



SPORTS INCLUSION IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

NORA LYNCH

University of Michigan, School of Social Work
Global Activities Scholars Program



LOCATION

Melbourne, Australia is the capital of the southeastern state of Victoria, and is a metropolitan city known for its high population. Melbourne is also considered Australia's "cultural capital" because of its immigrant history and presence of young generations.



PARTNERSHIP HISTORY

The Hobsons Bay Community Fund was established in 2006 with the purpose of financially supporting and assisting projects and initiatives coming out of the Hobsons Bay community. The partnership between the Hobsons Bay Community Fund and the University of Melbourne began in 2016, when there was a voiced need for sporting clubs in the community to expand their inclusion efforts, with a focus on disability.

PROJECTS

I worked on a team of six students, all from the UoM. This placement lasted three months and was meant for the incoming student group to build on work that had been done by previous groups. During our time together, the main projects my team and I focused on fell within the Sports Inclusion Tool-kit.



When we arrived to the placement, we were given the work that had been done by past students. After doing research on the Hobsons Bay community and hearing more about the local sporting clubs, we decided that our team's primary projects within the Sports Inclusion Tool-kit were going to be expanding the Self-Assessment Tool for clubs and the Sports for Everyone guide. In order to evaluate whether the resources we were working on would be useful to the community, we also held a focus group event.



Our team chose to expand on the Self-Assessment tool by putting it on a digital platform, in an effort to ensure data collection after clubs completed it and to reach a larger audience. This tool was created to give clubs an idea on where they fell on their inclusion journey. It is organized by seven categories- access, attitude, choice, partnerships, communication, policy, and opportunities. From there, we created a companion tool for families and youth to discover what they may want in a sporting club to best serve their needs.

These tools would then become part of the overall Sports for Everyone guide, which is a document containing resources, inclusion concepts, and case-studies to help guide sports clubs looking to learn more about how they can include inclusive practices in their club cultures.

OUTCOMES

After our focus group event, we learned the following:

- Language/word choice matters. At times, the attendees felt that the words we were using were too academic, and could turn away potential participants.
- Instead of being set in stone, these tools should act as a template in the hopes that clubs would adapt them to best fit their club's culture.
- To ensure that we reach as many sporting clubs as we can, we must focus on community building and creating partnerships with organizations that may be doing similar work.

LESSONS LEARNED

- When entering a community you are not familiar with, it is essential to take time to learn more about it- make sure to ask questions!
- Communication will look differently based on culture/country.
- When working in a team, naming each group member's strengths and giving them tasks based on those strengths will help with organization and flow.