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au</a>
Surf Coast Shire Council	Torquay	(03) 5261 0600	<a href="http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au">www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au</a>
Swan Hill Rural City Council	Swan Hill	(03) 5036 2333	<a href="http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au">www.swanhill.vic.gov.au</a>
Towong Shire Council	Tallangatta	(02) 6071 5100	<a href="http://www.towong.vic.gov.au">www.towong.vic.gov.au</a>
Wangaratta Rural City Council	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 0888	<a href="http://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au">www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au</a>
Warrnambool City Council	Warrnambool	(03) 5559 4800	<a href="http://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au">www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au</a>
Wellington Shire Council	Sale	1300 366 244	<a href="http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au">www.wellington.vic.gov.au</a>
West Wimmera Shire Council	Edenhope	(03) 5585 9900	<a href="http://www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au">www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au</a>
Whitehorse City Council	Nunawading	(03) 9262 6333	<a href="http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au">www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au</a>
Whittlesea City Council	South Morang	(03) 9217 2170	<a href="http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au">www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au</a>
Wodonga City Council	Wodonga	(02) 6022 9300	<a href="http://www.wodonga.vic.gov.au">www.wodonga.vic.gov.au</a>
Wyndham City Council	Werribee	(03) 9742 0777	<a href="http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au">www.wyndham.vic.gov.au</a>
Yarra City Council	Richmond	(03) 9205 5555	<a href="http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au">www.yarracity.vic.gov.au</a>
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	Lilydale	1300 368 333	<a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au</a>
Yarriambiack Shire Council	Warracknabeal	(03) 5398 0100	<a href="http://www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au">www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au</a>

## State Government

- **Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV)** is a division of the Department of Planning and Community Development. SRV supports community building through targeted sport and recreation activities and works to attract and organise major events throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria.  
Website: [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: (03) 9208 3333
- **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission** is a statutory body that reports to the Victorian Parliament through the State Attorney General. The Commission helps people resolve complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment and racial and religious vilification. It also offers information, education and consultancy services, conducts research and provide legal policy advice.  
Website: [www.humanrightscmission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscmission.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: 1300 891 848
- **VicHealth** is the peak body for health promotion in Victoria. It works in partnership with organisations, communities and individuals to make health a central part of the daily lives of all Victorians. The focus of its work is on promoting good health and preventing ill-health.  
Website: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: (03) 9667 1333
- **Department of Human Services, Disability Partnerships and Service Planning** – is responsible for partnerships with community service organisations funded to deliver services to people with a disability. The functions of Disability Partnerships and Service Planning include forming collaborative partnerships with community service organisations.  
Website: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)
- **Victorian Government Accessibility Toolkit** provides guidance on creating an accessible website, accessibility evaluation tools and links to further information.  
Website: [www.egov.vic.gov.au](http://www.egov.vic.gov.au)
- **Aboriginal Affairs Victoria** is the Victorian Government’s central point of advice on all aspects of Aboriginal affairs in Victoria. An important aspect of the work of AAV is to promote knowledge and understanding about Victoria’s Aboriginal people within the wider community.  
Website: [www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: (03) 9208 3333 (Department of Planning and Community Development switchboard)

## Federal Government

- **Australian Sports Commission (ASC)** is the peak Australian Government body responsible for the delivery of funding and development of Australian sport through the implementation of the government's national sport policy *Building Australian Communities through Sport*. Its roles and responsibilities are detailed in the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989*.  
Website: [www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)  
Telephone: (02) 6214 1111
- **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)** is a national, independent, statutory government body. Its aim is to promote greater understanding and protection of human rights in Australia and to address the human rights concerns of a broad range of individuals and groups. Its responsibilities include education and public awareness, discrimination and human rights complaints, human rights compliance and policy and legislative development.  
Website: [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)  
Telephone: (02) 9284 9600

## Sources of funding for inclusion projects

For assistance finding a government grant that would enable your club to implement a particular inclusion program, visit GrantsLINK at: [www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au) or the Department of Planning and Community Development at: [www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au).

