

COMMUNITY FOOTY CLUBS ARE VALUABLE!

For every \$1 spent on a community football club there is at least \$4.40 return in social value. This was the finding of a unique study undertaken by the Centre for Sport and Social Impact at LaTrobe University. The research was commissioned by AFL Victoria with the findings released on 27 February 2015. [Click here](#) for a summary of the findings.

The research established 4 key positive outcomes resulting from community football clubs:-

1. Social Outcomes including greater social connectivity and support (3 times more useful than work, education or community clubs), developing skills in public speaking, problem solving, conflict resolution and dealing with people from diverse backgrounds. Significantly, footy clubs provide individuals, “particularly those aged 15-24, with significant increased chances of securing employment via the social networks provided by the club.”
2. Health Outcomes were also considered significantly positive including footy clubs are important and effective vehicles for delivering health and safety campaign messages, participants at a footy club have a greater level of self-reported well-being (both physical and mental health) compared to comparable samples of the Victorian population.
3. Community Outcomes were also a significant positive outcome where football clubs engage with their communities and are often the hub of a community but the football clubs reach, influence and benefit extends broadly into its relevant community. Importantly, “Sponsors typically support community football clubs to assist them to deliver community benefits rather than for commercial gain.”
4. Economic Outcomes: noting that not only are football clubs direct employers for their communities but are significant consumers within their own communities. “The average community football club in Victoria makes an annual economic contribution of \$630,000.”

The report stated in summary:-

“It does not matter where you live, how long or how often you are involved in a football club, or what role you have (player, coach, volunteer, supporter) in the club, people associated with a football club experience greater social connectedness, well-being and self-reported physical and mental health.”

The report further summarised the community reach of the club as follows:-

“A football club’s reach is significant and extends beyond the players, coaches, administrators and volunteers within the club; for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community.”

Research Design

The report describes the research designs in the following terms which is most interesting and useful for readers:-

“The research design comprised two stages:

- 1. Conducting nine case studies on the activities and outcomes of football clubs in various locations across Victoria developed through 110 in-depth interviews with club and community members; and*
- 2. A survey sent to all members of AFL Victoria football clubs across the state (with 1677 returned) examining individual health, well-being, trust and social connectedness.*

It is important to note that this research includes the views of people outside of football clubs. The research design deliberately sought to confirm the views of football club members with those in their communities in developing the case studies and comparing the results of the survey of football members with the general community.”

This research is most welcome. For those involved in community football clubs and sporting clubs generally it provides evidence for the intuitive understanding that has probably stood for decades.

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