

AFC's Best Grassroots Program in Asia



CLUB CHANGER

Club Development Program

Developing Community Football Clubs

CASE STUDIES



Introduction

This booklet celebrates the amazing work being done by community football clubs across Australia. It showcases real examples of how Community Clubs are making a difference at the grassroots level and offers practical ideas for other clubs with similar goals to learn from.

The clubs featured here were either self-nominated or nominated by their Member Federations for the 2024 Club Changer Club of the Year Award. They were recognized for the incredible progress they've made in delivering their Club Changer action plans, particularly in creating more inclusive spaces and opening opportunities for women and girls in football.

Inside, you'll find a range of inspiring case studies focused on areas like increasing female participation, supporting referees, running football programs year-round, and breaking down barriers to create positive change. Each story highlights what these clubs are doing to grow stronger and more connected, and we hope their experiences spark ideas for your club too.

Whether you're a club manager, volunteer, or just passionate about community football, there's something here for you. If you're not in a decision-making role, feel free to pass this along to your club leaders—we're sure they'll find it useful!

To all our 1 & 2 Star Club Changers, thank you for being part of this journey and supporting the growth of community football.

Grace Lambourne

National Program Manager – Club Development, Football Australia

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ACU Football Club



CREATING A NEW ERA FOR REFEREES

In the past year, ACU Football Club has undergone remarkable transformations, particularly in women's participation and establishing a referee program. These initiatives have significantly enhanced the member experience and established a sustainable framework for future growth.

ACU Football Clubs introduction of the 'Club Referee Program' was a pivotal change. The club identified that a significant source of dissatisfaction among members was the lack of referees, with an average of six referee slots unfilled each round. Instead of relying on the local referee branch, the club took proactive steps to address this issue. It recruited and trained its own referees, partnering with a Level 1 and former NPL1 referee to conduct both theoretical and practical training sessions. All necessary equipment was provided by the club, and communication was made with their Association who approved the program and endorsed the participants as official "club referees". The club ensured that they were compensated for each game they officiated, with a dedicated Referee Coordinator managing the weekly assignment of referees to matches.

As a result, the club's referees officiated a total of 59 games, providing a much-needed solution to the referee shortage. Impressively, 75% of those matches were overseen by female referees. This initiative not only enhanced member satisfaction but also significantly increased respect for match officials across the club, creating a positive atmosphere for both players and referees.

The success of these initiatives was largely supported by the resources and guidance provided by Club Changer. The program's modules helped the club identify areas for improvement, brainstorm new ideas, and access valuable tools for its committee and volunteers. This structured approach was instrumental in driving development efforts and ensuring critical blind spots were addressed.

The focus on the referee program was motivated by several compelling reasons. It directly increased member satisfaction by ensuring referees were present at matches, showcased the important role of women in football, and engaged new members, including students interested in pursuing refereeing. Furthermore, it fostered a culture of respect for referees within the club and exemplified the initiative in addressing challenges common across Australian football.

To guarantee the long-term success of the Club Referee Program, the Referee Coordinator was appointed; a dedicated committee member to oversee its operations. A comprehensive training manual and curriculum were developed for ongoing use, and the marketing strategy targets diverse groups each year, allowing for continuous recruitment of new referees and replacement of outgoing members.

As ACU Football Club moves into 2025, it enters a new era with a rejuvenated committee comprised of young, dynamic members and experienced leaders. This blend of fresh perspectives and sage advice positions the club well for continued success and innovation. The past year has been transformative, and there is a strong commitment to building on this momentum, fostering an inclusive environment for all players, and setting an example for other clubs to follow.

ADVICE

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Learn from the Club Changer modules and see them as an opportunity to implement programs to grow your club. Do not see them as obstacles you need to overcome to achieve a star rating.

Daylesford & Hepburn United Soccer Club



KICKSTARTING CHANGE FOR FEMALE PARTICIPATION

In recent years, Daylesford & Hepburn United Soccer Club recognized the need to increase participation among women and girls in football. However, it struggled with direction and guidance until it partnered with Club Changer. The excitement surrounding the FIFA Women's World Cup sparked interest in football among girls, and the club was eager to harness this enthusiasm.

With the support of Club Changer, the club developed a comprehensive "Women and Girls in Football" Action Plan. This plan not only provided clarity on its objectives but also guided strategies for increasing female representation within the club. The results have been remarkable; for the first time in its 38-year history, the club has a record number of Senior Women (16 years and older) interested in playing football.

In February 2024, the club launched the "Go Women's Soccer" program, aimed at women aged 16 and older. This initiative attracted many registrations, with participants ranging from teenagers to those in their 60s, many of whom were new to the sport. The program ran for nine weeks, from March to May, and due to overwhelming interest, training continued weekly to build skill, fitness and understanding of the game.

