

# Sport

## in the Neighbourhood

## 2 ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

For any community based program to be effective there needs to be opportunity for the community to “buy-in” and support the initiative. By involving the community in the development of the program there will be a greater acceptance and ownership by the community and a more successful outcome.

### Take the idea to the community

To gauge the community's interest and support you will need to get information to the community about the proposed program and seek feedback and ideas from the community. This might generally be called “community consultation”.

There are a number of ways to do this:

- Community meeting or forum
- Newsletter
- Surveys
- Word of mouth
- Expressions of interest.

You will need to consider how to get information out to the community about your proposed community consultation.

To do this you might consider:

- Letterbox drop
- Mail out
- An article in the local newspaper
- Radio (on community stations or community “notice-boards” of commercial stations)
- Word of mouth
- Community notice-boards – flyers and posters
- Community newsletter/newspaper
- Presentations at community meetings
- Assistance from local council.

During the process of talking to the community you need to achieve several key tasks:

- Outlay your ideas for your community sport project
- Explain why you believe there is a need for a project like this and the potential benefits of the project
- Reinforce that it needs to be community focused, community driven and community owned
- Gauge perceived interest and level of support for the project
- Provide brief information about what the next steps will be and how this will be communicated (e.g. interested people may provide an email address or other contact method to receive information).

### Lessons from Sport in the Neighbourhood

*For SITN we found that word-of-mouth was a valuable method of gauging community interest. Not everyone could make it to a community meeting but people all over the community were talking to each other. Our community members that worked closely with the KBT group were great at getting in touch with many community members and reporting back to us on community sentiment.*

*SITN also used a letterbox drop to get information directly to the community – which seemed to work really well.*

**TIP** Information gathered during this process is important and should be documented clearly and ultimately used to shape the program during the planning and development stage. Be open to new ideas that will enhance the project.

**TIP** It's a good idea during your consultation to understand why the community wants to implement a program like this:

- What does the community want to achieve?
- What do they want the outcomes of this program to be?
- What good will it do for the community?

These are some of the questions that need to be answered by the community.

## 2 ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

### Is your community ready?

Before you get too far into the process you will need to determine whether your community is ready to fully embrace the initiative.

You may get this information from your community consultation or you may have to seek further feedback. In order to get an idea of whether your community is ready you will need to answer questions such as:

- Does the community believe there is a genuine need for the project?
- Do community members believe it will be of value for their community?
- Are there enough people willing to provide hands-on support?
- Does your community have the time and physical resources to get started?

### Establish a working group

This step is important in terms of community ownership and for the overall success of the program. Having the right people on your working group is important in getting your program moving in the right direction.

#### Who could be on your working group?

- Community members – very important!
- Local council representative
- Relevant state or federal government representatives
- Representatives from a range of community organisations such as service clubs, youth services, family centres, neighbourhood centres
- Local school representatives
- Local business representatives
- Police Liaison Officers.

#### What will the working group do?

The working group will be responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and management of the initiative which is why it is important to have the right people.

The working group will decide who will take on the various tasks and delegate these to the appropriate people.

The working group has an important role as it should be representative of the broader community and keep the needs and wishes of the community as a priority.

#### How many people should be on the working group?

Depending on the scope of the project and size of the community you might consider between 4 and 8 people – this is generally a workable sized group.

### Report back to the community

Regular communication to the broader community will be an important function of the working group. If done effectively it should ensure the community remains supportive of the initiative.

You might consider some of the following options for reporting back to the community:

- Updates in newsletters/community newspapers
- Letterbox updates
- Updates on community notice-boards
- Email updates
- Follow up meetings/briefings with the community.

**TIP** Don't leave it too long between reports back to the community. Keeping the communication wheels turning and updating the community regularly serves to build trust between the working group and community.

#### ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY – SUMMARY OF KEY TASKS

- Seek feedback from the community about the proposed project
- Gauge readiness of the community
- Establish a working group to oversee the project
- Report back to the community about progress and issues.