

# Sports Focus Annual Report

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2024 - 2025



**SPORTS FOCUS**

*SAFE • WELCOMING • INCLUSIVE*

[www.sportsfocus.com.au](http://www.sportsfocus.com.au)

# Our vision..

“Physically active, connected,  
inclusive and resilient communities”



# Our mission..

“Engaging and enabling communities to  
shape their future health and wellbeing  
through physical activity”



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# Board Chair Report

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It is with great pleasure that I present the Chair's Report for Sports Focus at this year's Annual General Meeting. Over the past year, our organisation has continued to strengthen its strategic direction, demonstrate its commitment to community engagement and advocate for inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven sport across central and northern Victoria.

## *LEAD WITH A PLAN*

The Community Sports Partnership (CSP) program has been a major strategic direction taken by the organisation. After the departure of the CSP Consultant back in March of this year, the role is now fully managed by existing Sports Focus team members, leveraging their extensive experience and knowledge. We have broadened the scope of the CSP to include club growth opportunities in areas such as gender equality—an important step toward inclusive sport development. The Community Sport Partnerships (CSP) program remains a cornerstone of our work. All workshops delivered through the CSP are now being evaluated by attendees, with data analysed to improve program delivery. New evaluation forms have been introduced to gain deeper insights into the value of the information provided, and follow-ups are planned with workshop participants to assess post-session impact.

Over the course of the year our directors and staff have actively pursued professional development to enhance organisational capacity. Directors attended the 'Seat at the Table' workshop hosted by CMSport, and Director Jacqui Carroll undertook Governance training through The Boardroom School. Staff members have participated in a range of webinars covering topics such as 'Building Reputation through Media', 'Benchmarking Board Performance', and 'Driving Sustainable Change'. Staff members, Lauren Fawcett and Laura Bradley also completed 'Building Resilience' training through the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in May. Further Cyber Security and Social Media Law training was delivered to staff to bolster our digital literacy and risk management capabilities.

We continue to deepen our use of the GOAT Risk platform, with monthly reviews uncovering new ways to enhance our risk management practices. This tool has become integral to our governance framework and operational resilience.

## *LISTEN AND ACT*

Sports Focus has provided a range of tailored resources and advisory support to various sporting groups across the region. From supporting clubs with amalgamations, to joining competitions and other challenges. This initiative reflects our ongoing dedication to strengthening grassroots sport and ensuring sustainable club operations in regional communities.

# Board Chair Report

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## *LISTEN AND ACT*

We also circulated a targeted survey for children with a disability to better understand their sport participation preferences. This data will inform future program design and ensure inclusive opportunities for all young people.

We have actively engaged in advocacy efforts, including correspondence to our four local MPs expressing concern over the defunding of The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and the cancellation of the Prevention of Violence through Sport Grants Funding program. Further correspondence was sent in response to an ABC article on the issue, amplifying the voices of local clubs, leagues, and associations.

Sports Focus continues to play an active role in sector-wide advocacy. We have engaged with Regional Sport Victoria to encourage the establishment of a lead role focused on safeguarding children in community sport across regional Victoria. This initiative reflects our commitment to creating safe, inclusive environments for all participants.

## *TAKE A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH*

Gannawarra Shire Council has expressed interest in extending our Fee for Service support, building on the success of our current Flood Recovery Support project. We also continue to engage with the Council through their community club forum, further solidifying our partnership and shared commitment to community sport development.

We are in active discussions to extend our partnership with Better Boards Australasia, with a focus on supporting clubs interested in the Our Cat Herder governance platform. This initiative aims to strengthen club governance and leadership capacity across the region.

Our collaboration with Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander Shire Councils continues as we support the implementation of their Fair Access Policies—an important step toward equitable access to sport and recreation for all.

An exciting development this year has been our partnership with Bendigo Community Health Service (BCHS), through which we successfully secured a \$50,000 funding grant to support our joint work with multicultural communities. This collaboration enhances our efforts to remove barriers to participation and create meaningful opportunities for engagement in sport and recreation.

The 12-month project, running from July 2025 to June 2026, is focused on supporting the Karen, Afghan, and Filipino communities. Through targeted programming and community-led initiatives, we aim to educate, empower, and enable these groups to actively participate in sport and recreation, thereby enhancing social cohesion and community wellbeing across Bendigo.

# Board Chair Report

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## *TAKE A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH*

In collaboration with Table Tennis Victoria and Badminton Victoria, we have delivered a series of Come 'n' Try days designed to introduce multicultural communities to new sports and foster participation. Additionally, our new partnership with Badminton Victoria in the Macedon Ranges Shire is focused on increasing sport participation among women and girls—an area of strategic importance for our organisation.

We have also commenced early discussions with the Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative (BDAC) to explore opportunities that encourage physical activity participation among Aboriginal young people. These conversations are vital to ensuring culturally appropriate and accessible sport pathways.

## *ENGAGE AND ENABLE COMMUNITIES*

We have commenced the implementation of a comprehensive Digital Communications Strategy across all our communication channels. This initiative is designed to enhance our reach, improve engagement, and ensure consistent messaging across our programs and partnerships.

In response to the growing concern around gender-based violence in sport, Sports Focus has developed a suite of resources aimed at raising awareness and encouraging safe, respectful environments. This work has been amplified through an extensive television media campaign, which highlights the various forms of gender-based violence that can occur within sporting clubs and promotes pathways for reporting.