The enthusiasm generated by the program has laid the groundwork for the club's first-ever Senior Women's team, working towards entering

competitively in 2025. This milestone is a significant achievement for the club, reflecting its commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone can participate in football.

Daylesford & Hepburn United expresses that the focus on developing the women's team demonstrates a broader shift within the club. Originally founded by a small group of senior men, it has evolved to embrace a community-oriented approach that welcomes all members of the family—dads, moms, and kids alike—into the sport. The project aligns with the club's goal of achieving 50% female representation by 2025, marking one of five objectives accomplished this year under the Action Plan.

Sustainability is key to the club's success. It continues to promote women-only training sessions, which attract new players weekly, being led by a dedicated coach who the club is supporting to attain additional training during the off-season.

Crucially, the club fosters connections between the Senior Women's team and the U14 girls' team, facilitating knowledge sharing and community building. This relationship not only enriches the experience for all players but also ensures a clear pathway for junior girls to advance into senior competitions.

As one of the smallest clubs in the region, with fewer than 200 members, Daylesford & Hepburn United SC's achievements are a testament to the power of community engagement and strategic planning. With continued support from Club Changer and the commitment of its members, the club looks forward to a bright future for women in football.

ADVICE

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Don't just focus on juniors or just seniors. Make opportunities for all members of the family to play and get involved. By bringing in the community, the energy and focus of the club changes. While we are not the biggest club, nor do we have the best facilities, people who visit or become new members often comment on what a great community club it is. This is something we pride ourselves on above all else.

Epping Football Club



FOOTBALL ALL YEAR ROUND

Epping FC sought to increase the involvement of women and girls in all areas of the club, including governance. The club realized through the Club Changer Program that it could do much more to enhance its services to its members, especially in areas of member protection and inclusion. Football Australia's Safeguarding Webinar and associated modules have been invaluable in helping the club move forward and further refine its approach.

One of the most notable changes within the club in the past 12 months has been the launch of its Women's Social Football Program. The program aimed to provide a flexible and supportive environment for women interested in football, resulting in a significant increase in female participation. By focusing on a non-competitive, fun atmosphere, the club was able to attract many women to register for sessions held on Saturday afternoons. These women, many of whom had never played football before, engaged in skill-building activities followed by small-sided games and eventually 9v9 matches.

The club quickly realized that the Women's Social Football Program was about more than just football. It created a space where women, including mothers, university students, and others, could come together, get fit, and have fun, regardless of weather conditions. The program became a social outlet, with participants building friendships, not only among themselves but also with their families. Children played together on the sidelines while their mothers honed their football skills,

and even spouses joined in by bringing "half-time oranges" and cheering on the players. This sense of community and support led to the continued success of the program.

The program's success was further demonstrated by the fact that 85% of the original participants are returning for the club's Summer Football program, while others have ventured into local futsal leagues. Word of mouth has fueled even greater interest, and the club is now focused on creating football environments that allow anyone to play, at any time. The club believes that the growth of this female cohort will continue as they work to offer inclusive and flexible spaces that meet the needs of all members.

The club has been intentional in ensuring the sustainability of the Women's Social Football Program by offering both Winter and Summer sessions. This approach allows players to stay engaged throughout the year while also providing pathways for those who may want to transition into more competitive formats, such as 11v11 matches or Masters 9v9. The club is committed to supporting players of all skill levels and backgrounds, ensuring that their football experiences are enjoyable, inclusive, and sustainable.

By creating a safe, flexible, and welcoming environment for female players, the club has not only introduced new participants to football but has also fostered a growing community of women who are eager to continue playing and developing their skills. Through these efforts, the club is setting an example for other clubs to follow, demonstrating how inclusive and community-driven programs can thrive.

ADVICE

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Make positive changes wherever you can and take the risk of trying something new if you believe it is going to make a difference. Continue working with Football Australia on the Club Changer program in order to continue to learn and grow as a club and further support your members and wider football community.

Lochinvar Rovers Football Club



EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERS AND FUTURE LEADERS

Lochinvar Rovers Football Club celebrated its 50th season, reflecting on its rich history and strong community values. Founded from a local police sergeant's idea to provide a football club for the youth of Lochinvar, the club has always been family oriented. To ensure its future success, the club has focused on developing new volunteers into leadership roles, a critical step for sustainability.

With the guidance and resources provided by Club Changer, the club has implemented a structured approach to identify, encourage, support, and train volunteers. This support has been invaluable in helping cultivate a pool of passionate individuals eager to take on leadership roles within the organization.

To facilitate this change, the club has utilized various modules and training resources offered by Club Changer. One of the key initiatives was nominating candidates for relevant training courses, including a female leadership program available through their Member Federation. This year marks the first time the club has been able to put forward a candidate for this program, thanks in part to the funding secured through the Commbank Growing Football Fund and Member Federation Legacy funds.

Many families are involved, with members playing and volunteering across generations, so the implementation of a Volunteer Development Plan aimed at upskilling emerging leaders, ensuring opportunities for personal development for all ages has been pivotal. By utilizing grants, the club provided essential training such as first aid and coaching, supplemented by peer support to enhance the learning experience.

Looking ahead, the 2025 plan includes the nomination of an emerging female leader for the

Member Federations' leadership program, further solidifying the club's commitment to fostering leadership among women. Additionally, a youth development program has been launched to nurture the next generation of leaders, emphasizing the importance of leadership development from an early age, with examples like six-year-old club member teaching others how to use an iPad in the canteen, and young adults coaching junior players.

The club believes that investing in volunteers and emerging leaders is essential to maintaining current momentum. As it prepares for transitions in leadership, it is vital to have a robust plan in place that will ensure continuity and growth. Club Changer has helped articulate ongoing goals and provided access to the leadership group at Lochinvar Rovers FC through initiatives like the National Volunteer Focus Group, fostering collaboration and shared objectives.

The outcomes of these efforts have been encouraging. Improved engagement and retention of dedicated volunteers have been observed, alongside the establishment of a clear roadmap for the future. This proactive approach ensures that the club is not only addressing current needs but also preparing for upcoming challenges.

To ensure the sustainability of volunteer development initiatives, the club is committed to setting aside annual funding through various fundraising activities and grants. By establishing a strong foundation for volunteer leadership, it is confident that the club will continue to thrive, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all members.

As the club moves forward, it is excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and remains dedicated to empowering the leaders of tomorrow.

ADVICE

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Jump on board the Club Changer and get buy in from as many club members as possible. Set your goals and work towards achieving them, adjusting if necessary to suit the current climate and opportunities.

Mandurah City Football Club



BREAKING BARRIERS AND COMMITTING TO CHANGE

Over the past year, Mandurah City Football Club with the implementation of a comprehensive Women & Girls program that has dramatically increased participation rates among female players. This initiative has led to an impressive 125% rise in overall participation numbers, significantly enhancing the landscape of women's football within the community.

Historically, engagement and outreach efforts to attract new female players were minimal, leaving many local girls unaware of the opportunities available, and resources for the women's program were minor, negatively impacting the quality of training and overall experience. Addressing these gaps has been crucial for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.

The club's commitment to change began with a focused effort to hire female coaches and mentors, creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages young girls to pursue leadership roles. This initiative has not only elevated the profile of female football but has also fostered a culture where everyone feels valued and engaged.

A standout project from the last year was the launch of the MiniRoos/MiniTillies program, designed to introduce young girls to football in a fun and engaging environment. The club was thrilled to see many girls attend the very first session, marking a strong start for the program. The focus on skill development and teamwork helped participants build confidence and a love for the game.

The response to the MiniRoos program was overwhelmingly positive for the club. By creating a welcoming environment specifically for girls,

the club aimed to break down barriers and encourage participation. The program not only attracted participants but also fostered a sense of community among the girls and their families, promoting greater involvement in the club.

Club Changer has played an instrumental role in the club's development by providing essential resources that simplified administrative processes. Tools such as job descriptions and safeguarding resources have allowed the club to focus on delivering quality programs rather than being bogged down in paperwork. This support has been vital in enhancing outreach efforts and improving organizational efficiency, allowing the club to better serve its members.

To ensure the sustainability of the MiniRoos program, the club is establishing a regular schedule for sessions and recruiting dedicated coaches who are passionate about fostering a positive environment. Active engagement with families and the community through events and outreach initiatives aims to raise awareness and attract new participants. By partnering with local schools and organizations, the club seeks to expand its reach and resources.

Additionally, feedback will be gathered from participants and their families to continually improve the program. By focusing on these strategies, the club is committed to creating a thriving female football program that empowers young girls in the community for years to come.

Overall, the achievements of the past year not only reflect the Mandurah City FC'S dedication to inclusivity but also set the stage for continued growth and success in women's football. With ongoing support and a clear vision, the club looks forward to building a strong foundation for future generations.

