



Be the Change!

AFL Yarra Ranges

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The Be the Change! Project evolved from community motivation to prevent violence against women (PVAW) in the Yarra Valley community.

The commitment and persistence of key community members, combined with willingness by the AFL Yarra Ranges and the Eastern Football League (EFL) to enhance women's participation in football, resulted in an innovative and impactful community forum in June 2017. The success of the Be the Change! Project owes a significant amount to local community partnerships and their role in driving the work.

The Be the Change! Project engaged with leadership in women's participation at a crucial time in the development of women's football.

2017 saw the first National Women's AFL League. The Be the Change! Project took advantage of this critical timing, as over the last year many clubs across Melbourne's east had broadened the scope of women's involvement in football and have been tackling key issues such as facilities management, scheduling of games and challenging internal cultures and attitudes towards women as part of the well-established Eastern Ranges competition.

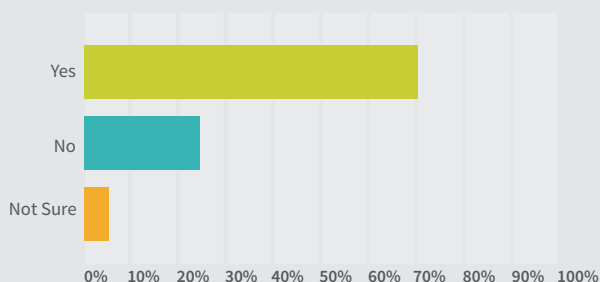
Be the Change! Survey

This survey gathered information from key club officials on:

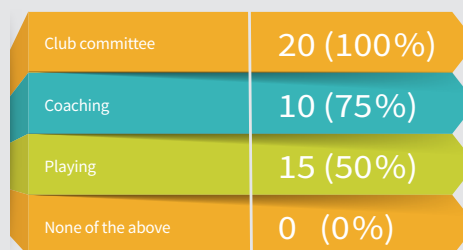


20 of 30 AFL Yarra Ranges clubs completed the survey

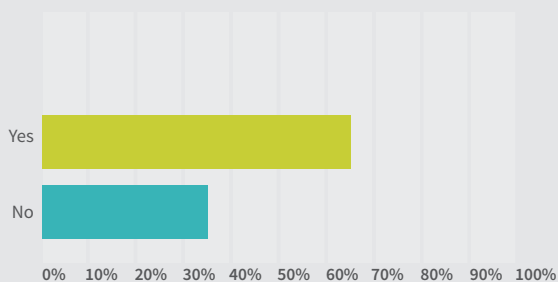
70% of clubs had a key person who championed respectful relationships or a healthy culture between men and women.



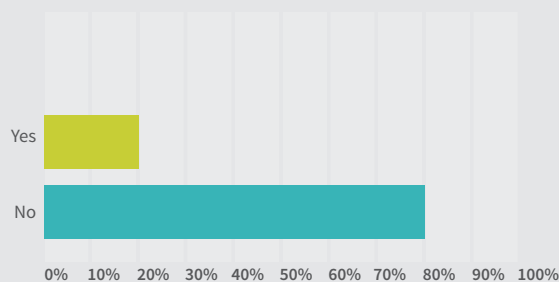
100% of clubs that responded to the survey had women represented on their club committee.



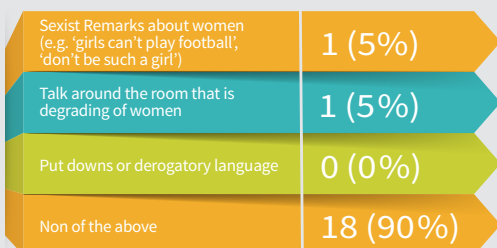
65% of clubs were aware of local family violence support services they could refer people to for support.



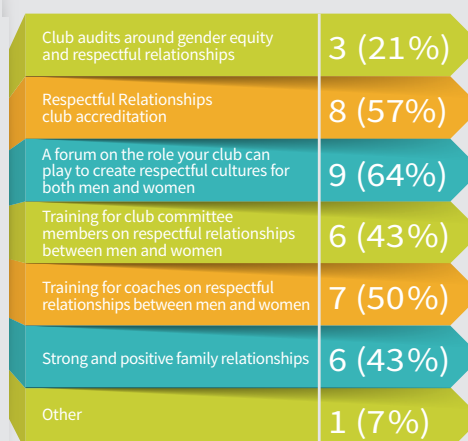
20% of clubs in the last 12 months had an alcohol or drug related incident that had a negative impact on the club.



5% of clubs reported that sexist remarks about women are common in their club culture.



There was significant interest in strategies to support positive relationships between men and women in football clubs.



Be the Change! Forum

23 clubs from AFL Yarra Ranges attended the Be the Change! Forum

What identified by clubs attending the forum as the main factors that would support girl's and women's participation?

Most of the club representatives that attended the forum were able to identify some of their strengths to support girls and womens participation. The forum enabled several participants to share stories about what was working well. Several clubs shared how increasing girls participation had brought families back to the club that had previously disengaged. They also shared how the atmosphere within club environments had changed with more girls and womens involvement. The tone of the sharing was exciting and encouraging. Some club representatives shared stories of being challenged or feeling unsupported in establishing their first junior girls teams but they chose to be persistent and continue to invest in supporting the girls to play.

Overall, five main strengths were identified in the clubs in the eastern region.

- ▶ **An attitude of openness to womens and family participation across all levels within clubs** – Some clubs were open and actively encouraged women and families to participate within any given role in their football environment.
- ▶ **The de-normalisation of traditionally gendered roles** – Some clubs were beginning to be fair and equal with the distribution of tasks/roles within the club.
- ▶ **Women and men are involved in leadership and decision making** – Some clubs had women in leadership positions. Leadership within some clubs had shown commitment to achieving gender equality on the club committee.
- ▶ **Introduction of women's football teams at senior and junior level** – Some clubs had women's teams in junior and senior level whilst an increasing number of clubs were planning to introduce women's teams.
- ▶ **Working towards equal and fair distribution of facilities and resources** – Some clubs were ensuring that all genders had equal access to the same resources and facilities. This had involved changing schedules and making conscious decisions that do not reinforce girls or women as secondary players on the field.

All members are treated equally!

Quotes from two AFL Yarra Ranges clubs in attendance

“We have a mixed committee of female and male Netball and Football players. We have an equal playing field. Our current strengths are we all get along and share duties. We are a very homely club. No position is gender based.”

“Vice president is dedicated to junior’s girl’s team. We have an understanding of roles in committee through development of position descriptions and a strong culture of respect within girl’s teams, team managers and coaches. Dad’s are highly involved in girls teams - great to see fathers who have limited contact with their daughter being involved.”

