



Football United

Football United® - Equipped to lead a national, multi-departmental approach to addressing the equity gap in participation for Australia's disadvantaged communities

Introduction

This note is submitted in answer to the recent call from Minister Bowen for contributions to the inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia.

Football United® has been working effectively to promote harmonious connecting and engaging of Australia's multicultural fabric since its founding in 2005. We particularly work to engage and empower youth in communities with high levels of refugee and newly arrived migrants in S-W Sydney. In doing so, Football United also addresses the equity gaps in community empowerment and social inclusion that persist in our communities, and reach individuals from many areas of disadvantage including aboriginal Australians. We use proven social building approaches to do so, with football as the attracting vehicle.

No doubt Minister Bowen has heard about us, as one of our major programs is in his Constituency area. Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion Kate Lundy is also well aware of the impact of our work, as is Minister for Sport Arbib.

As noted in many government reports, in particular the recent Crawford Report, ideally an in-depth approach, supported by multi-year funding, is required to effectively support the move from a society of multiple cultures to one that is truly multicultural (ie. harmonious and productive).

In response to the call for contributions, I would like to present this short paper which sets out an overview of our approach, supported with research findings that highlight the impact. At the same time I encourage the government to follow up recommendations from its own research with meaningful support to action those recommendations, as opposed to token, patchwork solutions such as those recently announced.

Respectfully submitted,

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Recipient Australian National Human Rights award 2010 :

"For encouraging audiences to look past the sensational news headlines and the political rhetoric to see that refugees and asylum seekers are far more than just statistics".

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Football United® - Equipped to lead a national, multi-departmental approach to addressing the equity gap in participation for Australia’s disadvantaged communities

Football United has been engaged in effectively addressing issues of social inequity and their ensuing impact on communities since 2005. Football United was developed to address the following issues:

1. There are extreme gaps in equity of participation in sport in both the community sport arena as well as within the public education sector;
2. These gaps in participation translate to gaps in opportunity, which if not addressed, result in issues of disaffection in society (leaving school, aggressive behaviour, unemployment etc);
3. Misunderstanding of newly arrived immigrants and different cultures often translates further to racism.....and the ensuing problems it provokes.

The above-mentioned phenomena are inter-ministerial issues of inequity of access to sport, education, employment, health and community services in disadvantaged communities. Football United’s proven capacity to conduct programs, research and advocacy that effectively address these issues, makes it ideally suited to lead a multi government department approach to tackling these issues nationally.

We propose a two-level approach:

- A. Expansion according to our national development strategy
- B. Situational mapping to analyse “who, what, where” – our research indicates currently there are gaps, but also groups working in various related capacities – potentially being less effective, often in competition for precious funds thus losing the exponential impact that could be made if they were effectively collaborating; a serious study of who is doing what currently, where the inequities are and best practice impacts would provide govt with map for potential progress in these areas.

This paper presents the following sections as supporting material:

1. The Need - existing evidence including Federal Government funded reviews
2. Football United’s history of impact on addressing the issues
3. Proposal - Football United’s proposed approach to addressing the gaps

Australian Research Council (ARC)

Football United (preliminary) research findings indicate that Football United has made the following impact in the area of social inclusion:

- ◆ Significant reduction in peer-related problems among male FUn participants, as compared to those in comparison sites.
- ◆ Significant increase in positive orientation toward ethnic groups other than their own compared to data from comparison sites among male FUn participants



Section 1:

Addressing the need – existing evidence and research

1.1 Introduction

The Federal Government itself has commissioned research and reviews, (page 4 and annexe for details) including the 2009 Crawford Report into Australian Sport that highlights:

Very low participation rates of people from disadvantaged and multicultural backgrounds in sport and physical activity compared to that of the mainstream population. (Crawford, CMYI, ABS, Children in Sport Report)

Cross governmental, long-term funding approaches are needed to address this issue and improve the ineffective distribution of short term, short sighted funding thereby improving resource allocation of community organisations (Crawford, NSWDSR).

Developing neighbourhood programs, re-building schools systems, and training teachers are crucial to addressing the physical activity needs and interests of children, youth and families from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling them to overcome their limited resources and better engage with educational and social systems (Crawford, CMYI, ASC)

Football United experiences, researches (through our partnership with UNSW) and addresses – in short *knows and engages with* these issues both intimately and extensively. This knowledge has led to the development of programs that have achieved quantifiable improvements in the lives of individuals, communities and Australian society at large. We believe that an adequate national strategy to address these issues cannot simply rely on the often over-burdened community sport sector, or on slow systemic change within the education system. Rather, an effective strategy must also include a multi government department approach working with an organisation like Football United that operates collaboratively and in parallel with.