ADVICE

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For clubs looking to develop and elevate themselves, start with a clear vision that involves all members to foster alignment and motivation. Engage members actively to create a sense of ownership in initiatives, and leverage resources like the Club Changer program for valuable insights. Encourage leadership through mentorship to strengthen your foundation and focus on community impact to enhance relevance. Celebrate achievements to boost morale, embrace diversity to cater to varied interests, and network with other clubs for innovative ideas. Stay adaptable to change and regularly reflect on progress to make informed adjustments

CRITERIA FOR STAR STATUS ACHIEVEMENT



- ▶ Completion of Club Affiliation with the Member Federation
- ▶ Complete Game Plan Club Profile
- ▶ Complete the Our Game: Women & Girls in Football Module on Game Plan
- ▶ Complete the Our Game: Women & Girls in Football 1 Star Action Plan
- ▶ Share and discuss the Action Plan with State Program Manager - Club Development



- ▶ Achieved 1 Star status and demonstration of program on Women & Girls Action Plan
- ▶ Attend Football Australia's Safeguarding Webinar
- ▶ Complete 4 additional modules in Game Plan:
 - Safeguarding (Mandatory)
 - 3 Priority modules of club's choosing
- ▶ Complete 1 additional Action Plan in line with club's key priority areas based on modules completed
- ▶ Share and discuss the Action Plan with State Program Manager - Club Development



3 Star Status
unlocking in 2025

Eligibility criteria
releasing soon

Millthorpe Junior Soccer Club



EMPOWERING GIRLS & THE COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOTBALL

Before joining Football Australia's Club Changer, Millthorpe Junior Soccer Club faced significant challenges in promoting female participation, particularly among girls aged 11-15. With a female participation rate of only 30% and a concerning dropout rate beginning at age 12, the need for targeted interventions became increasingly apparent. Additionally, the club lacked robust safeguarding measures, further emphasizing the necessity for systematic improvements.

In the last 12 months, Millthorpe Junior Soccer Club has undergone a remarkable transformation by implementing a comprehensive Women & Girls program and establishing robust safeguarding measures. These changes have led to a notable increase in female participation, with rates rising from 30% to 44%. The success of the "Girls Love Football" (GLF) program, specifically designed for girls aged 11-15, played a critical role in this achievement. With more than 50% of participants in the GLF program new to football, showcasing the program's effectiveness in attracting new players.

To ensure a safe environment, the club developed a comprehensive member protection policy, established child-friendly complaint handling procedures, and implemented the NSW Child Safety Standards. This structured approach not only protects young players but also empowers them through coaching information sessions and player feedback initiatives.

Club Changer has been instrumental in guiding the club's development journey. The self-assessment tool provided by Club Changer helped the club critically evaluate its current state, allowing for the identification of key gaps in female participation and safeguarding. Armed with resources such as Football

Australia's Women's Football Development Guide and the Office of the Children's Guardian materials, the club tailored its strategies to meet specific needs. The structured review process, including the 2-Star Modules assessment, enabled the club to evaluate the effectiveness of its initiatives and refine approaches based on participant feedback.

The launch of the GLF program was a highlight for Millthorpe Junior Soccer Club, the program meticulously planned, with a dedicated team that included experienced players and coaches. Structured over six rounds from June to August 2024, the sessions featured skill training, game time, and community engagement activities, such as a free BBQ to encourage social interaction.

The program's focus on empowerment allowed participants to have a voice in decision-making, with opportunities for girls to lead warm-ups and contribute to session planning. A holistic approach was also used to include workshops on focusing on challenging stereotypes in sports, building healthy relationships with their bodies, and developing authentic voices.

The outcomes of the GLF program have been substantial. The club successfully increased female participation, welcomed new players, and fostered community partnerships through collaborating with neighboring club and local business sponsorships. Feedback from participants highlighted ongoing inequalities in football, further underscoring the importance of such initiatives.

To ensure the program's sustainability, the club is investing in volunteer development, applying for grants, and establishing community partnerships. By integrating the GLF program into its broader club strategy, Millthorpe Junior Soccer Club is committed to fostering an inclusive environment for years to come. The strides made in the past year not only reflect the club's dedication to women's football but also lay the foundation for future growth and success.

ADVICE

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Implementing new initiatives requires significant time and effort from volunteers, so it's important to prepare for the commitment while recognizing the value it brings to your club and community; celebrate the contributions made by volunteers. Be honest in self-assessment to gain the most from programs like Club Changer as identifying areas for improvement is crucial for meaningful change. Leverage your community by collaborating with like-minded individuals, local businesses, and neighbouring clubs, as these partnerships have been instrumental to success. Additionally, focus on holistic development by prioritizing empowerment, self-confidence, and personal growth alongside football skills.

North Geelong Warriors Football Club



TRANSFORMING THE ROLES OF VOLUNTEERS

North Geelong Warriors FC through has undergone significant transformations through the guidance of Football Australia's Club Changer Action Plan, the club has effectively identified and prioritized key needs for women and girls, taking decisive actions to fulfill these objectives with purpose and accountability.

One of the most notable changes has been the introduction of a dedicated head of Women's & Girls Football, who leads a newly established Football Department and Committee. This initiative aims to drive female football to new heights, ensuring that the voices and needs of female players are recognized and supported across all areas of the club.

In conjunction with this leadership role, North Geelong Warriors FC has rolled out a comprehensive Volunteer Program designed to support women and girls in football, embodying the motto "Something for Everyone." This program emphasizes equity, providing a unified approach to managing female and male football initiatives that were previously fragmented.