Our commitment to inclusive sport continues through our work with Karen, Afghan (Hazara), and Filipino community leaders to identify and create sport participation opportunities. We have strengthened our partnership with the Bendigo Table Tennis Association to deliver free coaching and come 'n' try events for members of the Karen and Afghan (Hazara) communities, fostering connection and active engagement.

Workshops on 'Respect in Sport' and 'Inclusive Clubs' have been delivered in the Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shires. These sessions support the implementation of Fair Access policies and aim to make council-managed sporting facilities more inclusive and accessible to women and girls. We continue to work closely with other local councils to ensure that Fair Access policies are not only adopted but actively implemented across facilities and programs.

Volunteer sustainability remains a key concern, and we are currently developing a targeted recruitment strategy for the Sailability program in response to an ageing and declining volunteer workforce.

# Board Chair Report

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## *CLOSING REMARKS*

To the staff of Sports Focus, I extend my heartfelt thanks for your unwavering drive and commitment to the organisation. Your dedication to our mission and your genuine desire to support our partners and sporting clubs is deeply appreciated. The consistent positive feedback we receive from across our region is a testament to the outstanding results you achieve and the meaningful relationships you build within our sporting and local government communities.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Shelley Mulqueen, our Program Manager, and Stuart Craig, our Business Manager, for their exceptional leadership and service. Their commitment to keeping me fully informed on operational and strategic matters—including future directions and proposals—has been invaluable. This open and transparent communication extends to the Board level, fostering a strong foundation of trust and confidence in their ability to lead Sports Focus into the future.

To my fellow directors on the Sports Focus Board, thank you for your insightful contributions and steadfast commitment throughout the year. Your collective expertise and thoughtful engagement have enabled the Board to carry out its governance responsibilities with diligence and integrity.

The mutual respect among Board members creates a space where diverse perspectives are welcomed, and every voice is heard—strengthening our strategic decision-making and reinforcing our shared vision.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to our partners, and stakeholders. Your continued support and collaboration enable Sports Focus to deliver meaningful outcomes and drive positive change across our region. Together, we remain committed to building stronger, more inclusive, and resilient sporting communities.

Kind Regards,

**Matthew Mann**

***Sports Focus Board Chair***

# Sports Focus Team

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## **Program Manager**

Shelley Mulqueen

## **Business Manager**

Stuart Craig

## **Club Development & Special Projects Lead**

Lauren Fawcett

## **Community Development & Partnerships Lead**

Laura Bradley

## **Project Coordinator – Regional Sport Partnership Program**

Jo Cahill

## **Project Coordinator – Program Delivery & Digital Communications**

Sophie Bickford (resigned July 2025)

## **Community Sport Partnerships Consultant**

Paul Colbert (resigned March 2025)

## **Administrative Contractor**

Zita Waldron-Brown

# Board of Management

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## **Board Chair**

Matthew Mann

## **Deputy Chair**

Kylie Evans

## **Directors**

Anne-Marie Kelly

David Burns

Jacqui Carroll

Andrew Gallagher

Dr Kirsty Forsdike

Sandra Hansen

# Financial Highlights



## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
Revenue	4	590,120	586,257
Finance income	4(a)	18,727	15,880
Employee benefits expense		(535,659)	(463,243)
Depreciation and amortization expense		(1,423)	(1,574)
Computer Expenses		(11,908)	(16,010)
External Contracting/Consultancy		(12,648)	(28,683)
Insurance		(5,924)	(4,917)
Lease Expenses		(3,088)	(1,440)
Maintenance		(5,523)	(7,641)
Motor Vehicle Expenses		(2,146)	(1,667)
Printing, Postage & Stationery		(1,842)	(2,515)
Program Expenses		(37,793)	(38,887)
Telecommunications		(5,075)	(4,501)
Travel & Accommodation		(2,208)	(3,639)
Other expenses		(24,700)	(28,982)
<b>Profit before income tax</b>		<b>(41,090)</b>	<b>(1,562)</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Profit from continuing operations</b>		<b>(41,090)</b>	<b>(1,562)</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>		<b>(41,090)</b>	<b>(1,562)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income, net of income tax</b>			
<b>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</b>			
<b>Items that will be reclassified to profit or loss when specific conditions are met</b>			
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>(41,090)</b>	<b>(1,562)</b>

# Financial Highlights

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Auditors report to the members of Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly INC.

*Report on the audit of the financial statements.*

## *Qualification*

As is common for organisations of this type, it was not practicable to establish accounting control over donations, memberships and income from remaining sources prior to their receipt in the accounting records of the association. Accordingly, it was not practicable in relation to such income to extend our examination beyond the amounts recorded in the accounting records of the association, and as such our audit in relation to this revenue was limited to the amounts recorded.

## *Qualified Opinion*

We have audited the financial report of Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes, and certification by members of the committee that the annual statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the association. In our opinion, except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had the limitation discussed in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly Inc. as at 30 June 2025, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

## *Basis for Opinion*

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

# Financial Highlights

## *Emphasis of Matter - basis of accounting*

Without further modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly Inc. to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

## *Responsibilities of the committee and those charged with governance for the financial report*

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

## *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report. A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



**Justin Gordon** FCPA  
Lead Auditor  
**Strategem Audit Services**  
35-37 Mundy Street, Bendigo, Vic, 3550

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of October 2025

Loddon Campaspe Sports Assembly Inc

Certificate by Members of Committee

I, Matthew Mann, and I, Sandra Hanson, certify that:  
(a) We are committee members of the Association, and  
(b) We are duly authorised by the committee to make this statement, and  
(c) The attached financial statement was submitted to the members at the annual general meet

Dated 20 October 2025



Matthew Mann (Committee Member)



Sandra Hanson (Committee Member)

# Funding Partners

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Sports Focus is a not-for-profit organisation that relies on funding from a diverse range of sources, to enable our support for the sport and recreation community across the Loddon Campaspe region. We gratefully acknowledge and thank all our funding partners for their valued support throughout 2024-2025.