1.2 Key Findings

Key findings from Government funded research including the 2009 Crawford Report into Australian Sport, ABS Statistical Data, Children in Sport Reports, the Centre for Multi-Cultural Youth Issues and NSW Sport and Recreation Research. A table aligning Football United's areas of action and impact with the national Government Priorities is provided in annex.

Section 2:

Football United addresses the need

2.1 Current Operations

With 10 programs currently spread across West and South West Sydney and Southern Brisbane for more than 1000 participants per week, Football United empowers local youth's and adult leaders to run free and easily accessible football programs for children, the parameters of which are designed collaboratively with local community organisations, including schools and migrant resource centres, and representatives of the various cultures involved.

In addition to football training and playing opportunities, the program elements include ongoing leadership and personal life-skills development processes. All of Football United activities are underpinned by research, including the Australian Research Council funded Linkage Project that evaluates the effectiveness of utilising sport (football) to improve social inclusion for refugee children and youth in urban areas.



Importantly over the past 2 years in particular, Football United has been in a leading role, advocating, promoting and celebrating the value of diversity to Australian Communities and demonstrating the power of Football and Sport as a means of bringing people together from all parts of society. This culminated in the 2010 Australian Human Rights Award for Television ***“For encouraging audiences to look past the sensational news headlines and the political rhetoric to see that refugees and asylum seekers are far more than just statistics”***. This was for a documentary that tracked a group of 11 refugee youth now living in Sydney as they represented Australia at the 2010 FIFA Festival of Hope Tournament during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

A national partnership with Football Federation Australia is in place, small seed funding from the FIFA Football for Hope Program has been secured, and over 50 interstate government and community organisations have implored Football United to start programs in their communities. With this proposal, it provides the Federal Government with an opportunity to drive a joint multi portfolio approach to address the gaps and work toward empowerment and social inclusion to build foundations which will address the inequities and build multicultural harmony.

Issue	Evidence
<p>Inequitable access to sport and physical activity disadvantaged people including refugee, migrant, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Indigenous</p>	<p>“... around 50 per cent of Australians participate ‘regularly’ in sport and physical activity. The ‘missing half’ has become a formidable policy challenge. If sport contributes to the nation’s health and community cohesion, a key task for sports policy makers and administrators is to address the factors and, in some cases, the barriers that prevent participation.” (Crawford Report)</p> <p>“Club sports are made up mostly of children from middleclass backgrounds, which is due in part to cultural traditions but also because participation requires adequate disposable income to pay for fees, uniforms, equipment and transport.” (Crawford Report)</p> <p>ABS Survey data suggests that ethnic minorities and people born in non-English speaking countries are more likely to have lower participation rates in sport and physical activity. It is difficult to engage new migrants in sport at all.</p>
<p>Inequitable access to sport and physical activity for the disadvantaged including refugee, migrant, and Indigenous</p>	<p>People born in Australia had participation rates of 27%, compared to around 10% for people born in non-English speaking countries.” (Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues)</p> <p>People from “Migrant, Indigenous and Disadvantaged” backgrounds have all been identified in the Crawford Report as key categories for which the government must develop appropriate strategies and policy to address low participation rates.</p>
<p>Lack of coordination, wasted resources and ineffective cross governmental approaches to funding and associated initiatives</p>	<p>Vast amounts of energy and time of community development workers is absorbed in applying for grants and making acquittals to multiple stakeholders. (Crawford Report)</p> <p>Government departments and non-government organisations (NGOs) often use sport to achieve other social outcomes but they are not co-ordinated with sports infrastructure leading to wasteful, duplicated and ineffective outcomes (for) Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>“... funding is committed through annual application-based grant processes. These have historically supported one-off, short-term activities that limit the development of genuine community capacity and undermine the potential for sustainable community-run sport programs. (Crawford Report)</p>