Before the formation of the new committee, women and girls' programs operated independently, lacking cohesion and a shared vision. The establishment of the Female Football Department at the club has created a platform to centralize efforts, ensuring that all programs align with the club's goals. This structure has significantly enhanced the recruitment and engagement of volunteers, crucial for sustaining both female and male football activities.

The achievements of the Female Football Department have been remarkable. Key outcomes include the provision of dedicated female changerooms and

support amenities, as well as the introduction of appropriate apparel and kits. These improvements have not only enhanced the overall experience for female players but have also contributed to a 38% growth in participation rates, driven by initiatives like "Come & Try" days and the Warriors Skill & Acquisition Program (SAP) for Girls.

The "Something for Everyone" Volunteer Project has also yielded significant results. The club developed a Volunteer Recruitment Roadmap and utilized platforms like Seek to streamline the recruitment process. Over 100 clearly defined roles were established, providing diverse opportunities for community involvement, from skilled positions to casual volunteer roles. A sub-committee was formed to co-manage volunteering efforts across the club, fostering relationships with local community centers to enhance training and engagement.

To ensure the sustainability of these initiatives, North Geelong Warriors FC has committed to maintaining a dedicated Football Department for Women & Girls, complete with female representation. A dedicated volunteer committee, managed by club representatives across all operations, is in place to oversee ongoing recruitment and support. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities within the department are well-documented to facilitate smooth transitions and succession planning.

North Geelong Warriors FC's focus on empowering women and girls in football reflects a broader commitment to inclusivity and community engagement. As the club continues to build on these foundations, it is poised for future success, setting a positive example for others in the region. With sustained support and a clear vision, the club looks forward to fostering an inclusive environment for all players in the years to come.

ADVICE

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To uplift the presence and status of women in football, forming a separate football department to advocate for females across all aspects of the game can be beneficial. Dedicated change rooms and amenities for women's health and wellbeing are essential, alongside special women's and girls' days at the club, from community to senior levels. Supporting female football week annually and prioritising women's and girls' games in prime time, alongside men's football, will further enhance their visibility and growth in the sport, and additionally, offering numerous playing opportunities, including season, academies, SAP programs, and tournaments.

Officer City Football Club



MAKING FOOTBALL ACCESSIBLE

Before joining Football Australia's Club Changer, Officer City FC faced several challenges, including low female engagement. This underscored the need for targeted programs to boost participation among women and girls. Financial barriers also existed, as there were no subsidized kits or fees for female players, particularly affecting those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the absence of dedicated programs for women and girls, such as "Go Girls" or "Casual Kicks Adults," highlighted the club's gaps in offering structured opportunities.

Recognizing these challenges, Officer City FC committed to change. In the last 12 months, the club successfully increased its female participation by 67%, expanding its female-only teams, including the establishment of its very first women's team. This remarkable growth was facilitated by the introduction of the "GO Girls" program and targeted outreach efforts. The club secured a sponsor to cover all associated fees for the women's team and obtained grants to subsidize kits, making participation financially accessible.

One of the most notable projects was the formation and launch of Officer City FC's inaugural women's team. This initiative began with women-only spring training sessions that attracted over 30 participants. These sessions provided a welcoming environment, helping to recruit players while fostering a supportive community for women interested in football. The financial backing from sponsorships and grants ensured that kits and fees were subsidized, significantly lowering barriers to entry for participants.

The decision to focus on launching the women's team aligned with Officer City FC's strategic plan to better represent the local demographic, which includes a substantial number of women eager to engage in football. The club recognized the growing interest among women, particularly following the Women's World Cup, and aimed to meet this demand by providing a local platform for female athletes.

The establishment of the women's team marked a key achievement for Officer City FC, promoting gender equity and providing women with competitive opportunities. Beyond simply forming a team, the project created a supportive space where women could engage in football, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

To ensure the sustainability of the women's team, Officer City FC is actively seeking grants to improve equipment, such as better goals, which will enhance game-day efficiency. The club is also collaborating with local governments to secure dedicated facilities for the women's team, recognizing that appropriate training and playing grounds are vital for long-term success.

Officer City FC is setting a precedent for female participation in football within the community. By addressing previous gaps and implementing targeted initiatives, the club is not only empowering female athletes but also laying a solid foundation for the future growth of women's football. With ongoing support and strategic planning, Officer City FC is committed to fostering an inclusive and vibrant football environment for all.

ADVICE

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To elevate your club, focus on building community connections and ensuring inclusivity. Engage with local governing bodies and seek partnerships that align with your values. Apply for grants and sponsorships to support growth. Listen to members' needs, even small details to game-day essentials, and fostering a sense of community through initiatives like celebrating Female Football Week. Create an environment that encourages participation at all levels, from youth to senior teams. Every step forward, no matter how small, helps in building a sustainable and successful club.