Delivering the Together More Active Program through the support of Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.



Delivering the Preventing Violence Through Sport Program through the support of Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.



Partnering with VicHealth to deliver the Regional Sport Partnership.



Community Partner to deliver the Tackle Your Feelings Program to AFL and netball clubs.



Supported by the Change Our Game Community Activation Grant to support the roll out of the documentary Equal The Contest.



Supported by the City of Greater Bendigo's Partnering For Impact Grant, to support LGBTQIA+ Access and Inclusion in community sport.

# Thank you for your support

*Through a competitive process, Sports Focus re-applied for Sector Capability Building funding under the Together More Active program in January 2025, to determine our level of funding for the 2025-27 period.*

*We thank our wonderful partners who supported our application, which in a challenging fiscal environment, enabled us to receive funding consistent with existing levels. The letters of support we received were a reflection of the impact our work has on the community.*

## *The support came from:*

- 4 Local Members of Parliament
- 5 Local Government Authorities
- 8 from LaTrobe University, community organisations, sector partners, and local sporting clubs and associations.

## *Their words...*

***“As a trusted partner of Sports Focus, we have witnessed firsthand their invaluable work in supporting the community sport sector”***

***“Sports Focus’ commitment to the successful implementation of our amalgamation has had a major impact not only on Bendigo netball, but regional netball”***

***“They are providing a service to Bendigo and Northern Victoria that is not being met by any other organisations, and will be instrumental in improving inclusion for all in this region”***



# Club Support

Sports Focus delivered a variety of individual support to sports clubs, leagues and associations within the Loddon Campaspe Region.

## 135 Total Club Support Enquiries

*“We are interested in running a Tackle Your Feelings session”*

*“We would like assistance to create a Child Safety Policy for the club”*

*“We have an enquiry on the amalgamation process for football/netball clubs”*

*“We require mediation services”*

*“I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for your involvement in this process. Having an independent person was extremely beneficial and your knowledge and expertise in this area gave us the insight we needed and confidence to navigate the process.”*

### TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS



**44**  
Governance  
Queries

**21**  
Member  
Behaviour  
Consultations

**13**  
Grant and  
Fundraising  
Enquiries

**22**  
Club Culture  
Reviews

**12**  
Participation  
and  
Engagement  
Requests

**8**  
Other  
General  
Enquiries

**6**  
Planning  
and  
Marketing  
Enquiries

# Building Club Capacity

The Sports Focus team delivered a variety of training and capacity building opportunities to clubs, leagues and associations within the Loddon Campaspe Region - informed by current needs, challenges, and support requests.

As passionate community developers, we understand the unique challenges faced by sporting clubs and possess the expertise and knowledge to assist with all facets of club development.

## *We delivered..*



- Inclusive Clubs Workshop
- Understanding Refugee Journey Session
- Governance Workshops
- Engaging & Empowering Volunteers
- How to be an effective Club Treasurer
- Respect in Sport 101
- Respect in Sport - Leading Change
- Respect in Sport - Action Planning
- Tackle Your Feelings Workshops

## *Our Reach:*

**17**

Workshops  
& Training  
Sessions

**30**

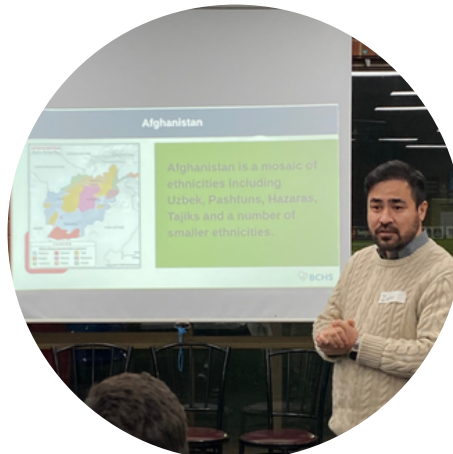
Training  
Hours  
Delivered

**150**

Participants  
Engaged

**60**

Clubs  
Attended



# Building Club Capacity

On the back of our club education and training services, we continued to strengthen the clubs' capacity for sustainable participation. This included developing club skills to create ongoing opportunities, running come-and-try sessions, and building understanding around marginalised communities – all while actively engaging the community.

The following examples highlight community participation activities in which Sports Focus has played a key developmental role within the Loddon Campaspe region.

- Wheelchair Basketball Come and Try sessions
- Karen Youth Soccer Tournament
- All Abilities Badminton Come and Try
- Sailability
- All Abilities Tennis Come and Try
- This Girl Can Victoria - Central Goldfields
- All Abilities Basketball - Kyneton
- This Girl Can Victoria - Bendigo
- Pyramid Hill Equipment Library Launch
- Indian and Filipino Badminton & Table Tennis
- Karen Badminton & Table Tennis
- Tarnagulla Equipment Library Launch
- Afghan (Hazara) Badminton & Table Tennis
- All Abilities Regional School Lawn Bowls Event
- All Abilities Soccer Come and Try



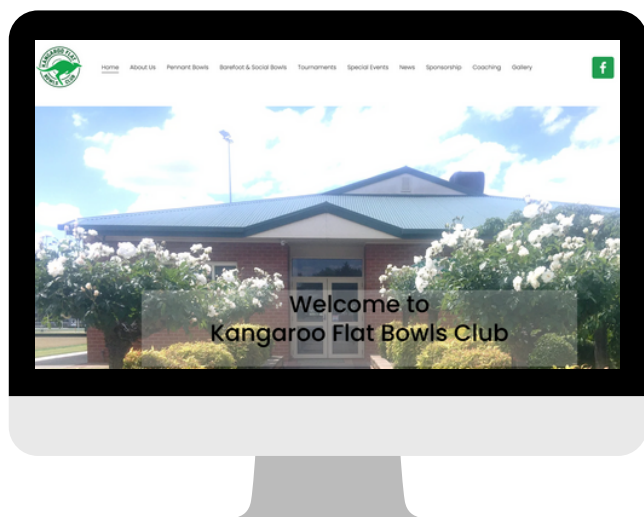
# Community Sport Partnerships

In its second year, the Community Sport Partnerships (CSP) Program has broadened its impact across the Loddon Campaspe region, delivering additional workshops, offering enhanced expertise, and supporting a greater number of sporting clubs, leagues, and associations to achieve their full potential.

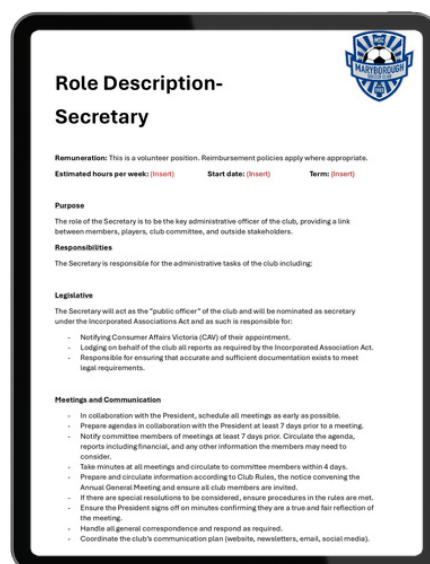
The CSP Program provides clubs with tailored, one-on-one support, acknowledging the limited capacity and time available to volunteers to implement policies, procedures, and other essential club development initiatives.

## Over the past 12 months, CSP delivered...

- Workshops
- Constitution reviews & rewrites
- Policy development
- Website development
- Governance training
- Governance efficiency training

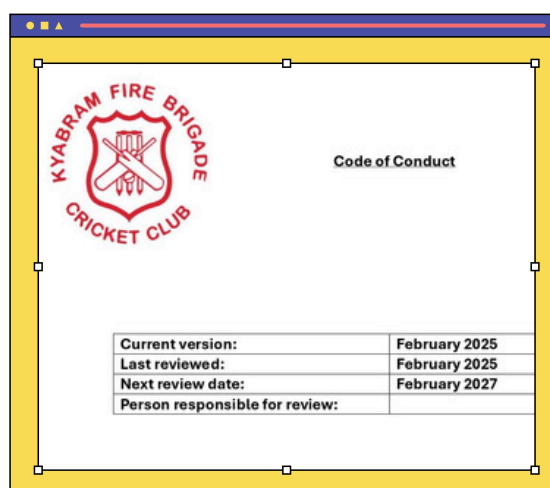


The website created for the Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club.



A role description created for the Maryborough Soccer Club.

*"I honestly think without you there we might not have landed in a hopeful place by the end of the session. So your time and expertise was very much appreciated and I hope the club takes you up on the offer for some extra support. If they aren't a member currently. I will be asking at the next meeting that we do sign up with SF."*



A code of conduct created for the Kyabram Fire Brigade Cricket Club.

# Partnerships

Sports Focus recognises that creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments in sport, active recreation, and play requires strong partnerships and collective effort. Throughout 2024/25, we collaborated with government agencies, community organisations, committees, and stakeholder groups to drive meaningful change.

These partnerships were strategic and action-focused, not just symbolic. Together, we tackled the issues that mattered most to our clubs, leagues, associations, and communities.



## *Celebrating the partnership between Sports Focus and BCBS*

The partnership between Sports Focus and BCBS originally stemmed from work undertaken with the City of Greater Bendigo, through their Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2016. From that time on, Sports Focus and BCBS have banded together to support the increasing number of former refugees in Greater Bendigo, and their physical, social, and mental health.

The main focus within this partnership has always been to increase the multicultural, refugee and migrant communities' inclusion within community sport - address systemic barriers to their participation, increase social cohesion, and address poor health and physical activity rates. Additionally, the partnership has worked towards increasing sport club volunteers capacity to create culturally safe and welcoming environments for multicultural community members, by enhancing their understanding of the refugee experience and the barriers that refugees face in participating in community sport and active recreation.

This partnership is vital to create meaningful change and achieving outcomes. Sports Focus's knowledge of community sport, paired with BCBS's knowledge of working with refugee community members, has proven to be a powerful combination. This collaborative approach ensures that initiatives are both culturally responsive and grounded in the practical realities of community sport. By working closely together, the two organisations have been able to co-design programs, share resources, and build trust within the local communities.

