Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the lands on which we are all gathered today and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

I would like to specifically acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Bunurong, Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation as the ongoing custodians of the lands on which Monash University now stands.

We pay our respects through our research, teaching and learning to the Wurundjeri and Bunurong, Boon Wurrung Elders and their past, present and future communities.

What is Informal Sport?

Background

As we become increasingly time poor, sport is being tailored to meet personal needs. This is largely being influenced by the increased use of online tools and applications to individualise sport. Health, rather than competition, is becoming a major driver for participation in sport.

Society is however changing, Australia as a country is changing, and sport needs to change too to avoid the classic traps of complacency, stasis and overconfidence that can be the product of decades of success and a failure to adapt to changing times.

John Wyle, Chair of Sport Australia

Australian society has become, and will continue to be, highly multicultural. Different cultures have different sporting preferences and recreation habits. Sporting organisations will be challenged with capturing the interest and involvement of diverse cultures.

A TIME OF CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Participation Statistics ABS
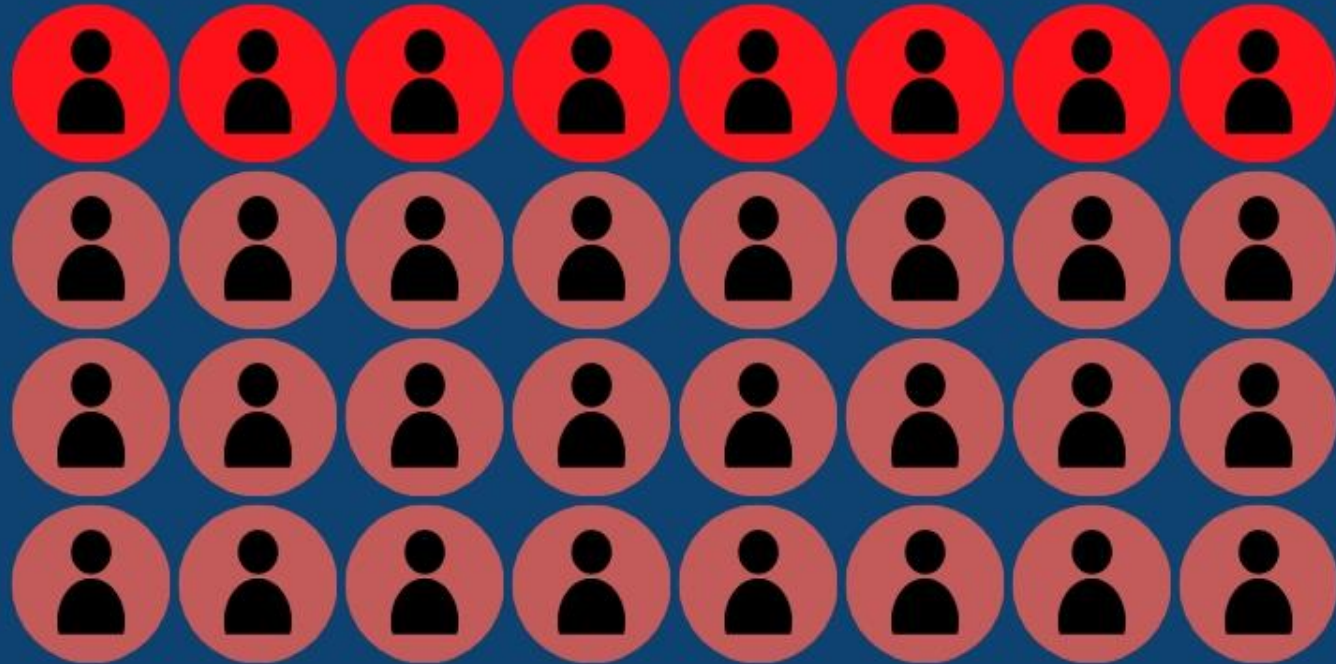
Only

26%

of persons aged 15 years and over will be playing an organised sport

Adult participation in formal
SPORT

15% by 2036

(Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport, 2017)

One million more people were active in 2018/19 than were active in 2015

One million less people played organised sports in the same period

(Active Lives report, 2019: Sport England, Adults).

Why is informal sport important?

- Physical activity & health agendas
- Continuation of children's play – rethinking sport
- Relationship with traditional forms of sport
- Health and Physical Education and School Sport

INFORMAL SPORT AS A HEALTH AND SOCIAL RESOURCE FOR DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE: RESEARCH PROJECT

1. Understand how informal sports that engage diverse young people are **self-organised** and **managed**, and provide evidence for the social, health and economic **benefits** that these activities provide within diverse communities

2. Enhance the capacity of government, sport, physical activity and health agencies to **harness** the health and wellbeing **potential** of informal sport by generating guidance and practical resources to assist with **reconceptualising** current policy and operational approaches.

Informal Sport as a Health and Social Resource for Diverse Young People

Research Methodology

Victoria

Western Australia

Policy Network Analysis and Key Stakeholder Interviews
60 Interviews, National, State and Local Authority Level & collection of policy documents across sport, health and local government sectors

Phase 1

Case study Analysis

Phase 2

City of Casey

Hume City Council

City of Canning

City of Stirling

4 sites of informal sport at each case study area.
Mixture of facilities, locations, cultural diversity, socio-economic status and gender

Focus groups with each informal sport group and social connectedness survey
Approximately 160 participants

Observations using system observation of play and recreation in communities (SOPARC)
leading to cost benefit analysis

Participatory Design Workshops
1 in each Local Authority Area with key stakeholders identified in phase 1 and 2. Develop resources and policy solutions

Phase 3

Informal Sport as a Spectrum?

Organised sport is only going to provide opportunities for such a small margin of Victorian community to be active and we need to almost adopt a lifecycle approach that is flexible for different opportunities for people to be active around the rigours of their daily routine….. So, it's really about trying to design a system, if you like, that is responsive to where people are at through different stages of their lives to be active. (State rep Vic)

Who?

Why?

What benefits?

Informal Groups & Sporting Space

- Ownership & co-sharing
- Seasonal Space
- Historical planning & data issue
- Wrong activities and the wrong people
- Lack of facilities & overcrowding

"There's a very strong sense of ownership of clubs over facilities, something that we're working pretty hard to change in the way that we design and build, more the buildings, as opposed to the sports grounds. And especially with, it's been a season where the club's worked pretty hard to manage their use and then at the end of the season we send a community group down there to run a tournament, and they get caught antsy at us, why they're not paying for the use of it all year, like they are." (LGA Vic)

Legislation, Policy and Funding

- Insurance, booking spaces
- Policies prioritizing existing users
- Not accounted for within current funding systems
- Linking of funding to participation data
- Community facilities v commercial assets?

"New user groups wishing to utilise a reserve must submit an EOI form on an annual basis to be considered for future allocations. Council officers will work with the State Sporting Association (SSA) to confirm any new user groups are registered through the relevant SSA". LGA policy

A lot of community members have come to me … and said, "we've contacted the [council], every time we do no one's helping us". Obviously, there's a process to booking venues and to accessing the venues. But it's just not knowing who to speak to or the procedures. And it's just, they feel shut down. They would call the council and they'll just say, "call this person". (Community Organisation rep).

There is a – this is part of a much broader discussion in terms of poverty and economic problems some of these kids are faced with…..the issue of public liability is just another final kind of nail in the coffin of trying to – for a lot of kids trying to organise informal social sporting activities. (Community Organisation rep)

Innovative responses

- Community groups/ Key leaders acting as a bridge
- Tennis, book a court system
- Annual low cost memberships that cover insurance
- Activating low usage spaces,
- Providing toilet blocks
- Leaving lights on
- Holistic planning, new facilities considering dual usage
- Activating school spaces
- Prioritization of multi-use/all weather in planning
- Recognition for need of whole of system planning to be proactive rather than responsive

Implications so far..... & where to next?

- Understanding informal sport
- Raising awareness of importance in policy considerations
- Exploring funding alternatives
- Sporting space, planning, access, legislation –problem solving options
- Innovation, leveraging this
- Co-design workshops

Contact

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https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/informal-sport-health-social-resource-for-diverse-young-people