Sunbury United Football Club



STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF WOMEN & GIRLS FOOTBALL

Over the past year, Sunbury United FC has experienced a remarkable transformation, especially in female participation, driven by the Club Changer program. This initiative addressed challenges that previously hindered the visibility and support of women's football within the Sunbury community, making gender inclusivity a central focus of the club's growth strategy.

One of the club's most significant achievements has been the expansion of its female programs, leadership, and coaching. In 2024, the club surpassed its initial goal by establishing more female teams than anticipated, increasing opportunities for young girls to engage in football and creating a solid foundation for future talent development. The club introduced two models of the MiniTillies program to cater to different needs during the off-season and regular season. This initiative offered a structured and enjoyable introduction to football for young girls. Additionally, the establishment of a senior women's team, which finished as premiers of their league, marked a pivotal achievement and provided a crucial pathway for players transitioning from junior to senior levels.

Sunbury United FC also focused on creating clear developmental pathways from junior to senior levels. Senior coaches played an active role in training junior girls' teams, ensuring young athletes were well-prepared for higher levels of competition. The recruitment of five new female coaches in 2024 further supported this initiative, fostering an inclusive coaching environment and providing essential role models for young players. The club also participated in Football Victoria's CCC program, which enhanced coaching resources and support, ensuring that both new and experienced coaches were equipped to nurture talent and build strong female teams.

Beyond program expansion, Sunbury United FC has made strides in community engagement. Events such as Women in Football celebrations and special match days have showcased the achievements of female players and coaches, creating a sense of pride and support within the community. The club also updated its Fair Access Policy, guaranteeing that all players, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to participate and succeed. Additionally, the Go Girls program, which involved 20 young participants, increased the visibility and enjoyment of football for girls in the community.

The role of the Club Changer program has been critical in this transformation, providing the necessary frameworks, resources, and training programs to help the club develop inclusive policies and effective development pathways for female athletes. The program also guided the club in advocating for infrastructure improvements, helping them push for better facilities to support female athletes.

Looking ahead, Sunbury United FC is committed to ensuring the sustainability of its female-focused initiatives. The club will continue to develop programs like MiniTillies, recruit more female coaches, and strengthen partnerships with local schools and businesses. Regular reviews of policies and leadership structures will ensure that the club adapts to the evolving needs of its players. The club will also continue to advocate with the local council for more equitable access to funding and facilities to better support women in football.

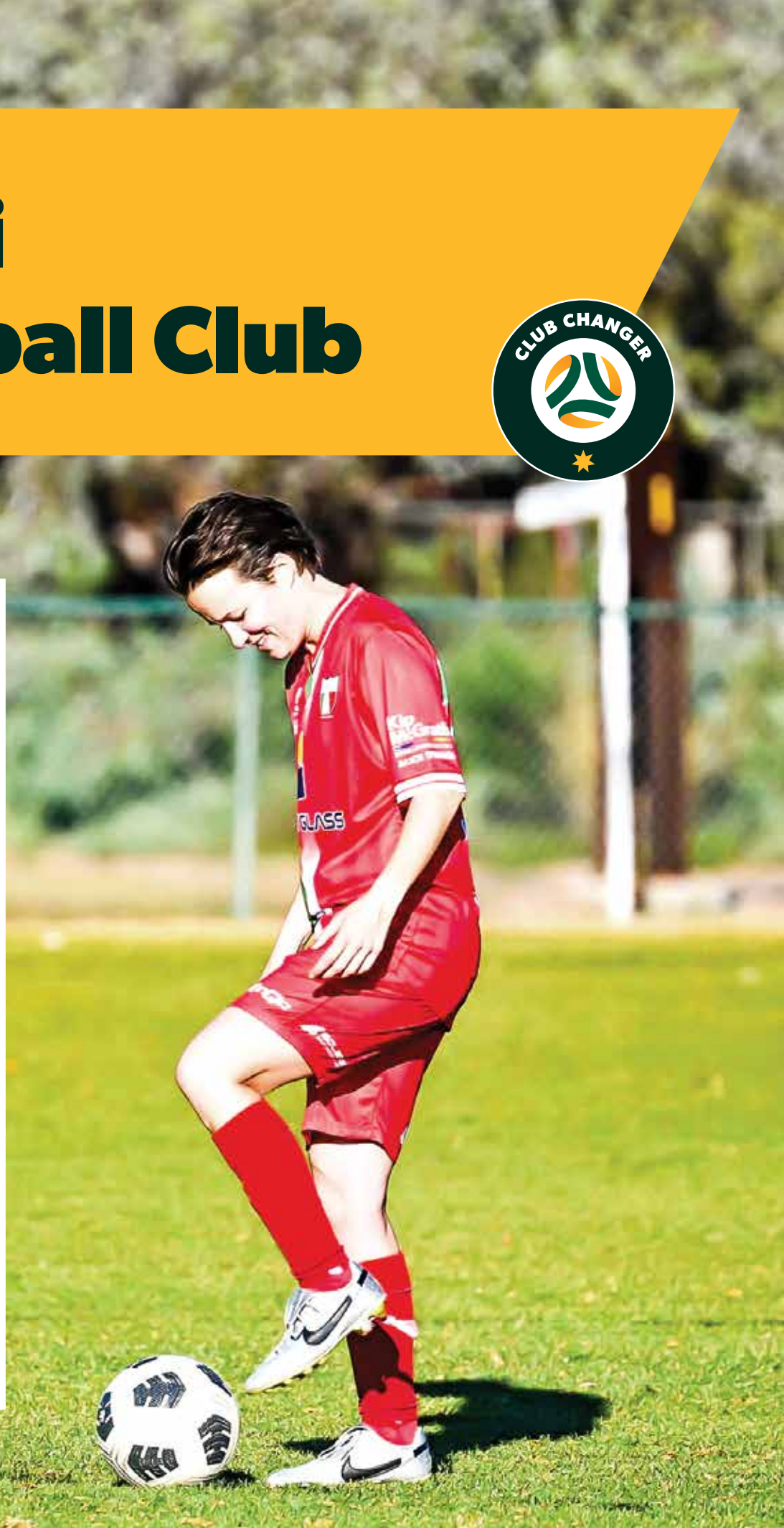
In just 12 months, Sunbury United FC has made impressive strides in empowering women and girls through football. The club's increased participation, stronger leadership, and more inclusive environment are paving the way for a brighter future for female sports in the community.

