



## Evaluation Report: The Community Soccer Hub

**A story to tell: Building an intercultural soccer hub in Melbourne's West**

Dr Alison Baker-Lewton  
Fletcher Curnow  
Dr Christopher C Sonn

**[vu.edu.au](http://vu.edu.au)**

CRICOS Provider No. 00124K  
CRICOS Provider No. 02475D

# EVALUATION REPORT: THE COMMUNITY SOCCER HUB

A STORY TO TELL: BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL  
SOCCER HUB IN MELBOURNE'S WEST.

JUNE 2016

Dr. Alison Baker-Lewton  
Fletcher Curnow  
Dr. Christopher. C. Sonn

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Elders, their families and forebears of both clans the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of Melbourne land for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we work is the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's continuous living culture has played a significant and unique role in the life of this region.

The authors are grateful for the support received from Brimbank City Council and partnership agencies over the course of this evaluation. We would like to thank the Council and partners for the dedication and commitment to creating a culturally safe space and allowing us to work with young people in this setting. Finally we would like to thank the young people who participated in the research for being so welcoming and for sharing their stories with us.

The work of staff in The Victoria Institute has been supported through the Australian Government's Collaborative Research Network.

## Address

Victoria University  
City Queen Campus  
300 Queen Street  
VIC, 3000  
Australia

**Phone:** +61 3 9919 5934

**Email:** [Victoria.Institute@vu.edu.au](mailto:Victoria.Institute@vu.edu.au)

# About

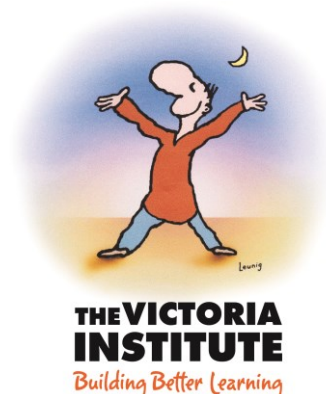
## The Victoria Institute

**The Victoria Institute is a research unit with a focus on inclusive education. We work collaboratively with a range of government departments, policy makers, philanthropic organisations and community groups to improve educational experiences and outcomes for all.**

Well placed within Victoria University, The Victoria Institute has social justice as a key focus. Our targeted research program aims to build better learning and greater participation and success for students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds as well as those who are disengaged or excluded.

### Report Authors

- Dr Alison Baker-Lewton is a Senior Lecturer Social Pedagogy at Victoria University. The majority of this research project was conducted while Alison held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Victoria Institute.
- Fletcher Curnow is a student in the Master of Community Psychology at Victoria University.
- Dr Christopher Sonn is an Associate Professor in the College of Arts at Victoria University.



# Contents

List of Tables.....	7
Figures.....	8
Abbreviations.....	9
Terminology.....	10
Executive Summary.....	13
Project background.....	13
Evaluation brief.....	13
Methods.....	14
Conclusions.....	14
Recommendations.....	17
1 Overview: Project Context and Evaluation Brief.....	19
2 Literature Snapshot.....	21
2.1 Sports and youth from refugee/migrant backgrounds.....	21
2.2 Participating in sports programs: Benefits, challenges and barriers.....	22
2.3 Sports programs focusing on newly arrived communities.....	23
3 Methods and Conceptual Framework.....	25
3.1 Case study approach.....	25
4 Background and Context: The Community Soccer Hub Genealogy.....	27
4.1 Unravelling the history of the Community Soccer Hub: Reflections about the Western Tigers.....	27
4.2 Important lessons.....	32
4.3 Moving forward and opening it up: The Community Hub vision.....	34
5 The Community Soccer Hub: Structure and Model.....	36
5.1 An emerging structure.....	36
5.2 The Hub model.....	37
6 Participant Voices.....	41
6.1 Foundations.....	41
6.2 Having a voice, taking action.....	46
6.3 Connection and belonging across and through culture.....	50
One of the elements most consistently identified by participants was their experience of connection to the Hub. In 2015 the majority of participants (89%) said the Hub gives them a place to belong (see Figure 3). .....	52
6.4 Health and wellbeing.....	58
6.5 New skills and opportunities.....	59
6.6 Sustainability.....	62
7 Stakeholder Perspectives.....	64
7.1 A bridge to mainstream soccer.....	64

7.2	The importance of social soccer.....	66
7.3	Towards a community-based structure.....	67
7.4	Future directions .....	68
8	Conclusions.....	72
8.1	The Hub as a public homeplace .....	72
9	Recommendations .....	75
	References .....	76
	Appendices .....	78
	Appendix A: Participant responses to evaluation questions .....	78
	Appendix B: Player Code of Conduct.....	80

# List of Tables

Table 1: Number of participants .....	23
Table 2: Summary of changes made during the 2015 season.....	45

# Figures

Figure 1: Participants' feelings of safety and support .....	39
Figure 2: Participants' perceptions of coaches and instructors .....	42
Figure 3: Participants' sense of belonging to the Hub.....	49
Figure 4: Participants' social connections through the Hub .....	54
Figure 5: Participants' opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills.....	57
Figure 6: Level of challenge for participants.....	57
Figure 7: Participants' perception of their achievements at the Hub .....	58
Figure 8: Participants' improvements in teamwork skills.....	59
Figure 9: Participants' willingness to recommend the Hub to others.....	60



# Abbreviations

**ASRC** – Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

**CMY** – Centre for Multicultural Youth

**NHF** – New Hope Foundation

**The Hub** – The Community Soccer Hub

# Terminology

## Humanitarian VISA overview

The current Australian Humanitarian Program places a cap on the number of refugee and humanitarian visas that are granted each year. The 2013-2014 intake was capped at 13,768 and has remained at this level for 2014-2015. The refugee and humanitarian program is broken down into three VISA subclasses:

1. **Offshore refugee visas** are granted to persons facing persecution who are living outside their home country, who are living in their home country and are unable to leave and/or face immediate threat to life/security, or women outside their home country in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of her sex.
2. **Offshore special humanitarian visas** allow people who face human rights abuse in their home country and have a connection to Australia to settle permanently in Australia. To be eligible a person must be living outside their home country, subject to gross violation of human rights in their home country and sponsored by a proposer (an Australia citizen/resident or organisation).
3. **Permanent onshore protection visas** are granted when an asylum seeker within Australia has been recognised as a refugee within the meaning of the United Nations 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol.

In addition, bridging visas also exist which are temporary visas that allow people to legally reside in the Australian community while they are applying for a longer term visa, appealing a decision relating to their visa, or making arrangements to leave Australia. People seeking asylum on a bridging visa are usually not permitted to work, have no right to family reunion and are not able to re-enter Australia if they travel overseas.

## Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled from their home country due to fear of persecution and has applied for protection in Australia but has not yet had their claim for protection assessed. Under the refugee convention Australia has an obligation to provide asylum seekers with an opportunity to seek protection, regardless of whether they have entered Australia with or without a valid visa.

## **Refugee and refugee background**

The definition according to Article 1 of the 1951 UNHCR Convention on the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a “person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality; membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution” (UNHCR, 2012).

The state of being a refugee is not permanent and should not be used to define a person’s identity. Accordingly, we use the term ‘refugee background’ in this report to refer to people who share at least some common features of refugee experiences, regardless of their visa classification or status upon entry into Australia.

## **Migrant**

A migrant is a person who voluntarily chooses to leave their country and make a new life in another country such as Australia.

## **Youth**

Youth or sometimes referred to as ‘young people’ in this report refers to people between 10-25 years of age, which is an age bracket frequently adopted within the Australian youth policy context.

## **Newly arrived**

Refers to a person who was born overseas and has lived in Australia for a relatively short period of time, which the Australian government defines as a period of five years. Other definitions of ‘newly arrived’ vary according to the length of time it is considered to take to effectively resettle (usually up to 10 years).

## **Length of settlement**

Refers to the time it takes for refugee applications to be processed and refugees are successfully resettled as Australia being their new country of citizenship and residence. This amount of time can vary quite substantially from weeks to several years depending on route of arrival and visa class. In addition, people seeking asylum who arrive without a valid visa may be given a bridging visa, which can allow them live in the community and access certain services, for example, Medicare usually for a period of five years and depending on the circumstances they may or may not be allowed to work.



# Executive Summary

## Project background

Over the past several years an increasing number of young men from recently arrived and emerging communities have been participating in soccer informally and have not been able to access mainstream competitions or facilities. In response to this need, the Sports and Recreation Unit (at Brimbank Council) has been working in partnership with key stakeholders and community groups to develop a community soccer hub in Melbourne's West. The key aim for the Sports and Recreation Unit was to work with local stakeholders to contribute to the development of the hub meeting the objectives identified in the project brief prepared by the Council.

Similarly, many of the young men from refugee and migrant backgrounds living in Brimbank have experienced a range of barriers to participating in social and/or competitive soccer. Such barriers are well documented in the research literature, including structural barriers to participation such as access to transport, lack of funding and equipment. Social barriers, can also influence participation, for example, clubs that don't support culturally sensitive practices (i.e., having access to translators if needed or being flexible) are often unwelcoming spaces for young people from refugee backgrounds. Very few mainstream soccer clubs form partnerships with local settlement organisations and thus lack awareness about young people's experiences and the kinds of support they require. Similarly, other mediating barriers can include racism and discrimination, parent and guardian support, and the culture of sport in Australia, for example, drinking alcohol and aggression (Olliff, 2008). Finally, a range of personal barriers to participation often consists of financial constraints, language barriers, lack of time and family responsibilities (CMY, 2006).

## Evaluation brief

The evaluation brief provided by the council was to conduct an independent evaluation of the Community Soccer Hub (the Hub) across two years to document the development and progress of the program. In addition, the objective of the evaluation was to also gain a better understanding of participants' experiences of the setting. The current evaluative research will identify the progress of the Hub in relation to the objectives of the Council, which are outlined below:

- To develop support from settlement services to support the community groups on an ongoing basis.

- To develop a hub where newly arrived communities can get together and play football in a safe environment and gain a better understanding how soccer in Australia is organised.
- To develop coach and referee opportunities to support the groups on an ongoing basis.
- Develop a multicultural sports club supporting the needs of the emerging communities playing in mainstream competition.
- Develop a leadership team that becomes the elected committee for the Hub.

In addition, the evaluation particularly aims to capture the key impacts of the Hub in relation to participants' experiences, which includes exploring;

- participants' engagement in the Hub (attendance and motivations for engaging),
- which aspects of the Hub are most successful, enjoyable and beneficial for them, and
- participants' perspectives on future directions (for themselves and the Hub).

## Methods

This evaluation research used a case study approach was to document and explore Council's main targets and ensure a focus on participant perspectives on the Hub. Using a case study approach brings into focus the setting and the broader context in which it exists, including understanding the need for this setting in the West and how this took place over a two-year timeframe. Multiple methods (i.e., questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, participatory photography) were utilised to explore the Hub through a range of perspectives (i.e., participants, facilitators/coaches and stakeholders).

## Conclusions

The findings presented in the following sections of this report highlight a number of important functions of the Hub, not only for the young people involved, but also for the facilitators, staff and the broader community. In drawing together these findings and taking into account the council brief and the goals of the cultural community groups represented, it is clear that the Hub has far exceeded the initial aims set out in 2012. In this report the Hub is conceptualised as a setting that, through its community-based structure and model, provides channels of expression and opportunities for young people to develop.

The findings of this report speaks to the broader social and cultural context in which the Hub was developed, particularly in response to exclusion and marginalization in mainstream competition, which highlights issues of racism and discrimination that are all too common for many newly

arrived communities. This history has informed the development of a new setting, one in which people have a place to play soccer that forefronts inclusion, cultural learning and capacity building. The findings also identify the organizational elements of the Hub, including the structure and model that makes it unique. The final findings sections focus on different outcomes for individuals in terms their personal development and formation of interpersonal relations and cultural literacy, in addition to the function of the Hub, both internally as well as bridging with and informing external settings about newer communities.

### **The Community Soccer Hub as a public homeplace**

Public or community homeplaces are spaces that have been formed in response to the marginalisation or exclusion of groups and they serve as culturally safe spaces (Belenky, 1996). Watkins and Shulman (2008) bring together a range of literature that conceptualise the functions such spaces have including, countering social exclusion, promoting social solidarity, foregrounding people's voices, developing relationships and creating a shared vision for the future. Public homeplaces are settings that focus on specific values of inclusion, democratic participation, empowerment and capacity building (Case & Hunter, 2012).

This concept captures how the Hub has evolved into a public homeplace because of the structures it has developed, the processes it has put in place and the ways in which the participants experience it. Rather than focusing solely on participants' experiences, this framework aimed to understand the 'setting' as the unit of analysis by exploring individuals and groups as one part of the overall picture. In exploring the setting, we can focus on the relationships (interpersonal), roles, social processes, activities and resources that are all part of the space. Within this framework we can also link these elements of the Hub to features of public homeplaces. Through this framing we aim to move beyond an evaluation that focuses solely on individual outcomes by shedding light on how and why these settings are formed, while also identifying individual and group dynamics.

### **Building on prior experience and knowledge**

While participants' experiences speak to different aspects of the setting, there is an interpretive element that includes understanding the past and current sociopolitical context in which the Hub is embedded. This context is outlined in Section 4 of this report, which documents part of the history that contributed to the development of the Hub. As is often the case with public homeplaces, which are settings established "in opposition to violence and injustice" (Watkins & Shulman, 2008, p.209), the Hub was established after one community's experiences of violent racist attacks on their players in a mainstream soccer league. The experiences of those involved in the Western Tigers and supporting agencies was central to developing a new setting, particularly because they brought important knowledge about the challenges of establishing a club and participating in

mainstream competitions. Those involved had experience in responding to community needs, accessing resources and advocating for the rights of young people in their community. In moving forward to develop the Hub, community stakeholders and leaders were privy to issues raised such as racism, challenges in club management, balancing social and competitive streams and how to link players to new opportunities and support services. Essential to the establishment of public homeplaces is listening to community voices -- this is something that was the foundation for the Hub's formation. The experience and knowledge gained was used to create a vision for the Community Soccer Hub and the primary focus was the development of a culturally safe space and a community-based structure and model.

### **Facilitating voice, empowerment and an alternative opportunity structure through the Hub model**

Public homeplaces are settings in which people are able to voice basic concerns through a democratic process, promote empowerment and develop non-hierarchical ways of operating (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). The community-based structure of the Hub as identified through this report, has created channels for participants, facilitators and community groups more broadly to voice their concerns and express goals for the future. The Player Leaders, Program Facilitators and Community Leaders offer multiple perspectives and serve as gatekeepers for different cultural community groups, while also amplifying participant voices. This structure, which also includes a flexible Council Liaison and committed stakeholders, has established a form of governance that is anchored in community needs and practices, while also building a sense trust over time. Both participants and stakeholders identified the Hub as a place in which young people can be heard, in addition to being able to create change. Participants highlighted the importance of having opportunities for additional training and skill development, which reflects the emphasis on capacity building. Similarly, the Hub model focuses on collaborative partnership both within the Hub and across networks. Watkins and Shulman (2008) reiterate the importance of trust, respect and inclusion, all of which are produced in these settings that serve as public homeplaces. Participants' identified trust and respect as being important values, while their experiences of belonging, friendships and cooperation serve important outcomes of these values. In moving forward, it is important not only for the sustainability of the Hub but in terms of staying true to its vision, that this type of structure is maintained.

### **Individual and interpersonal gains through participation in the Hub**

Public homeplaces are also important sites of individual and group regeneration. A crucial goal for the Hub is having participants benefit on a personal level. As indicated in the findings sections, participants named a number of individual gains, including:



- improved physical health (staying shape and being healthy),
- enhanced wellbeing (participating in Hub soccer as stress relief and a source of enjoyment),
- establishing new friendships and being linked to broader networks, and
- opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge (in soccer, English language, and through training courses).