Alternatively, you may want to contact the following organisations directly:

- **Sport and Recreation Victoria**  
Website: [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: 9208 3333
- **Australian Sports Foundation**  
Website: [www.asf.org.au](http://www.asf.org.au)  
Telephone: (02) 6214 7868
- **Victorian Multicultural Commission**  
Website: [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au)  
Telephone: 9651 6884
- **Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs**  
Website: [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)
- **Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Living in Harmony*** – Funded Community Projects, 131 881  
Website: [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

– **Department of Family and Community Services**

Website: [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

- The State Sporting Association or National Sporting Organisation for your sport.
- **Council community grants scheme.** Contact your local council for more information.
- Subscribe to the *Easy Grants Newsletter* and database – for \$45 clubs receive a monthly email newsletter which provides details of all the latest new and recurring State and Federal government, philanthropic and corporate grants and special email bulletins for important grants at: [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)
- *Victorian Volunteers Small Grants* (Department of Planning and Community Development) of up to \$5000 are available for Victorian organisations to attract new volunteers from diverse backgrounds, create new volunteering opportunities and strengthen existing volunteering programs. For details on how to apply visit: [www.grants.dpdc.vic.gov.au](http://www.grants.dpdc.vic.gov.au)
- *Country Action Grants Scheme* (Department of Planning and Community Development) provides grants of up to \$5000 to sports clubs in rural and regional Victoria. The scheme aims to increase the capacity of grassroots sport and recreation organisations in regional and rural Victoria. Funding is provided for initiatives that help the operation of organisations, attendance at relevant training courses and initiatives to provide accessible sport and active recreation opportunities for members of the local community.

– **VicHealth**

Telephone: 9667 1333

- *Active Participation Grants* aim to increase participation in community sport and active recreation in rural and regional Victoria, particularly for people with disability and those from low socio-economic, Indigenous and new-arrival communities. Grants of up to \$60,000 per year over two to three years are available to support initiatives to engage a range of community groups, organisations and partnerships to undertake activities to increase physical activity among disadvantaged groups and communities in rural and regional Victoria.
- *Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation (PICSAR)* program comprises three levels of activity – state, regional and local. Through PICSAR, Regional Sports Assemblies can be the central point for creating and promoting partnerships that will increase the likelihood of a more active community. Regional Sports Assemblies can help with the development of a project idea, make contact with suitable partners and help to source funding. If you have identified a need in your community, contact your Regional Sports Assembly and talk to their PICSAR project officer.

- *Building Bridges Scheme* aims to improve mental health and wellbeing by promoting positive contact and cooperation between people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and others in the community. Grants of up to \$20,000 have been provided to support initiatives that bring migrant and refugee groups affected by discrimination and social exclusion together to work on cooperative activities with members of the wider community. The scheme is being targeted to work places, school, local government and community settings.

More information on all of the above programs can be found on the VicHealth website at: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

- Sports without Borders is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are involved or want to get involved in sport. It provides funds for a diverse range of activities and items, including sporting goods such as equipment and uniforms, payment of sporting club memberships, travel expenses, financial assistance for participation in sporting programs/workshops, training, education and mentoring for club volunteers and community sporting events catering for humanitarian and refugee communities. For more information visit [www.sportswithoutborders.net.au](http://www.sportswithoutborders.net.au)

## Abbreviations – What do these words mean?

Sometimes government resources can use jargon or words which have particular meanings in particular circumstances. Here is a short glossary to explain the terms used in this Resource:

**AGM:** Annual General Meeting. In this context it refers to the Annual General Meeting of your club.

**CALD:** stands for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and, in this Resource, is used to describe people of different races, cultures, nationality, ethnic background or who whose first language is not English. CALD includes newly-arrived and refugee communities.

**Committee of management (COM):** the committee or other body responsible for the management of the club. A committee of management performs the same role for the club as a board (or board of management) does for a company. The title given to the committee of management can vary – for example: board of management, board, committee, council etc. Regardless of the name given to the body responsible for the management of the club, its obligations remain the same.

