



2020

# FOOTBALL IN MONASH

DISCUSSION PAPER

MAYOR’S MESSAGE ..... 3

1. INTRODUCTION ..... 4

    1.1 Background ..... 4

    1.2 This Discussion Paper ..... 4

    1.3 The Next Steps ..... 4

2. FOOTBALL IN MONASH ..... 5

    2.1 Benefits of playing football ..... 5

    2.2 Broader football trends/participation ..... 5

    2.3 Football Victoria – Club Engagement Program ..... 6

    2.4 Football participation in Monash ..... 6

    2.5 Distribution of Council Football Pitches and Clubs ..... 7

    2.6 Audits and Assessments of Monash Football Pitches ..... 8

    2.7 Table 3 - Summary of Football Pitches in Monash ..... 9

    2.8 Governance and sustainability of football clubs ..... 10

3. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION ..... 12

    3.1 Issue 1 - Football facilities ..... 12

    3.2 Issue 2 - Sustainability and governance of football clubs ..... 13

    3.3 Issue 3 – Participation ..... 13

    3.4 Issue 4 - Prioritisation of investment ..... 13

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF FORUM FINDINGS ..... 14

APPENDIX B – DISTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL FACILITIES IN MONASH, 2020 ..... 17



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Monash Football Discussion Paper 2020.

Our football clubs are a key contributor to the physical activity being undertaken by the Monash community. It is well known that regular physical activity can provide significant gains in health and wellbeing by preventing chronic disease including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. It can also improve mental wellbeing, build social connection, increase productivity and create positive change in the places where we live, learn, work and play. Good health is a great foundation for living life to the full.

This Discussion Paper represents meaningful and effective engagement with football clubs in Monash that occurred throughout 2019. Football has a strong presence in the City of Monash. What we are doing now is planning for the future of the sport to ensure it thrives into the future.

The Monash Football Forum was a unique opportunity for Council to engage with all football clubs and discuss issues and opportunities that are unique to the sport. This Discussion Paper represents the views that were put forward by clubs and presents a series of questions that delve into how the sport can be successful and sustainable in Monash for many years to come.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the forum and contributed to this document including representatives from all football clubs in Monash and Football Victoria. I am confident that, working together, we will effectively plan for the future of The World Game in Monash.

STUART JAMES  
Mayor

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The City of Monash is a culturally diverse community in Melbourne's south-east suburbs. We are home to an estimated population of over 200,000 residents, making us one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria. Forty-eight point nine percent (48.9%) of residents are born overseas, which is much higher than Greater Melbourne at 33.8%. Twenty-one point nine percent (21.9%) of the population are aged 60 or over, which is slightly higher than the Greater Melbourne average of 19%.

Our City (81.5 square kilometres) includes the following suburbs: Ashwood, Clayton, Glen Waverley, Hughesdale, Huntingdale, Mount Waverley, Mulgrave, Notting Hill, Oakleigh, Oakleigh East, and Wheelers Hill. Parts of Chadstone, Burwood and Oakleigh South are also included in Monash.

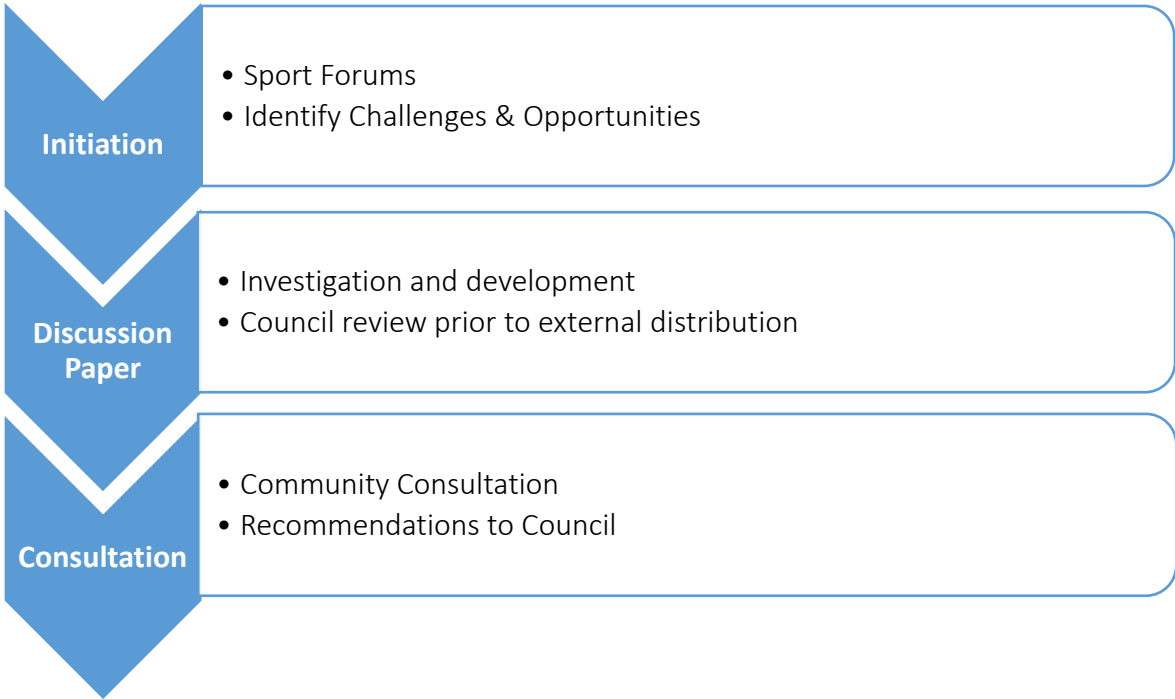
## 1.2 This Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper has been developed following the Monash Football Forum held with clubs and Football Victoria on 27 June, 2019. This Discussion Paper considers issues and opportunities as identified by clubs, Football Victoria and Council officers at the forum.

For more information on forum findings, refer to Appendix A – Summary of forum findings.

## 1.3 The Next Steps

This discussion paper will be released for broader community consultation before findings are presented to Council with any recommendations to help Council plan for the future of football in Monash.



## 2. FOOTBALL IN MONASH

### 2.1 Benefits of playing football

Football is the most popular sport in the world and can be played both recreationally and competitively, indoors and outdoors and across a number of formats. Being a game of continuous play, it is a great sport for fitness and cardiovascular health, as well as building strength, flexibility and endurance.

Football is a sport that is inclusive of various ages, skill levels and athletic ability. It is a sport that teaches coordination, teamwork and concentration. Being a sport that requires very little equipment, it is a sport that can be played in the backyard or down at the local park.

Source: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/soccer-health-benefits](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/soccer-health-benefits)

### 2.2 Broader football trends/participation

According to 2019 Ausplay data for football (released October, 2019), the national participation rate for football is 5.5% of the Australian adult population (aged 15+). Nationally, the dominant motivation for adults to participate in football was 'Fun/enjoyment' (57%), however 'Social reasons' (43%) and 'Physical health or fitness' (39%) were also strong motivators.

Across Australia, males account for 77% of adult participation in football. Adults have been found to have a median frequency of 52 football sessions per annum, with a median session duration of 75 minutes.

For juniors, that national participation rate for those aged 0-14 years is 15.9%. Males account for 78% of junior (under 15) football participants nationally, which is consistent with adult rates across the county (77%) as mentioned above.

The 2019 Ausplay study also identified that national growth opportunities for football are quite limited among adults (aged 15+), which is reflected in the slightly downward national trend in participation over the last three years. The study has identified that current trends and net growth market opportunity are much more favourable and likely with children (aged under 15), especially for girls aged 0-8.

Over a longer period of time, according to national research undertaken by Roy Morgan in 2017, the number of regular football participants across the country has grown 46% over a 15 year period (2001-2016). This growth was found to be an outlier compared to most other organised sports. In the same period, the overall number of participants across all sports dropped at an average of 7%.

## 2.3 Football Victoria – Club Engagement Program

Football Victoria is committed to assisting local football clubs to be viable, sustainable and successful. To do this, they have endeavoured to identify different areas that Victorian clubs should endeavour to thrive in. The Club Engagement Program identifies over 100 key metrics that a 'great' club would have in place. Clubs can use this tool and compare themselves against these measures to provide an assessment of their strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Key focus areas of this program include:

- Resilience & Capacity
- Female Participation
- Inclusive Participation
- Facilities
- Meeting Demand
- Community Citizenship
- Football Experience

## 2.4 Football participation in Monash

The Ausplay 2019 participation data reported that adult football participation (aged 15+) in Monash is slightly above the current national average, 5.9% compared with 5.5%. However, the rate for juniors (aged under 15), was 14%, which is lower than the national average for that age group at 15.9%. This lower than average participation of juniors in Monash is attributable to particular low rates of participation for girls, given that Ausplay data shows the participation rate for boys in Monash is 21.7%, which is considerably above the 15.9% national average for under 15 football.

Based on Football Victoria (FV) player registration data for 2019, 3,049 Monash residents were a registered participant in the sport. Of this figure, only 1,256, or 41.19%, played their football with a club based in the City of Monash.

FV data also showed that a total of 2,560 players were registered to play with clubs based in Monash, indicating that 489 Monash footballers (net) were registered to play with clubs outside the municipality. Whilst there is no data to indicate why, reasons for this may include lack of provision, suitable clubs or opportunities for local residents to play.

There are 11 football clubs in Monash that operate under a license arrangement with Council. In 2019, clubs had access to 24 football pitches of various sizes and standards. The following table summarises the total number of teams of all eleven clubs over the past five seasons highlighting the under representation in junior and female participation in particular.

Table 1 – Registered teams for tenant clubs accessing Monash facilities over the past 5 seasons

YEAR	ADULT MALE	ADULT FEMALE	JUNIOR	TOTAL
2015	22	4	151	177
2016	21	3	129	153
2017	22	4	141	167
2018	25	7	136	168
2019	23	4	111	138

## 2.5 Distribution of Council Football Pitches and Clubs

Football facility mapping and analysis of distribution of football facilities throughout Monash shows that the majority of Council-owned pitches are located in the western section of the municipality. 52% of pitches are located adjacent to or within the Huntingdale Road and Warrigal Road stretch, with the highest population per pitch ratios being recorded in Mount Waverley and Clayton/Notting Hill areas.

Table 2 - Distribution of Council owned football pitches by sub-region, 2020

AREA	POPULATION	COUNCIL-OWNED FOOTBALL PITCHES	POPULATION NUMBER PER PITCH
<b>City of Monash</b>	200,077	24	8,337
<b>Ashwood Burwood Chadstone</b>	20,195	5	4,039
<b>Clayton Notting Hill</b>	26,722	2	13,361
<b>Glen Waverley</b>	43,064	5	8,613
<b>Mount Waverley</b>	36,327	2	18,164
<b>Mulgrave</b>	20,896	4	5,224
<b>Oakleigh Hughesdale Oakleigh East Oakleigh South</b>	31,863	6	5,311
<b>Wheelers Hill</b>	21,010	0	

Refer to Appendix B - Distribution of football facilities in Monash, 2020.



## 2.6 Audits and Assessments of Monash Football Pitches

In 2019, Council officers commissioned a series of audits and assessments of football pitches and associated supporting infrastructure. These audits were undertaken independently by external experts.

Common facility issues across Monash football pitches include:

- Issues with pitch irrigation
- Issues with pitch drainage
- Presence of winter grass tufts
- Heavy soil, contributing to poor drainage
- Less than ideal surface shape
- Non-compliant flood lighting lux levels in accordance with Football Victoria lighting standards
- Non-compliant flood lighting uniformities in accordance with Football Victoria lighting standards

Please read on to *2.7 Summary of football pitches* in Monash for analysis of each football pitch in Monash in consideration of recommended facility standards by Football Victoria.

Football Victoria requirements for field of play dimensions are:

- Touch line – minimum length of 90 metres, maximum length of 105 metres
- Goal line – minimum length of 50 metres, maximum length of 68 metres

Football Victoria lighting standards for training are:

- Minimum lux average of 100
- Minimum horizontal uniformities of  $U_1$  0.50,  $U_2$  0.30



## 2.7 Table 3 - Summary of Football Pitches in Monash

PITCH	MEETS MINIMUM PITCH SIZE FOR SENIOR FV COMPETITION STANDARDS	MEETS MINIMUM FV FLOODLIGHTING STANDARDS FOR TRAINING	FOOTBALL PITCH IS CRICKET WICKET FREE	FOOTBALL ONLY VENUE
Gardiners Reserve North	✓ (90 x 55m)		✓	✓
Gardiners Reserve Synthetic	✓ (100 x 65m)	✓	✓	✓
Gardiners Reserve South	✓ (100 x 68m)		✓	✓
Ashwood Reserve North	✓ (90 x 50m)		✓	
Batesford Reserve	✓ (90 x 51m)			
Caloola Reserve West	✓ (105 x 65m)			
Caloola Reserve East	✓ (90 x 55m)		✓	
Scotchmans Run Reserve	✓ (100 x 66m)		✓	✓
Mayfield Reserve	✓ (100 x 60m)			
Jack Edwards Reserve Turf	✓ (100 x 66m)	✓	✓	✓
Jack Edwards Reserve Synthetic	✓ (100 x 60m)	✓	✓	✓
Argyle Reserve	✓ (100 x 62m)		✓	✓
Carlson Reserve West	✓ (100 x 64m)		✓	
Carlson Reserve East	✓ (90 x 55m)		✓	
Tally Ho Reserve	✓ (90 x 60m)		✓	
Glen Waverley North Reserve	✓ (90 x 60m)			
Larpent Reserve	✓ (100 x 60m)			
Capital Reserve	✓ (105 x 65m)			
Brandon Park Reserve East	✓ (100 x 60m)		✓	
Brandon Park Reserve West	(50 x 40m)		✓	
Freeway Reserve Main	✓ (103 x 60m)		✓	
Freeway Reserve Central	✓ (100 x 65m)		✓	
Freeway Reserve South	✓ (98 x 65m)		✓	
Southern Reserve	✓ (90 x 60m)			



## 2.8 Governance and sustainability of football clubs

All football clubs that regularly use Council-owned football pitches in Monash do so under a license agreement. These agreements are typically seasonal and mostly apply between the months of April and August. This can be a challenge for clubs, especially when early season fixtures or end-of-season finals are often played outside of the typical seasonal allocation.

Football clubs have licenses to facilities that are located within public open space and reserves that are publically accessible, meaning maintenance and management responsibilities fall entirely with Council. As landowner and asset manager of community football pitches in Monash, Council applies seasonal sportsground fees to recoup approximately 15% of maintenance costs from tenants. This cost recovery figure and varying levels of maintenance are determined by the level of sport played on that field. That is to say, a club playing at an A grade field will pay more than a C grade field.

For more information on this, please refer to Council's Active Reserves Fees and Charges Policy: [www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/leisure/recreation-strategies/active-monash-fees-and-charges-policy-february-2018-updated.pdf](http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/leisure/recreation-strategies/active-monash-fees-and-charges-policy-february-2018-updated.pdf)

At the Monash Football Forum, several clubs nominated a scarce volunteer workforce as one of the most critical issues facing the sport presently. This is an issue that many sporting codes are currently faced with and one which further emphasises that clubs can often be stretched by leaving 'too much to too few'. Having clearly defined roles, strong governance and a sustainable connection with community are important elements of any successful community sporting club. As well as a dwindling volunteer base, clubs also flagged that gender diversity on club committees was also lacking and is an area for improvement.

Often, the sustainability of community groups, in this instance football clubs, is heavily contingent on their capacity to understand and successfully engage with the various demographics of their community. Inclusive and culturally diverse clubs that are reflective of the Monash Community was nominated by several clubs as a key issue at the forum, and is a strong starting point to prioritising and embedding inclusivity into any future planning for football in Monash.

Currently, there are two clubs in Monash that participate at Senior National Premier League (NPL) level. The Football Victoria Football Facilities Guide specifies that NPL level facilities need a higher level of amenities provision and are to be designed and maintained to a high standard. The intention is that these facilities are to be primarily used for regional games / elite level competitions and can cater for large numbers of spectators.

This covers minimum requirements for several assets, including:

- Minimum pitch size (100-105m x 60-68m)
- Minimum pitch runoff (3m)
- Formally line marked technical areas
- Minimum sizes for change rooms, amenities and match officials rooms
- Provision of media viewing and broadcast/filming areas
- Undercovered spectator seating areas to accommodate up to 500 people

For more information on Football Victoria's facility guidelines for National Premier League facilities, as well as senior and junior local and community competitions, please visit: [www.footballvictoriafacilities.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FV-BUILDING-DEVELOPMENT-GUIDE.pdf](http://www.footballvictoriafacilities.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FV-BUILDING-DEVELOPMENT-GUIDE.pdf)

A recent trend across Melbourne is for some community football clubs to establish elite player pathways outside of the NPL structures and talent pathways.

Activities can include and not be limited to, out of season clinics, trials, academies, player development squads and professional coaching. Many include incentives and the lure of international exposure, participation or opportunities.

Clubs can also look to use their access rights from Council to expand their participation through partnerships and associations with professional coaching groups or clubs looking to expand their talent identification programs. Given the relative shortage of grounds across Monash, the need to prioritise use has become an issue for Council.



### 3. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Issue 1 - Football facilities

At the forum, clubs nominated condition of football facilities as 2 of the top 3 most critical issues facing the sport, specifically playing surface standards and floodlighting. Without doubt, the future planning, management and maintenance of football facilities are essential ingredients to ensure a sustainable and thriving football community in Monash.

1. Currently, one third of football pitches in Monash have a synthetic cricket wicket located inside the playing field. What level or standard of football is suitable to be played at venues that have covered cricket pitches within the playing field?
2. At the forum, some clubs suggested that club members are willing to travel further distances to get to their club as they are familiar and comfortable with the club culture. With this in mind, should future investment for football facilities in Monash focus on:
  - a. existing venues and tenants which already have a strong player and social membership base?

OR

  - b. invest in neutral venues that can be accessed by several clubs and potentially accommodate night matches?
3. Is shared access of 'football only' venues between clubs an opportunity that Council should further explore? Yes or No? Please explain why.
4. Council's current sport lighting policy requires a minimum 20% club contribution for the upgrading of lights. Should this be amended to allow clubs to focus their investment more on club and game development? Yes or No? Please explain why.

### **3.2 Issue 2 - Sustainability and governance of football clubs**

1. What support should Council offer to clubs who may be declining in numbers and/or experiencing financial hardship?
2. Should Council support and permit clubs to enter into third-party arrangements with commercial (for profit) operators (e.g. football coaching and academy businesses), given that clubs only hold a license over venues that are classified as community open space and are publically accessible? Yes or No? Please explain why.
3. Should Council support and permit clubs to develop and implement elite pathway structures, academies or partnerships with professional clubs that sit outside of NPL and FV structures and pathways? Yes or No? Please explain why.
4. At the forum, 'increased participation and inclusiveness of clubs' was the most popular club response when clubs were asked what the sport will ideally look like in 10-15 years from now. Is it reasonable to expect that all football clubs in Monash commit to this at governance level and in their strategic plans? Yes or No? If yes, what do clubs need to do in order to achieve this outcome?

### **3.3 Issue 3 – Participation**

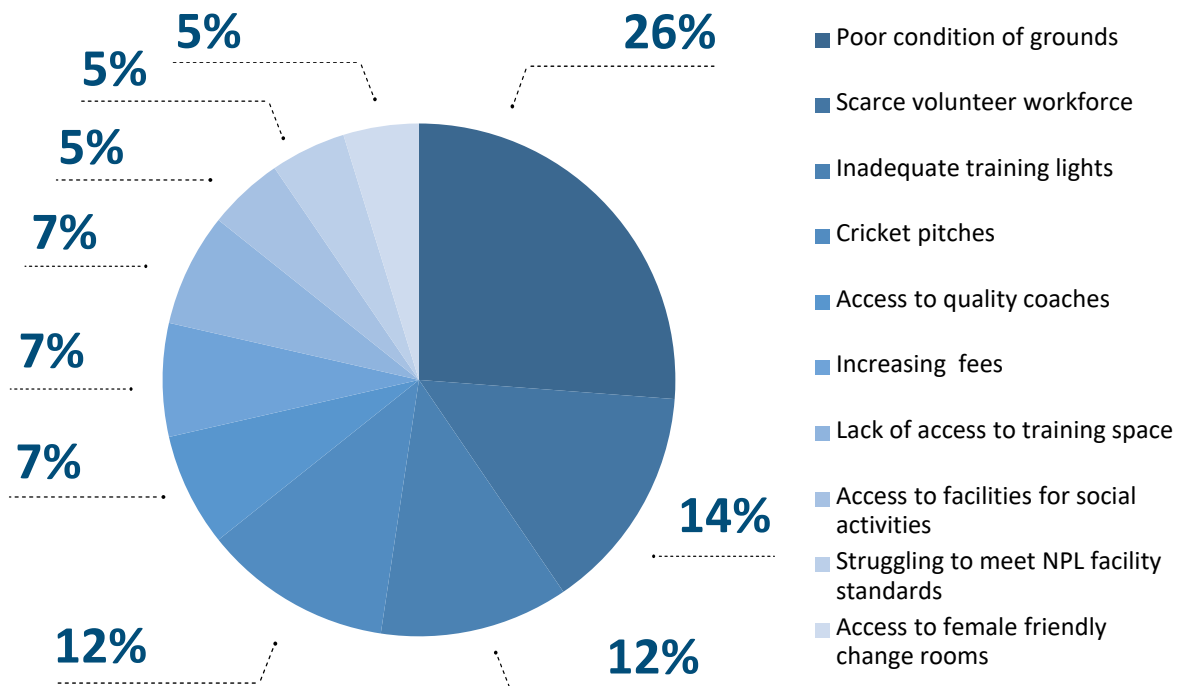
1. Should football clubs be encouraged to accommodate non-traditional modes of participation, such as small-sided and modified games (for example, walking football or all abilities programs) to encourage broad participation? Yes or No? Please explain why.
2. Should football clubs be encouraged to offer affordable membership options that cater for casual and social play? Yes or No? Please explain why.
3. Football in Monash is currently below national rates for female participation. Do you think this is something that clubs and Council should commit to and strive for across players, committees, coaching and refereeing? Yes or No? Please explain why.

### **3.4 Issue 4 - Prioritisation of investment**

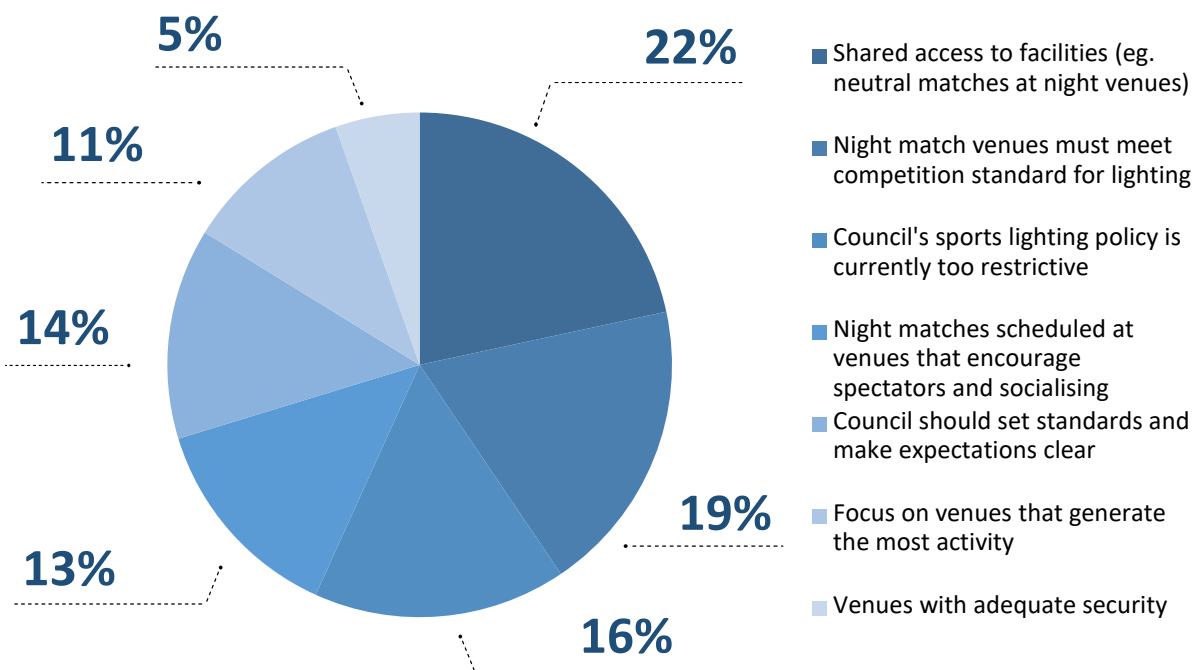
1. Should Council establish a clear set of funding criteria to facility improvements and principles for future investment into football facilities? If so, what do you think the top 3 principles should be?
2. With significant Council/community investment required to achieve NPL venue standards, is it reasonable to expect that more clubs would have access to these NPL venues if or when upgraded?
3. Currently, there are two clubs in Monash with Senior NPL status. How many Senior NPL clubs is feasible/sustainable in Monash? Please explain why.
4. Currently, there are two clubs in Monash with Junior NPL status. How many Junior NPL clubs is feasible/sustainable in Monash? Please explain why.

## APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF FORUM FINDINGS

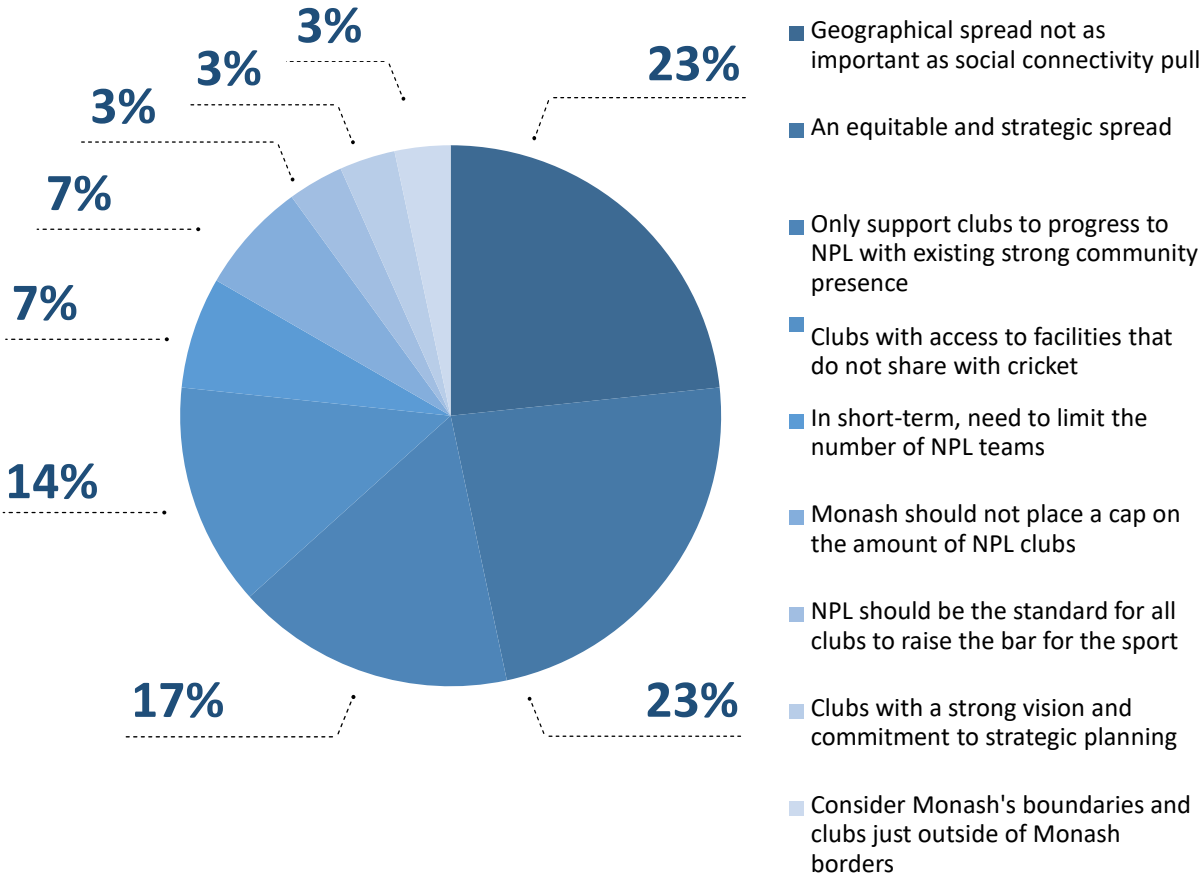
### Forum Discussion Topic 1 – What are the most critical issues facing your club?



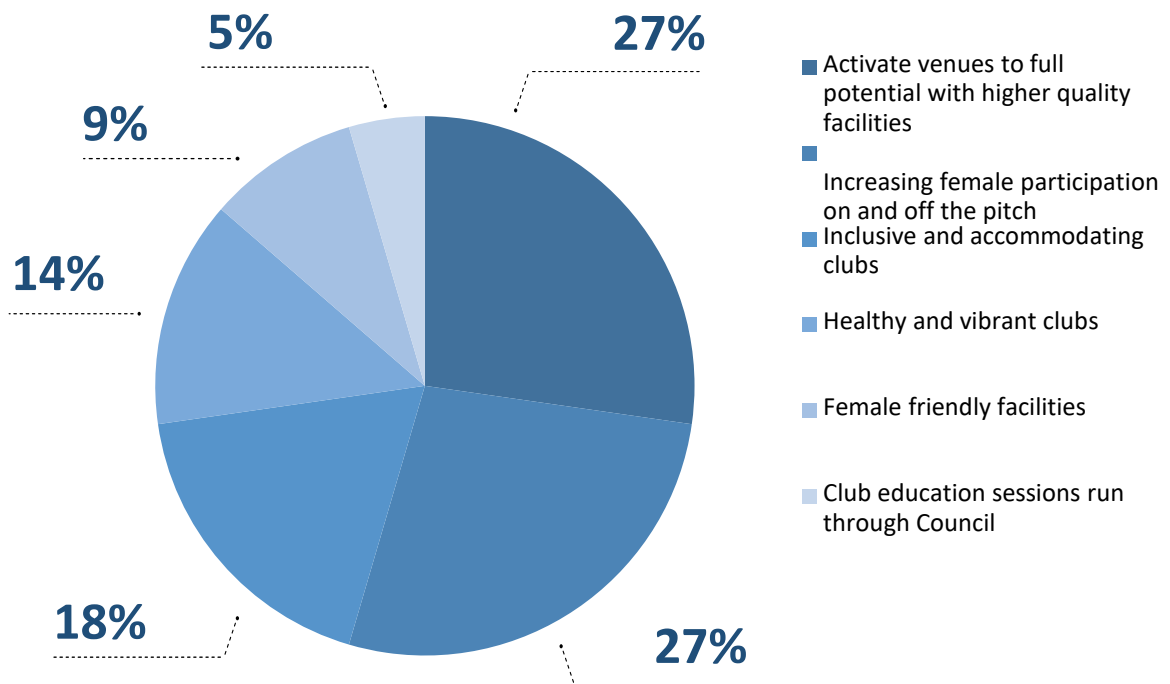
### Forum Discussion Topic 2 – What is a fair and equitable approach to the provision of night match venues for football in Monash?