Another important element identified through this research is the cultural exchange aspect of the Hub. As described in the public homeplaces literature, these spaces become sites in which stories can be shared and understanding and awareness developed across cultural groups. Participants identified the Hub as a safe space in which connection and belonging could be established across cultural boundaries. In reflecting on a drama performed by members of the Sudanese community at a local tournament, many participants felt connected by some of the experiences such as growing up amidst conflict, living in refugee camps and the journey to Australia. These common experiences and having the Hub as a place to share and be witness to these experiences through performance and sports was a key aspect of creating a sense of belonging. As a reflection of the activity (soccer) in this space, it also became a place to establish new ways of doing things, such as developing strategies for inclusion through communication (i.e., knowing the language of soccer and learning English in the setting).

## Recommendations

Based on the reflections of the young people and other stakeholders, as well as the themes of this evaluation, including the fostering of the Hub as a public homeplace, the following recommendations are outlined for the continued success and growth of the Hub:

1. The Hub needs to maintain a safe and interconnected space for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
2. Continue to include and expand upon opportunities for cultural learning or transculturation.
3. The club model can be supported but should be based on collaboration, respect and mutual support.
4. Continued support in terms of infrastructure, funding, and opportunities to do council supported PD for leaders.
5. Support and expand the activities of the Hub and how to access funds to support activities.
6. Promote networking and opportunities for reciprocal exchange and learning between mainstream settings and new and emerging settings.
7. Support a focus on pathways (into employment and education/training opportunities) for young people through the Hub.

8. Homeplaces like the Hub, are examples of the enactment of transculturation and therefore should, through LGA support, newer communities can create spaces to build intercultural competencies and express ways of belonging.

# 1 Overview: Project Context and Evaluation Brief

The Sports and Recreation Unit (at Brimbank Council) has been working in partnership with key stakeholders to develop a Community Soccer Hub (the Hub) in the local area bringing together a number of informal groups who have been participating in soccer on a casual basis. Many of the young men playing soccer are from newly arrived communities and have not yet been able to access mainstream competitions or facilities. The key aim for the Sports and Recreation Unit was to work with local stakeholders to contribute to the development of the Hub meeting the objectives identified in the project brief prepared by the Council.

Unfortunately, many young men from refugee and migrant backgrounds living in Brimbank have experienced a range of barriers to participating in social and/or competitive soccer. Such barriers to participation are well documented in the research literature and through local research. For example, young people often experience structural barriers to participation, which can include, access to transport, lack of funding, lack of culturally sensitive facilities, and a lack of communication and collaboration between sporting and settlement organisations. Mediating barriers can include racism and discrimination, lack of inclusive practices in sporting organisations, limited parent and guardian support, and the culture of sport in Australia (for example, drinking alcohol and displays of aggression) (Olliff, 2008). Finally, a range of personal barriers can consist of financial constraints, language barriers, lack of time and family responsibilities (CMY, 2006).

The brief from council was to conduct an independent evaluation of the Hub at the end of the first year to document progress and to gain a better understanding of participants' experiences of the program. This evaluative research will identify the progress of the Hub in relation to the objectives of the Council which are outlined below:

- To develop support from settlement services to support the community groups on an ongoing basis.
- To develop a hub where newly arrived communities can get together and play football in a safe environment and gain a better understanding to how soccer in Australia is organised.
- To develop coach and referee opportunities to support the groups on an ongoing basis.

- Develop a multicultural sports club supporting the needs of the emerging communities playing in mainstream competition.
- Develop a leadership team that becomes the elected committee for the Hub.

In addition, the evaluation aims to in particular capture the key impacts of the Hub in relation to participants, which includes exploring;

- participants engagement in the Hub (attendance and motivations for engaging),
- which aspects of the Hub are most successful, enjoyable and beneficial for them, and
- participants' perspectives on future directions (for themselves and the Hub).

## 2 Literature Snapshot

### 2.1 Sports and youth from refugee/migrant backgrounds

People of migrant and refugee backgrounds endure many challenges adjusting to a new country. Migrant and refugee young people can face additional challenges. Amongst recovering from trauma, navigating education, employment and complex bureaucratic systems, developing language skills and trying to adjust, refugee and migrant young people must also negotiate family, peer, individual and community expectations in the context of early adulthood (Olliff, 2008). However, it is important to note that newly arrived youths bring a wealth of resources and strengths to the Australian community and embody many qualities and skills such as resiliency, adaptability, a strong commitment to family and community and a strong desire to achieve, amongst many others (Coventry et al., 2002).

In many situations in the Australian context young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds can be lumped together and their complex social, cultural and religious diversity is overlooked, misunderstood and undervalued. People migrating to Australia often create settings, that is, they construct places within a new social ecology and power relations, which help prevent or reduce community disintegration. Such settings can buffer against negative psychological outcomes (Couch, 2007). One such setting is the participation in sport and recreation by young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. There not only is a strong desire to play and be involved with sport and recreation from young newly arrived communities, but sports play an important role in Australian culture, particularly in Melbourne, and provides a platform for positive settlement outcomes, social inclusion and supporting integration into Australian society (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2010). Settlement agencies as well as community and local government organisations across the country are deeply embedded in migrant and refugee communities and can greatly contribute towards the development of fostering the engagement and participation of newly emerging communities in a wide range of sporting and recreation activities (Morgan, 2010). This can provide a platform for newly arrived youth to build on their vast array of strengths and assist with integration, social inclusion and capital, civic engagement and community building, amongst many other benefits (Murray, 2014).

## **2.2 Participating in sports programs: Benefits, challenges and barriers**

### **2.2.1 Benefits**

A number of researchers have identified the benefits for newly arrived communities participating in sport and recreation (Cortis, Sawrikar, & Muir, 2007; Morgan, 2010; Olliff, 2007; VicHealth, 2007). These benefits are diverse and include social benefits such as trust building, capacity building opportunities, community understanding, developing social contacts and building relationships, belonging, social cohesion, an entry point to broader participation and building social capital (Bunde-Brouste et al., 2012; Olliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2012, 2015). There are benefits for health and wellbeing including, physical fitness, general wellbeing, self-esteem and psychological benefits, such as, reduce stress and depression, and increase confidence (Morgan, 2010). In addition, sport and recreation can facilitate settlement and transitional support in a supportive environment where information regarding services and systems can be shared among participants and trusted workers (Olliff, 2008). These benefits are well documented and demonstrate the fantastic opportunity sport and recreation can provide newly arrived youth.

### **2.2.2 Barriers to participation in sport**

The literature demonstrates that there are individual and groups benefits that flow from participation in sport and recreation activities and clubs. However, young people of refugee and migrant backgrounds can also face challenges and barriers to participation. Barriers can be structural, mediating, and personal. Structural barriers to participation can include, access to transport, lack of funding, lack of culturally sensitive facilities, and a lack of communication and collaboration between sporting and settlement organisations (Bunde-Birouste et al., 2012; Morgan, 2010). Mediating barriers can include racism and discrimination, lack of inclusive practices in sporting organisations, parent and guardian support, and the culture of sport in Australia (for instance, drinking alcohol and aggression) (Olliff, 2008). Personal barriers can consist of financial constraints, language barriers, lack of time and family responsibilities (CMY, 2006). Finally, there are also barriers that relate to the nature of competitive sport. For instance, it can be divisive and can create an 'us' and 'them' mentality and a structure of competition with rules and regulations promoting winners and losers that can work against community building and cultural understanding and affect participation (Nathan et al., 2010). Whilst there are widespread barriers to participation and challenges, there are many programs actively promoting sport and recreation with refugee and migrant youth who are trying to combat these challenges and allow newly arrived young people to flourish.

## 2.3 Sports programs focusing on newly arrived communities

There are a number of multicultural sporting bodies and programs that include newly arrived youth populations in Australia. Programs such as the AFL Multicultural Program, Cricket Victoria's 'All-embracing Program', Surf Life Saving Australia 'On the Same Wave' Program, 'Helping Hoops' Basketball Program, and many others (Morgan, 2010). In addition, there are programs more specifically targeted at newly arrived communities such as the South-Eastern Migrant Resource Centre's 'Girl's Indoor Soccer Program', the 'Advantage Refugees!' Tennis Bridging Program and 'Sports Without Borders Program'. These programs have varying degrees of success and many face and battle the previous identified challenges discussed above.

Of all the sports practiced in the various programs, soccer or 'football' is by far the most popular and fastest growing amongst newly arrived populations (Nathan et al., 2010). The 'world game' offers a unique opportunity for new programs to target young and enthusiastic newly arrived communities who have a desire to begin or continue their football journey. Two football programs targeted at newly arrived young people that have been evaluated are the Football United Program (NSW) and The Melbourne Giants Football Club. Football United began in 2006 and has the main goal of assisting refugee and newly arrived young people and their families in their transition to Australia. The program provides football activities such as regular afterschool and Saturday programs, gala days and holiday camps, capacity building (for example, coaching, referee and first-aid courses), and providing linkages with local clubs (Bunde-Birouste et al., 2012). The program aims to improve and support personal, social and leadership skills, capacity building, key life transitions within schools, building linkages and creating awareness. Bunde-Birouste et al. (2012) evaluated the Football United Program and found success in these areas, however, they still faced many challenges.

The Melbourne Giants Football Club is quite different in terms of their approach. They established the club in the late 1990s and provide football opportunities to African refugees, particularly Somalis. The club has been awarded small grants, enabling them to acquire equipment and lower membership costs, to mitigate the financial barriers to participation (Spaaij, 2012). The club emphasises the need for meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable football activities as a way of helping new comers into Australian society and to improve community togetherness.

Both the Football United Program and the Melbourne Giants are examples of the important role soccer or 'football' can play in newly arrived young people's lives. However, programs such as these are usually ethnically based (e.g., only targeted at the South Sudanese community) or do not provide a sustainable and safe space for different cultures to come together and interact. There is a dearth of programs and literature on intercultural spaces or programs where multiple cultures are

coming together to play sport such as football or engage in leisure activities together. Having an intercultural space enables newly arrived youth to come together, share experiences, have social opportunities and play sport with multiple cultures within the Australian context.



## 3 Methods and Conceptual Framework

### 3.1 Case study approach

This evaluation uses a case study approach to explore the development of the Hub over a two-year period of time. As outlined by Yin (1994) and Bromley (1986), case studies focus on a particular setting and timeframe and often include a focus on the broader context in which the setting is embedded. For example, in this case it is important to consider the social and historical contexts in which the Hub has been formed, thus Section 4 of this report traces some of these important aspects of the setting. Using a case study approach for this evaluation allows us to explore the Hub through a range of perspectives (i.e., participants, facilitators, community leaders, stakeholders) and use several methods (i.e., questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, participatory photography) to bring together a clearer picture of this setting internally and as it relates to external structures.

Participants in the Hub were surveyed about their experiences across two seasons, which included fixed response items in addition to opened ended questions. Across the 2014 and 2015 seasons approximately half (n = 18; n=17 respectively) of the participants consistently attending the Hub completed questionnaires. A smaller group of participants were involved in the participatory visual component of the project, which is discussed in more detail below. However, a range of participants (both players and young adult facilitators) were involved in focus groups and interviews in which photographs were used to stimulate conversation. This research included interviews with staff, stakeholders and community leaders to gather additional perspectives regarding the progress of the Community Soccer Hub in relation to the objectives outlined by the Council. Finally, archival data (such as program documents) was also used in the evaluation to understand the processes and structure of the Hub. Table 1 below highlights the research activities, their timeframe and the target groups involved. Also included for analysis in this evaluation research were documents related to the Hub, the public social media page linked to the team in 2015 and field notes by the lead researcher during the time spent at the Hub.

#### 3.1.1 Participatory visual methods

The use of participatory visual methods, in which players from the Hub took photographs to represent their experiences, provided insight into their experiences and circumvented issues

related to expression solely through spoken or written language. All players expressed interest in the photographic component and cameras were provided. However, participants preferred for one of the 'player leaders' to take charge of taking photos at team activities and events. Over 50 images were taken by this participant across the two seasons (2014 and 2015), involving a range of Hub participants and coaches. Following the method of photo-elicitation put forth by Harper (2002), the first set of images taken for the project were used in the subsequent focus groups and interviews with players and coaching staff to discuss and reflect upon their experiences. Photo elicitation focuses on photographic images used in interviews to elicit a deeper analysis and gather rich verbal data (Clark-Ibáñez, 2007; Harper 2002).

**Table 1: Number of participants**

Data gathering activities	Timeframe	Target groups	Number of participants	
			2014	2015
<b>Surveys</b>	August 2014	Players	18	18
<b>Interviews</b>	August 2014 – March 2015	Stakeholders (organizations, community leaders)	4	5
<b>Focus groups and interviews</b>	October 2014 – March 2015	Facilitators		2
		Players (from the Chin community)	5	5
<b>Photograph component</b>	October 2014	Players	10 players 2 facilitators	

## 4 Background and Context: The Community Soccer Hub Genealogy

---

*...[Initially] there was about four of us, we started with four of us in the West and in the afternoon we used to get together and go to Footscray Park behind VUT, just kick the ball, socialise and go home and before I knew it there was about five of us, 10, 20, 30.*

---

### 4.1 Unravelling the history of the Community Soccer Hub: Reflections about the Western Tigers

This section documents the Sunshine Heights Western Tigers, a club that was the predecessor to the Community Soccer Hub and was instrumental in the start up, planning and vision of the Hub. Through the eyes of several local community members who had been involved with the Western Tigers, we can understand the journey of one club that went from informal pick-up games to a club that participated in mainstream competitions. The Western Tigers were anchored in the South Sudanese community and were formed through not only for a love of the game, but also as a way to reconnect people after they had migrated to Australia. Over the three years the Western Tigers were in existence, the club experienced a number of major successes, both on and off the field. They also faced a number of challenges, which as described by community members, have become important lessons for moving forward and creating the Community Soccer Hub. This section traces the genealogy of the Hub using the Western Tigers as the starting point.

#### 4.1.1 Something was missing there: Early beginnings of the Western Tigers

While the Western Tigers were established as a club in 2010, it had been in making for a number of years. Many community members, who had recently immigrated to Australia, were involved in playing soccer informally as a way to stay connected and support each other. In addition, as Joseph describes below, many South Sudanese community members faced exclusion when attempting to join 'mainstream' clubs, which at the time were already strongly tied to particular ethnic/cultural/national backgrounds.

*I came to Australia in '96 and when I came I was the only Sudanese, South Sudanese that first arrived here in the West. So I joined a local club which was a mainly Macedonian club*

*and I was the only stranger there. So I played with them until that time. Although I was a player I didn't really feel that I was really welcome because the club did not have that community aspect of setting. So yeah, I was part of the squad but outside really, or in the change room or other parts there was something missing there...being part of that, I think it gave me that idea to identify what was missing, the social bonding among their players, so I took that social bonding and said "okay, how can I help my fellow countrymen fitting into their new country and also become a person to go to for a source of information?"...We had a very small community, scattered all across Melbourne and very hard to come together.*

*...[initially] there was about four of us, we started with four of us in the west and in the afternoon we used to get together and go to Footscray Park behind VUT, just kick the ball, socialise and go home and before I knew it there was about five of us, 10, 20, 30.*

The fledgling club had the required numbers and subsequently began to organise friendly matches and to participate in local weekend tournaments. Faced with the issue of limited recreational space and access to fields, the group approached councils in the Western suburbs until they found an option that would work. In 2010, after making contact with Kate George at Brimbank City Council, the informal team was linked with a 'host club,' one which was well-established and interested in taking a partnership approach to assist in developing a club. Ironically, this was not a local soccer club, but instead it was the Sunshine Heights Cricket Club, who had a history of working with the South Sudanese community and which also fielded a junior's soccer team. From 2010 to 2013, the new club, which was called the Sunshine Heights Western Tigers, had both a junior team and seniors teams (reserves and the 1<sup>st</sup> team).