**COM Member:** a member of a committee of management.

**DPCD:** the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development.

### Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI)

A person's sexual orientation may be any one or more of the following:

– heterosexual: sexual attraction to or feelings for a person of the opposite sex;

– homosexual: sexual attraction to or feelings for a person of the same sex; – bisexual: sexual attraction to or feelings for people of both sexes;

– transgender: a transgender believes he or she was born into the wrong body and that this is a passionate, lifelong and ineradicable conviction. The sex reassignment process is extremely complex and lengthy and involves surgeons, gynaecologists, endocrinologists, plastic surgeons, psychiatrists, speech therapists and lawyers. Once a person has a sex change, they live the rest of their life as a member of that sex<sup>62</sup>; and

– intersex: an intersex person is a person who, because of a genetic condition, was born with reproductive organs or sex chromosomes that are not exclusively male or female.<sup>63 64</sup>

**Inclusion** is defined in Chapter 2 (What is inclusion?).

**National Sporting Organisation (NSO):** the peak body for a particular sport in Australia.

**Resource:** this resource which is intended to provide guidance to sport and recreation clubs on matters relating to governance and being an inclusive club.

**SRV:** Sport and Recreation Victoria, part of the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development.

**State Sporting Association (SSA):** the peak body for a particular sport in Victoria.

<sup>62</sup> *Participating in Sport – transgender*, Australian Sports Commission, undated

<sup>63</sup> *Legislation Act 2001 (A.C.T.)*, s.169B. See also Sex and gender diversity terminology link, Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>64</sup> *Sexual Discrimination and Homophobia*, Australian Sports Commission, undated

## Annexure A – Structures of clubs



### Unincorporated association

An unincorporated association is not a separate legal entity and this can present a number of difficulties for it or for its committee members. It means that it cannot sue or be sued, enter into contracts or protect or limit its liability (or that of its committee members). Therefore, if a club is not incorporated there is significant risk to its committee members, in the event that the club is sued, because their personal assets are potentially at risk, as well as those of the club.

For this reason, a club is far better to be an incorporated association or company limited by guarantee than an unincorporated entity.

### Incorporated Associations

For local level sport and recreation clubs, incorporating under the Associations Incorporation Act is usually the best approach because it is much simpler and cheaper than registering as a company. Incorporating as an association overcomes the difficulties associated with being an unincorporated association (i.e. not having a legal existence) and imposes far less onerous obligations on the association (and board/committee members) than those imposed on a company.

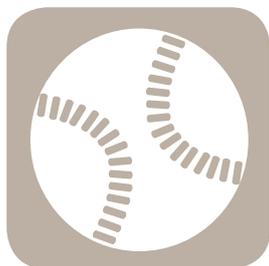
An incorporated association exists as an entity distinct from its individual members. It can hold, acquire and deal with property in its own name, sue and be sued and enter into contracts. In the ordinary course of events, neither the committee of management nor the members of the association are personally liable for the acts or omissions of the association.

### Company limited by guarantee

In order to overcome these difficulties, some sporting organisations are incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

A company has a separate legal existence, can sue and be sued, is entitled to hold property and may enter into contracts. An advantage of becoming a company limited by guarantee is that it enables it to carry on activities in more than one state. However, incorporating under the Corporations Act means that it is required to comply with the requirements of the Corporations Act which are more onerous than the obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act.

## Annexure B – Legal obligations under the *Associations Incorporation Act*



Under the *Associations Incorporation Act* an association must not trade or make a profit for its members. However, this prohibition does not prevent the organisation from undertaking fundraising in order to raise money to support its objectives. Members of incorporated associations can be held personally responsible if the association trades or makes a profit and in allowing it to do so, they may have committed an offence. Any member who has committed an offence is liable to creditors of the association for all debts and liabilities incurred by it in trading or securing of profit for its members.

An incorporated association must ensure that it complies with each of the items set out in the *Checklist legal obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act* and that its constitution contains each of the items set out in the *Checklist items to be included in the constitution*.

## Checklist

### Legal obligations under the associations incorporation act

An incorporated association must:

- Use its full name on all club correspondence, accounts, publications, advertisements, notices, cheques, receipts and on its common seal
- Maintain a register of committee of management members, including the name and address of each member and the date he/she was elected – update the register annually.
- Have a registered address.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting at least once a year (within five months after the end of its financial year).
- Submit to members at an AGM a statement which reflects its position during the last financial year, particularly:
  - its income and expenditure;
  - its assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year;
  - any mortgages, charges and securities affecting any of the property owned by it;
  - prescribed details of any trust of which it was a trustee during any part of the financial year;
  - details of any trust held on behalf of the association by a person or body other than the association, in which funds/assets of the association are placed.
- Maintain accounting records.
- Does the association have gross revenue in the financial year in excess of \$200,000 or gross assets in excess of \$500,000? If so, have its accounts audited.

## Checklist

### Items that must be included in the constitution

Ensure the constitution includes:

- the qualifications (if any) for membership;
- the register of members;
- the right of the committee of management to determine entrance fees, subscriptions and other amounts (if any) to be paid by members;
- the name, constitution, membership and powers of the committee or other body having the management of the association;
- the election or appointment of members of the committee;
- the terms of office of members of the committee;
- the grounds on which, or reasons for which, the office of a member of the committee shall become vacant;
- the filling of casual vacancies occurring on the committee;
- the quorum and procedure at meetings of the committee;
- the quorum and procedure at general meetings of members and whether members are entitled to vote by proxy;
- the time within which, and manner in which, notices of general meetings and notices of motion are to be given, published or circulated;
- the sources from which the funds of the incorporated association are to be or may be derived;
- the manner in which the funds of the association are to be managed and, in particular, the mode of drawing and signing cheques on behalf of the association;
- the intervals between general meetings of members and the manner of calling general meetings;
- the manner of altering the statement of purposes;
- the manner of altering and rescinding the rules and of making additional rules (in the constitution);
- provisions for the custody and use of the common seal (if any);
- the custody of relevant documents and securities;
- the inspection by members of the incorporated association of relevant documents;
- the disposition of any surplus assets on the winding up or dissolution of the association;
- the procedure (if any) for the disciplining of members and the mechanism (if any) for appearances by members in respect of disciplinary action taken against them; and
- the grievance procedures for settling disputes under the rules between the association and any of its members or between a member and any other member.

## What is the role of the public officer?

An incorporated association must also have a public officer. The public officer is the person who applied for the incorporation of the association or such other person subsequently appointed to be the public officer. The public officer is the link between the club and the Registrar. The public officer may, unless the club's rules state otherwise, hold any other office (e.g. president or secretary) in the club.

The public officer must ensure that he/she complies with his/her obligations under the Act and set out in the *Checklist role and functions of the public officer*.

For more information on complying with these (and other) obligations, visit the Consumer Affairs Victoria website at [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) or phone the Consumer Affairs Hotline on 1300 55 81 81.

## Checklist

### Role and functions of the public officer

A public officer must:

- Within 14 days of his/her appointment as public officer, give details to the Registrar of the appointment and of his/her full name and address.
- Obtain the approval of the Registrar where the association passes a special resolution for the change of its name.
- Obtain the approval of the Registrar where the association passes a special resolution to change its statement of purposes or rules.
- Within 1 month of the AGM being held, provide the Registrar with:
  - financial statements and, if the association is required to present audited statements to the AGM (see '*Checklist Legal obligations under the Associations Incorporations Act*'), a copy of the audited accounts and the auditor's report;
  - the statement submitted to members at the AGM reflecting the position of the association during the last financial year (see '*Checklist Legal obligations under the Associations Incorporations Act*');
  - a statement that (i) the certificate from a committee member certifying that he/she attended the AGM; and (ii) the relevant financial statements were submitted to the members at the AGM, has been completed and signed by a committee member who attended the AGM and that the certificate is being kept by the association;
  - a statement of the terms of any resolution passed at that meeting concerning that statement; and
  - any prescribed fee.
- Within 14 days after the association becomes a trustee of a trust, lodge with the Registrar details of the trust and a copy of the trust deed.
- Where an association is being wound up, lodge a notice with the Registrar of the special resolution and a statutory declaration signed by 2 members of the committee stating that the special resolution was passed in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (and confirming that all relevant statement and documents have been lodged with the notice).
- Ensure he/she retains a copy of any documents lodged with the Registrar for at least 7 years after the document was lodged.

## Annexure C – Role and functions of the committee of management



### What is the role of the committee of management?

The committee of management is responsible for managing the business of the club. The committee of management must act in accordance with the relevant law and the constitution, rules, by-laws/regulations and policies of the club.

### Size and composition of committee and management

The committee of management should be of sufficient size and comprise people with an appropriate range of skills to effectively carry out its role.

