

## MELBOURNE SOUTH FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY



The nine Local Government Authorities (LGAs) within the Melbourne South region, in association with the South Metro Junior Football League, the Southern Football Netball League, the Victorian Amateur Football Association and AFL Victoria, have partnered to develop a Football Facilities Strategy. The Strategy will guide the future planning and development of football facilities throughout the Region.

In Season 2017, the Region reported 37,470 football registration across all leagues and program types, an increase of 10.9% or 3,600 participants.

Currently in draft stage, the Strategy provides an integrated and strategic approach to the provision of football facilities across Melbourne's South. The Strategy addresses current and future infrastructure demand to support the growth of football, as well as establishing clear objectives to guide future investment into community football facilities.

The Melbourne South region incorporates the nine Local Government Areas of Bayside City Council, City of Casey, Frankston City Council, Glen Eira City Council, City of Greater Dandenong, Kingston City Council, Monash City Council, City of Port Phillip and City of Stonnington.

The financial pressures of rate capping and ageing facilities, combined with planned development of new facilities in growth areas, requires all partners to approach sport infrastructure investment collaboratively to ensure best outcomes for communities.

The Region has enjoyed sustained growth in football participation across all player categories but has particularly high participation in the female and junior player categories, which sit well above Victorian metropolitan average penetration rates.

Female participation has proliferated by 379% to see an extra 4,565 female players participating in football since Season 2014. Overall football player numbers exceeded 37,000 in Season 2017 across the Region.

**This unprecedented growth now sees Melbourne's South faced with two mounting challenges; building capacity at existing ovals and providing facilities that cater for diversity to accommodate and retain new participation.**

### WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

The Draft Melbourne South Football Facilities Strategy has been developed based on key project outputs including:

- An audit of all football facilities;
- Analysis of current and projected participation numbers;
- Mapping the need for new grounds and facilities;
- Mapping under-utilised venues which may support growth
- Strategic directions and sports development workshops; and
- Delivery of a Key Findings Report which included analysis on the issues, opportunities and challenges impacting football across the Melbourne South region, highlighting potential opportunities for facility improvement based on facility audit outcomes.

Project partners have worked together to develop the Draft Melbourne South Football Facilities Strategy based on this consultation and analysis.

Three key objectives have been identified by project partners to guide the direction for the support of football facilities which will be underpinned by actions at the local level.

**VISION**  
COLLECTIVELY ENHANCE,  
IMPROVE AND DEVELOP  
FACILITIES THAT INCREASE  
THE CAPACITY OF THE  
REGION TO SUPPORT THE  
SIGNIFICANT IDENTIFIED  
GROWTH OF AFL ACTIVITIES  
IN MELBOURNE'S SOUTH



### PRIORITY 1

**Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities.**

Strategically approaching facility investment and increasing facility access through changed amenity provision, building ground capacity and use of alternate venues such as schools will be key to addressing the Region's facility gaps and ground access limitations.

Priority 1 identifies opportunities to grow the sport through improved ground capacity, considering alternate ground surfaces such as synthetic fields and hybrid turf, addressing lighting provision, amenities to support female participation and use of alternate venues such as schools and under-utilised grounds.

### PRIORITY 2

**Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, programs and competitions at key locations.**

Rapid population growth is predicted for the Melbourne South region. This will affect future football participation, placing further pressure on existing facilities and grounds that are, in some cases, already at capacity.

Priority 2 outlines projected demand and planning and development opportunities to ensure facility and ground provision aligns to this demand and encourages broad use and multi-purpose provision and inclusion.

### PRIORITY 3

**Continue to enhance the relationship between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs.**

State-wide, 87% of football facilities are provided on land owned and/or managed by local government who carry most of the responsibility for funding the renewal and upgrade of these assets.

Continuing to collaboratively plan facility renewal based on participation trends and projections will maximise facility usage, strategically direct new developments and support football participation growth into the future. Key to this will be sourcing new funding opportunities, initiating regular State of Play Reports and implementation of a local level Local Government Reference Group to review implementation of the Strategy

### CRITICAL ACTIONS

**Five Critical Actions have been identified to support Strategy implementation and guide project partner long term planning.**

1. Prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV and AFL Victoria Grants Programs to cater for unisex use.
2. Commit to developing options to increase existing ground capacity through the use of synthetic surfaces, oval upgrades and lighting provision.
3. Explore all opportunities to advocate for access to school facilities and develop ongoing partnerships with schools.
4. Collectively lobby for investment into identified regional level venues to support finals and player pathways.
5. Implement a Melbourne South Local Government Forum that meets as a minimum twice yearly to review the initiatives from the Melbourne South Football Facilities Strategy and to act as a further consultative process for football and LGAs in the Region.

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

**There will be opportunity provided to football clubs and the wider community in the Melbourne South region to review the Draft Strategy early 2018.**

**Written feedback will be requested according to an agreed process and timeframe.**

**This last round of feedback will be reviewed by the Project Control Group to support delivery of the Final Strategy anticipated for April 2018.**