

## Case Study – Social Women’s Football at Brunswick City Soccer Club

In April 2019, Heather enquired about running a Soccer Mums\* program at Brunswick City SC (BCSC) in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, the club that her son played with.

Heather & the club wanted to create more opportunities for women & girls to play football in ways that worked for the participants, so Soccer Mums was the ideal program. The club had 3 junior girls’ teams & 1 senior women’s team but no social offering for women who were not looking to join a team or play in competition football.



While Heather had no coaching experience, she had a sound knowledge of the game & enthusiasm. After being trained to deliver the program, started with a free come & try session in June 2019 to test the interest in the community. On that cold winter’s night 12 women attended, they were asked what they wanted to get out of the sessions; there was a recurring theme – I want to do something just for myself, I want to get more active, have fun & meet people.

By scheduling the sessions at the same time as the children’s training, they were able to engage parents in physical activity who would otherwise be sitting in their cars or the clubhouse, doing something just for them.

The club supported the program by allocating suitable pitch space, promoting it on their social media, putting flyers up in the club room, sharing information to Team Managers & members, sharing with the council physical activity team (Active Moreland) to post on their social media pages. They also provided the women with a uniform when they played social matches against a neighbouring Soccer Mums program – for many of the women, this was their first game of football & they loved it!

Since the program began in June 2019, over 25 women have participated, with 12 returning regularly. The women have formed strong friendships, supported each other through major life changes, increased in physical confidence, they can talk & play football with their children.

This increase in confidence has led to 1 participant becoming a coach of a junior girls’ team at a neighbouring club, 2 women joined a futsal team. Heather has decided to coach a junior girls’ team at the club in 2021 & 3 of her participants have expressed interest in doing the coaching course with her with the full support of BCSC.

Through the return to play period, Brunswick City SC ensured that Soccer Mums were supported to return through pitch allocation & communicating with Heather to ensure she was included in communication about protocols & processes.

If you would like more information on this experience, you can contact Heather McGiddy on [h.mcgiddy@gmail.com](mailto:h.mcgiddy@gmail.com) or 0425777077

\*Soccer Mums is a social football program aimed at engaging inactive women (targeting mums) in fun, skills-based sessions with the principles of no judgement, no experience necessary. It was funded by Vic Health for 3 years, as part of the Active Women & Girls Program. It was managed by Football Victoria, in partnership with Melbourne City FC (City in the Community) and evaluated by La Trobe University Centre for Sport and Social Impact. The project ended in June 2020 & Football Victoria is working to implement the program through a sustainable model.