#### **4.1.2 The partnership**

Ron along with his brother Rick, who were running the Sunshine Cricket Heights team, describes his involvement and the values underpinning their club and the partnership:

*So my involvement dates back some time where initially our cricket club, Sunshine's Cricket Club, we had a lot of interest in soccer and so we created a team and the club's--one of our major drivers or our values and philosophies about embracing people, integration and using sport as a vehicle to include people in the broader community... And then the Brimbank City Council, we got a close relationship with, approached us about mentoring, nurturing, collaborating, partnering up with a Sudanese team called the Western Tigers. So we did that for several years and we had some really great successes with that but we also had some challenges.*

He noted that partnership was a process of co-development and learning:

*...it just needs that patience and a commitment to it over a longer period of time. And working out with the communities one, too. It's not about--it's a two-way thing. It's important that you don't have that patronising or you're--this is the way you do it. It's got to be we learn--like I found that I was learning just as much from the guys as what hopefully I was giving to them as well.*

*The wonderful side was playing in those years when it was all Sudanese. They're lovely guys. Absolutely enjoyed, you could see they loved the game, the teaming together, the camaraderie and you could see, lovely guys. They've made their own contribution in lots of ways. A lot of them were working in Council, a lot of them were mentoring younger people, they were involved in programs. A lot of them were trying to cut it in this world. Inspiring stories and terrific, some absolutely wonderful people that were there. They just needed a chance. (Ron, Sunshine Cricket Club)*

Joseph reiterated the Sunshine Cricket Club's commitment to 'inclusion,' which he describes as a 'win/win' for both groups involved in the partnership. One of the benefits for the Cricket Club was more young people being linked to club into the cricket and soccer junior teams. However, he also highlights the 'tensions' and 'sacrifices' he believed the Sunshine Cricket Club experienced as a result of their commitment to the partnership and inclusion more broadly:

*And I think Rick and Ron felt very strongly about having an inclusion environment and having that view did not really fit in well with many other people... And when we came in some of those individuals were not very happy with what they were seeing and those individuals were given options, either to take it or leave it and some decided to move on.*

*So that did create a few tensions and the message was quite clear from those who were managing the clubs, especially Ron, Rick and Jerry who were very, very clear in the lines saying "this is the setting we're having, it's going to be there for a while, if you're not happy with what you're seeing please find another place or go somewhere else". So I think that's the sacrifice I mean because they probably lost good friends who'd been there for a while. (Joseph)*

#### **4.1.3 Challenging racism on and off the field**

Despite finishing second in the Metro League in the first season the team decided not to take the option of promotion to the next level. Joseph noted that because the team was new, the management decided that the club needed more resources and financial stability to participate. He also noted the issue of racial discrimination on the field, which had led to penalties for the club in the early stages:

*Not to forget that we did have quite a few issues in the first season because of behaviour on the field. We had young people who were really getting very upset, reacting very aggressively because of name calling, we had that from day one.*

However, the most significant lessons from the Western Tigers were undoubtedly the issues faced when the team played in mainstream competitions. Ron, who was running the Sunshine Cricket Heights team and acting as a partner for the Western Tiger's club development, also noticed the challenges faced during competitions:

*So you had opposition teams that really were playing for sheep stations. They didn't care about the migrant journey, asylum seekers, humanitarian entrants, whatever. It was for keeps and it was really awful. I always used to say, I've never yelled out to the bench, "How long to go? How long to go?" Because you can see trouble brewing....*

*And I remember it was apparent sometimes where I'd be sitting in the change rooms, just in a quiet corner getting ready or whatever, and the referee would come in and their tone of voice sometimes. Not always. A lot of them were good. But there were exceptions. Their tone of voice was very authoritarian, talking down on them. And then I remember one time I actually got up, and I didn't want to embarrass the referee, so I just pulled him aside and said, "Hey, you know. Your tone of voice, your body language, very aggressive. We haven't even started the game."... So, yeah, it's just that lack of empathy a lot of times. (Ron, Sunshine Cricket Club)*

In one game in 2011, violence erupted as racial slurs were hurled at Western Tigers' players. Joseph explains:

*So we went into a second season, it didn't go very well. We had so many issues where we ended up in the tribunal and there was a big messy fight where we were in [suburb], we were playing [team name] and there was a lot of racial abuse and physical attacks. Two of our players ended up in hospital. So that really scared many players and we went before the tribunal and the first hearing was quite harsh, we were basically kicked out of the league and penalised quite severely. We had two or three players that were suspended for two seasons and I can't remember how much we were fined for, even though two of our players ended up in hospital. Soccer is a lovely game but sometimes people they go overboard just to win by just intimidating and calling names to mentally break you down. I mean psychologically break you down so that they win but what they're doing for them is good, winning is good but for the opponent it's ...It's damaging and it's not a pleasant thing.*

After the incident, the club organised quickly to challenge the penalties and take action against racism on the soccer field, hoping to affect change at a broader institutional level. As Joseph describes this did lead to some changes in terms of the Football Federation Victoria shifting their focus:

*...we came back and said "well this is totally unfair, we appeal" and we took the case to the media and it was quite a highlight in the media on ABC and also The Age. We involved [a legal firm] and the outcome was more in our favour.... The Football Federation after the incident and after the second hearing when we appealed decided to put more strategies in place to avoid these things happening again because I think they had really limited understanding of what was going on on the field. (Joseph, Former Western Tigers Player & Community Leader)*

Subsequently, the Federation put together training material, with the input and contribution of Joseph and other community members. However, the effects of the incident lingered for a long time after and consequently a few players decided to take a season off altogether or stop playing:

*So last year we didn't play because given what happened the previous season and the crisis we had in terms of getting the numbers out of the players we decided "no, it's too much, let's just take one season break. Have a reflection, think about what to do next and if anyone is ready to come back, then we'll be happy to do that". So this season we didn't play.*

*Yeah, I might be wrong but I think it's the social connection and trying to recover or just trying to reflect on what has happened in the last three seasons might be the factor. I don't know, I haven't asked them but I always tell them "guys, Saloon Park is open, let's go" and it's like "when we're ready. We're not ready, when we're ready we'll go back".*

Despite the challenges, Joseph and the managers from the cricket club believe that the Western Tiger's journey has been extremely important and has paved the way for a new approach to developing inclusive models of sports participation. The next section highlights the lessons from those driving the development of the Western Tigers across the three years.



## 4.2 Important lessons

---

***I mean, the kind of back and forth of reflecting and all the planning and how long it was around for. I think a lot of people have focused on "we tried to have a club and then it ended in disaster" but that's not the whole story. There are so many learnings from it. (Joseph, Former Western Tigers Player & Community Leader)***

---

### 4.2.1 The challenges of club management

Joseph noted that one of the key lessons from his experience at the Western Tigers would be to have club management operate as a separate entity, meaning they were not involved in playing or managing of the daily operations of the club.

*Big, big, big, massive job so we were basically running everything. We took it on ourselves and it was big, massive work. We played, we set up, we organised the referee, we organised the payment and it was just like "okay, whatever, just do it, don't complain". That was a bad idea and we learnt it the hard way. I think that part is probably the biggest learning for me because I wish we had a separate management just to look at things in a different context and leave the coaching and the daily, day-to-day running of the clubs to other people. That could have made a huge difference. (Joseph)*

Ron also discussed the tensions that sometimes arose in a partnership management model, in addition to the competing priorities faced by some of those involved in management:

*Probably got a bit frustrating at times where trying to balance guiding and not being too involved and respecting the other was quite tricky, because everyone's at different levels.... I see us as being in the power position because we've grown up here, we know the system and how it works largely. I mean we're still learning as well. And then sometimes you're taken for granted and not appreciated and then even criticised, there was a couple of times, and I thought can't keep doing this. I got kids and a family.*

These tensions highlighted the difficulties of having partnership models that relied too heavily on a few people. Thus, models that take a partnership and mentoring approach, must plan to have sufficient numbers of people willing to participate at different levels of club operation (for instance, club management and operations versus the day-to-day activities).

### 4.2.2 Making it work for everyone: The elite and recreation divide

Different types of participation were also something the Western Tigers worked to balance. The club wanted to provide avenues for competitive participation, but did not want the club to only cater



to elite players. The foundations of the club were strongly based upon creating a space in which people could come together to play and to connect with other community members. Joseph describes the open door policy and the subsequent challenges they faced in ensuring that these needs were met:

*We had a lot of players that were knocking at the door every day, wanting to come in so it became a drop in club basically and we had that open door policy. We were not just there to play soccer but we were also there to provide social space.*

*After the first season, many of the players believed the management (which consisted of volunteer players, most of whom were considered leaders in the South Sudanese community), should have pushed the team into the division above. Many new clubs struggle with the balance of having a mix of ability levels, with some who want to play in a highly competitive league and others who are interested on recreation. Similarly, with the management of the club consisting of volunteers, some of whom were traveling back and forth to Africa for other commitments; day-to-day operations became difficult to manage.*

Ron also identified the ways in which the competitive aspect of the club became more complicated when the Western Tiger's participated in mainstream competition. The combination of high intensity soccer and instances of racism during those competitions, led many involved to reconsider inclusion in mainstream competitions. This is in part where the beginnings of the Community Hub started, as a way to create a space that was safe and inclusive:

*I think that left a really bad taste and it was very unsavoury. So we thought that the best way to go now is don't worry playing in a competition with the stakes a lot higher, was it perceived, we thought we'd just create this thing with Councils--actually it was a big driver. Just creating a environment where you just play and it's not for points, it's not part of a competition. And that was the philosophy behind the Community Hub. (Ron, Sunshine Cricket Club)*

#### **4.2.3 Pathways for players into mainstream clubs**

In the past Joseph has also worked to link young people into mainstream clubs so that they could develop their skills and be exposed to opportunities not available in the community club. As he describes below, mainstream clubs offer a structured program and high quality facilities, however, the social support for young people from different backgrounds is not provided. Players often face exclusion and discrimination and thus go back to their previous clubs.

*The other side which I tend to focus was more providing support to players that were young, skilful, that deserved to play for other clubs. I encourage them because we had players who*

*are playing Melbourne.. yeah, [Name] Soccer Club and this young one was coming back and I knew exactly what they felt like because I went through it. There was no social support there so I said "look, you're welcome to come and play with us on Sunday or when there's no season but I think you should continue in that form and if you want I'm happy to come along or maybe talk to the management or talk to the coach just to see how they can accommodate you because you deserve to play in ...*

*Yeah "but if you come in here then basically it's a waste of that skill". So some individuals went back and forth. Trying it, come back, trying it but it is an ongoing issue. The whole idea was to provide that pathway to young players coming in and don't feel they're being part of the mainstream soccer clubs, yet they have the ability to play.*

Joseph notes that it isn't that a young person 'can't fit in,' it is that the clubs have not been educated about the discrimination young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face in mainstream sports.

*...still lacking some proper management and resources to be able to put in, I guess, the proper training and material that would go across the communities, regardless of what level of league you're playing. Some leagues who have the resources so may have the ability and time maybe to train who manage and coaches on anti-racism but I guess clubs at a rural area or further down that their main focus is to keep those people together and have a weekend game, may not have that ability.*

### **4.3 Moving forward and opening it up: The Community Hub vision**

The journey of the Western Tigers has been essential to the creation of the Community Soccer Hub. The Western Tigers formed organically, not only through the love of the game of soccer or 'football', but also as a response to exclusion and racial discrimination experienced in mainstream clubs. This need still remains, while young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds are playing with their community groups informally, they are interested in joining clubs that allow for access to mainstream facilities and offer culturally safe spaces to play. Ron articulates the importance of this space and the central role the council has had in facilitating the development of this space:

*So I guess that's a bit of the Western Tigers, where we started, where we kind of finished and how the idea of soccer hub came from because after we decided not to continue in the league, Kate [Brimbank City Council] kind of saying "well I don't want that space to be lost because there are other communities that are willing to come along". Yeah, and then there were a few other individuals who were newly arrived who were coming as well. So Kate and*

*I think the cricket clubs came to the conclusion that "I think we should keep this space open for others and if you guys, the Western Tigers players decide to come back at least you'll have that opportunity rather than starting all over".*

The vision for those involved in the Western Tigers partnership was to keep this 'space' open, specifically to allow for access to a training pitch and to bring together young people from a range of cultural community groups to bridge the gap between informal and mainstream structures. Part of the vision includes offering ways for young people to further develop their interest and passion for soccer through referee courses and training in coaching.

# 5 The Community Soccer Hub: Structure and Model

## 5.1 An emerging structure

In 2014 the first year of operations, the Community Soccer Hub did not have a formal club structure. Instead the hub used the collaborative partnership model as a foundation to build elements from the ground up. This approach is quite different than most sporting clubs, which have a stanchly hierarchical club structure. However, allowing for time to develop a community-based approach was central to the vision shared by those involved. One of the goals in developing the structure was to focus on community-ownership by mentoring (older) players and community leaders into different roles. The structural elements developed from early 2014 have included Kate George as a liaison and organiser of the Hub, representatives from different partner organizations, community leaders from each cultural group involved, program facilitators and player leaders.

The **Council Liaison** (Brimbank City Council Leisure and Sports Officer) played the role of overall program facilitator in terms of working with community groups to establish needs, the direction of the Hub and how to link the space to other services. This person has also scoped different resources (i.e., facilities, equipment, personnel) and acquired additional supports by ensuring partnering agencies are a key component of the program.

**Stakeholders** - this group includes agencies such as New Hope Foundation (NHF), Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY). Representatives from these agencies assist with identifying support for the Hub (for instance, through joint grant applications, sharing information, networks and personnel) as well as contributing in-kind support and obtaining equipment. Over the two seasons of 2014 and 2015 collaborations have led to specific initiatives with the Hub including the “I Speak Football Brimbank”, which included both Football Federation Victoria (FFV) and Melbourne City FC.

**Community Leaders** are individuals who have volunteered to be part of the Hub to represent their community group. Each community leader works with their cultural group to identify needs and decide how they would like to be involved. The community leaders work with the stakeholders and player leaders to ensure that the processes and structures are culturally appropriate.

**Program Facilitators** (2-3 people) involved in the Hub are usually young adults who have experience in coaching, mentoring and developing community programs. These individuals have,

in the past, come from cultural groups participating in the Hub and facilitate sessions and help with sports-related skill development, but they are also working to link players to additional opportunities and services. The program facilitators have worked closely with the Council representative and different agencies to procure monetary support and work towards program sustainability. In 2015, program facilitators were also involved in club roles that developed as a result of participating in a formal league.

The **Player Leaders** are young men involved in the Hub who have volunteered to informally represent their cultural community group. These individuals speak to their respective player groups to get a sense of what they need and want through their participation in the Hub. The player leaders work between facilitators and players to organise and communicate different activities on the ground (for example, organising transport, relaying information about training and different opportunities available). These young people mitigate many of the barriers participants might face such as language difficulties. In addition, player leaders work with the facilitators to ensure players drive processes such as the development of the code of conduct and are critical to developing a Hub culture that is welcoming and respectful.

Together, these young people formed the **Player Committee**, with about four or five participants in total. The group works with the community leaders, program facilitators and council liaison to provide direction and make decisions relevant to the participants.

