

# **Brunswick Zebras Junior Football Club**

## **Inclusion Policy**

### **Commitment to inclusion**

Brunswick Zebras is committed to providing an inclusive environment which welcomes and encourages participation in football by diverse groups in our community. Inclusion means recognising and integrating all members of the community - whether as players, officials, coaches or volunteers - regardless of cultural and linguistic background, age, ability, income or sexual preference.

The club is committed to promoting inclusion by publicising and promoting its benefits while acknowledging and actively working to overcome barriers to participation that may be experienced by particular groups.

### **Benefits of participation to individuals**

- Increased physical and mental health associated with participation in sport
- Opportunities to make friends and build social connections with wider community
- Opportunity to practise English for newly-arrived young migrants and refugees and their families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Learn new skills
- Build self-esteem and confidence

### **Benefits of diversity and inclusion to the club and community**

- Ensures all club members feel respected and valued
- Access to increased talent pool
- Increased membership base and associated long term financial sustainability
- Potential for greater pool of people to assist club in volunteer and administrative roles
- Social benefits for all club members associated with diversity and learning about new members
- Enhanced community profile and reputation of the club and opportunities to make links with other organisations such as local councils, FFV etc.
- Benefits to whole community through enhanced social cohesion which can be threatened when particular groups are excluded from participation resulting in feelings of alienation

### **Barriers to participation and strategies to overcome them**

- Cost of club registration and uniform that is not included (eg. boots and shin pads) can be prohibitive

- Explore grant opportunities to provide subsidies where needed
- Provide discounts and payment plans where cost is a barrier to participation
- Lack of access to appropriate and safe transport to training and matches
  - Strategies: explore potential for local youth and migrant resource centre services to assist with transport
  - Provide assistance with negotiating public transport options where appropriate and safe
  - Actively encourage assistance through car pooling by other team members
- Perceived lack of an inclusive club culture or discrimination, language barriers, lack of knowledge about how to join and potential lack of parental support for participation in football
  - Create a welcoming club culture by promoting the benefits of diversity to all club members
  - Provide information and, where feasible, run information sessions at sites where young people from diverse backgrounds can be reached. eg: local schools and language schools, migrant resource centres, youth groups etc.
  - Greet and introduce new members to coaches and team mates
  - Display inclusion policies and welcome signs in English and other community languages; provide information about club in community languages.
  - Actively encourage people from diverse communities to become involved as coaches, assistant coaches, officials, committee members and team managers
  - Explore ways to involve and communicate with families and explain the benefits of participation in sport
  - Discuss importance of inclusion and ways to respond flexibly to concerns or particular cultural issues with coaches and team managers (eg. modify uniform requirements so that young Muslim women are comfortable participating)

Resources:

CMY. (2010). *Giving Communities a Sporting Chance*. Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth.