



# Value of a Community Football Club



## Research Background

The Centre for Sport and Social Impact (CSSI) at La Trobe University was commissioned by AFL Victoria to determine the social value of a “typical” community football club; specifically its social, health and community impact.

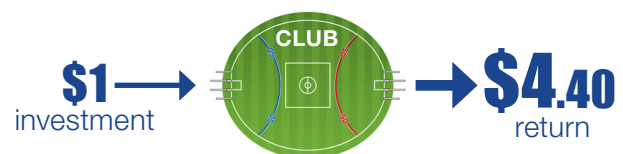
## Research Design

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 club members with the general community.

**For every \$1 spent on a community football club, there is at least \$4.40 return in social value.**



## Social Return on Investment

The social return on investment for an average community football club indicates that for every \$1 spent to run a club, there is at least \$4.40 return in social value in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing, and mental health status; employment outcomes; personal development; physical health; civic pride and support of other community groups.

SROI is an increasingly accepted method for undertaking impact assessments, especially for community focussed organisations and has been identified by the Productivity Commission as a comprehensive method for social impact assessment. SROI is based on program logic – the process of identifying the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts associated with an organisation.

## Social Outcomes

1. Football clubs provide an environment where people are more socially connected at every age group compared to other Victorians.
2. Football clubs are 3 times more useful for developing social networks than work, education or other community group networks.
3. Football clubs provide club members greater social support than through their other social networks.
4. Football clubs help people develop skills in public speaking, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, and dealing with people from diverse backgrounds.
5. Football clubs provide individuals, particularly those aged 15 to 24, with significantly increased chances of securing employment via the social networks provided by the club.

## Health Outcomes

1. Football clubs are important and effective vehicles for delivering health and safety campaign messages for young people.
2. Individuals associated with a football club have a greater level of self-reported wellbeing at every age group compared to a sample of the Victorian population.
3. Individuals associated with a football club have higher levels of self-reported physical and mental health at most age groups compared to a sample of the Victorian population.
4. The self-reported mental health of people aged 18-24 associated with a football club is substantially higher than the general population; given the higher incidence of mental health issues among young people, it could be argued that 'football clubs help those at greatest risk of poor mental health'.



## Things that would suffer if my football club disappeared ...





*'We joined this club when we moved; I didn't know a single person in the town. Now I can walk down the street and know lots of people.'*

*'You know the one thing about footy, whenever you meet up with someone you played footy with, you've always got something to talk about, it creates those lifelong connections with people.'*

*'My football club is like a second family to me and everyone involved with the club. Not only have I gained many lifelong friends, but I have role models who I look up to and have taught me so much since joining the club. Our club is a place where you can go to escape from normal everyday life and also confront your problems with the help of the people at the club.'*



*'Our club is the hub of our community. I have witnessed young boys who come from abusive homes and are disconnected from school and the community come to our club and feel part of a team. These boys learn respect, discipline, team work, responsibility, mate ship and a sense of belonging.'*

*'You can always be welcomed down at the football club – it doesn't matter who you are or what your background is.'*

*'My football/netball club brings the community together. Living in a country area, it is a place that allows everyone to catch up at least once a week, brings the family together and strengthens relationships.'*

*'I know from my own experience that I would not be in the career I am now if it was not for the contacts I made through football.'*

## Community Outcomes

1. Football clubs harness the collective energy of players, coaches, administrators, volunteers and supporters to not only deliver sport and social activities for members, but for their respective communities.
2. Football clubs are increasingly engaged with their communities, delivering a range of services such as school holiday clinics and health awareness programs in schools, while supporting other community groups' events and fundraising efforts, supporting health awareness and education campaigns, and supporting socially disadvantaged members of the community participate in football.
3. A football club's reach is significant and extends beyond its players, coaches, administrators and volunteers; for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community, generating increased civic pride.
4. Football clubs are considered the hub of a community, particularly in rural and regional areas, are a focal point for community efforts in times of crisis and celebration, and are considered by club and community members as central to shaping the identity of a township or area.
5. Sponsors typically support community football clubs to assist them deliver community benefits rather than for commercial gain.
6. Football club leaders, on and off the field, are considered community role models.

## Economic Outcomes

1. As highlighted under social outcomes, football clubs create direct employment opportunities for their communities.
2. Football clubs are large consumers within their own communities, supporting local businesses such as bakeries, cafes, hotels, butchers, restaurants and local trades people.
3. The average community football club in Victoria makes an annual economic contribution of \$630,000 (Street Ryan Economic Contribution Assessments of Australian Football).

**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, wellbeing and self-reported physical and mental health.**

For further information on this project contact:

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## Reach of football clubs

### Community Activity Reach

- Primary school & school holiday clinics
- Facilitate football activities for disadvantaged and people with a disability
- Volunteers for community activities and individuals in need
- RSL ANZAC Day matches
- Education & awareness campaigns
- Fundraising events for charities and individuals in need
- Participation in local festivals

### Social Reach

- Spectators at football games
- Football game day functions
- Attendees Thursday & Saturday night club meals
- Attendees at social functions – club members; extended friends/family; individuals

### Football Club Members

Life members; Committee; Past player; Senior players; Junior player parents; Netballers; Social supporters

### Sponsors and Partners

Local business partnerships such as bakery, butcher, hardware, tradespeople, local supermarkets, bank, stock feed, sports suppliers and gyms

### Game Day Volunteers

Water carriers; Bar; BBQ; Canteen  
Coaching staff and trainers

### Committee Members (Volunteers)

President; Vice President; Secretary; Treasurer; Junior; Netball; General members

### Players

- Senior football players
- Junior players
- Netball players
- Auskick
- Net Set Go