## **5.2 The Hub model**

The Community Soccer Hub has been developed as a place-based initiative, supported by Brimbank City Council, local community groups and a wide range of partners including, local police, non-profit organisations such as New Hope Foundation, Centre for Multicultural Youth and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. The following section highlights elements of the Hub model, drawing on observations, interviews and documents linked to the setting. Subsequent sections in this report also report on some of these elements as themes that are discussed by participants or stakeholders.

### **5.2.1 Participation**

The Hub maintains an open door policy and is founded on a model that encourages participation by offering both social and competitive soccer streams. This is an important ethical aspect of the initiative that has been continued on from the Western Tigers. In that, the Hub also aims to cater for participants who seek to play socially and/or competitively.

### 5.2.2 Collaborative partnership

The Hub has been built through a collaborative process, not only with community groups, but also in partnership with multiple agencies in the local area. This collaboration has been developed through relationships between individuals and groups involved, with a strong sense of trust and respect for what each can offer.

The model is also collaborative in terms of pooling resources to provide basic elements such as coaching, equipment and facilities. The partnership also pools resources to offer in-kind support and work together to provide opportunities and pathways for players through courses in refereeing, coaching and mentoring for leaders in club management.

*It was more about this dialogue that was occurring between these clubs and service providers like us and council. Then thinking, “what are some options? How can we..?” I think that sometimes even though there might be some people in the community that are driving this idea that they want a club for their own particular community group. From what I can see sometimes where it stops, the motivation stops, is when perhaps there’s not regular attendance at some of the training sessions that have been run. So the idea that you could bring these community groups together and that they could share this and have enough people to sustain a community hub seems to be working quite well. (Community Stakeholder, New Hope Foundation)*

### 5.2.3 Capacity building and mentorship

Central to the Hub model is a focus on capacity building for players and facilitators. This occurs in a number of ways including a mentoring approach to creating a community-led committee and through a range of additional opportunities offered through the Hub. For example, over the past two years the Hub has had referee training offered to players as well as coaching workshops. The Hub has also hosted guest coaches from Melbourne Victory FC and Melbourne City FC (A-League professional clubs) and has brought in the “I Speak Football Brimbank Project”, which caters to a younger cohort of participants (ages 13 to 17 years, both male and female) and uses a peer facilitator approach. This approach has allowed for young people to seek out different skill sets and even work towards employment in a sport they enjoy.

### 5.2.4 Community involvement: A democratic approach to governance and development

Over the two year period of operation, The Hub has focused on building the structure to be community driven and led. For example, community leaders from different cultural and faith groups have facilitated player recruitment, participation and have worked to steer the general direction of

the Hub. A strong mentorship model was implemented early on with volunteers from different organisations working with local leaders involved in the Hub (players and facilitators) to build community members' knowledge and capacity in the area of club management. The Hub model also uses a democratic approach to the governance of day-to-day activities as well as the future direction of the Hub more broadly. For example, the structure of the Hub, which includes 'player leaders' from each community group, who ensure that each player has a way to voice their opinions and discuss issues as needed. One of the program facilitators (coach/mentor) noted that this process can be frustrating but also allows for fluidity and ensures that players are always heard and driving the direction of the Hub:

*The fluid thing about how there is no set structure in place allows for these different and creative ways. Though it has been really frustrating at times to know who really speaks for the hub and who doesn't and it will continue to be and doesn't really matter. But it still doesn't remove the fact that Steven's voice holds a lot of weight Thomas' voice holds a lot of weight, regardless of what you do, you consult them, no matter what. Because they ask their players what they think and they will come back to you and tell you what is good and what is not. (N. Facilitator, 2015)*

Similarly, facilitators who work for partnering agencies, while also playing and participating in the Hub activities, serve as knowledge brokers and work to secure important resources for the Hub. For example, one of the facilitators in 2015 also worked with the Centre for Multicultural Youth. Through his involvement in the Hub he was able to work between his agency, Council staff and the players to secure additional resources (support) and equipment. These facilitators need to know how to assess and communicate needs as well as the politics and agendas each agency brings to the table:

*So that is our challenge, listening to that and being able to bridge the two. And for the last six months consistently they have been telling us they need a coach. So I could dance around that but if you don't address that people are going to walk away. It is about being really confident to have that conversation with Yonas and Kate, and we are really thankful that we can do that. We can have a sit down and a coffee with Kate and say 'Kate, this is what the players are saying, how do we go around that?' and she is awesome! She is like "ok cool, we need to do this and that and that".*

This model, as noted by facilitators, player leaders and other stakeholders, relied heavily on trust and respect. These two values are central to the Hub and are enacted through the ongoing consultative processes that are informally established through relationships between different actors involved. Essential to this process in 2014 was the collective development of *the Player's*

*Code of Conduct* (Appendix B) in which the players, facilitators, council and a local stakeholder organisation worked together to establish a shared agreement. This established a sense of ownership as described by one of the stakeholders involved:

*Council Youth Services would run a session around the guidelines or the rules of the club with young people and got them to input into that.... ....so they went in there with a basic framework and then they played around with some ideas. You could see that off the back of that there was a sense of ownership as well, just formalising what they were doing.*



## 6 Participant Voices



*A - This one is good because it represents power.*

*Q - Do you think the soccer hub represents power?*

*A - Yes*

### 6.1 Foundations

This section highlights players' and facilitators' perspectives on different areas of the Hub that are considered foundational to its development. This section highlights the importance of the following in building the Hub; volunteers, establishing trust, gaining participation and understandings about what makes the Hub work.

#### 6.1.1 Building the Hub: A collective effort

Interviews with participants involved in the Hub in 2015 revealed that a lot of work had gone into developing the setting. Facilitators and players in particular noted that work of those previously involved over the past two years was essential to the Hub's development and saw themselves as building on the foundations previously established:

*N: We are talking about what has happened now but what we have done has been on the back of what others have done. Before us there was (names two young adult leaders) were crucial to this.*

*S: John.*

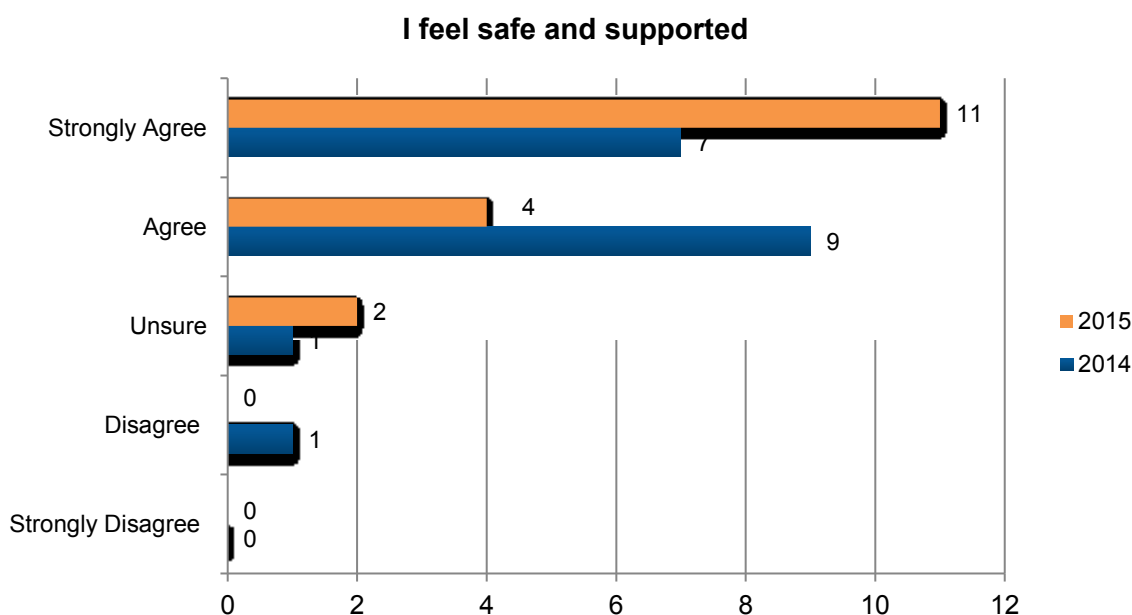
*N: (Names of community leaders, facilitators and player leaders from 2014) for sure and there are others who along the way have laid a brick and for whatever reason they have moved on but it is about carrying that momentum forward.*

These participants spoke about the time and effort previous facilitators and community leaders had contributed voluntarily and the importance of those individuals in translating the vision for the Hub into a setting which embodied the current vision.

### 6.1.2. A safe space

One of the main motivations for creating the Soccer Hub was the growing need for a culturally safe space that offered participation in soccer. This also became central to the vision for the Hub when it was established and is something that has been explored over the 2014 and 2015 seasons. As shown in Figure 1, the vast majority of participants (89% and 88%) surveyed across both seasons did feel safe and supported at the Hub.

**Figure 1: Participants' feeling of safety and support**



One of the facilitators characterised the support players give each other both on and off the field:

*Just from the playing sense, there is a lot of love and a lot of spirit. Whenever you come on to the pitch, you are meeting friends who are very good hearted and you feel that on the pitch and off the pitch. (Facilitator 2015)*

Setting the Hub up as a safe space in which participants felt welcomed was foundational and the findings presented here suggest that this aim has been met.

### 6.1.2 Participation

Participation among different cultural groups and genders has been a priority of the Hub since it began in 2013/2014. Council has worked with community and player leaders to facilitate participation across cultural groups and ensure that a wide range of age groups was included. Players and facilitators identified community leaders and player leaders as central to gaining participation. For example, community leaders were central to this process early on:

*And because that's one of the thing, because I think they're forgetting it's still in the early stage, so they have to be proactive like they have to do everything they can to get the numbers, to get people who want to be part of it still and enjoying it until we can reach certain levels, okay I'll just fade away now and leave it with you guys. But I understand what Kate is doing but need some leaders, some community leaders definitely. (Facilitator, 2015)*

Maintaining the support of community leaders has been important for participation, especially when engaging newly emerging communities. Similarly, a few players identified that participation is highly reliant on player leaders attending training sessions and liaising with their community group:

*The thing is that team we have different groups. When the head of the group is there, the players will be there. When the head is not there it becomes difficult sometimes. Like you mentioned (player leader), when he was there his boys were there.... Some groups have dropped out, I think the Sri Lankans are not here this year.... (Player Leader, 2015)*

Similarly, player leaders also identified some difficulties in maintaining participation, such as having less time due to employment or because many players do not want to come alone:

*...And another thing like with most communities, if you are new to a country like Australia, if you are free you are more likely to turn up. As soon as you have a job or something like that things become difficult. I think that is what has happened those guys. And if it just you, you are not going to go by yourself. (Player Leader, 2015)*

Finally, player leaders and players identified another reason some players stopped coming to the Hub was because there was not a formal competition in 2014:

*A lot of boys here they want to play competition but they found out that they have to wait another year so it made them withdraw. (Player Leader, 2014)*

*Yeah, I think if we can get involved in it (a competition) I believe that people will be more committed, because it's the real game, because a lot of time when we train we just came here and trained and we don't really have a real game, so if we have the real game I think like a lot of team mates can commit themselves. (Player Focus Group, 2014)*

*I think it is going to be big, in the first week when we started training there wasn't many people. We when started the serious training more boys were coming, every day we were practicing there was someone new coming each day. I think we might even have two teams in the future. (Player Leader, 2014)*

Some participants noted the possible impact the level of coaching could have on participant numbers at the Hub:

*More coaches, yeah. Some of the boys they don't want to come anymore... Some of the boys they look up to you like real Aussie club, you know, they're a good club like their coaches are from somewhere very good, they look up to that, like they don't want to come here so it's just some coaches like yeah, you know. (Player Leader, 2014)*

This feedback highlights the importance of the Hub as a space that balances the social and competitive streams of participation as well as engaging key individuals to maintain participation. Also, in Section 8 of this report, stakeholders discuss the barriers that young people face in relation to participation in the Hub .

### **6.1.3 Values of the Hub: Trust and respect**

Central to the Hub's vision was establishing trust among those involved in building and participating in the Hub and ensuring that it was a safe space for young people. One facilitator noted that the Hub was initiated through a strong foundation of trust built through relationships in the partnership with Brimbank City Council:

*You know it has actually required a great deal of trust in order to get this off the ground. If you actually think about it -because nobody signed any pieces of paper to assume responsibility for anything. So the giving of resources in good faith to (names player leaders) who represent all these different groups who come and access the space, that is a great deal of trust. (Facilitator, 2015)*

While this quote focuses on the trust between Council who were distributing resources and providing access to facilities, trust has been identified as a central value among team members.

As evidenced through the development of the Players Code of Conduct, players and facilitators believe respect to be one of the core values of the Hub. Data collected through interviews, focus groups and surveys supported this, highlighting the importance of respect within the Hub and to those they play against. In the open-ended response section of the survey in 2014 two players identified 'respect' in response to the question, "What is most important about the soccer hub to you/others?" One player responded:

*Showing respect with the team member and team opponent and being proud of what you did for the team.*

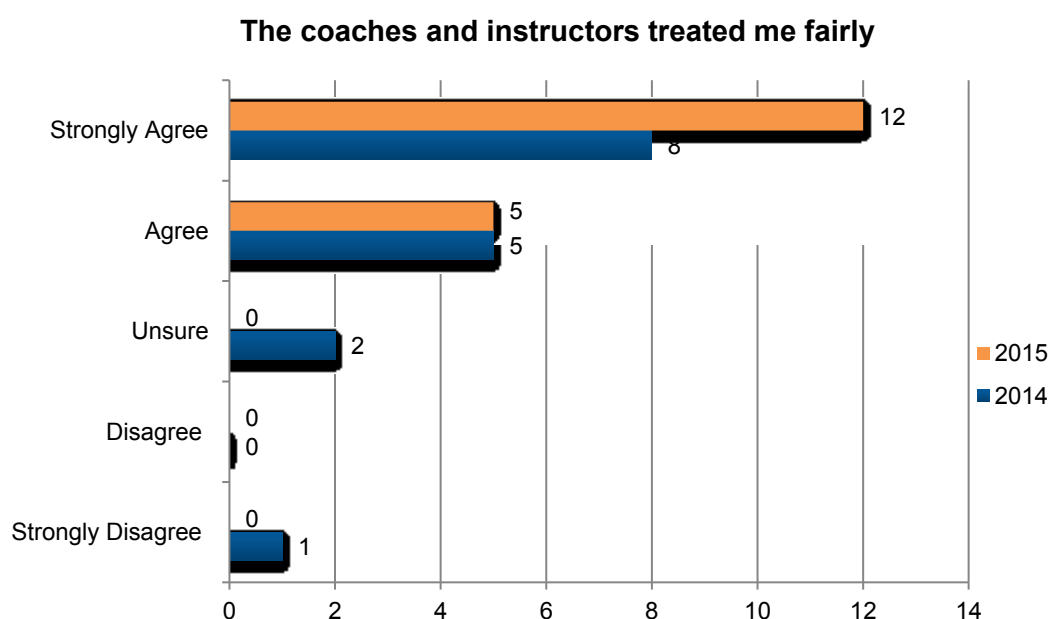
In response to the question, “How might the Hub be improved in the future?” one participant wrote, “learning how to respect others and work as a team”. Indicating that this was important and an area of development for some of the participants involved in the Hub.