ADVICE

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To increase their impact, clubs should focus on inclusivity, leadership development, and recognition. Ensure activities are inclusive and promote equality across all operations, despite potential resistance. Build a strong leadership program with training for current and future leaders to sustain growth and uphold governance standards. Leadership buy-in can lead to rapid progress. Additionally, regularly celebrate team and individual achievements to foster pride and belonging, boosting motivation and engagement within the club.

Verdi Football Club



TRANSFORMING GIRLS' FOOTBALL IN RURAL AREAS

Before engaging with Football Australia's Club Changer program, Verdi FC faced significant challenges in providing opportunities for young female players. The club did not offer any team or competition specifically catering to girls under 16 years, leaving a notable gap for those eager to play alongside their peers. This lack of opportunities limited the growth of women's football in the region.

Over the past 12 months, Verdi FC has made remarkable strides in addressing this gap. The club successfully launched an all-girls Mini Roos competition, featuring four teams, and established a second women's team for the Women's Premier League. These initiatives reflect Verdi FC's commitment to promoting inclusivity and accessibility in football.

The support from Club Changer has been instrumental in these developments. Achieving a 1-Star status with the program has set the foundation for Verdi FC's growth, and the club is now on track to reach a 2-Star rating. The online resources provided by Club Changer enabled the club to engage with volunteers effectively and gather valuable feedback from the community. The structured modules offered insights into the club's overall health, highlighting areas for improvement and growth.

A standout project from the past year has been the creation of the all-girls Mini Roos competition. This initiative has made significant progress in promoting inclusivity within the Alice Springs football community. By establishing this standalone competition for under-5 and under-6 players, Verdi FC has created a fun, welcoming environment that

encourages young girls to participate without the intimidation of mixed-gender competition. Tailored coaching sessions emphasize skill development at a comfortable pace, focusing on fun, teamwork, and confidence-building.

Initially aiming for three teams, the club's success in forming four teams underscores the demand for female-focused football opportunities. By conducting thorough research and gathering feedback from participants and their families, Verdi FC identified barriers to participation, such as limited access to female-specific coaching and facilities. This insight was crucial in shaping the all-girls competition.

The project's achievements have been profound. By establishing a sustainable all-girls competition, Verdi FC has increased participation rates, empowered young female footballers, and laid a solid foundation for the future of women's football in Alice Springs.

To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, the club is committed to consistent community engagement and securing long-term partnerships. Plans include collaboration with local schools and the involvement of female role models and coaches to maintain interest and involvement. The next Action Plan focuses on securing funding or sponsorship to provide necessary resources, alongside training female coaches to create a supportive ecosystem around the competition. Continuous feedback from participants will guide future improvements, ensuring the project remains relevant and thriving for years to come.

ADVICE

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Go through the modules on Game Plan, use the resources that are already there, and talk with the FA Club Changer representative. It has helped our Club take the 'next step' in developing and creating pathways for girls and women in football.