There are no strict rules about the size of a committee of management but an ideal number is between five and nine COM Members. Smaller organisations often find a small committee of management is most suitable. Any additional volunteers could be members of sub-committees or carry out particular roles or duties delegated to them by the committee of management so the committee of management has a strong support structure.

All COM Members must be independent and not answerable to any other stakeholder because their main duty will be to ensure the well-being of the club.

A committee of management should be diverse and inclusive. By being inclusive and encouraging wider diversity in characteristics, experiences and background of COM Members, the club will have a more diverse range of opinions on which to draw when developing the future of the club and whilst strengthening its position in the present.

### Committee of management processes

A committee of management should agree and document the processes it will put in place to ensure effective governance. An agenda should be prepared for each committee of management meeting and a written record of the meeting (minutes) should be kept. The sample agenda and minutes provided below under the heading Annual General Meetings can be modified and used for committee of management meetings.

### The chairperson

The chairperson is the leader of the committee of management and is responsible for its efficient operation.

The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that committee of management meetings and Annual General Meetings are conducted in accordance with the club's constitution.

The chairperson must ensure he/she complies with all items in the *Checklist obligations of the chairperson of a committee of management*.

## Checklist

### Obligations of the chairperson of a committee of management

The Chairperson must:

- Chair all committee of management meetings.
- Ensure the committee of management performs its duties in an effective and efficient manner and fulfils its legal (both statutory and common law) and operational responsibilities.
- Ensure the integrity of the committee of management's process.
- Lead, manage and provide direction to the committee of management.
- Ensure the best possible composition of the committee of management in relation to the skill set of the COM Members to serve the best interests of the club.
- Ensure the committee of management represents and protects the interests of all stakeholders.
- Foster a mutual respect and trust in the committee room and ensure the committee of management works together.
- Foster healthy dynamics amongst the committee of management by encouraging a culture where it is acceptable to debate, disagree and question, without issues being personalised.
- Ensure each COM Member is making a positive contribution.
- Establish a system whereby the committee of management evaluates its own performance and effectiveness in meeting its responsibilities.
- Identify potential new COM Members and explore their interest in joining the committee of management to ensure a succession of qualified leadership.
- Ensure that the responsibilities of the committee of management and the club's administrators are well understood by all and that their roles are clearly understood and respected.
- Represent the committee of management to stakeholders and media.
- Ensure that deliberations by the committee of management are timely, fair, thorough and orderly.
- Prepare the agenda for each meeting (in consultation with the club's management, if such positions exist) and ensure all members and/or COM Members receive all relevant information (particularly in relation to any business to be transacted at that meeting).
- Ensure the meeting is properly constituted and convened (as required under the club's constitution), that a quorum is present and that it is properly conducted.

At each committee of management meeting and General Meeting, the Chairperson (of that meeting) must:

- Make and keep a record of proceedings (minutes of meeting).
- Declare the meeting closed when its business has been completed.
- Prepare the agenda for each meeting (in consultation with the club's management, if such positions exist) and ensure all members and/or COM Members receive all relevant information (particularly in relation to any business to be transacted at that meeting).
- Ensure the meeting is properly constituted and convened (as required under the club's constitution), that a quorum is present and that it is properly conducted.
- Put relevant questions to the meeting, take a vote on them and declare the results.

## Annual General Meetings

To ensure the club complies with its statutory obligations, the committee of management must hold an AGM each year.

The AGM must be held in accordance with the constitution of the club. The constitution will specify:

- how much notice members must be given, informing them that an AGM will be held;
- the information that needs to be included in the notice, such as the place, day and hour of the meeting and the business to be transacted at the meeting;
- quorum for the meeting – quorum is the minimum number of members who can be in attendance for the meeting to validly proceed;
- who is to act as chairperson of the AGM; and
- the voting procedure for the AGM and how votes are to be recorded.

The business that should be transacted at the AGM includes the consideration of accounts and the reports of the committee of management and auditors, the election of committee of management members, the appointment and fixing of the remuneration of the auditors (if any) and any other business specified in the constitution.

Depending on the rules in the constitution of the club, the committee of management may convene a Special General Meeting of the association (i.e. a general meeting other than an AGM), whenever it thinks fit.