However, while respect has been broadly identified in the examples above, it is important to see how it translates into the day-to-day activities of the Hub. The example below, given by one of the facilitators speaks to how he experienced respect when he was new to the setting:

*But I come in and these guys are listening to me saying “coach, what should we be doing?” and I’m thinking most places would be like “where is the coach, you are not the coach” (laughs) “I just met you last week, you are not the coach” that is what I was expecting from a usual type club environment. But these guys were the opposite, and obviously I am going to have a different style and system to what they are used to, but they gave me the respect to and time to give my perspective and input. And it worked fine and that goes on the people I guess. (Facilitator, 2015)*

From the players’ perspective they felt their coaches and instructors treated them fairly, with 81% and 100% agreeing or strongly agreeing respectively. This highlights the reciprocal respect between coaches and players.

**Figure 2: Participants’ perceptions of coaches and instructors**



## 6.2 Having a voice, taking action



Another foundational element of the Hub has been ensuring that participants and facilitators have a voice. As noted in earlier sections, the structure of the Hub facilitates player communication through player leaders. Facilitators also work with player leaders and players directly to gather feedback through specific meetings held every few months. Other feedback mechanisms have included the yearly surveys and other evaluation activities such as focus groups and interviews. Being able to identify areas of improvement as well as what works has been essential to the Hub growing and adapting to the needs of those it serves. As noted by this player leader, in 2015 the Hub focused more on fielding a team in a competitive league, which was something the players identified the previous year:

*This year is more what the boys wanted. They just wanted to be part of the league and play. From last year to this year there has been a lot of changes. Hopefully next year it is going to be even better. (Player Leader, 2015)*

Another example was that participants also identified the success of professional players and coaches running a training session at the Hub and the desire for someone to come again:

*A1 - There's a guy from Victory that came and did one.*

*Q1: Was it good?*

*A1 - It was good really good he's good. I think he's a youth team coach. (Player Focus Group, 2014)*

In the 2015 season, facilitators describe the process they had been following to ensure that player's voices are heard as the future direction is developed:



*There are bigger plans for next year but at every step it has been ‘what do you guys think? Do you want this? Do you need this? Is this what you want going forward?’ If the answer is ‘yes’ we do, then we do it and if it is ‘no’ then we don’t...Because we talk about it, we talk about it with the players. We talk about it all the time. What is next? That question comes up all the time. (Facilitator 2015).*

In terms of taking action on this feedback it is evident that players, player leaders and facilitators are not passive agents when it comes to improving the Hub and moving it forward. They do not expect to name things and have it happen, rather many of the facilitators and player leader put in many hours working on meeting the needs of the players. For example, at the start of 2015, they did the work of becoming a ‘club’, setting up their Facebook page, having players vote on a team name and designing the team logo. Similarly, a group of four players travelled to the other side of the city to meet with the head of the Church League, acting on behalf of the team to negotiate entrance into the league. The players have also worked through barriers such as transportation by organising carpooling. Reflecting on the support they receive from the partner agencies, this facilitator emphasises the importance of flexibility when taking action:

*What has worked is because of the flexibility. Working for the last four and a half months with Kate (Brimbank Council), she is very flexible. There is no restrictions at all, there is no “you can’t do this”, “whatever is good for the hub we will do”, and it has been the same from day one for me at CMY my manager knows whatever needs to be done will be done, no restrictions. That helped a lot because you can’t do things with specific state of mind because you cannot tell people that “this will be good for you”, you need to ask them “what is good for you?” We want to create that space of flexibility and rules but rules that benefit them, not that goes against them, and most of the rules they made, they made themselves. (Facilitator, 2015)*

This quote demonstrates the approach that has allowed the Hub to evolve and adapt over a two-year timeframe. The foundations, in the form of values (respect and trust) and through various types of participation (for example, in activities, and feedback processes) have led to a community-based model that works *with* young people of different cultural backgrounds to shape the Hub based on their input.

Table 2 summarises some of the player and facilitator feedback given through the data collection process in 2014 and identifies how this was changed, developed or adapted in the 2015 season.

**Table 2: Summary of changes made during the 2015 season**

Types of barriers/improvements identified in the 2014 season	Examples of player feedback in 2014	Changes made in the 2015 season	Future directions
<b>Facilities</b>	<p><i>"Having more time to train, with lights"</i></p> <p><i>"We need a lot of equipment. Our ground isn't good enough. If we had two pitches, one where we have training and one to have official match. The other clubs we are playing with they are well equipped."</i></p> <p><i>"If they have lights installed on the sides we could play the whole pitch on the light, and guys will be motivated, every night go there there's lights, have a good game."</i></p>	Lights were replaced so the entire field is playable.	
<b>Communication</b>	<p><i>"Yeah oh a lot, most of the times, it's (communication) probably number one. One time we had a game, and the game was cancelled. But I mean the games were sharing for two different days, so they give one information on one day, say oh we're playing Saturday". (Player Focus Group)</i></p>	<p>Players created a Facebook page to help with communication.</p> <p>Player leaders also contact players from their community group.</p>	
<b>Equipment</b>	<p><i>"The quality of balls are poor, we don't have enough, we don't have enough training gears, yeah like just have a couple of poles and..." (Player Focus Group)</i></p>	New balls and uniforms have been obtained for the team.	
<b>Social and competitive participation</b>	<p><i>"Organizing more games/friendly matches" and "Make this a recognizable team" (Open Response, Questionnaire)</i></p> <p><i>"It's not that I'm good and I'll play, it's just that I want to have fun."(Player Focus Group)</i></p>	<p>In 2015 the Hub focused on developing a club structure that would support playing in a competition.</p> <p>They participated in the Church's League in Melbourne and finished at the top of the ladder. Players and facilitators organized</p>	The Hub will work to bring both the social and competitive stream into focus. Younger age groups have been engaged and a social women's group has been established



and managed day-to-day operations.

*If we could have like a tournament like that, if we can organise a tournament like that it would be really great. Because I've seen a lot in east side they usually have you know like (Eastern Suburb) and all those people that come together and play, but I haven't seen them like that's the first time I've been involved in west side. (Player Focus Group, 2014).*

<b>Coaches</b>	<i>"Bringing in new coaches to train us who are experienced" (2 players)</i>	The Hub had two facilitators training the players and they continued to engage with guest coaches from local professional teams.	A formal coach has been hired for 2016, the Hub will support him to get his C coaching License.
<b>Training</b>	<i>"Train us hard, it isn't fun if it isn't challenging"</i>	Player leader feedback provided in 2015 notes that the level and intensity of training has lifted.	Having a coach lined up for the competitive stream will likely improve the focus and quality of sessions.
<b>Costs and sustainability</b>			

## 6.3 Connection and belonging across and through culture

---

***That is another gift about the group is that there are so many cultures represented and so many different identities. (Facilitator, 2015)***

---

One of the most recurrent themes across both seasons was bringing together of young people from different cultural backgrounds. This was especially discussed in relation to the images taken by one of the player leaders. Hub participants reflecting on the images identified the importance of sharing their stories, understanding where others are coming from and developing a connection through this process. This was particularly evident during the participatory photo portion of the data collection:

*Q – How do you think the pictures represent your experience of the club?*

*A – It shows that it is bringing us together, uniting us, the different communities and bringing them all together....Each player who is coming here is representing each of their communities, so you get to know where they are from. (Player Leader)*



*I like this one. Because we are all from different backgrounds. As you can see here are the Africans, this and that. Each player who is coming here is representing each of their communities, so you get to know where they are from... (Player, 2014)*

### 6.3.1 Intercultural belonging

While some participants related their connection to the Hub as being linked to friends, their passion for the sport or other reasons, it was clear that many participants also tied their connection to the intercultural element of the Hub. Several players who completed the survey wrote that playing with different cultural groups was the most important part of the Hub for them. As the facilitator explains in the quote below, their shared passion for playing soccer facilitated intercultural connection and understanding:

*"In terms of the sport are very symbolic in bringing people together, and from what I understand, maybe I might be wrong, a lot of the conflicts has to do with travellers in it's just funny stuff, we don't look alike, we don't speak the same language. And with sports it is different, doesn't matter what you look like, where you're from, if you can play, let's play. So having people from different backgrounds as well, didn't matter, everybody was there for one reason to play soccer that's it and enjoy the atmosphere so in terms of bringing people together." (Facilitator/Player, 2014)*

Another facilitator highlighted that one of the key aspects of having an intercultural connection was developing tolerance:

*Also, you connect and that will hopefully lead to many things. You learn to see that despite the cultures there are a lot of similarities with all the people from the different countries. Tolerance is another thing they learn. (Facilitator 2015)*

*Q1: Because this place was set up as multicultural hub but do you guys think that there should be like white Australians there?*

*A1 - Yeah, why not? We have a few white Aussies there, and just spot them and play. There was an Irish kid that use to come, he had a very heavy accent... but no, there's not that many. And because usually it's through friends, maybe because they don't reach out to those communities or maybe they think Kate or the council thought oh that's not the purpose of it. But again, it's about them coming to get a different coach but integrating as well, they can learn from... Because they're not going to always play in a multicultural team in their communities. They're going out to all the communities. (Player Focus Group, 2014)*

Feedback from participants on the open-ended portion of the survey included:

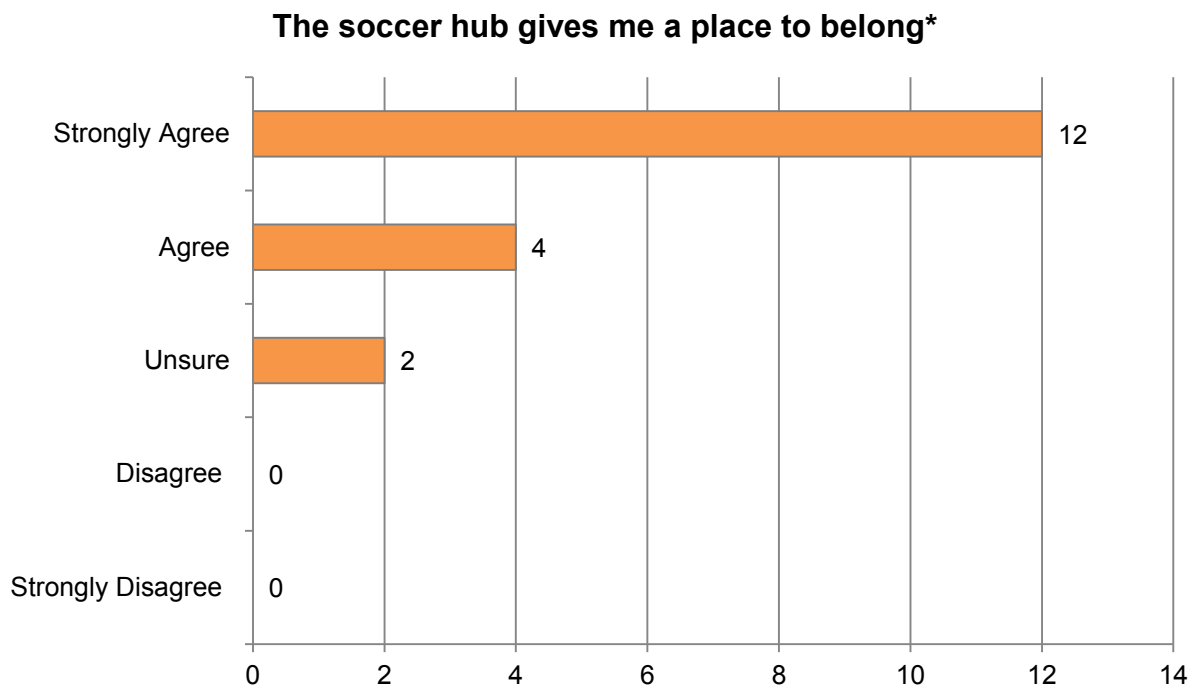
*Making friends from different backgrounds.*

*Socialising and multicultural activities.*

*People from different backgrounds coming together.*

One of the elements most consistently identified by participants was their experience of connection to the Hub. In 2015 the majority of participants (89%) said the Hub gives them a place to belong (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Participants' sense of belonging to the Hub**



### 6.3.2 Shared struggle

One of the images that participants and coaches discussed was captioned “dirty boots,” which had significance in terms of their shared struggle and the “hard work” involved in both soccer and in their migration journeys.



*Q – What do the ‘dirty boots’ represent for you?*

*Facilitator: I think it represents our struggle, hard work and what we have been through.*

*Player Leader :In soccer if you come out clean it means you didn’t do anything.*

Participants also noted that there were challenges, namely in regards to communication, playing styles and experience. As this player leader notes, the participants at the Hub work through challenges by getting to know where people are from and what they have been through:

*Q – Have there been any challenges?*

*A – The challenge is maybe because of where we are from. But at the end of the day we get used to it. After some time you get know about people and their situation and you get used to it (Player Leader, 2015)*

*Q – When you guys first started, and there were many cultural groups, did people feel ok talking to each other, or were they quiet at first?*

*A – It was very difficult. We still have that but it is not happening like it used to. I remember when we first came some groups wanted to just be with themselves. We are trying to tackle that issue. Now you feel like you need to get to know each other.*

One event in particular, a performance by women in the community from Darfur became an opportunity for players to learn about another group’s story. This event was held during a day long soccer tournament and players from a range of cultural backgrounds believed it was really important in understanding what players from that community had been through.





*“This was a performance. The ladies were putting on a drama reflecting back home, the camps... When different people come together, we get to know their stories. You get to know what they went through. I have heard some of the other’s stories too. I thought it was just people like us who were refugees, but when I came here I learnt there were people like us who were refugees from all around the world.” (Ladies performing picture, Player Leader from the Sudanese community)*



In the section below, participants from the Chin community reflect on the event:

*Q1 – What happened with the drama?*

*A1 – That was amazing. I don't know what happened but...*

*A2 – The drama was, I think it was performed but you know the guys who organised the competition, so I think it was just local people. They're not professional or anything like that. So they're just women in the community like came together and just sort of act out things that actually happened during their own race in their own country. So it was basically about the war.... Yeah and there was music, and it was just different. It's kind of a bit confronting if you imagine too much about it.*

*Q1 – And was everyone around was watching it?*

*A1 – yeah everyone's involved, and you could tell everyone was caught up in the moment like*

*Q2 – So it was powerful?*

*A1 – Yeah*

*Q1 – What did you guys think about it?*

*A2 – It was amazing, especially when they actually showed the cultural stuff like how they were living (in camps)...*

*A3 – Yeah like they actually showing what really happens there, like yeah it was just good.*

*A2 – And I heard that they were saying, I think it was it Darfur somewhere like people live in a camp like maybe four million people live in a camp.*

*A1 – I think it is, because I think it is a good idea because that community tournament was actually multicultural like everybody came there from like different backgrounds and they're actually seeing this kind of a story. And yeah it is a good idea to actually host the tournaments and then get people to understand their background.*

This conversation demonstrates the importance of social events using community-based arts to facilitate intercultural understanding and supplement sports activity alone as a tool for social cohesion.