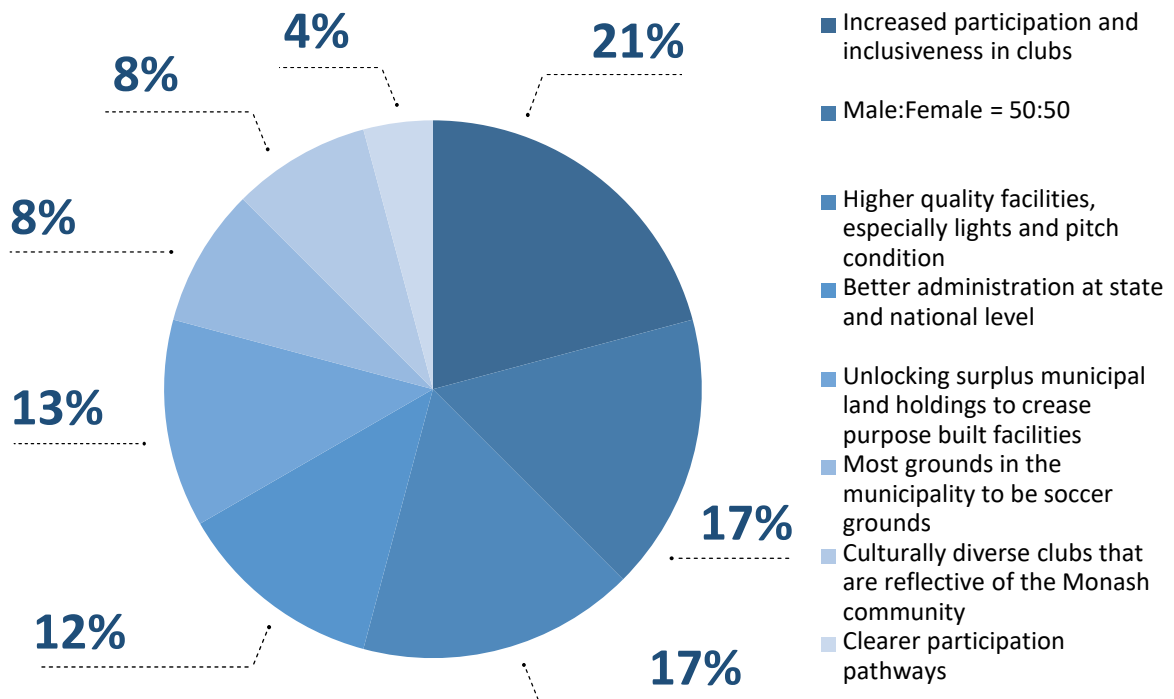
**Forum Discussion Topic 3** – For clubs participating at NPL level, there are higher requirements on facility standards and access. In 2019, clubs were recently invited to enter the newly formed junior NPL. What is a reasonable distribution and quantity of NPL clubs in Monash?



**Forum Discussion Topic 4a** - Broadly speaking, what do you feel needs to happen for football to thrive into the future?



**Forum Discussion Topic 4b** – Ideally, what does the sport look like in 10-15 years?





# APPENDIX B – DISTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL FACILITIES IN MONASH, 2020



## HAVE YOUR SAY

We are keen to hear from you and receive your responses to questions that are listed in the discussion paper via the following link

[www.monash.vic.gov.au/monash-football](http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/monash-football)

All football clubs are encouraged to share this opportunity with their members. The views of all community members and stakeholders are also welcomed through this process.

Council is seeking feedback until Friday 29 May.

## MORE INFORMATION

Recreation Services

Phone: (03) 9518 3527

Email: [recreation@monash.vic.gov.au](mailto:recreation@monash.vic.gov.au)