Issue	Evidence
<p>The need for cross government approach</p>	<p>All levels of government are involved in the delivery of sport and recreation services to Indigenous Australia. The general view is that a combination of limited funding, a duplication of activities, limited strategic direction and limited understanding of the Australian sports industry has resulted in an inefficient, fragmented and under-resourced approach.” (Crawford Report)</p> <p>“...it is important to clearly articulate the impact of youth sport leadership in the areas of health, education, economic, and social cohesion.” NSW Sport and Recreation 2007</p>
<p>The need to work more closely with schools, develop tailored programs to the needs and interests of the disadvantaged constituents</p>	<p>Australian Sports Commission Research recommends strategies that “remodel the school environment, up skill teachers and establish neighbourhood networks as of means of engaging children in sport and more physical activity. (ASC Website)</p> <p>Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues identifies that “a large number of refugee and migrant young people participate in informal, unstructured games....These are often sports that young people have played prior to settling in Australia and are already familiar to them....”</p> <p>Sports allow youth to overcome barriers such as language and move towards integration and social inclusion. Young people of refugee background and Muslim youth want to have normal experiences and be accepted in normal environments.</p>

2.2 Projected Reach

At current rate of growth, by 2014 Football United will have established over 20 separate programs across the country that support 5000 young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Indigenous backgrounds. With the support of the Federal Government, this growth could be transformed to national – level, in-depth, long term and systematic approach to addressing the inequity of access to mainstream community sport, educational programs and community services for disadvantaged children, youth and their families.

Section 3: Football United’s plan to address the gaps across the country

Football United is seeking support from the Australian Federal Government to realise its National Development Strategy that will see its programs delivered into every state and territory in Australia.

3.1 National Development Overview

The following table presents an overview of the a phased, progressive national roll-out of Football United activities across the country, with methodology, timeline, and deliverables.

2011: Parallel and simultaneous:

- A national scoping, situation analysis mapping project
- 2 interstate projects in Victoria and South Australia