### **6.3.3 Inclusion through communication**

Being able to communicate in a common language can be a potential barrier in an intercultural setting with newly arrived populations. Whilst some participants were concerned about English

language or lack thereof, facilitators and players worked through language issues practically, using it as an opportunity to learn and help one another. Similarly, 'speaking football' is one important element of communication, referring to the understanding the game and being able to read different aspects of it through body language and experience playing. As outlined in the example below, those within the setting adapt so that all players can participate and feel part of the Hub:

*Facilitator 1: ...we have a fair few of these guys come in and they don't speak a word of English, but they are a part of the team. The communication barrier is there but it is also not there, cos if you speak football it is fine.*

*Facilitator 2: There is a guy in the team that we only speak sign language to.*

*Q1: Really?*

*Facilitator 2: But the love towards that player is no less than to someone else who does speak perfect English. I think there have been examples where that has been ok. That is always going to be a challenge in this space and in any other program*



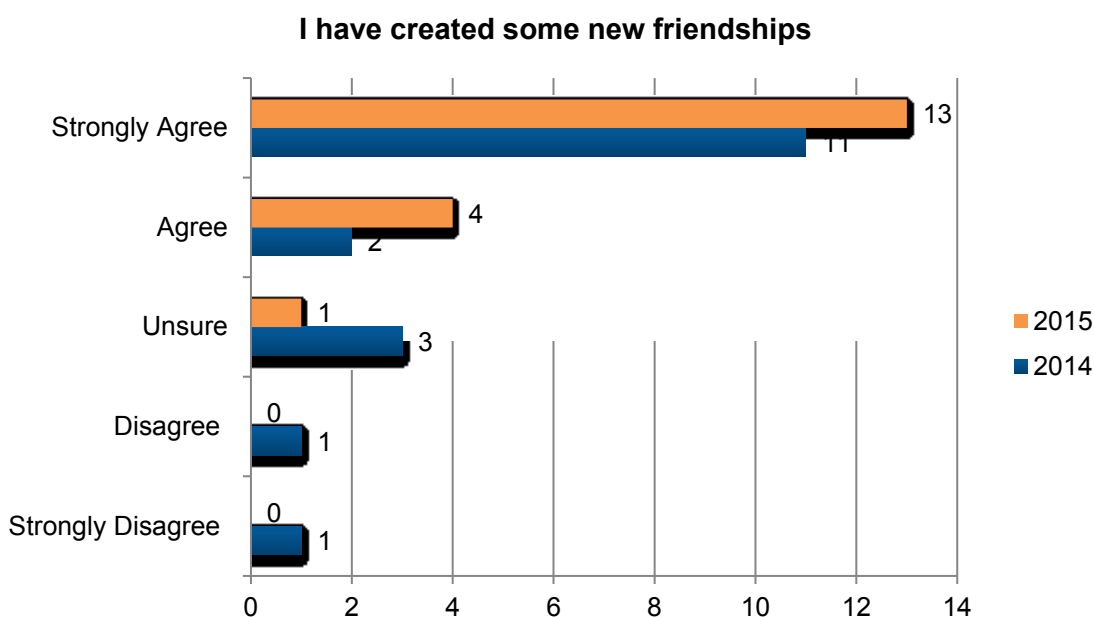
#### **6.3.4 Social networks and friends**

One theme that was particularly salient across 2014 and 2015 participant responses was the importance of social connections such as having their friends at the Hub, making new friends and



expanding social networks. As shown in the Figure 4 the vast majority of participants (94%) felt that they had created new friendships through their participation in the Hub.

**Figure 4: Participants' social connections through the Hub**



Over half of the respondents mentioned 'friendship' or 'friends' in their responses, emphasising the importance of the Hub as a place to connect with existing friends and make new ones. That is, in exploring some of the open-ended responses to the questionnaire prompt, "What is most important about the Hub for you and others?" participants nominated the following:

- Connections with new people
- Fitness and friendships
- Making friends from different backgrounds
- Playing with friends
- Teamwork and friendship
- Social (aspect)

The young person below discusses his participation in the Hub as central to having a social life:

*A2 – I only go there's so that I have social life, and all I want is like together with friends and that's what I want.*

*Q2 – So for you it's the social part that's most important?*

*A1 – It's not that I'm good and I'll play, it's just that I want to have fun.*

*Q2 – Me too, you know I play for fun too. But that's okay you feel like you can be part of it...*

*A1 – It's good when you are with your friends*

While the theme of friendship and social connection is relevant for all young people participating in sports, for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, it is extremely important to be connected to community settings that facilitate peer connection and belonging as they may be unable to access other settings that support the development of new friendships (Spaaij, 2015). Similarly, social networks can be extremely important for linking participants to other opportunities. In the quote below, one of the facilitators describes how the Hub has also provided a space for players to access opportunities for employment:

*But more than that connect, network... I mean crazy things happen throughout the year, people will say stuff like "I need a job, do you know anyone hiring?" and because you know them you can confidently say that "yeah I know someone". So we have had a few people come and ask us you know. those informal conversations happen throughout. (Facilitator, 2015)*

## **6.4 Health and wellbeing**

Participants consistently identified the importance of the Hub in terms of their physical health and their general wellbeing. For example, one facilitator explained that many of the young men playing at the Hub looked forward to coming after work:

*At the very least it is just stress relief in what sometimes is a mundane week for a lot of people. Quite a number of them do shift work, work in factories and even for us who punch keyboards all day it is a break from that mundane nine to five stuff that you do, so it is real refreshing. It is definitely more than just football (Facilitator, 2014).*

Other participants identified their participation in the Hub as a place of enjoyment:

*I always feel happy with I come to this soccer hub  
(Participant Response, 2014)*

*I love soccer. The last time I played in a league was in 2008. This time I want to involve myself, keep up with the fitness and get to know other people. (Player Leader, 2015)*

Finally, across 2014 and 2015 several participants who completed the survey noted that the most important thing about the Hub was ‘fitness’. As noted in Table 3 (Appendix A), six players listed “being healthy,” or “fitness” as one of the most important things about the Hub. One participant, in response to the prompt, “what would you be doing if you did not have the soccer hub to come to?” wrote “sitting home watching TV, being lazy”. These physical benefits are extremely important, as other research has supported the multitude of health and wellbeing benefits participating in community sports has for young people recently arriving in Australia (Olliff, 2008; Sherry & Strybosch, 2012).

## 6.5 New skills and opportunities

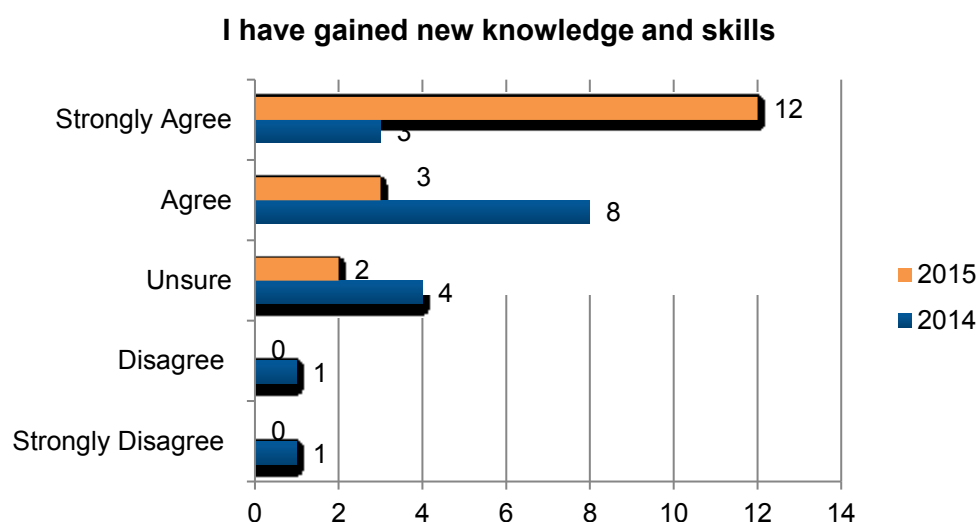
Another common theme found in the evaluation was the importance of new skills gained through participating in the Hub. Players involved in the survey consistently believed they had gained new knowledge and skills (see Figure 5), with 65% and 88% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2014 and 2015 respectively that they had acquired new skills. There was also an improvement from 2014 to 2015 in terms of the number of players who were unsure or disagreed (6 and 2 players respectively) with the notion that participation in the Hub had lead to them developing new skills. This improvement may have been a reflection of some of the recent additions to the program, such as more structured training sessions as mentioned by players in the focus group:

*A1 - .... Have a good session like once the guy that came from Victory as well, and there was a guy from the council that I think he's a fitness instructor something like that but he knows how to train, different training for different sports. He's very good.*

*Q1 – Because then you can learn, learn as well like what kind of...*

*A1 – He's a professional, he's been doing it for years so. If you're a soccer player, you go training he can give you as a soccer player, if you're karate fighting he'll train you. He's pretty good. (Player Focus Group, 2014)*

**Figure 5: Participants' opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills**

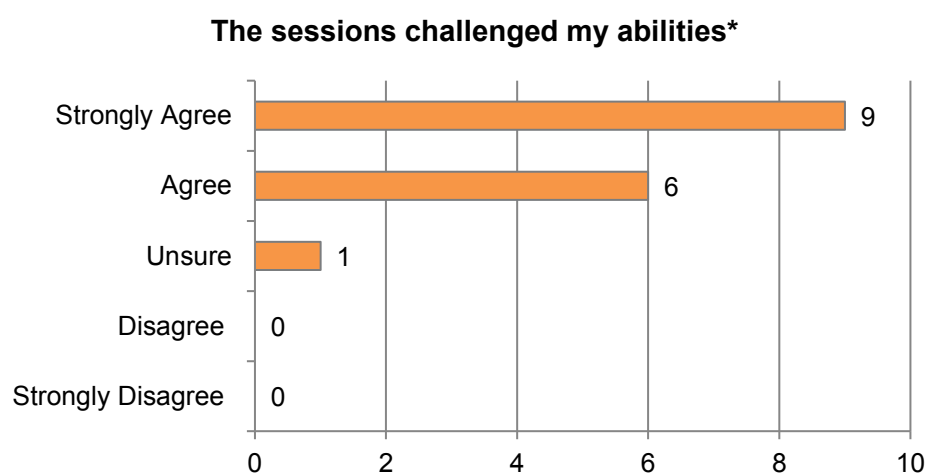


New knowledge and skills also came in the form of learning English as given with this example shared by one of the facilitators:

*My personal experience with one of the participants was he would say to me “speak to me in English”, and we spoke as much as we can because we want him to learn. And I started to notice a lot of difference, now he is very confident... He recently told me that he enrolled into a new course, he has moved up from an English class to something else now. Also, you connect and that will hopefully lead to many things. (Facilitator, 2015)*

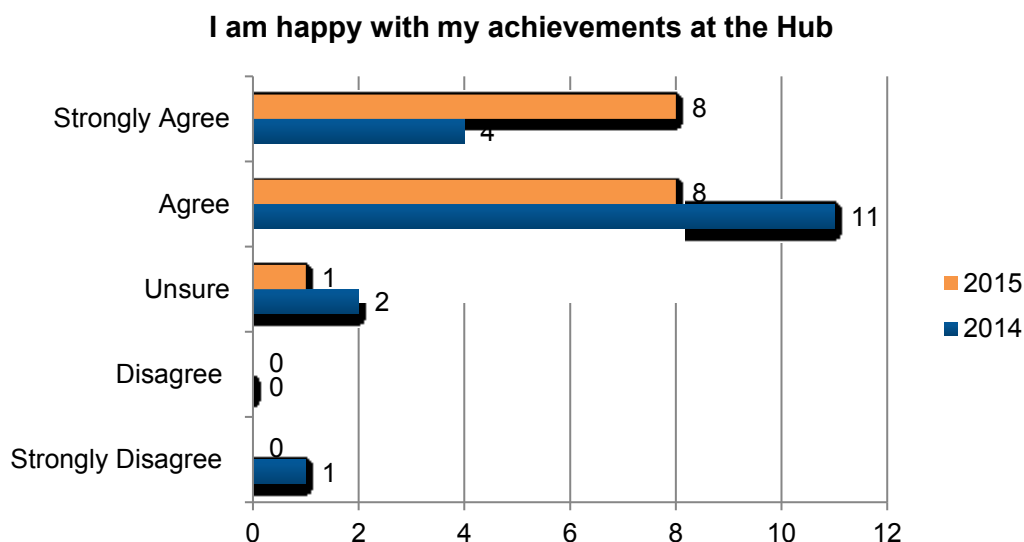
In 2015, players were also asked to rate whether or not the training sessions challenged their abilities, something which 94% of those surveyed agreed with (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Level of challenge for participants**



Similarly, the majority of players were also happy with their achievements at the Hub, with 83% and 94% in 2014 and 2015 respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was the evident for them (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Participants' perception of their achievements at the Hub**

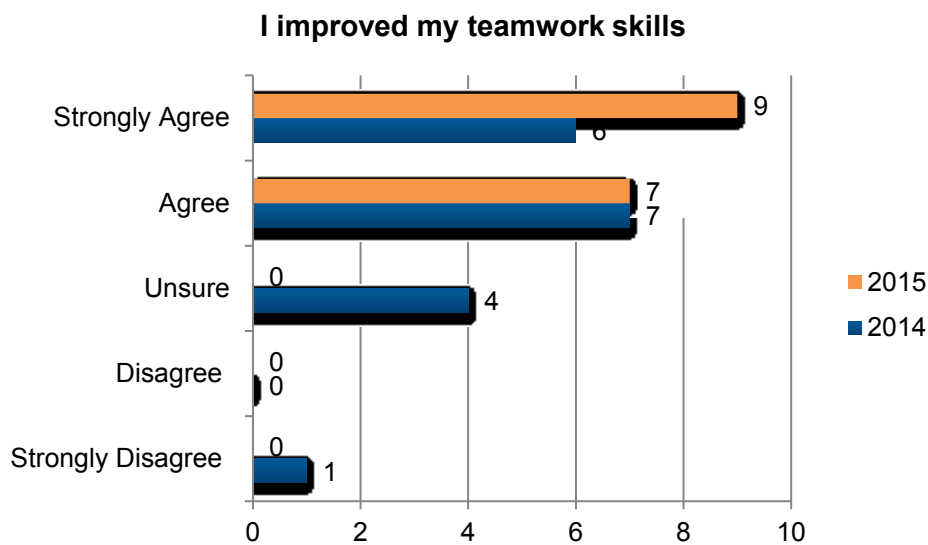


Players also identified that participation in the Hub led to skill development in the areas of communication, language and confidence as highlighted by one of the facilitators:

*Hopefully they can get opportunities where they can grow their skills and self-esteem through working along side us and facilitating things for themselves, where they can use their skills and hopefully pursue something. (Player Facilitator, 2015)*

Similarly, teamwork and leadership skills were also other areas of skill development identified by players and facilitators. Generally, players believed they had improved their teamwork skills over the course of the season and this was also reflected across 2014 (72%) and 2015 (100%).