The chairperson of the AGM has a similar role to the chairperson of a committee of management meeting. Essentially, the chairperson of the AGM must:

- ensure the meeting is properly constituted and convened (as required under the constitution), that a quorum is present and that it is properly conducted;
- put relevant questions to the meeting, take a vote on them and declare the result – if the result is in doubt and a poll is demanded (in accordance with the constitution) the chairperson must ask for a poll to be taken and then declare the result;
- ensure all relevant business is transacted at the meeting;
- make and keep a record of proceedings (minutes of meeting); and
- declare the meeting closed when its business has been completed.

A sample agenda and sample minutes of meeting have been provided for use by the chairperson.

## Sample Agenda

[Insert full name of club]

**Agenda of a meeting of members  
held at [Insert Address]  
on [Insert Date] at [Insert Time] [am/pm]**

1. Notice of meeting and quorum
2. Purpose of Meeting
3. Documents Tabled
4. [Heading]
5. Other business of which notice has been received under the constitution
6. Next meeting

## Sample minutes of meeting

[Insert full name of club]

**Minutes of meeting of members  
held at [Insert Address]  
on [Insert Date] at [Insert Time] [am/pm]**

**Present**

[Insert Names e.g Mr A Jones]

**Proxies and Representatives**

[Insert name of person attending and whom he or she represents and in what capacity]

**Chair**

[Insert Name] was elected to the Chair.

**Quorum**

The chairman stated a quorum of members was present and declared the meeting open.

**Business**

[Heading]

It was resolved that:

[Heading]

It was resolved that:

There being no further business the chairman declared the meeting closed.

Confirmed

Chairman:

Dated:

## Annexure D – Obligations the law imposes on com members – *Associations Incorporation Act*



### Legal obligations – COM Members' duties under the *Associations Incorporation Act*

The *Associations Incorporation Act* imposes a number of obligations on COM Members:

- **Improper use of information.** A COM Member or former COM Member must not knowingly or recklessly make improper use of information acquired by virtue of his/her position so as to gain, directly or indirectly, any financial benefit or material advantage or so as to cause a detriment to the association.
- **Improper use of position.** A COM Member must not knowingly or recklessly make improper use of his/her position so as to gain, directly or indirectly, any financial benefit or material advantage or so as to cause a detriment to the association.
- **Disclosure of interest.** A COM Member who has any direct or indirect financial interest in a contract, or proposed contract with the association must, as soon as he/she becomes aware of the interest:
  - a. disclose the nature and extent of his/ her interest to the committee; and
  - b. disclose the nature and extent of his/ her interest in writing at the next AGM.

These disclosure obligations do not apply where a financial interest exists only because:

- a. the COM Member is an employee of the association;
- b. the COM Member is a member of a class of persons for whose benefit the association is established; or
- c. the COM Member has the financial interest in common with all or a substantial proportion of the members of the association.

A COM Member who has any direct or indirect financial interest in a contract, or proposed contract, with the association must not take part in any decision of the committee of management with respect to that contract but may take part in any deliberations or discussion with respect to that contract.

Any member of an association (including but not only COM Members) who helps the association (directly or indirectly) to trade or secure a profit for its members may be guilty of an offence. Members who are deemed to have committed such an offence are liable to any creditor for any debts/liabilities incurred as a consequence of the offence.

## Annexure E – Obligations the law imposes on com members – directors’ duties under the common law



A committee of management performs the same role for the club as a board (or board of management) does for a company. Regardless of the name given to the body responsible for the management of a club or to the people who form that body, the obligations are the same.

### Legal obligations – directors’ duties under the common law

Regardless of whether a club is incorporated or whether COM Members are paid or volunteers, all COM Members owe certain basic legal duties to the club – these duties are known as ‘common law duties’ or ‘directors’ duties’ and have been developed as a result of decisions made by courts.

A COM Member has a special obligation to his/her club because they occupy a position of trust – the COM Member is bound to exercise rights and powers in good faith and for the benefit of the organisation. COM Members are expected to know and understand their obligations to the club and to comply with all requirements under the law.

#### Duty to act for a proper purpose

A COM Member may only exercise his/her powers for the purposes for which they are given. A COM Member must not exercise his/her powers for personal gain. Acting in the COM Member’s own self interests or to gain a private advantage or private purpose would not be considered to a ‘proper purpose’ of the use of a COM Member’s powers.

#### Duty of good faith and honesty

Not only must a COM Member act for a proper purpose but he/she must also act in good faith and honestly. This means COM Members must act honestly in what they believe to be the best interests of the club as a whole. This may involve considering both the long-term and short-term interests of the club. If the club is in financial difficulties, the duty to act in the best interests of creditors takes priority over the duty to act in the best interests of members of the club. This is because the COM Members must not allow the club to carry on its business (and conduct non-prohibited trading) while insolvent.

#### Duty of care, skill and diligence

In order to comply with the duty of care, skill and diligence, COM Members must give their reasonable attention the affairs of the club. The level of care required is that which would be reasonably expected from a person with that person’s knowledge and experience in the circumstances of the club. When assessing the level of attention to be given, a COM Member is entitled to take into account the surrounding circumstances including the type of the club, the size and nature of its operations, the composition of its committee of management and the distribution of its work between the COM Members and other officers. COM Members are entitled to delegate duties and this will not (in itself) result in a breach of the duty of care, skill and diligence.

In exercising appropriate care, skill and diligence, COM Members must ensure they:

- keep themselves informed about the activities of the club – this can be done by preparing properly for meetings, making inquiries of the relevant people where they have any concerns about any issue within the club and reviewing any management reports on the implementation of committee of management decisions (even if formal reports are not prepared – talk to the people responsible for taking the relevant action);
- understand the business/operations of the club and the industry (i.e. local-level sporting clubs in general and the sport(s) or recreation in particular) and the key issues which affect the club;
- monitor the management committee's management of the business, affairs and policies of the club – ensure the committee of management defines appropriate policies, particularly in areas which may give rise to liability for the club or COM Members (the risk management process can assist with this – see Chapter 8 (Risk management) and that these policies are implemented; and
- are aware of the club's financial position and regularly review the club's accounts and any financial or budgetary reports – any areas of concern must be queried.

### **Duty to avoid a conflict and to disclose interests**

COM Members must avoid a conflict between their personal interests and their duty to the club. In particular, a COM Member must not make a profit from any transactions of the club. If a potential conflict of interest does exist, that COM Member must notify the committee of management and make a full and frank disclosure of his/her interest.

Examples of a conflict of interest include (but are not limited to) a situation where:

- a COM Member has an interest in a transaction with the club – e.g. if the COM Member runs a butcher's shop and can get cheap sausages for the club barbecue but he proposes to take a percentage of the sales (even if reduced from his normal margin);
- a family member of a COM Member has an interest in a transaction with the club;
- a COM Member holds an office or property which creates duties in conflict with his/her duties as a COM Member of the club – e.g. if the COM Member is also a director/committee member of the regional association of which the club is a member or a director/committee member of the State Sporting Association;
- a COM Member has an obligation not to profit personally from his/her position as a COM Member and must not divert an opportunity made available to the club to the benefit of his/her own commercial interests/company.

Such transactions are not prohibited but must be fully disclosed to the committee of management, the COM Member must not take part in any decisions relating to that transaction and he/she must account to the club for the profit made. A COM Member must never allow his/her personal interest to compromise his/her position as COM Member.

Contracts made by a COM Member with the organisation can be terminated by the club, regardless of the fairness of the contract. However, it may be validated by ratification at a general meeting; provided the contract and the COM Member's interest are fully disclosed and the members are fully informed.

### **Confidential information**

A COM Member must not disclose or use the club's information, nor disclose or exploit confidential information. Confidential information includes commercially or price-sensitive information or information which it has been agreed is confidential.

COM Members should not reveal any information about policies, plans, proposed actions or other information discussed at committee of management meetings while such documents or plans are in their initial stages. Full disclosure should be made by the committee of management (as a whole) when such plans, policies or actions have been formalised.

### **Insolvency**

A club is insolvent if it is unable to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable. COM Members must ensure that the club does not trade (or continue to operate) while it is insolvent. If COM Members allow the club to continue to trade (and operate) they may be personally liable for any debts incurred by the club after the club became insolvent.

## Further information

### For further information about Leading Clubs, please contact:

Sport and Recreation Victoria  
Department of Planning and Community Development  
1 Spring Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Telephone (03) 9208 3333

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