*This text was derived from the Sports Focus case study on Bendigo Community Health Services.*

# Sports Focus Collaborators

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Participation

Communication

Environments

Advocacy

Partnerships

## *Local Government Partners*

Mount Alexander Shire Council  
Central Goldfields Shire Council  
Loddon Shire Council  
Macedon Ranges Shire Council  
Campaspe Shire Council  
City of Greater Bendigo  
Gannawarra Shire Council

## *Sport & Recreation Organisations*

Grassroots sporting clubs, leagues and associations  
Active recreation facilities  
State Sporting Associations  
National Sporting Organisations  
Bendigo Sailability

## *Sector & Policy Collaborators*

Sport and Recreation Victoria  
VicHealth  
Play by The Rules  
La Trobe University  
AAAPlay  
CMSport  
Healthy Loddon Campaspe  
Healthy Greater Bendigo

## *Community & Inclusion Partners*

Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria  
Women's Health Loddon Mallee  
Change Our Game  
Centre for Multicultural Youth  
CMSport  
Bendigo Karen Youth Network  
Karen Organisation of Bendigo  
Goldfields Youth Alliance  
Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services  
Treehouse Paediatrics  
Murray PHN  
Lifely  
Local disability support services  
Bendigo Community Health Services  
Greater Bendigo Youth Council  
Central Goldfields Youth Council  
Kangaroo Flat Karen Baptist Church  
Mainstream and Specialist schools

## *Strategic Advisory & Planning Groups*

Mount Alexander Shire Disability Action Plan Working Group  
City of Greater Bendigo Disability Inclusion Reference Committee  
International Day of People with a Disability 2025 Organising Committee  
Greater Bendigo Early Years Matters Partnership  
Children and Young People First

# Access for All Abilities

In 2024/2025, Sports Focus strengthened its commitment to fostering greater inclusion of people with a disability in community sport and active recreation.

## *Club Support*

We continued delivering Inclusive Clubs Workshops to help sporting clubs build their capacity to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for people with disabilities. We also supported State Sporting Associations and local clubs with inclusive program delivery and funding applications for accessible events and equipment.

## *Local Partnerships*

We partnered with a diverse range of organisations, including allied health professionals, Local Government Authorities, specialist schools, disability support services and community sporting groups. These multifaceted partnerships strengthened our capacity to deliver inclusive programs, foster meaningful community connections, and create lasting opportunities for participation at all levels.

## *Advocacy Work*

We continued to champion inclusion through our involvement in the Mount Alexander Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan Working Group, the City of Greater Bendigo's Disability Inclusion Reference Committee, and the International Day of People with a Disability Event Committee. These groups ensured that physical activity remains a key focus and that inclusion is approached through a person-first, evidence-based lens.

Our continual work with our Sticky Dot activity needs analysis has allowed to engage us with local support services and individuals living with disabilities to discover what sport and recreation activities they are wanting to participate. This has allowed us to continually advocate for the needs of the local disability community, as well as ensuring they are able to provide input into the development of these programs.



# Access for All Abilities

## Sailability Bendigo

During the 2024/2025 season, Sailability Bendigo launched an exciting new partnership with Cycling Without Age (CWA) Bendigo, offering participants with disabilities free and accessible trishaw rides around the lake after their sailing sessions.

The initiative quickly became a highlight of each sailing day, adding joy and connection for everyone involved. CWA also continues to engage with participants and support services between sailing days, extending the program's positive impact.

In recognition of its dedication to inclusion and community wellbeing, Sailability Bendigo received the Bendigo Bank Community Minded Award at the 2024 Bendigo Sports Star Awards. This honour celebrates clubs that show leadership through initiatives delivering lasting benefits to their communities.

## Inaugural Regional School Lawn Bowls Event

Sports Focus partnered with Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club to host the inaugural All Abilities Regional School Lawn Bowls Event, welcoming students from four regional specialist schools, including Bendigo Special Developmental School, Kalianna School Bendigo, Echuca Twin Rivers Special School and Maryborough Education Centre.

Supported by ACHPER Victoria and Bendigo Special Developmental School, the event provided a fun and inclusive introduction to lawn bowls in a safe, supportive environment. It encouraged physical activity, confidence, and social connection while strengthening partnerships between schools, clubs, and community organisations.

Discussions are already underway to continually develop the club's skills to provide ongoing participation activities for students, both in and outside of school.



# Preventing Gendered Violence in Sport



## The Project

In June 2025, we marked the completion of a three-year partnership between Sports Focus, La Trobe University, and the Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria. The project explored how ready our local community sporting clubs are to prevent and respond to gendered violence – looking at awareness, prevention strategies, and confidence in responding to incidents.

## The Outcome

Through a co-design approach involving community members and experts, we developed practical resources – including posters and videos – to build awareness, understanding, and action across local clubs.

These videos were also aired on the WinTV Network for two months to help spread the message.

All resources, along with additional tools and supports for club administrators and members, are now available on the Sports Focus website to help foster safe, respectful, and inclusive sporting environments.



# Supporting LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Greater Bendigo

Funding received through the City of Greater Bendigo's Partnering for Impact Grants program, has enabled a 2-year project, to support local community sporting clubs to provide safer and more welcoming environments for our diverse LGBTQIA+ community.



We are seeing promising progress as more clubs actively engage in the broader inclusion space, motivated by a shared commitment to creating safer, more respectful, and welcoming environments for all members of their communities.

In many instances, this engagement is prompted by a specific situation or identified need, which in turn opens the door to deeper conversations and targeted support. Currently, we are working with a club that identified concerns regarding the safety and inclusion of women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals following a local incident.

Together, we are undertaking a comprehensive review of the club's policies, practices, and everyday operations. This process will result in a tailored Inclusion Plan designed to strengthen a culture of respect, safety, and belonging for all members—particularly those from underrepresented groups.

In addition, broader communication and awareness initiatives will be implemented throughout the remainder of the project to continue engaging clubs and expanding the conversation around inclusion across the sporting community.

# Gender Equity & Inclusion

## *Respect in Sport - supporting Fair Access in our region*

As Local Governments implement Fair Access Policies, Sports Focus partnered with Mount Alexander Shire Council to help clubs strengthen their understanding of gender equality and inclusion.

Through three workshops and tailored support, clubs built their capacity to foster safe, respectful environments and developed draft action plans to guide future progress.



## *Gender Equality Action Planning with Maryborough Basketball Association*

Central Goldfields Shire Council supported the Maryborough Basketball Association (MBA) to partner with Sports Focus to develop a Gender Equity & Inclusion Plan.



This collaborative process involved gender equality training, an association-wide member survey, and a comprehensive gender audit. The outcome was a detailed action plan designed to strengthen governance, reduce barriers to participation and promote a safe, respectful and inclusive culture within the Maryborough Basketball Association.

***“Our goal is to create supportive pathways for females to engage in basketball, from grassroots involvement to competitive play. This initiative underscores our commitment to inclusivity and the belief that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to participate and thrive in our sport. By prioritising gender equity, we are paving the way for a more diverse and connected basketball community in the future.”***

- President of the MBA

# Multicultural Inclusion

In 2024/2025, Sports Focus continued to support sport and active recreation organisations to provide inclusive, welcoming and culturally safe environments and participation opportunities for multicultural communities.

## Refugee Understanding and Education in Community Sport



Sports Focus partnered with Bendigo Community Health Services to deliver Understanding Refugee Journey Education Sessions to eight sporting clubs, helping 22 participants better understand and support the experiences of people from refugee backgrounds in sport.

Inviting administrators, coaches, players and friends of the Bendigo Table Tennis Association & Bendigo Eaglehawk Badminton Association to attend an

**Understanding Refugee Journey Session**

Presented by:  
Bendigo Community Health Services' Cultural Diversity Team

**When:** Monday 3 March, 2025  
**Time:** 7.00pm - 8.30pm  
**Where:** 140 Victoria Street, Eaglehawk  
**Cost:** FREE

To register, please scan the below QR code or visit <https://www.trybooking.com/CZEPP>

Presented by: BCHS Cultural Diversity team  
Kayla Graves: Senior Leader - Refugee and Cultural Diversity  
Linda: Refugee Project Worker  
Azmi: Cultural Diversity and Relationships Project Worker

***"I learned so much from this session. I never knew that Karen people come to Australia on humanitarian visas because they were persecuted in their home country".***  
*(club representative)*



***"After attending the Understanding Refugee Journey Session I felt I have a greater knowledge of the challenges that the refugee communities have, not only just getting into sports but prior to them arriving in Australia. This then allows our association to look further into how we can support them to become active in a sport they enjoy in an inviting and supportive environment"***  
*(club representative)*

# Multicultural Inclusion

## *Inclusive Participation*

A key highlight this year was Sports Focus forming a new partnership with Table Tennis Victoria and Badminton Victoria to deliver a pilot project in Bendigo with local associations.

In collaboration with Bendigo Community Health Services, the project promoted inclusion and provided affordable, accessible opportunities for multicultural communities.

It included an Understanding the Refugee Journey session and three Come and Try events for the Karen, Afghan (Hazara), Indian, and Filipino communities, engaging 102 participants in a fun, welcoming, and culturally safe environment.

## *Outcomes:*

- 16 Karen women and girls participated in a follow-up table tennis session.
- Afghan (Hazara) women attended weekly badminton sessions.
- One Afghan (Hazara) family registered their children for weekly badminton sessions.
- Karen participants joined the table tennis C Grade competition.
- Junior participants joined weekly junior table tennis coaching sessions.
- Table Tennis Victoria funded 20 social memberships for Karen and Afghan (Hazara) community members.
- Bi-lingual support staff coordinated six coaching sessions to support ongoing participation.

***"Our local Karen and Afghan Community members had smashes, laughter, and lots of fun learning and playing Table Tennis in a friendly atmosphere along with several of our own Coaches/Members. When communities come together over Table Tennis, it's not just a game – it's global bonding, one serve at a time!"***

*(club representative)*



***"The Badminton and Table Tennis Come and Try sessions have provided a fantastic opportunity for community members to engage in physical activity, learn new skills, and build social connections in a welcoming environment. As a result, several participants have joined badminton lessons and now regularly attend the Feathered Friends – Women's Badminton initiative every Saturday, demonstrating the positive impact of these sessions in fostering ongoing participation and community wellbeing."***

*(Bi-lingual worker from Bendigo Community Health Services)*

# Youth Participation

In 2024/2025, Sports Focus continued to create opportunities for young people and their families to be physically active in ways that suit them, breaking down barriers to participation across the Loddon Campaspe region

## *Community Consultations*

306 individuals within the Loddon Campaspe region were consulted during the formation of these projects.



## *Local Partnerships*

Partnerships are at the heart of everything we do. Sports Focus' Regional Sport Partnership (RSP) program creates opportunities for young people and their families to be active by working with local schools, sports clubs, LGAs, Healthy Loddon Campaspe, ACHPER, and multicultural youth groups to design and deliver initiatives that reflect community priorities.

These collaborations ensure our programs are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to local needs.

## *Advocacy Work*

There are many ways to be physically active, and Sports Focus continues to advocate for more social and informal sport opportunities across the Loddon Campaspe region.

Our advocacy work promotes community engagement and consultation, raises awareness of the benefits of active recreation and play, and supports equitable access to local spaces where people can be active in ways that suit them.



# Youth Participation

## Equipment Libraries

A standout achievement of the RSP program over the past 12 months has been the development of community sports equipment libraries that are genuinely responsive to local needs.

Each library was shaped through consultation and co-design, ensuring that the equipment provided is both relevant and accessible.

In partnership with Healthy Loddon Campaspe and Loddon Shire, we engaged with 147 Loddon Shire residents to understand local priorities. As a result, primary-aged children in rural Tarnagulla now have more opportunities for play in a setting where few options previously existed, while teenagers in Pyramid Hill can enjoy team sports such as volleyball, cricket, and basketball in a relaxed, non-competitive environment. These libraries stand as a testament to place-based, inclusive design that meets communities where they are.



## This Girl Can

Sports Focus partnered with key stakeholders in the City of Greater Bendigo and Central Goldfields Shire to deliver 97 This Girl Can Victoria activities across the two LGAs.

These activities created opportunities for women and girls to try something new and be physically active in safe, welcoming, and supportive environments. In the City of Greater Bendigo, there was a strong focus on multicultural inclusion, while in Central Goldfields, activities had a strong emphasis on inclusion for mothers with young children.

A total of 150 women and girls participated in This Girl Can events hosted by local sports clubs, gyms, yoga studios, self-defence instructors, and personal training providers.



# Enhancing Our Space, Supporting Our Community

This year, we focused on meaningful actions - big and small - that enrich our space and reflect our values. From embracing cultural connection to environmental care, these initiatives reflect who we are and who we strive to be.

## Sustainability in action



We considered our efforts towards sustainability - recycling our coffee capsules to reduce landfill and give the pods a second life.

## A welcoming environment



Our new reception wall art, to ensure everyone feels welcomed and safe entering our office/organisation.

## Celebrating culture



Our new ethically sourced Indigenous artwork in our Board Room, titled "Together" by Domica Hill celebrates connection, community and culture.

## Giving back, together



We supported Bendigo Foodshare's Christmas food drive, through their "reverse advent calendar boxes" - a meaningful way to give back to our community.

# 2024-2025 Members

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1st Woodend Scout Group  
Australian Tractor Pullers Association Inc.  
Axedale Golf Club  
Bamawm Lockington United Cricket Club  
Barkers Creek Cricket Club  
Bears Lagoon Serpentine Football Netball Club  
Beavers Basketball Club  
Belvoir Park Golf Club  
Bendigo & District Fire Brigades Championship Committee  
Bendigo & District Table Tennis Association  
Bendigo Amateur Soccer League  
Bendigo Baseball Association  
Bendigo Billiards & Snooker Association  
Bendigo Blaze Inline Hockey Club  
Bendigo Bridge Club  
Bendigo Campaspe Goldfields Bowls Region  
Bendigo Car Club  
Bendigo City Football Club  
Bendigo Clay Target Club  
Bendigo Cricket Club  
Bendigo Croquet Club  
Bendigo District Cricket Association  
Bendigo District Cricket Umpires Association  
Bendigo Eaglehawk Badminton Association  
Bendigo East Baseball Club  
Bendigo East Bowling Club  
Bendigo Field & Game  
Bendigo Football Netball League  
Bendigo Gliding Club  
Bendigo Golf Club  
Bendigo Jailhouse Rockers  
Bendigo Kart Club  
Bendigo Mountain Bike Club  
Bendigo Northern Flames Junior Netball Club  
Bendigo On Road Radio Control Car Club  
Bendigo Orienteers  
Bendigo Pistol Club  
Bendigo Regional Tennis Centre  
Bendigo Rowing Club  
Bendigo Rugby League Club  
Bendigo Senjuns Hockey Club  
Bendigo Sportsmens Association  
Bendigo Squash Club  
Bendigo Tai Chi Club  
Bendigo Thunder Women's Football Club  
Bendigo United Cricket Club  
Bendigo Volleyball Association  
Bendigo Yacht Club  
Boort Football Club  
Boort Netball Club  
Bridgewater Bowling Club  
Cairn Curran Sailing Club  
Calivil Bowling Club  
Calivil United Football Netball Club  
Campbells Creek Bowling Club  
Campbells Creek Football Netball Club  
Carisbrook Cricket Club  
Carisbrook Football Netball Club  
Carisbrook Recreation Reserve  
Castlemaine Amateur Swimming Club  
Castlemaine Bowling Club  
Castlemaine Cycling Club  
Castlemaine Football Netball Club  
Castlemaine Goldfields Football Club  
Castlemaine Golf Club  
Castlemaine Rifle Club  
Castlemaine Rocky Riders Mountain Bike Club  
Central Goldfields Shire Council  
Central Vic Rangers Baseball Club  
Central Victoria Swimming  
Chewton Archers  
City of Greater Bendigo  
Colbinabbin Football Netball Club  
Colbinabbin Lawn Bowling Club  
Colts Phelans Cricket Club  
Cycling Without Age – Kerang  
Dalhousie District Golf Association  
Derby Tennis Club  
Dingee Bowling Club  
Dragon City Roller Derby  
Dunolly & District Neighbourhood Centre  
Eaglehawk Bowling Club  
Eaglehawk Community Croquet Club  
Eaglehawk Cricket Club  
Eaglehawk Football Netball Club  
Echuca & District Netball Association  
Echuca Bowls Club  
Echuca United Football Netball Club  
Elmore Football Netball Club  
Elmore Tennis Club  
Emu Valley Cricket Association  
Epsom Football Club  
Falcons Baseball Club  
FC Eaglehawk  
Girgarre Football Netball Club  
Gisborne & District Cricket Association  
Gisborne Football Netball Club  
Gisborne Rookies Junior Football Club  
Golden City Football Club  
Golden Square Bowling & Croquet Club  
Golden Square Cricket Club  
Golden Square Football Netball Club  
Goldfields Croquet Association  
Goulburn Murray Cricket  
Gunbower Bowls Club  
Harcourt Bowling Club  
Harcourt Football Netball Club  
Heathcote Bowling Club  
Heathcote Cricket Club  
Heathcote Football Netball Club  
Heathcote Golf Club  
Hockey Central Victoria  
Huntly Football Netball Club

# 2024-2025 Members

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Ice Hockey Victoria  
Inglewood Football Netball Club  
Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club  
Kangaroo Flat Cricket Club  
Kyabram Bowls Club  
Kyabram Fire Brigade Cricket Club  
Kyabram Parkland Golf Club  
Kyneton & District Tennis Club  
Kyneton Bowling Club  
Kyneton Clay Target Club  
Kyneton District Horse & Pony Club  
Kyneton Women's Football Club  
Lancefield Bowling Club  
Leitchville Gunbower Cricket Club  
Leitchville Gunbower Football Netball Club  
Lockington Bamawm United Football Netball Club  
Lockington Golf Club  
Loddon Shire  
Macedon Ranges Badminton Club  
Macedon Ranges Croquet Club  
Maiden Gully Marist Cricket Club  
Maiden Gully YCW Football Netball Club  
Maldon Bowling Club  
Maldon Petanque Club  
Maldon Tennis Club  
Malmsbury Cricket Club  
Mandurang Cricket Club & Junior Sports Bodies Association  
Marong & District Tennis Association  
Marong Bowls Club  
Marong Cricket Club  
Maryborough & District Gun Club  
Maryborough & District Horse & Pony Club  
Maryborough & District Triathlon Club  
Maryborough Football Netball Club  
Maryborough Martial Arts  
Maryborough Netball Association  
Maryborough Tennis Centre  
Mitiamo Football Netball Club  
Moama Cricket Club  
Mount Alexander Shire Council  
Mount Alexander Women's Sports Club  
Mount Macedon Golf Club  
Mount Macedon Petanque Club  
Mount Pleasant Football Netball Club  
Muckleford Cricket Club  
Natte Bealiba Football Netball Club  
Newbridge Football Netball Club  
Newstead Bowls Club  
North Bendigo Bowls Club  
North Castlemaine Cricket Club  
Northern District Croquet Association  
Pine Grove Gun Club  
Pyramid Hill Bowling Club  
Pyramid Hill Football Netball Club  
Quarry Hill Croquet Club  
Quarry Hill Golf Club  
Rich River Croquet Club  
Rochester & District Angling Club  
Rochester Bowls Club  
Rochester Cricket Club  
Rochester Football Netball Club  
Rochester Lawn Tennis Club  
Rochester Little Athletics Centre  
Rochester Netball Association  
Rochester Sports Club  
Romsey Golf Club  
Rushworth Bowls Club  
Rushworth Cricket Club  
Sandhurst Football Netball Club  
Sandhurst Hockey Club  
Sandhurst Snooker & Billiards Club  
Scots Baseball Club  
Sedgwick Cricket Club  
Serpentine Bowling Club  
Shire of Campaspe  
South Bendigo Bowls Club  
South Bendigo Football Netball Club  
South Bendigo Tennis Club  
Sporting Shooters Assoc. of Aust – Bendigo Branch  
St Monicas Junior Football Club  
Strathdale Hockey Club  
Strathdale Park Tennis Club  
Strathdale-Maristians Cricket Club  
Strathfieldsaye Bowls Club  
Strathfieldsaye Colts United Football Club  
Strathfieldsaye Tennis Club  
Talbot Football Netball Club  
Tongala Bowls Club  
Tongala Football Netball Club  
Victorian Veteran Golfers' Association  
Volaire Calisthenics College Inc  
West Bendigo Cricket Club  
White Hills Cricket Club  
White Hills Football Netball Club  
White Hills Junior Football Club  
Woodbury Bowling Club  
Woodend Bowling Club  
Woodend Cricket Club  
Woodend Golf Club  
Woodend Hanging Rock Petanque Club



# SPORTS FOCUS

SAFE • WELCOMING • INCLUSIVE

**14 Nolan Street  
Bendigo 3550**

Phone: (03) 5442 3101

Email: [admin@sportsfocus.com.au](mailto:admin@sportsfocus.com.au)

Website: [www.sportsfocus.com.au](http://www.sportsfocus.com.au)

*Sports Focus acknowledges the utilisation of Artificial Intelligence during the development of this document.*



**LinkedIn**

@SportsFocus83



*Sports Focus acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future*