**Figure 8: Participants' improvement in teamwork skills**

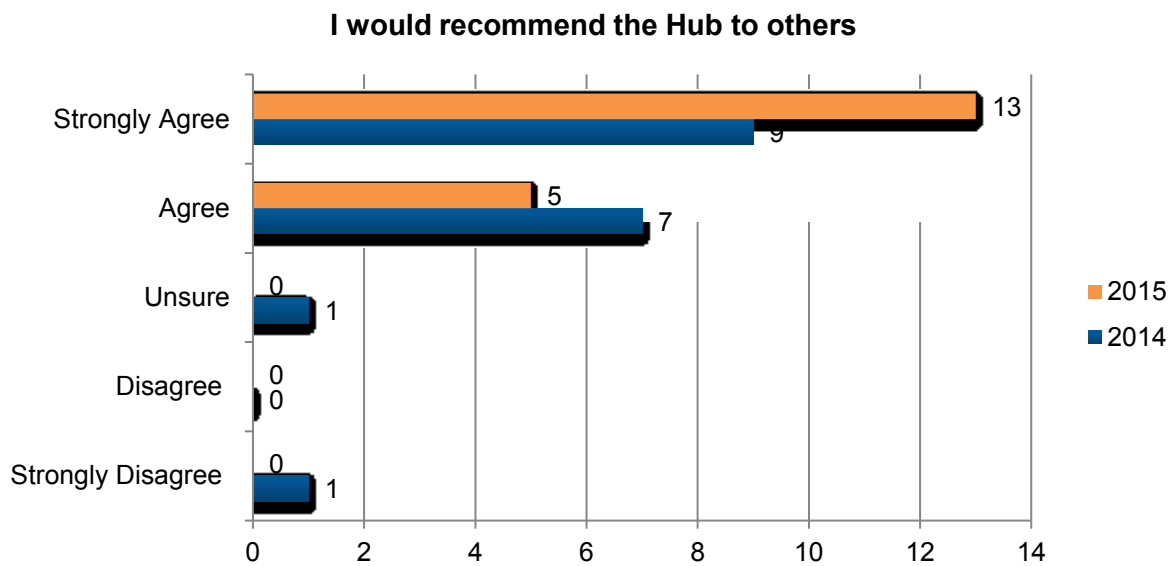


## 6.6 Sustainability

Finally, the issue of sustainability was also an area of concern for many stakeholders and facilitators involved in developing the Hub. Issues of sustainability were linked to sourcing funding and other resources. As outlined in the quote below, being able to ensure the Hub will continue was important in relation to trust and being able to deliver the program:

*Sustainability was a term that was used from day one. For me I find that very challenging because you are telling me you are going to go and sometimes it takes a really long time for things to establish themselves. Even now it is starting to change. If we are talking about leaving before we have started, it is a very difficult conversation. It can set a... I guess the tone isn't right. So part of the challenge for all of us has being able to say that the challenge is still the same, we need a space to play, we still need the financial resources, that hasn't changed. Leaving it to the players or selected committee long-term will probably happen in 10 years but not now. (Player Facilitator, 2015)*

**Figure 9: Participants' willingness to recommend the Hub to others**



# 7 Stakeholder Perspectives

This section focuses on the stakeholders' and community leaders' feedback over the 2014 – 2015 timeframe. Given that some of the themes discussed in the previous section were also discussed by stakeholders and community leaders, these findings will draw out some of the broader and more systemic themes including the Hub in relation to mainstream sports, issues of racism and discrimination, the importance of social soccer and the development of a community based structure. Finally, this section will conclude with some comments from this group about the future direction of the Hub.

## 7.1 A bridge to mainstream soccer

Due to the difficulties and barriers faced by newly arrived communities and joining an mainstream soccer club, the stakeholders identified the importance of creating a football hub that had the potential to create a supportive environment and possibly bridging towards a club that prevents and combats barriers faced by community members:

*Q1 - So you would see the Hub very much as a bridging thing towards club membership ultimately?*

*A - Yeah. So if we did a continuum I would see young people playing in their communities, at a park somewhere, social. The next step it would be nice to be part of a Community Hub with some games attached. And then from there probably linkages into several clubs that have a lot of empathy and understanding and support services to integrate these people. Yeah. So that's how I would see it looking. Yeah. (Nick – Cricket Australia/Sunshine Cricket Club)*

### 7.1.1 Challenging multiple forms of racism and discrimination

The stakeholders, through their reflections of previous experiences with football and outside clubs, had experienced many difficulties and barriers when it came to including newly arrived communities in club football. Including issues of racism:

*Aspects of our community are racist and unfortunately they appear a lot in the environment of football or soccer I suppose because a lot of the soccer in Australia was based on the ethnic background. Even to this day apart from the A league which is trying to reverse that but a lot of the clubs historically have been based on ethnic boundaries.... (Local Stakeholder)*



Other stakeholders also recognised the barriers or limitations of having ethnic based football clubs, in terms of the community setting and inclusion:

*I joined a local club which was a mainly Macedonian club and I was the only stranger there. So I played with them until that time. Although I was a player I didn't really feel that I was really welcome because the club didnt have that community aspect of setting.... (Stakeholder at local CBO & Community Leader, 2014)*

In addition, some stakeholders expressed concern about the competitive nature of sport and how newly arrived community's issues can be overlooked:

*....So you had opposition teams that really were playing for sheep stations. They didn't care about the migrant journey, asylum seekers, humanitarian entrants, whatever. It was for keeps and it was really awful. I always used to say, I've would yell out to the bench, "How long to go? How long to go?" Because you can see trouble brewing. (Stakeholder from Sunshine Cricket Club)*

A recommendation from both participants and stakeholders that might be useful for the Hub further down the track is the integration of the wider Australian community. There seems to be little or no involvement from the broader white Australian community:

*A - Not at this moment. At this moment, other communities are joined together, like Sri Lankan, Indian, Sudanese, Nigerian and Vietnamese. So these are the groups mostly participating in this, but we are trying to get other communities too. We need Aussie community to get in there too. So we are trying. I don't know how it's going to be happen. (Nathan – Tamil Community Leader)*

---

***For a lot of the guys it was around actually having something to do, having that sense of belonging, that sense of purpose. Particularly--we have some guys who play who don't have the right to work, don't have the right to study. So, you know, a lot of their identity is then shaped around, you know, being a soccer player and I think that's another important thing for us is that, you know, when they are there, when they're participating in the Hub, it's around being a soccer player, not being, you know, an asylum seeker or not being someone from the <inaudible> \*0:16:17.4 community or a refugee or a--however they're kind of, you know, labelled within the community and just being a soccer player (Stakeholder, ASRC)***

---

## 7.2 The importance of social soccer

One of the important themes identified through interviews with stakeholders and community leaders was maintaining a social stream of participation. Recreational sport emphasises playing as a way to improve skills and fitness level and most importantly meet other people and be part of a team. Many of the stakeholders interviewed saw the value of having a flexible and informal mode of participation:

Definitely I think that if you lost the social aspect of it and the opportunity to pop down once or twice a week and just play soccer without playing at club level you'd be losing a lot.  
(Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)

In reflecting on the first half of the season in 2014, one stakeholder noted that organised events (i.e., one or two day tournaments) were really important in developing social connections:

*I think that making it a social activity in the first instance was really good but then having some organised games or events to go to was a way that the group bonded together. They were working on something, it was a like a shared idea, a shared project. (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)*

According to one stakeholder maintaining the social stream important part of being an inclusive space, ensuring that a range of skill levels and age groups felt there was space for them:

*A more social side to it in terms of like a social soccer. So if people want to participate but they're not really, you know, skilled or don't want to play competitively, just making sure that they feel like they have a place there because at the moment it does seem very--it's quite--because all the guys are so serious and they love it and they're very skilled but just making sure there's that space for other people. (Stakeholder, ASRC)*

One stakeholder believed that there was a need reflected in the community for participants in other age categories:

*....Like we did have some guys come along and they, yeah, joined in our training and they've struggled. They had fun but they didn't come back and you know, they were like, "Yeah, that was good," you know but they were like, "Oh you know," because we had a couple of people who were late 30s, early 40s who wanted to come along. So I think it would be great to be able to have space, so it's not just for the serious soccer people because I think that's the only kind of people that I see there at the moment. But also allowing spaces for people who, you know, want to come and try it out or just want to do a sporting activity. (Stakeholder, ASRC)*

### 7.2.1 Linking newly arrived young people to support and services

A number of stakeholders also believed the Hub was important for young people because it was an excellent point of connection for accessing other services and support:

*I think the hub is absolutely the source of information and I think the gateway to other resources the community may need... it does have a significant part and role to play in facilitating the newly arrived groups, linking them with the existing or other services like the council... I think Kate George deserves a big credit because I think her presence in the council has made a big difference. (Stakeholder 2, New Hope Foundation/Community Leader)*

### 7.3 Towards a community-based structure

Another important aspect of organisation identified by the participants and the stakeholders was transition from a hub into a club. With some stakeholders suggesting the need to clarify and reinforce roles and responsibilities:

*I think overall for anyone that's involved at the moment with the idea that this move towards a club, what's the structure? Who's going to take on these roles? What sort of support might they require, what's the way of moving forward? With that to take the next step because we've talked about roles. We've had meetings a few times just to get something a little more formal happening with the management of the hub from community groups. Having clear position descriptions, roles and responsibilities written up is a good way to start because if you don't have that then you've got no point of reference. (James – New Hope Foundation)*

In addition, part of this role clarification is writing a constitution and organising a committee:

*Q - How do you think they can manage the transition?*

*A - We have to, because there are a lot of things involved, like we have to write the Constitution, we have to write down the contracts for the players, the insurances, all the club things. That's why they formed already a club committee there now. So they at least want to run for the end of the year to get into the committee, who is the leader, the coordinator, the president sort of thing. Sorting out the roles and want to fit into that and want to organise something to go into the next level. So probably we will do it through the council. (Nathan – Tamil Community Leader)*

---

## **Community Leader reflection on Language and Communication**

**(Nathan – Tamil Community Leader)**

**A - And the language barrier is another big problem, they can't talk. And some of them, we try to put them in different clubs, the mainstream clubs. They had bit of racist issues, so they don't want to come and play with us. They don't understand. They're really, really good players, even the managers and other players saying they're playing well, but they can't understand so they don't want to come. I say, "listen, if they can't understand, with the playing, if you show them the skill, they will learn. There's no need for the language to learn a sports".**

**Q - You can learn just a few words and make it work...**

**A - That's right. That's what we say to them. It's a bit hard to get in, so even the players don't like to go and play in the different clubs and stuff.**

**Q - That makes sense.**

**A - So they want to stick with our community club, so whatever. It's been very hard to explain to them, they say, "no, different groups are coming and we want to play together and it's going to be big issue". "Listen, we have to work together, okay? One club, another club is coming from the Darfur community; another club is coming from the Vietnamese community".**

**Q - And what was their reaction?**

**A - They said no. In the first two weeks, council don't know anything about it. For me, they say no, we don't want to play. I said, "you come and learn. We don't want to play together, but come and learn". Then after they come and learn for a month, they get to know what are the realities. Then they're interested and asking, "can you please organise one more day to practice?" So sort of that understanding they come through.**

---

## **7.4 Future directions**

Through stakeholder interviews a number of important future directions were identified. These included a focus on social elements of the Hub, broadening the scope of inclusion by increasing participation in the girls and women's streams and addressing concerns for sustainability.

#### 7.4.1 Social events and activities

Finally, one of the cornerstones of a community sporting organisation is the social aspect. Whilst the Hub has been a great space for encouraging socialising among participants, some of the stakeholders expressed that some improvements need to be made regarding the inclusion of the wider community in social activities. Thus, social activities at the Hub can be used as a way of encouraging new participants:

*Have a meal and have some presentations or something like that, just to ease people into that environment as opposed to straight up meet and greet where people are expected to stand around and chat and mingle. (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)*

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre provide a good example of how a simple meal or social activity can bring a team and families together:

*I know for a lot of our guys and we've been doing more this year, like even, you know, going having lunch at "Lentil as Anything," or you know, doing something together and looking at, you know, and barbecues after, you know, training or games. Looking at how we can do that with the other communities there just so, yeah, we can foster more of that relationship, yeah. (Courtney Green – ASRC)*

There is also a need and desire for women in the families of the participants and in the wider community to be involved in social opportunities facilitated through the Hub.

*I think when you've got community leaders or parents and guardians involved in the project it would be nice to do something with them. To have something that involved young people and their families. (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)*

#### 7.4.2 Engaging women and girls

Engaging girls and women has been a priority for those involved in the Hub. Efforts have been made to facilitate the development of a women's social stream, which was trialled in 2015. Similarly, in 2015 a women's team participated in the Brimbank Cup and subsequently, weekly sessions were offered throughout the season. As one of the stakeholders describes, engaging families is also an important aim of the Hub, which can also link families to additional services:

*Get linked into different things, get talking with service providers about those. It would be an opportunity for service providers to engage with those families and explore other options. (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)*

---

### **Stakeholder Reflection on Girls' and Women's' participation**

***We don't just work with guys in the community but when you're talking about community leaders predominately male. Then you might be supporting a community to run a sports day and 80% of it might end up being soccer with the guys running around...One of the things that we've worked on with the Chin communities in the past is making sure that there's fair and equal participation. That is necessary anyway if you want to apply for funding there's sort of equity in what you're doing. Obviously there is a desire within those communities from everybody to play sport so we want to make sure that everyone's getting a fair go.....***

***That said a lot of the engagement is still like if we organised a consultation with the community, often we'll see that it's primarily the men that are coming along. Our engagement with women is often through a specific women's group that we've supported the community to put together. (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)***

***I like that idea that you might have having a social event at the hub where the families can come down and see what's happening. That might then get them thinking, "here's an opportunity for my daughter to come and participate in sports". (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)***

---

#### **7.4.3 Concerns for funding and sustainability**

Costs can be one of the biggest hurdles for newly arrived community's participation. Has some of the stakeholder identified, high costs can be a big issue when trying to join mainstream soccer clubs outside of the Hub:

***The cost of joining a soccer club, and soccer being the number one sport that the community seems to want to participate in, the cost has been really high. – (Stakeholder, Community-Based Organisation).***

***A plan for sourcing funding if we need it. What are the financial obligations that are going to be there for the playing group and for the club or the hub to exist into the future? (Stakeholder 1, New Hope Foundation)***

One of the Tamil community leaders identified the importance of financial barriers for people on a bridging visa, who are without work rights and therefore find it difficult to participate in anything, let

alone community sport and recreation. The Hub has provided them opportunity to become involved at a reduced or zero cost:

*A - Yeah, all Tamils. When they get here, they don't have work permit, they have no work allowed visa or anything, so they can't work anywhere. So when it comes to the championship and stuff, we go and apply together, but we didn't get any support from outside. We still don't have any support from outside, so we fund it ourselves. Like we pay some membership fee. But the difficult thing is most of them are on bridging visa, those who are not allowed to work. So we cannot collect...*

*Q - So they can't pay?*

*A - No, they can't pay. We are not collecting any money from them, but those who we can, like me and a couple of our friends, we put some money to support them and we start applying. (Tamil Community Leader, 2014)*

Future planning of the Hub will need to ensure that there are strategies in place to work through issues of sustainability such as individual financial barriers as well as basic organisational funding.



## 8 Conclusions

The findings presented in previous sections of this report highlight a number of important functions of the Hub, not only for the young people involved, but also for the facilitators, staff and the broader community. In drawing together these findings and taking into account the council brief and the goals of the cultural community groups represented, it is clear that the Hub has far exceeded the initial aims set out in 2012. In this section of the report we conceptualise the Hub as a setting that, through its community-based structure and model, provides channels of expression and opportunities for young people to develop.

This first section speaks to the broader social and cultural context in which the Hub was developed, particularly in response to exclusion and marginalisation in mainstream competition, which highlights issues of racism and discrimination that are all too common for many newly arrived communities. This history has informed the development of a new setting, one in which people have a place to play soccer that forefronts inclusion, cultural learning and capacity building. The second section focused on the organisational level elements of the Hub, including the structure and model that makes it unique. The third and fourth sections focused on different outcomes for individuals in terms their personal development and formation of interpersonal relations and cultural literacy. This section also pointed to the function of the Hub, both internally as well as bridging with and informing external settings about newer communities.

### 8.1 The Hub as a public homeplace

Public or community homeplaces are spaces that have been formed in response to the marginalisation or exclusion of groups and they serve as culturally safe spaces (Belenky, 1996). Watkins and Shulman (2008) bring together a range of literature that conceptualise the functions such spaces have including, countering social exclusion, promoting social solidarity, fore fronting people's voices, developing relationships and creating a shared vision for the future. Public homeplaces are settings that focus on specific values of inclusion, democratic participation, empowerment and capacity building (Case & Hunter, 2012).

This concept captures how the Hub has evolved into a public homeplace because of the structures it has developed, the processes it has put in place and the ways in which the participants experience it. Rather than focusing solely on participants' experiences, this framework aimed to understand the 'setting' as the unit of analysis by exploring individuals and groups as one part of the overall picture. In exploring the setting, we can focus on the relationships (interpersonal), roles,



social processes, activities and resources that are all part of the space. Within this framework we can also link these elements of the Hub to features of public homeplaces. Through this framing we aim to move beyond an evaluation that focuses solely on individual outcomes by shedding light on how and why these settings are formed, while also identifying individual and group dynamics.

### **8.1.1 Building on prior experience and knowledge**

While individual participant's experiences speak to these different aspects of the setting, there is an interpretive element that includes understanding the past and current sociopolitical context in which the Hub is embedded. This is highlighted in Section 4, which documents part of the history that contributed to the development of the Hub. As is often the case with public homeplaces, which are settings established "in opposition to violence and injustice" (Watkins & Shulman, 2008, p. 209), the Hub was established after one community's experiences of violent racist attacks on their players in a mainstream soccer league. The experiences of those involved in the Western Tigers and supporting agencies was central to developing a new setting, particularly because they brought important knowledge about the challenges of establishing a club and participating in mainstream competitions. Those involved had experience in responding to community needs, accessing resources and advocating for the rights of young people in their community. Those involved in moving forward with the Hub were privy to issues raised such as racism, challenges in club management, balancing social and competitive streams and how to link players to new opportunities. Essential to the establishment of public homeplaces is listening to community voices - this is something that was the foundation for the Hub's formation. The experience and knowledge gained was used to create a vision for the Hub and the primary focus of this was the development of a culturally safe space and a community-based structure and model.

### **8.1.2 Facilitating voice, empowerment and an alternative opportunity structure through the Hub model**

Public homeplaces are settings, in which people are able to voice basic concerns through a democratic process, promote empowerment and develop non-hierarchical ways of operating (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). The community-based structure of the Hub as identified through this report, has created channels for participants, facilitators and community groups more broadly to voice their concerns and express goals for the future. The player leaders, program facilitators and community leaders offer multiple perspectives and serve as gatekeepers for different cultural community groups, while also amplifying participant voices. This structure, which also includes a flexible council liaison and committed stakeholders has established a form of governance that is anchored in community needs and practices, while also building a sense trust over time. Both participants and stakeholders identified the Hub as a place in which young people can be heard, in

addition to being able to create change. Participants highlighted the importance of having opportunities for additional training and skill development, which evidences the emphasis on capacity building. Similarly, the Hub model focuses on collaborative partnerships within the Hub and across networks. Watkins and Shulman (2008) reiterate the importance of trust, respect and inclusion, all of which are produced in these settings that serve as public homeplaces. Participants identified trust and respect as being important values, while their experiences of belonging, friendships and cooperation serve important outcomes of these values. In moving forward, it is important not only for the sustainability of the Hub but in terms of staying true to its vision, that this type of structure is maintained.

### **8.1.3 Individual and interpersonal gains through participation in the Hub**

Public homeplaces are also important sites of individual and group regeneration. An important part of this for the Hub is having participants benefit on a personal level from their engagement and participation. As indicated in the findings sections, participants named a number of individual gains, including:

- Improved physical health (staying shape and being healthy)
- Enhanced wellbeing (participating in Hub soccer as stress relief and a source of enjoyment)
- Establishing new friendships and being linked to broader networks
- The opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge (in soccer, English language, training courses)

Another important element to be identified through this research is the cultural exchange aspect of the Hub. As identified in the public homeplaces literature, these spaces become sites in which stories can be shared and understanding and tolerance developed across cultural groups. Participants identified the Hub as a safe space in which connection and belonging could be established across cultural boundaries. In reflecting on the drama performed by the Sudanese community, many participants felt connected by some the experiences they shared such as growing up amidst a conflict, living in refugee camps and coming then to Australia. These shared experiences and having the Hub as a place to share and be witness to these experiences through performance and sports was a key aspect of creating a sense of belonging. As a reflection of the activity (soccer) in this space, it also became a place to establish new ways of doing things, such as developing strategies for inclusion through communication (i.e., knowing the language of soccer and learning English in the setting).

## 9 Recommendations

Based on the reflections of the young people and other stakeholders, as well as the themes of this evaluation, including the fostering of the Hub as a public homeplace, the following recommendations are outlined for the continued success and growth of the Hub:

1. The Hub needs to maintain a safe and interconnected space for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
2. Continue to include and expand upon opportunities for cultural learning or transculturation.
3. The club model should be supported but should be based on collaboration, respect and mutual support.
4. Continued support in terms of infrastructure, funding, and opportunities to do council supported PD for leaders.
5. Support and expand the activities of the Hub and how to access funds to support activities.
6. Promote networking and opportunities for reciprocal exchange and learning between mainstream settings and new and emerging settings.
7. Support a focus on pathways (into employment and education/training opportunities) for young people through the Hub.
8. Homeplaces like the Hub, are examples of the enactment of transculturation and therefore should, through LGA support, newer communities can create spaces to build intercultural competencies and express ways of belonging.

# References

- Belenky, M. (1996). Public homeplaces. *Nurturing the development of people, families, and communities*. In N. Goldberger, J. Tamle, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds.), *Knowledge, difference, and power: Essays inspired by women's ways of knowing* (pp. 393-430). Publisher etc.
- Bromley, D.B. (1986). *The case study method in Psychology and related disciplines*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Bunde-Birouste, A., Nathan, S., McCarroll, B., Kemp, L., Shwe, T., & Grand-Ortega, M. (2012). *Playing for change, Football United, School of Public Health and Community Medicine*, UNSW, Sydney.
- Centre of Multicultural Youth. (2006). *Creating a level playing field in more than just sport: A report on CALD young people's access and participation in leisure and recreation centres within the city of Yarra*. Viewed 19 May, 2015, [https://secure.ausport.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/376356/CMY1.pdf](https://secure.ausport.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/376356/CMY1.pdf)
- Centre for Multicultural Youth. (2010). *Giving communities a sporting chance: A multicultural resource kit*. Melbourne: CMY.
- Clark-Ibáñez, M. (2004). Framing the social world with photo-elicitation interviews. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(12), 1507-1527.
- Couch, J. (2007). Mind the gap: Considering the participation of refugee young people. *Youth Studies Australia*, 26(4), 37-44.
- Cortis, N., Sawrikar, P. & Muir, K. (2007). *Participation in sport and recreation by culturally and linguistically diverse women*, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.
- Coventry, L., Guerra, C., MacKenzie, D., & Pinkney, S. (2002). *Wealth of all nations: Identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence*. NYARS report, Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart.
- Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual studies*, 17(1), 13-26.
- Morgan, L. (2010). *A bridge to a new culture: Promoting the participation of refugees in sporting activities*. Surry Hills, NSW: Refugee Council of Australia.
- Murray, K. (2014). Sport across cultures: Applications of the human capital model in refugee communities. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 11, 681-682.

- Nathan, S., Bunde-Birouste, A., Evers, C., Kemp, L., MacKenzie, J., & Henley, R. (2010). Social cohesion through football: A quasi-experimental mixed methods design to evaluate a complex health promotion program. *Public Health*, 10, 587-599.
- Olliff, L. (2007). *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, Carlton, viewed 5 February 2008, <[www.cmyi.net.au/AIICMYIPublications#P](http://www.cmyi.net.au/AIICMYIPublications#P)>.
- Olliff, L. (2008). Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people 'settle well' in Australia. *Youth Studies Australia*, 27(1), 52-60.
- Sherry, E., & Strybosch, V. (2012). A kick in the right direction: Longitudinal outcomes of the Australian Community Street Soccer Program. *Soccer & Society*, 13(4), 495-509.
- Spaaij, R. (2015). Refugee youth, belonging and community sport. *Leisure Studies*, 34(3), 303-318.
- Spaaij, R. (2012). Beyond the playing field: Experiences of sport, social capital, and integration among Somalis in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(9), 1519-1538.
- VicHealth. (2007). *Sport and active recreation fact sheet*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton, viewed 5 February 2008, [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/assets/contentFiles/SportFactSheet\\_April%2007.pdf](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/assets/contentFiles/SportFactSheet_April%2007.pdf).
- Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Participant responses to evaluation questions

Question	Participant responses 2014	Participant Responses 2015
<b>What would you be doing if you did not have the soccer hub to come to?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sitting at home/watching TV/be lazy</li> <li>• I would be sitting at home, isolated from the world</li> <li>• Playing for a different club</li> <li>• Singing at church</li> <li>• Searching for the community soccer hub</li> <li>• Homework, if I had any</li> <li>• Dance training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would be joining a local club</li> <li>• Spending time with my family</li> <li>• Play with a friend</li> <li>• Organise one like it</li> <li>• I would just be watching TV</li> <li>• Nothing</li> <li>• Wood workshop</li> <li>• Visiting friends</li> <li>• Bushwalking</li> <li>• Staying home</li> <li>• I'd find somewhere else to play soccer</li> <li>• Working</li> </ul>
<b>What is most important about the soccer hub for you and/or others?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Connections with new people</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Building new skills and improving how I play</li> <li>• Fitness and friendships</li> <li>• The availability (field) and equipment</li> <li>• Making friends from different backgrounds</li> <li>• Be healthy</li> <li>• I always feel happy with I come to this soccer hub</li> <li>• Showing respect with the team member and team opponent and being proud of what you did for the team</li> <li>• Improved my communication skills</li> <li>• I have gained more confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People from different backgrounds coming together</li> <li>• Fitness/exercise and friendships</li> <li>• Playing with friends</li> <li>• Getting together playing the game that we all love</li> <li>• Socialising and multicultural activities</li> <li>• Help the Hub, develop the Hub</li> <li>• Teamwork and friendship</li> <li>• Making new friends</li> <li>• Having fun on weekends</li> <li>• Enjoy playing</li> <li>• Informing my life skills</li> <li>• Being in a safe environment and contributing to the community through soccer</li> </ul>
<b>Is there anything you do or don't enjoy about the soccer hub? If so, please tell us what it was and why you didn't like it.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty getting players together</li> <li>• I enjoy having pizza</li> <li>• I love this sport, you can show your moves</li> <li>• I enjoy the hub because I get to play with older people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players' commitment to the club</li> <li>• Getting a serious coach would help the hub gain more committed players</li> <li>• Need transportation (bus, van, etc.)</li> <li>• I like the Hub because it helps develop young people through soccer and bring families together</li> <li>• There is nothing I dislike about the soccer Hub.</li> </ul>

- All great
- Improving the change room and bathroom

**How do you think we could improve the hub in the future?**

- Bringing in new coaches to train us who are experienced (2)
- Organizing more games/friendly matches
- Make this a recognizable team
- Having more time to train, with lights
- Train us hard, it isn't fun if it isn't challenging, NO PAIN, NO GAIN
- Learning how to respect others and work as a team
- More people would be nice, more nationalities and more from Aussie background ☺
- More resources
- Need a coach to give us more time in training and support us on our away games
- Better structure on how to run it
- Organise stable management and security
- Get more people involved and make sure people are committed to the Hub
- We need more teamwork
- More training coaches and staff
- More funding
- More practice
- All good just keep it
- Projector needs to be fixed
- More motivation to attend training sessions

**Any other feedback, comments or suggestions?**

- I am loving it here
- Thank-you for having us
- If you could make these people happy, please make them happy ☺
- I appreciate what this hub has given me and my friends. The opportunities to play soccer without paying a cent!
- Let's keep it going
- More visits from outsiders
- Hope next season will be better than this year
- All good
- Needs more volunteers
- More flexibility, balls and uniforms
- Good food at training and matches

## Appendix B: Player's Code of Conduct

BRIMBANK SOCCER HUB — 2014

### Codes of Conduct for Players

#### Introduction

The Brimbank Soccer Hub (BSH) supports soccer activity with the goal of providing players from varied cultural backgrounds an opportunity to develop life skills through team play, sportsmanship, competition and hard work. Our mission is to provide Brimbank's diverse community with the opportunity to play soccer at the highest level commensurate with their individual ability, potential, and interest. An emphasis on fair play and respect for all participants is a primary element of our club's mission. To better achieve that mission, we provide the following Codes of Conduct for all BSH players.

These Codes of Conduct encourage players to abide by the rules and regulations of the game, as well as to maintain a cooperative attitude and uphold the ideals of fair play and sportsmanship. These Codes express our core values and goals. It is essential they be honoured and followed. **If you need some support in relation to following these codes of conduct, please speak to your coach.**

The Codes of Conduct can be summarized in the following three principles: (1) Demonstrating a positive attitude; (2) Setting a good example; and (3) Maintaining good relationships with all soccer participants - including officials, opponents, and our own teams' players, families, friends and coaches.

#### 1. Demonstrating a positive attitude

Players, parents, and coaches are expected to show a positive, respectful attitude for everyone involved in the sport. Criticism and disrespect for officials, opponents, coaches or fans undermine the purpose of sport and encourage behaviour not in the spirit of the game and the mission of BSH.

#### 2. Setting a good example

Each person associated with BSH is accountable for his/her own behaviour at all times on or off the field of play. Players, coaches and other adults should remember that children may be watching training/games and they learn by example - it is up to the adults to set good examples.

BSH will not tolerate conduct that "give's a negative image" to the sport, the participants, or the community. Such conduct includes: Vulgarity by coaches, players or family members; harassment or belittling of officials, coaches or players; verbal abuse, threats or physical violence toward anyone before, during or after a match; and the taunting of opposing players, coaches and supporters. We require thorough self-restraint by all participants - both players and coaches.

Teams must exercise appropriate control over those who fail to control themselves.

#### 3. Maintaining good relationships

##### Officials



The referee's job is a difficult one. All referees are human and they do make mistakes. Players who believe their team has been treated unfairly should speak to their coach after the game. Coaches should inform the appropriate club officials about blatant officiating problems. Managers should make reports through appropriate channels, including mail evaluations where available.

In accordance with FIFA laws, verbal abuse toward a referee can result in a red card and ejection for the player or coach. Referees have the authority to suspend play if a coach does not control his players and supporters.

### **Opponents**

Players and coaches are required to maintain a sense of fair play and be respectful of opposition players, coaches and supporters at all times. Sportsmanship begins with respect. Without it, the positive competitive environment, which should be a perfect classroom for learning the values of soccer, is completely undermined. Occasionally we will encounter opponents who do not share our values and high standards. If we allow ourselves to be drawn down to their level, we will have lost regardless of the final score.

### **Our Own Team**

In an environment where we are competing not only against other teams but also frequently against each other, it can be difficult to control jealousies and rivalries. A successful team resembles a family in that members put their own needs second, behind the greater good of the team. Great care must be taken not to undermine the coaches' authority. As in most cases, parental example is all-important.

### **Player's Code**

It should be seen as a privilege to play on the BSH soccer team. Therefore, as a player, I will:

1. Play the game for the game's sake and for my enjoyment.
2. Be modest and generous when I win and gracious when I lose.
3. Respect the game of soccer and its laws, learn these laws and try to follow them, and play the game fairly.
4. Work for the good of my team and give my best effort at all times.
5. Show respect for the authority of the referee, even though I will sometimes disagree with his/her calls.
6. Show good sportsmanship before, during, and after games. I understand that soccer is a game, and that the players on the other team are my opponents, not my enemies.
7. Conduct myself with honour and dignity and treat other players as I would like to be treated.
8. Help my family, friends and fans understand the laws of the game so they can watch and enjoy the game better. I will be sure they understand that dissent is not permitted in any form.
9. Control my temper and not retaliate, even if I believe I have been wronged.
10. Not use any drug or alcohol around venues where BSH are training or playing games.

## **Acknowledgement**

I have read, understand and hereby agree to abide by and support this BSH Player's Code of Conduct.

Player's name:

Today's date:

Player's signature:

Brimbank Soccer Hub Team:



