

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



Culturally and linguistically diverse populations (CaLD) represent communities of people who were born overseas or who are Australian born with one or both parents or grandparents born overseas. This term refers to people who are from countries in which the main language spoken is not English. CaLD is also used to refer to newly arrived migrants and refugees and the descendants of immigrants to Australia.

WHY DO CALD COMMUNITIES PLAY FOOTBALL?

According to AusPlay, Football is the most popular organised sport amongst CaLD communities in Australia¹. This is due to the popularity of the game and its ability to transcend national boundaries. Its familiarity amongst new migrants also helps create a sense of belonging, connect with friends, and ease their re-settlement experience.

Although Sport is generally seen as a vehicle to promote integration, social cohesion and inclusion, the structure and culture within sporting clubs and organisations as well as under-representation can lead to exclusionary practices and be unwelcoming or inaccessible for CaLD groups.

¹ https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media-centre/news/australias_top_20_sports_and_physical_activities_revealed

HOW TO ATTRACT, RETAIN AND SUPPORT CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PLAYERS AT YOUR CLUB?

I. UNDERSTAND THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

1. Lack of Time, family responsibilities and Settlement Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newly arrived individuals and families have to content with re-settlement challenges and often prioritise education, learning a new language, finding employment and a home, looking after siblings in large families and live in uncertainty as they have to start their lives again and look for safety.• Lack of family or parental support or encouragement due to ongoing challenges and pressures of resettlement. Parents may want their kids to study discouraging them from playing sport.• Competing home responsibilities as well as family and traditional community commitments, such as girls looking after younger siblings, can hinder participation in ongoing structured sporting activities.• Physical activity can be a low priority when seeking to embrace a new life in a new country.• Scheduling of programs or trainings can conflict with family, work, and religious responsibilities.
2. Financial constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial disadvantage when fleeing conflicts or moving to a new country.• Extended family groups living within the one home.• Single parent household.• High cost of participation into organised football activities (fees, uniforms etc).• Flexible payment options not available.
3. Lack of Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of knowledge of how to get around.• No public transport available to reach venue.• Newly arrived communities may not afford or have immediate access to personal or private transport.



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4. Language and Cultural Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English is often not the first language.• Unfamiliarity with the environment due to new customs and culture.• Stigmatisation and dominant values held about particular community groups.• Lack of culturally appropriate facilities and programs: e.g. prayer rooms, gender segregated programs etc.• Lack of cultural representation within the club can make communication difficult: the youth are often the de-facto interpreter.• Competing cultural, religious and community expectations.• Lack of appropriate information provision.• Unfamiliar with booking systems and challenges with registration requirements.
5. Negative Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unfamiliarity with the structured sporting system.• Dominant values and attitudes leading to negative experiences at other clubs.• Competitive environment that can turn away participants or exacerbate differences and reinforce tensions.• Experienced or being exposed to discrimination, racism, aggression, and violence that create fears and reactions that make interaction challenging.• Restricted opportunities or participation did not meet expectations (no pathway or support offered, lack of non-competitive, social and/or community-centric offerings).



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II. STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES WITHIN YOUR CLUB TO PROMOTE INCLUSION:

1. Club Leadership

- Identify issues, recognise the barriers in your local area and try to work out how your club can include CaLD communities.
- Work with the community instead of making decisions for them.
- Invest time on planning and building relationships. Seek advice and partner with community leaders and service providers to organise, manage opportunities and get to know specific groups.
- Engage CaLD communities in your club as administrators and committee members and encourage them to be involved in decision-making to voice their needs and make relevant decisions together.
- Ask young CaLD individuals and parents to gain coaching qualifications to get involved in sessions as coaches and volunteers.
- Appoint community ambassadors to support and build trust with CaLD communities and enhance the club's awareness and confidence.
- Run a Cultural Awareness workshop for your committee members and workforce to become familiar with particular community groups and eliminate stereotyping.
- Work on creating cultural change within you club and getting rid of myths and fears
- Raise awareness to reduce stigmatisation and prejudice and recognise that the needs and experiences of CaLD communities are highly diverse.
- Engage in a dialogue and increase contact with people with CaLD backgrounds to improve understandings and welcome them to your club by inviting them to come along.
- Communicate the benefits of physical activity on achieving priorities such as social, education and health outcomes when communicating with newly arrived communities.
- Celebrate culture, learn about their customs, and organise social events.
- Apply for grants, seek financial support from your local association or council, raise money from within the club, and/or support young newly arrived players with government vouchers.
- Include culturally diverse imagery and content on your socials, website and print materials, showcase experiences and celebrate contributions. This should include acknowledging significant days and events such as Harmony Week, Ramadan, Freedom Day, and Refugee Week.
- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards any type of racism, discrimination or prejudice and insist on the role that coaches and commit



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1. Be Flexible

- Be open to new ideas, organise a come and try and offer different participation options that cater for the needs of certain communities.
- Invite siblings and parents to include them in the process. By encouraging them to join you can influence and encourage participation and build trust with your club.
- Work closely with teachers and workers at targeted schools to organise open days to encourage them to visit your club.
- Accommodate mono-ethnic groups and allow them to play together and form their own team. Over time some players would want to move to other teams within your club.
- Offer flexible and suitable scheduling that does not conflict with school or work commitments and religious or cultural dates.
- Be flexible with your uniform requirements to accommodate the religious needs of certain communities (e.g. allow Muslim girls and women to cover their head, arms, and legs).
- Be open to modified and non-competitive offerings to unify people in their ability to participate regardless of age, gender, skill level, physical ability, religion, and ethnicity.
- Advertise your program via local ethnic and migrant community centres, English schools, Centrelink, Community Facebook groups etc. Ensure that you include easy information about where to find and join your club and, if possible, translate your posters or promotional materials and even use more visual displays to help the messaging.
- In promoting your programs consider using words such as 'safe', 'fun', 'easy to join', 'no commitments', 'confidence', 'pathways', 'make friends' to encourage people to join.
- Recognise that they are financially constrained and have limited time to play or commit to a season.
- Provide flexible payment options (reduced membership fees, instalments, or pay per session). Your membership can grow when you tailor it to the needs of different people.
- Be open to specialised programs or teams for minority ethnic or religious groups. This approach is well-suited for people who wish to connect with others with similar experience or values, develop life skills and deal with the stress of re-settlement. In fact, some individuals find acceptance and familiarity among participants sharing the same culture and language before they are ready for integration into a wide variety of community settings.
- When you run specialised sessions for CaLD people, try to organise them in conjunction with other programs to allow integration and mixing with other players. This would help create a feeling of inclusivity and change attitude or beliefs towards 'others' being different.
- Offer opportunities to integrate into existing teams at your club.



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3. Focus on experience

- When programs meet the needs of participants and provide a great experience, your club will encourage more participation as word-of-mouth advertising is quite common within CaLD communities.
- Participants may have different expectations, ask about why they want to play and what they wish to achieve.
- Offer equal access to pitches and adequate facilities that accommodate your players' cultural identities.
- Ensure you coaches, game leaders or volunteers are culturally aware.
- Make culturally appropriate food and beverages available at your club.
- Provide social opportunities to encourage connection between different cultural groups.
- Limit or remove the consumption of alcohol as part of the club's social culture.
- Consider offering manual application forms or support with online registrations.
- Have a Community Welcoming Officer at your club to greet new arrivals.
- Ensure you collect necessary data that will help better understand your participants and assist with providing a positive experience (e.g. preferred language spoken, dietary requirements, translated forms etc.).