ADVICE FROM CLUB CHANGERS

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AC UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Get right behind club changer this program and the support has been a game changer for our club. The resources and support have been fantastic and most importantly you can learn from what other clubs are doing which will support your journey to success!

BALMAIN & DISTRICT FOOTBALL CLUB

Choose specific goals and areas for change or improvement. Advertise for girls-only camps rather than mixed camps and subsidise the first camp either through grant funding or other means to get people through the doors. Have someone drive the structure of the camps and prepare fun activities to be held throughout the day. Find female coaches to deliver the camp and mentor younger, upcoming coaches during the camps to build a cohort of coaching staff to deliver future camps.

DOUGLAS PARK WILTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Work with your club members and community groups to find out what their needs are and empower those within your organisation to be bold in their thinking, with the community at your heart.

GOLD COAST KNIGHTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Take full advantage of the tools and resources provided by Football Australia (such as Club Changer) and Member Federation's.

Ensure that the people who are driving programs such as these are invested in the game and their club.

GYMEA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

All the club does is not possible without the work and dedication of our volunteer committee members. Attracting and retaining people who have the best interests of the club at heart are the only way this work was possible.

KEILOR PARK SOCCER CLUB

For clubs looking to develop and elevate their presence, our club recommends the following key strategies:

1. Community Focus: Prioritise building strong relationships within your local community. Engage with schools, local businesses, and community groups to drive participation, volunteers, and support. A club that feels embedded in the community will thrive.
2. Develop Female Football: Actively promote and support female football by creating pathways for women and girls. Offering dedicated programs and resources for female players, coaches, and volunteers will broaden your club's reach and foster inclusivity.
3. Volunteer Engagement: Invest in recruiting, training, and appreciating volunteers. Create a positive and rewarding environment where volunteers feel valued and motivated to contribute.
4. Strong Leadership and Planning: Develop clear, long-term goals for your club. Strong leadership with a well-defined vision will attract sponsors, talent, and opportunities for growth. Find the expertise within your community to build your organisation and expertise
5. Leverage Social Media: Use social media and

digital platforms to promote your club, celebrate successes, and engage with your community. Consistent communication can significantly increase visibility and draw in new members.

6. Focus on Junior Development: Invest in youth development programs to build a strong future for your club. Developing local talent ensures sustained participation and loyalty.

NARACOORTE UNITED SOCCER CLUB

Don't take no for an answer, always go one step further. In four years we have added 4 teams or programs for women and girls. We are a small community of around 6000 people with a very strong footy and netball scene.

NARANGBA EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB

Use the Club Changer assessment tools and set achievable goals for each Priority.

Track progress with the Assessment Modules and ensure people are accountable for projects & set realistic deadlines. Communicate regularly and encourage participation in future proofing the club, and celebrate each milestone and success.

SPRING HILLS FOOTBALL CLUB

Collaborate closely with your member federation to ensure that Club Changer objectives are relevant, actionable and sustainable. Be pro-active and invest in growing your women's and girls football programs.

TIGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

The Football Australia Club Changer program is a 'Game Changer' – sign up today and dive in to discover the huge number of resources at your fingertips to help grow your club and take it to the next level.

WOODBIDGE FOOTBALL CLUB

It does take effort but the rewards are long lasting to ensure our clubs are operating to the best possible standard of Football in Australia.

We highly recommend the Club Changer program; it is highly relevant to the football and sporting industry as it stands today.

WESTSIDE STRIKERS FOOTBALL CLUB

There are some key pieces of advice for other clubs looking to develop and elevate their programs:

Prioritise Inclusivity: Create an environment where everyone feels welcome. Actively promote programs for underrepresented groups, such as women and girls, and ensure that your messaging emphasizes inclusivity.

Engage the Community: Build strong relationships with local schools, businesses, and organizations. Community partnerships can enhance recruitment efforts and create a support network for your club.

Invest in Coaching Development: Provide ongoing training and support for coaches, particularly those working with youth. Well-trained coaches foster better player development and a positive club culture.

Role Models: Highlight successful players and coaches as role models. Their stories can inspire young athletes and demonstrate the possibilities within the sport.

Gather Feedback: Regularly seek input from players, parents, and volunteers. Use surveys or focus groups to understand their needs and preferences, and adapt your programs accordingly.

Focus on Long-Term Goals: Set clear, achievable goals for your club's growth and development. Regularly review and adjust these goals based on progress and changing circumstances.

Celebrate Successes: Acknowledge and celebrate both individual and team achievements. This boosts morale and fosters a sense of community within the club.

Utilise Resources: Take advantage of programs like Club Changer and other available resources to gain insights, support, and best practices.

By implementing these strategies, clubs can create a thriving environment that supports player development and community engagement, ultimately elevating their overall impact.

AFC's Best Grassroots Program in Asia



CLUB CHANGER

Club Development Program

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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

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