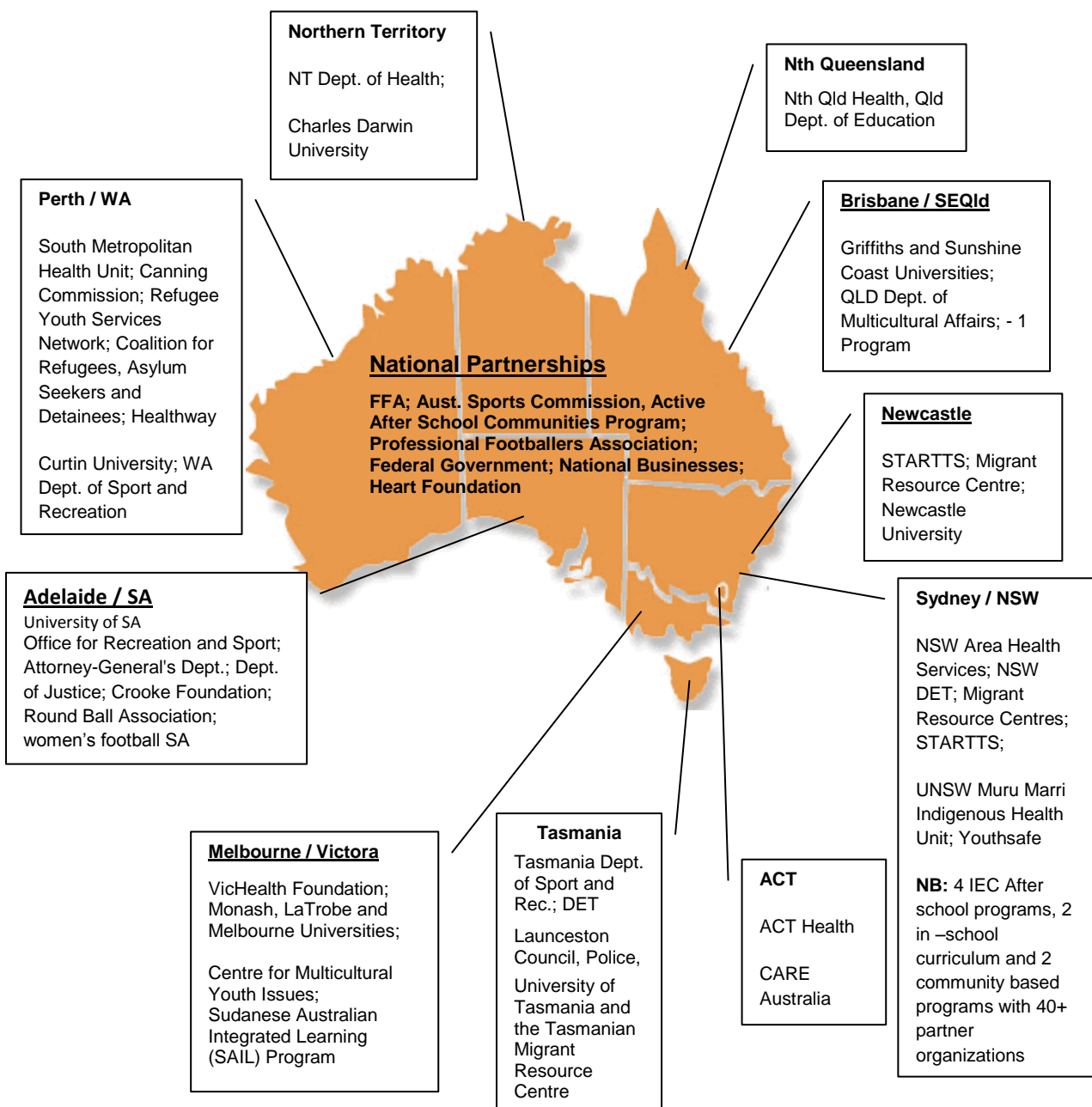
2012 – 2014

- Recurrent operational funding for NSW and Qld projects
- National Implementation
- Evaluation and Research

Phase	Methods	Stakeholder / Info Source*	Deliverables
1. Scoping Research and Development	Interstate focus groups, consultations with community groups and State Football Associations	Federal government agencies; State government agencies including Education and Sport and Recreation, Migrant resources Centres, Charitable Organisations.	Detailed 3 year project plan by August 2011
2. Pilot Projects – recommended in South Australia and either Victoria or ACT based on strength of existing need and FUn networks	Develop tailored projects in 2 prioritised states in regions advised through the consultation process and existing Football United interest	Specific schools, Football clubs, local migrant resources centre and other charities in the communities target.	2 programs running within these regions appropriately resourced with coaches and community coordinators and local partners Both established and running by December 2011
3. NSW and Qld Operating Budget	Ongoing support for existing programs in NSW and Qld	All existing partner organisations	Ongoing implementation and evaluation of 8 programs in NSW and Qld
4. National Implementation	Implement National role- out in targeted communities identified through Stage 1	As above	Staged role out of Football United programs aligned with priorities established in planning stage 4 new programs per year developed and implemented by Dec 2013
4. Review and Evaluate	In partnership with UNSW and local University partners establish Research processed protocol with the national program	UNSW and State based Universities	Research Grants secured and effective local research partnerships to meet state based and community based requirements. This will be ongoing as part of the program implementation

3.2 Football United National Stakeholder Networks

The following diagram depicts the network of primary stakeholders throughout Australia that have requested engagement in the delivery of Football United programs into their regions. These government bodies, academic institutions and grass roots organisations are all working in areas that have high proportions of people with refugee, indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that are experiencing significant health and social challenges stemming from a lack of cohesion between the various ethnic groups and ‘mainstream’ populations. All of these organisations will form part of the stakeholder groups responsible for advising on and facilitating Football United activities in each region, thereby maximising outcomes for participants across a range of health, social and educational sectors. Through its national partnership, Football United has assistance and endorsement from the FFA to build the football-specific networks. Through its university base, it has the university network connections to effectively assess and evaluate all programs.



Annex : Football United's Alignment with the Federal Government Priorities

The following table provides an overview of how Football United initiatives align with priority outcomes sought by various government portfolios.

Outcome	Football United Initiatives	Football United Outcomes
<p>Sport</p> <p>Increased participation in sport and physical activity</p> <p>Engagement with NSO, SSO, Regional and Club systems</p>	<p>Free weekly, easily accessible, after school, in curriculum or community based coaching and playing opportunities for 1000 children</p> <p>Partnerships with Football Federation Australia, Football Queensland and Football NSW in coach development</p>	<p>Less than 10% of Football United participants are able to play in mainstream community football clubs</p> <p>Existing Active After School Communities Programs or Football Federation Australia programs do not cater for FUn participants</p> <p>Football's governing bodies struggle to prioritise the people and areas that are the central focus of FUn</p>
<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Increased engagement with other cultures and mainstream community services</p>	<p>Football programs for all tailored to age, gender and ability levels</p> <p>10 Inter-school and region competitive matches</p> <p>1 Football United Annual Football Festival for 300 children and youth</p> <p>6 Multi school / region holiday camps, youth leadership programs and excursions to Soccerroos matches per year for 100 children and youth</p>	<p>Australian Research RC Football United research preliminary findings indicate:</p> <p>FUn program schools unite youth from in 31 different countries from 5 continents, including Australian native born, living in over 40 different suburbs</p> <p>FUn program schools indicate 98% feelings of social engagement and community participation compared to 72% non-program schools</p> <p>FUn program schools indicate 75 % feelings of positive appreciation for and engagement with friends from different cultures compared to 42 % non-program schools</p>
<p>Education and Training</p> <p>Improving engagement with school</p> <p>Increasing enrolments at schools with negative reputations</p> <p>Improved inter-cultural relationships in school</p>	<p>12 Coach training programs for 150 students per year students from Intensive English Centres and mainstream high schools</p> <p>Partnership with South West Sydney TAFE Indigenous Education Unit</p> <p>Nationally recognised Coaching Qualifications for youth from Aust. Sports Commission and Football Federation Australia</p> <p>2 Feeder Primary school programs in Fairfield and Granville South for</p>	<p>School principles report FUn youth better engage in their secondary studies, remain in school longer, and aim for tertiary study than non FUn students</p> <p>All IEC schools reported improved engagement with mainstream school studies and students</p> <p>500 Primary students recipients of programs and gala days run by youth coaches from local high schools</p>

Outcome	Football United Initiatives	Football United Outcomes
<p>Employment and volunteering</p> <p>Increase employment opportunities for youth in lower socio economic regions</p>	<p>FUn head Coach, Assistant Coach and Community coordinator roles all receive casual payment</p>	<p>40 causally paid roles on FUn programs for local youth and adults</p> <p>75% of the coach and staff have been developed through the FUn coach training and leadership programs.</p> <p>Over 50 youth coach and adult volunteers on a weekly basis</p>
<p>Health</p> <p>Promoting active lifestyle; addressing obesity; promoting substance abuse prevention; healthy eating</p> <p>Mental health promotion through benefits of sport, good sportsmanship – addressing racially instigated bullying, capacity to support post-trauma through positive effects of FUn</p>	<p>Promotion of and adherence to the Football United Good sport and Fair Play Values and Codes of Conduct</p> <p>Programs aligned with Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Curriculum</p> <p>Programs delivery aligned with Active After School Communities methodology</p> <p>Free fruit each week</p>	<p>In-school and after school activities weekly in 9 schools in SW Sydney and 2 in Brisbane</p> <p>All Football United Schools have reported in improvement inter-cultural relationships especially between IEC and mainstream students</p> <p>High quality and engaging sport and physical activity programs</p>
<p>Communities</p> <p>Building the capacity of the people and organisations in local communities</p>	<p>Partnerships and collaboration with schools, football organisations and community groups to design programs that meet cultural and demographic needs</p> <p>Youth and adult leadership, coach and volunteer opportunities designed to increase local sustainability</p>	<p>2 FUn community programs being run completely by participants who have been trained through the program</p> <p>FUn youth Ambassadors engaged in Primary school leadership programs</p> <p>Over 70 youth and adults employed or volunteers on a weekly basis on Fun programs</p>
<p>Youth</p> <p>Youth engagement, empowerment and employment</p>	<p>Youth and at the forefront of all FUn activity through coach training, playing opportunities and leadership development</p> <p>Youth leadership camps</p> <p>Telstra Foundation – Connecting the Disconnected Project</p>	<p>Since 2006 FUn has provided qualifications for over 150 youth</p> <p>50 youth have been involved in Leadership Camps and Activities</p> <p>11 youth from FUn represented Australia in the 2010 FIFA Festival of Hope in South Africa</p>
<p>Immigration and Citizenship</p> <p>Improving social cohesion and harmony in diverse communities</p>	<p>Core to FUn Strategy</p> <p>Core message in all media and marketing activity</p> <p>Harmony Day Activities</p>	<p>FUn Documentary Passport to Hope - 2010 Australian Human Rights Commission Award for Television Numerous television, radio and print media stories and features. See appendix B</p> <p>Nominated for Best Practice in Refugee Settlement programs by DIAC</p>