

CREATING A CLUB



Creating a Club

Background:

New clubs evolve from a range of circumstances the most obvious being the growth of communities or the changing demographics of a region. They arise from a perception by individuals or groups that a social need exists and has to be met.

If a club is to have any chance of success and longevity detailed planning is necessary. While there are certain minimal requirements in starting up a new club some comprehensive research early in the process will enhance the chances of success.

As part of the planning for a new club the following merit consideration:

- Establishing the real need for the Club;
- Having a base from which to operate;
- Compiling agreed objectives with others who are similarly committed to the concept;
- Assembling sufficient support to undertake the complete range of activities that will be needed to start the club and keep it operating; and,
- Creating the structural and policy environment by which the club will work.

Early Considerations:

Some research undertaken at the outset may make handling subsequent queries easier. For example:

- What is the level of interest and likely support in the local community beyond those who are initiating the proposal?
- Would information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the local Department of Sport & Recreation provide data that will emphasise the likelihood of success?
- Is there any strong local opposition to the idea that will hamper developments?
- Is support likely to be forthcoming from the local government/council?
- What laws and regulations exist that apply to organizations providing the services proposed- eg- child protection, occupational, health & safety?
- Will the club be a new enterprise or connected to an existing organisation?
- Is it targeted at juniors or seniors or both?

In addition to scoping the external environment there are practical aspects that need to be worked through. Some of these are:

- Determining the requirements of the local Union for inclusion in the competition eg a minimum of two teams;
- Appropriate grading or age groups;
- Awareness of, and compliance with, the Rules of Competition and Codes of Conduct;
- Playing strip/colours;
- Relationship to local club;
- Zones of responsibility with existing clubs;
- Demonstration of a sound administrative & financial base and,
- Access to appropriate facilities

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Initial steps:

Once the decision to proceed has been agreed progress will include some of the following steps:

- Confirm support from the other interesting parties;
- Undertake broad community exposure involving media announcements, community service announcements, notices at community centres/bulletin boards, letterbox drops and school visits.
- If possible include local high profile personalities to endorse the initiative.
- Organise a public meeting to which everyone is invited. This meeting must be well organised and structured. Its major objectives are to outline the purpose of the club, the processes that will be involved in creating it and formally establishing support. An interim committee could be established to organise the inaugural AGM when formal structures and committees would be put in place. At this stage it is also important to record the names and contact details of attendees so that their initial enthusiasm is followed up.
- The findings and outcomes of this meeting should be widely distributed. It is an opportunity to publicise the club's purpose, its target group and the activities and services it will offer to the community.
- After the AGM another release should be circulated that sets out the inaugural committee, contacts and forthcoming activities.

Membership:

Early in the process there is a need to determine and secure the minimum numbers that are needed to:

- Fill all executive and voluntary positions (coaches, managers, publicity, equipment/gear stewards etc);
- Provide sufficient player numbers.

Membership drives will require creative and dynamic approaches. A wide coverage by the use of posters, orientation sessions, open/come&try days, letterbox drops and local media releases are all encouraged.

It is important to establish a positive image from the outset and strong leadership and purpose can impress. An eye-catching uniform can also be appealing!

One thing is undeniable. Members must feel part of the club from the outset and then on an on-going basis if they are to continually make their skills available.

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Finance:

(see separate guidelines on Financial Management)

Organisations will not survive without a financial base. A budget underpins the financial stability of any organization and in framing one all sources of income and potential expenditure need to be determined.

Funds are required not only for expenditure on gear and equipment but also facility use, affiliation fees, insurance and possibly transport, medical expenses and end of year presentations & trophies

All potential sources of income need to be factored into framing a budget. This includes examining the availability of sponsors and grants. In initial considerations for a new club, if local authorities were made aware of the potential for improvement in the community environment the chances of their support are enhanced. It may not lead to cash contributions but it may lead to better co-operation for in-kind support.

Administration & Management:

A new club has to demonstrate administrative efficiency and effectiveness. There are many aspects of administration that have to be met and processed each week, others are longer term in their focus but all are necessary. A more comprehensive checklist is attached but the committee and volunteers should be made familiar with the more obvious. These include:

- An agreed plan that sets out the purpose and direction that the club will take over the next three to four years;
- A Constitution that provides the basic rules by which the club will run;
- Roles for each volunteer (sample job descriptions are available on this website);
- Committee procedures that require regular reporting and assessment of progress including financial status;
- Knowledge of local Union competition requirements (affiliation, registration, rules, team lists etc);
- Financial management systems;
- Membership lists & club records;
- An internal communication process, and,
- Links to the local senior body/Union.

Reference: Some of this material has been drawn from the module prepared by C Auld and G Cuskelly, School of Leisure Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane for the Australian Sports Commission

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Attachment A

Club Checklist

An annual appraisal of club performance is recommended and a template is available elsewhere on this website. However, as a preliminary check the club executive could consider the appropriateness of the club's handling of these matters:

Administration/Management

- Club constitution current & available
- Club's purpose and longer term objectives stated
- Club structure documented
- Job descriptions available
- Club core principles & values enunciated
- Structured meetings are regularly conducted
- Budget formulated annually
- Financial systems in place
- AGM and general meetings are conducted in line with the constitution
- Internal communication arrangements are in place
- Club records & photos maintained
- Links with external bodies are in place
- Succession planning strategy formulated

Competition & Coaching

- Accredited coaches appointed
- Team managers and support staff available
- Selection policy determined
- Competition rules known and complied with
- ARU & Union policies complied with
- Development plans formulated

Facilities & Equipment

- Playing and training fields accessible
- Training equipment available and in safe condition
- Match presentation responsibilities & protocols allocated
- Player uniforms in good order

Membership

- Players and officials registered
- Volunteers aware of role and responsibilities
- Membership recognition and benefits promulgated
- Codes of conduct in place

Strategic Alliances

- Potential commercial and sponsors benefactors identified
- Media links in place
- Local community relationships established
- School and development links in place