



Female Football Club Information Guide

youthgirls.aflvic.com.au

Contents

Program Overview	3
Program History – Youth Girls	4
Program History – Junior Girls	5
Pathway - Participation	6
Pathway - High Performance	7
2012/13 Junior Girls Competitions	8
2012/13 Youth Girls Competitions	9
Benefits of Junior & Youth Girls for football clubs	10
Benefits for players and their families	10
Club/School Responsibilities	10
Player Responsibilities	10
Handy Hints for clubs to recruit Junior & Youth Girls players	11
Participant Feedback - Youth Girls Competition	12
Case Studies	14
Testimonials	16
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM	17

Program Overview

The Junior and Youth Girls competitions are all about fun, fitness, friendship through football in a family friendly environment. The competitions are managed by local community football leagues and are specifically designed to promote a female football friendly environment for girls aged 9-12 (Junior Girls) and 13-18 (Youth Girls). Often run at central venues around Melbourne and beyond, these competitions continue to expand to provide more playing opportunities for girls under the age of 18.

Competitions are managed by local community leagues and have the support of local councils, the AFL, VicHealth and the Department of Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Junior and Youth Girls competitions give girls the opportunity to play in real football competitions with an emphasis on fun, friendship and fitness. Competitions welcome teams and players from government and non government schools, football clubs and leagues and all girls wishing to have a go at footy in their very own competition.

Competitions comprise of the following elements:

- **A structured competition** – a weekly competition played over 14 weeks from April to August (including finals for Youth Girls)
- **A fun atmosphere** – the emphases of Junior and Youth Girls competitions are on fun, friendship and fitness to develop football skills
- **Flexibility** – no prior experience is needed, many participants did not participate in either AusKick or junior club football
- **Convenient** – Many games are played at central venues, decreasing the amount of travel for families
- **Coaching** – each team is required to have at least one coach who is accredited at a minimum Level 1
- **Membership** – each player is a member of their club and league
- **Cost** – The cost of the club membership will be determined by the individual club as per any other team at the club
- **Slightly modified rules to further develop skills**
 - Both Junior and Youth Girls competitions have slightly modified rules to best promote player development and accommodate varying experience levels
 - No intentional kicking off the ground
 - No more than 1 (JG) or 2 (YG) consecutive bounces
 - No taking ball out of ruck
 - Variable team numbers such 15 on field, 6 on interchange bench in Youth Girls
 - 10m kick
 - 25m penalties



Program History – Youth Girls

Youth Girls competitions were established to cater for the growing interest from teenage girls wanting to participate in Australian football in regular community competitions. With the increasing number of girls participating in the Auskick, school and junior competitions, AFL Victoria identified that a structured female player pathway was required.

The inaugural Youth Girls competition was established in 2004 with 122 young girls competing in a 15-a-side competition using slightly modified rules. The competition has not only allowed these girls to continue playing and supporting the game, but also created an environment to allow them to play the game with their peers in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

The Youth Girls competition was planned around a safe, fun and female friendly football venue, where girls could compete in an environment that they felt was non-threatening. Some rule and equipment modifications have been made to encourage participation and safety. Our objective was to design and deliver a 10 week Australian football pilot competition for girls aged 13 to 17.

The Competition linked people from all areas of the with teams representing government and independent secondary schools, football clubs, leagues and also community based teams located in Rosebud, Glen Iris, Narre Warren, Berwick and Waverley.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Girls competition was conducted by Deakin University with participants, parents and other stakeholders all being involved.

The evaluation revealed that the girls were very passionate about the game, often stating their 'love of the game' as being the reason for playing. The opportunity to play a male dominated contact sport had been relished by many of the girls. Wanting to show that 'girls can do it' was a recurring theme and reflects frustration on the part of many of the girls that they have been denied this opportunity before.

A recurring theme emerged about having fun while meeting new people and making new friends, suggesting that this competition could indeed be a significant vehicle for social interaction and community connectedness.

Program History – Junior Girls

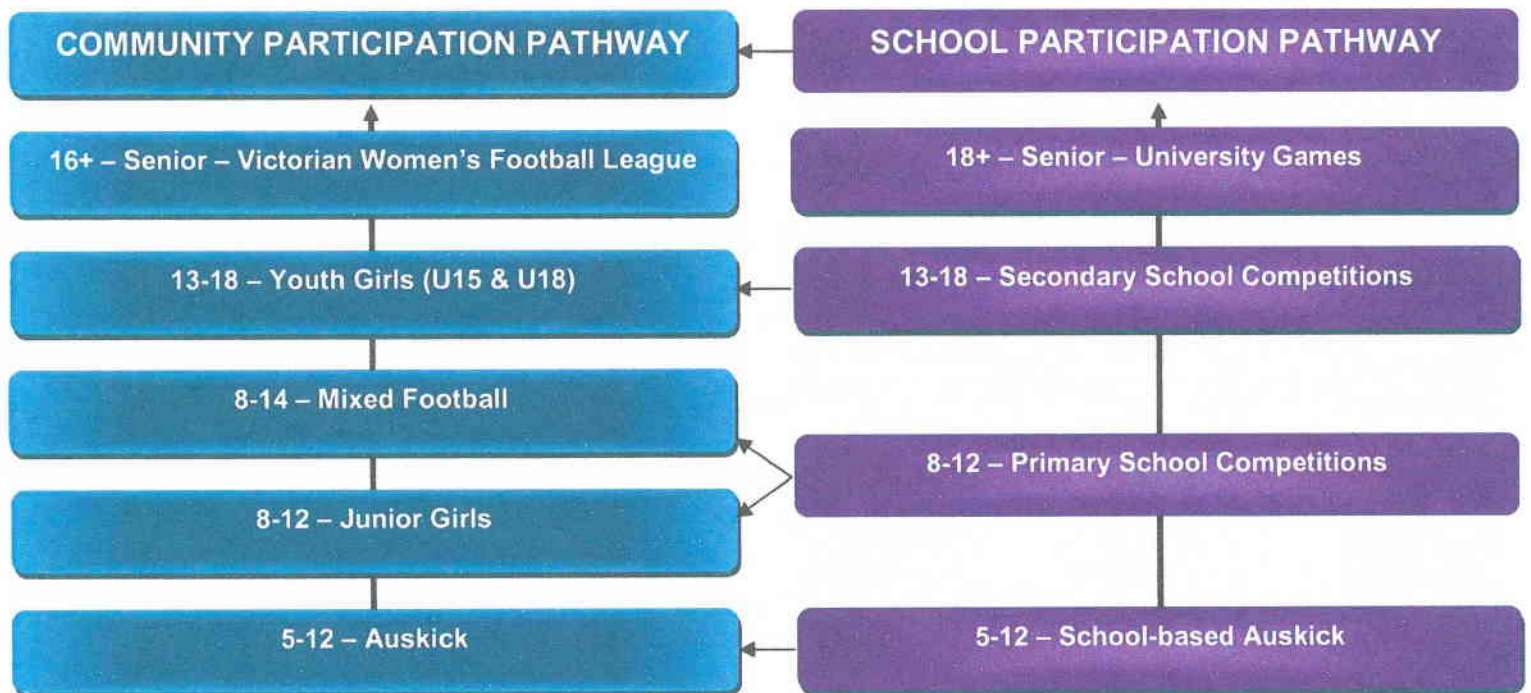
Four junior girls competitions began in 2011 after AFL Victoria recognised the need for girls aged 9-12 to have all female environments to play football. Of the 388 girls who expressed interest in playing junior girls football that year over two thirds (68%) had played Auskick(AK) or junior mixed sex football (JF). There were clear differences in the reasons for girls wanting to play junior girls football expressed between those who had played in a mixed sex environment with the boys and those who had never played football.

The following was reported by girls as reasons for wanting to play junior girls football:

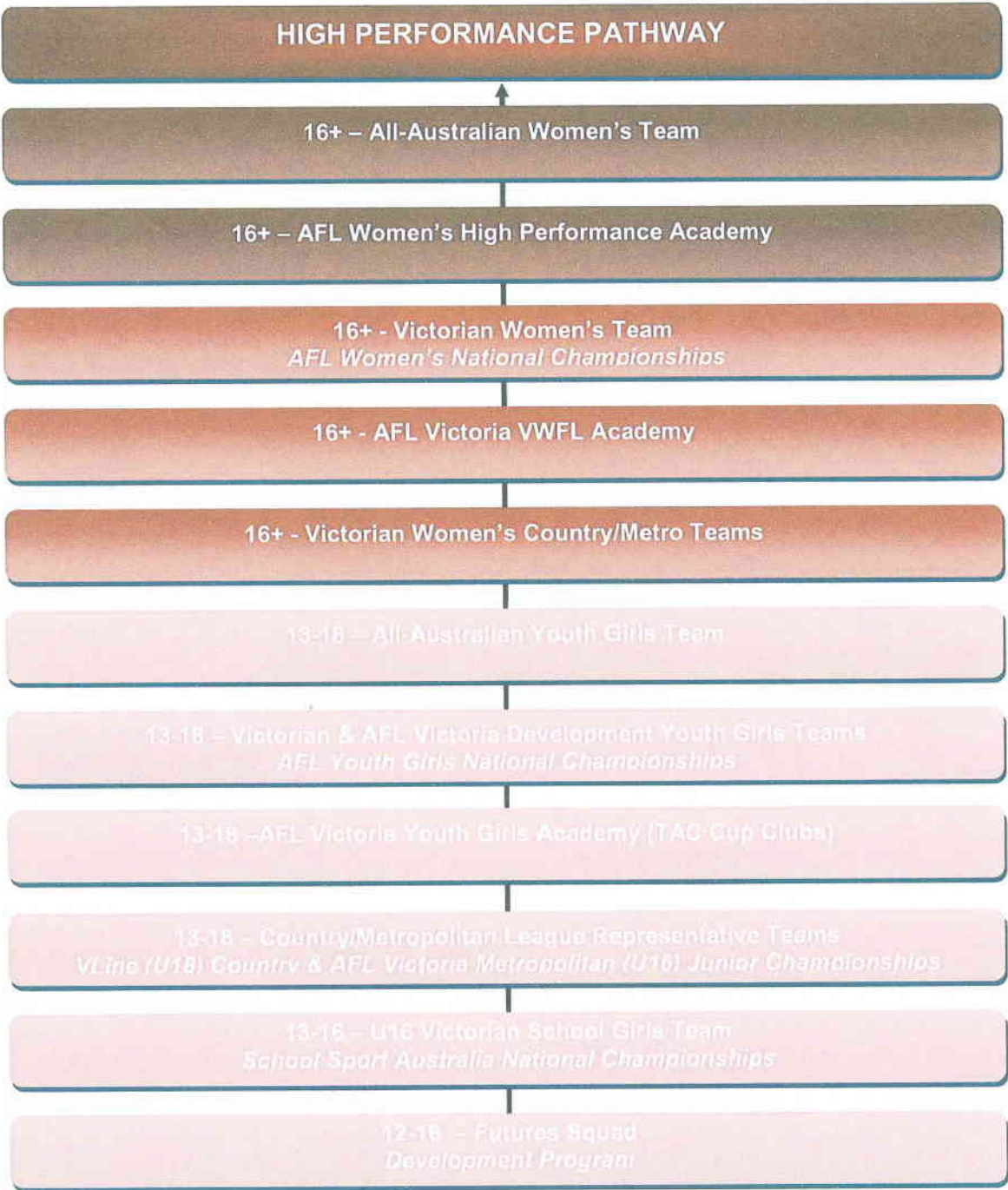
1. Girls who have played AK/JF stated that they 'loved football' more than those who haven't played AF/JF
2. Girls who have played AK/JF stated they 'loved playing' more than those who haven't played AF/JF
3. Girls who have played AK/JF stated they wanted to play in a girls only competition more than those who haven't played AF/JF
4. Girls who have played AK/JF were more likely to state negative experiences playing in male environment as reasons for wanting to play in an all girls competition than those who haven't played AF/JF
5. Girls who haven't played AK/JF reported that they watch or play with their brothers/dads more than those who do have played AF/JF

These findings suggest that whilst girls love playing Auskick or junior football, they don't find a mixed sex environment meets their needs. In essence, in a mixed sex environment they learn the skills and knowledge of the game but they also learn that there are challenges in being included by the boys. This provides us with strong evidence for the need to establish junior girls competitions.

Pathway - Participation



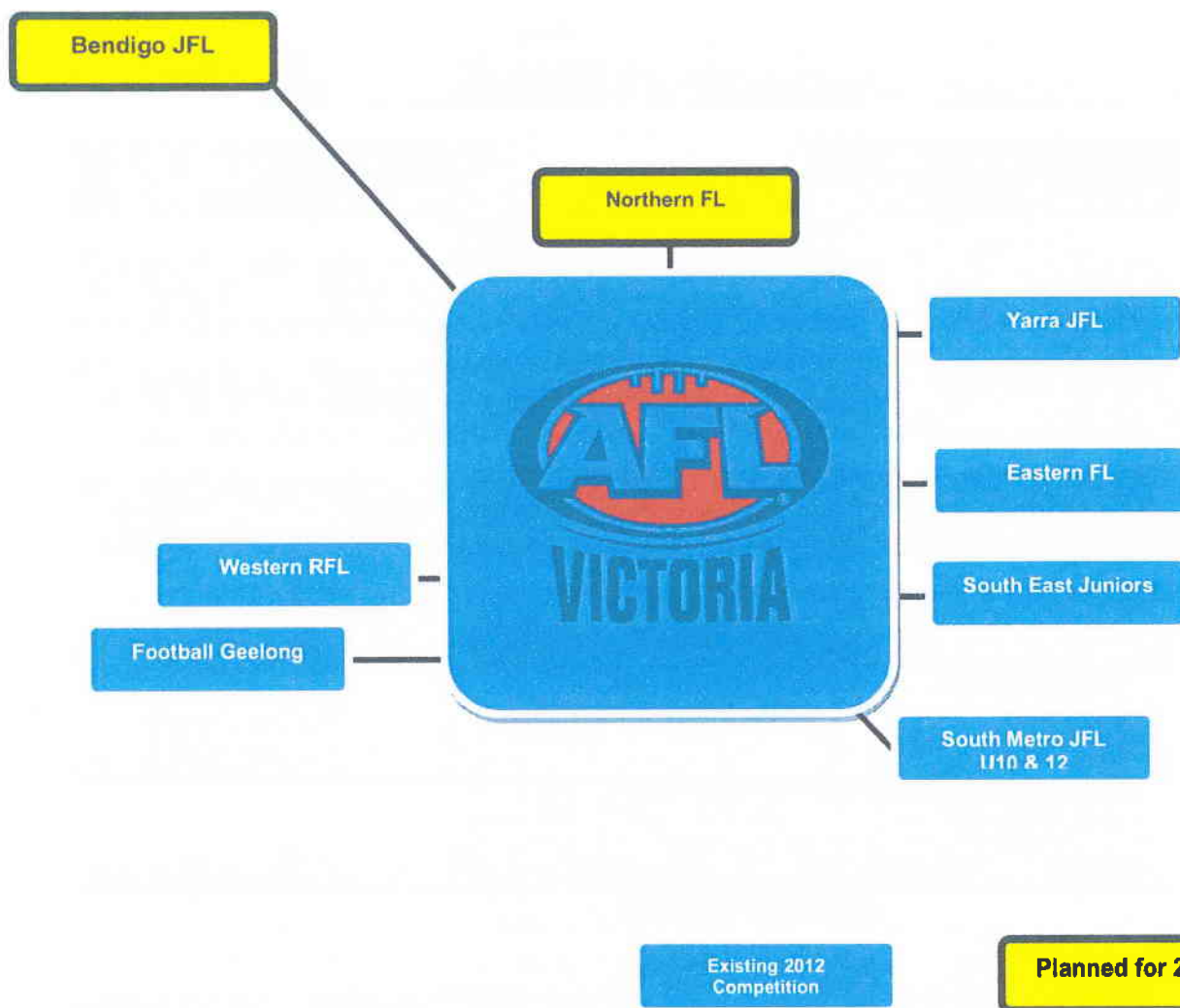
Pathway - High Performance



2012/13 Youth Girls Competitions



2012/13 Junior Girls Competitions



Benefits of Junior & Youth Girls for football clubs

- Retain junior girls and their families for longer (4 years)
- Increased membership
- Increased volunteer base
- Greater diversity in membership
- Inclusive club environment
- Assists in funding applications (government and private)

Benefits for players and their families

- Fun
- Fitness
- Friendship
- Ongoing participation from Auskick to Seniors
- Continuing to participate in sport
- Opportunity to play in team sport
- Opportunity to represent club, league and state
- Engage in the High Performance pathway
- Improved relationships between daughters and fathers (Deakin Uni evaluation, 2004)
- Family bonding

Club/School Responsibilities

- Provide a coach with a minimum Level 1 accreditation (team manager is strongly encouraged but optional)
- Provide a trainer with a minimum Level 2 First Aid qualification
- Training venue
- Training equipment
- 1 Boundary and 1 Goal Umpire
- Uniforms (at subsidised price through competition sponsors)
- Payment of annual team registration fee to League
- Complete insurance registration process

Player Responsibilities

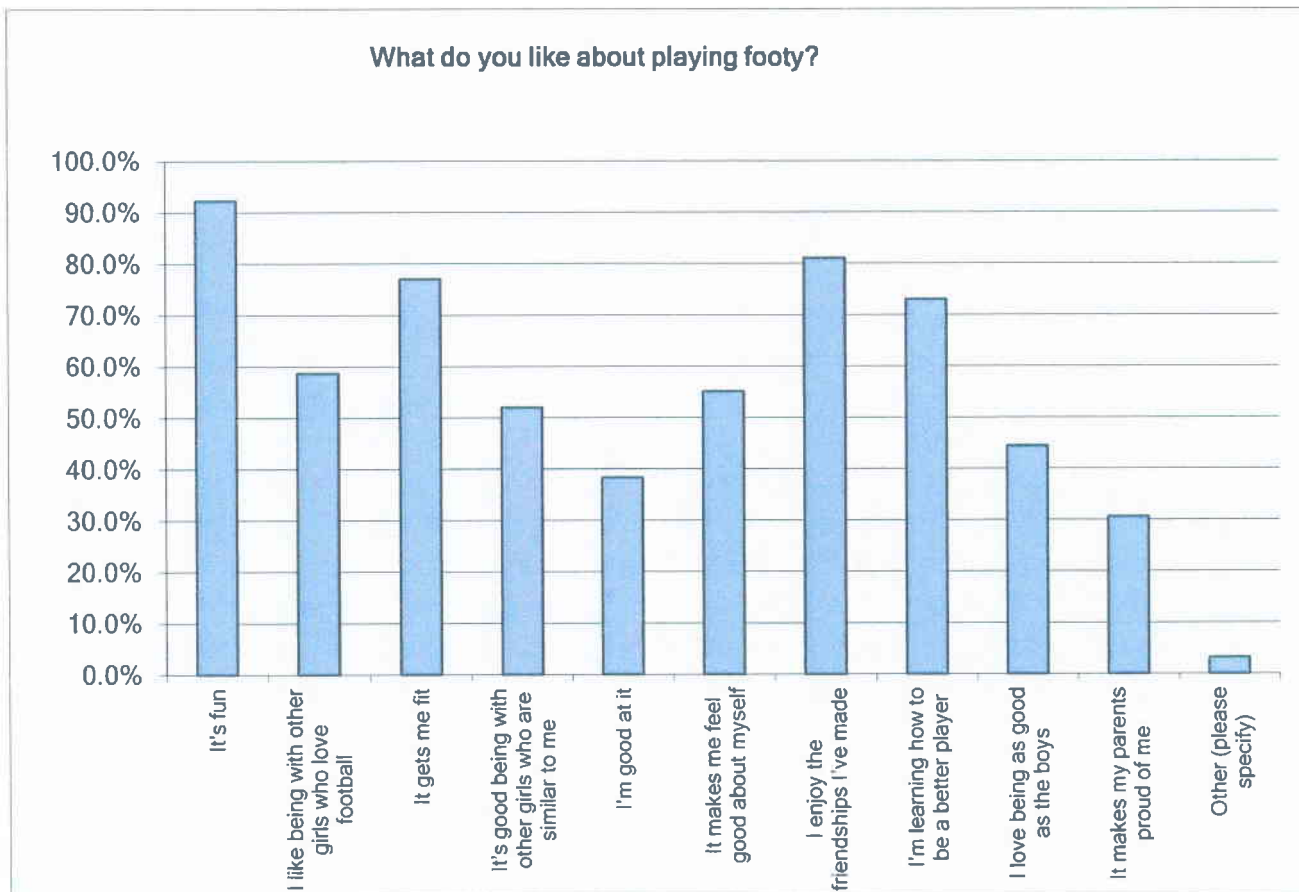
- Club membership (to be determined by the club)
- Purchase uniform (possibly – determined by club)
- Attend training and matches
- Provide a volunteer to participate in the volunteer roster (1-2 times per season)

Handy Hints for clubs to recruit Junior & Youth Girls players

- Contact existing families within club (sisters, daughters, cousins, nieces, friends)
- Contact local Auskick centre
- Contact former female players (may have participated in Auskick/club football)
- Contact local junior football clubs to engage girls in their final years of playing junior football
- Contact AFLV for promotional posters
- Advertise in local high school newsletters or local paper
- Conduct clinics at local high schools (AFLV will assist)
- Contact local VWFL club (senior women's competition)

Participant Feedback - Youth Girls Competition

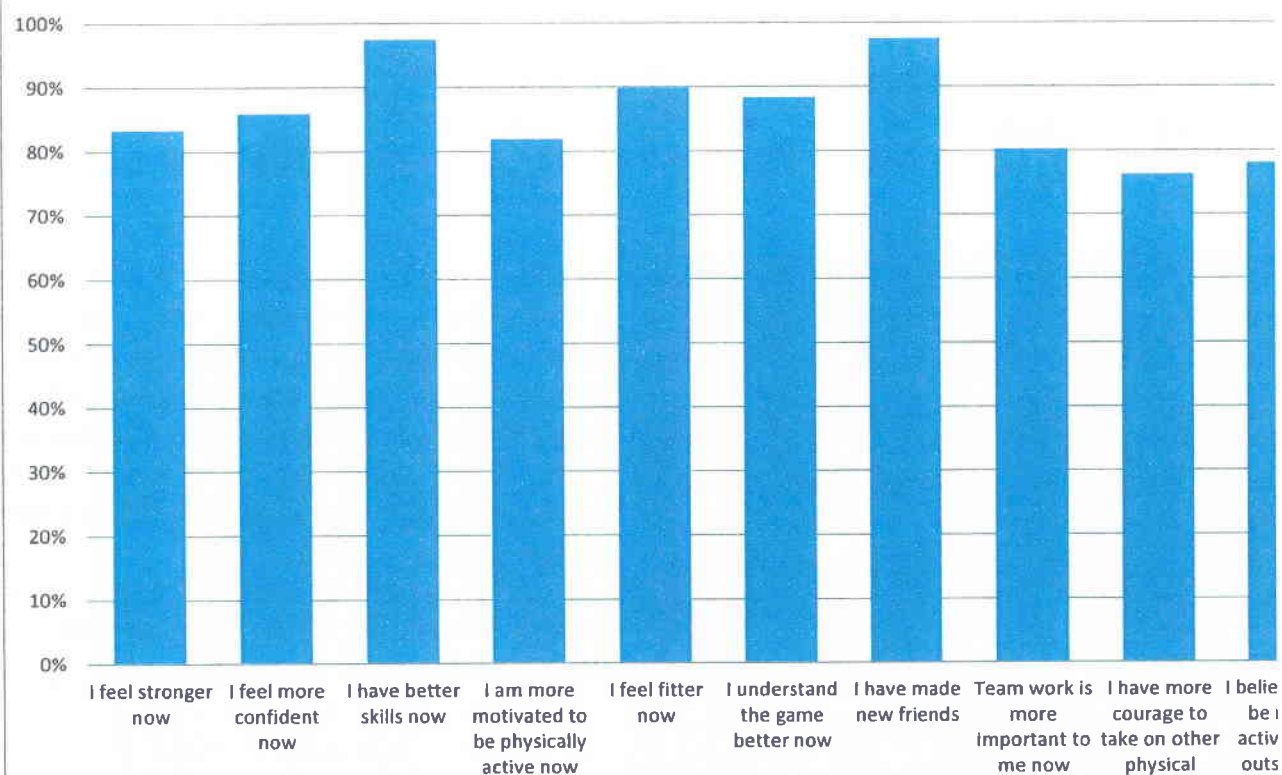
The girls who participated in 2011 Youth Girls competitions were surveyed at the end of the season. The main reasons the girls participated were fun, fitness and the love of footy. Not surprisingly the enjoyment of participating stemmed from the fact that it is fun, keeping fit, learning how to be a better player and the friendships made.



Just under 50 percent of the girls found out about Youth Girls through a friend, whilst the 30 percent of the remaining participants found out through school.

The girls also reported that football has had a positive impact on them:

Tell us how playing football has impacted on you?



At the conclusion of the season the majority of participants were going to play Youth Girls for at least another season, or play in the VWFL for those who were over the age of 18, suggesting that girls are likely to remain in the game.

Case Studies

Alicia Eva (East Malvern Youth Girls)

Entry level/pathway:

Auskick → Junior (East Malvern JFC) → Youth Girls (Sacre Coeur/East Malvern JFC) → VWFL



Alicia Eva joined the first Youth Girls competition through her school, Sacre Coeur, which entered a team in the south east competition. Alicia was a highly skilled junior footballer with East Malvern however upon approaching the age of 14 (after which boys and girls can not compete against each other) she joined her school team as a participant in the first Youth Girls competition. Since then, her school team has moved to East Malvern JFC, where Alicia was a vital member

of the team. She played interleague football in AFL Victoria's Metropolitan Championships, captained Victoria's U18 Youth Girls team and was a member of AFL Victoria's Youth Girls Academy. Her father, Brian, was also one of two fathers coaching the girls' team at East Malvern. After graduating from Youth Girls football, Alicia coached her former team for two seasons before being offered a role as an Assistant Coach of the Victorian U18 team. She now combines her captaincy duties as a player in the Victorian Women's Football League with U16 assistant coaching responsibilities with the TAC Cup's Calder Cannons.

Tess Haywood (Melbourne University Youth Girls)

Entry level/pathway: Youth Girls

Tess Haywood joined the Melbourne University Women's Football Club's Youth Girls ranks in 2007. After watching her older sister, Lisa, relishing the opportunity to play football, Tess joined the team a year later and became an integral member of the club's defence. Her mum, Michelle, was the first parent representative on the club's Executive, and backed up this role as the Youth Girls' Team Manager on match day. Tess' dad, Dennis, was an enthusiastic spectator each Saturday morning and occasional rostered volunteer, making Youth Girls football a family affair for the Haywood clan.



Narre South Lions JFC

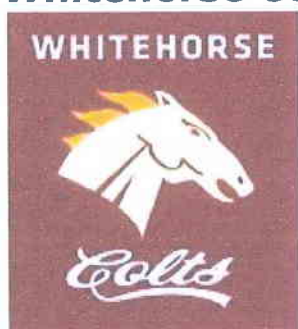
The Narre South Lions Junior Football Club often found that when their junior girls turned 14 they either gave up football or moved to another club. The Narre South Lions JFC established a Youth Girls team in 2006 to give girls the opportunity to continue playing football with all sides wearing the same guernsey.

Former Narre South Lions JFC President, Peter Gajanovic said 'The girls are a crucial team to the club, they have been fantastic. The enthusiasm and keenness of the girls is no different to the boys. They are very much apart of the club and are integral to everything we do''

The club currently has a number of girls participating in both junior football and Auskick. The presence of a strong pathway for girls has been a fantastic benefit to the club, 'The younger girls can definitely see evidence of a pathway now that we have the Youth Girls team at the club. We currently has several girls playing in the Under 13's who are very excited about playing Youth Girls next year – and that is fantastic, knowing they can continue playing a game they love' Gajanovic said.

Several of the Youth Girls also assist with Auskick on Saturday mornings which is a fantastic help to the club but also provides the younger girls with great role models.

Whitehorse Colts JFC



Whitehorse Colts JFC established their first Youth Girls team in 2011. When one of their players from their mixed sex junior teams was nearing the age of fourteen, the club realised that not only were they about to lose a respected player, but they were also about to lose her father, who happened to be the club's Coaching Coordinator. In effort to keep both members, the club established a Youth Girls team and very quickly recruited enough players for the team to be a success. The following year, the club leapt at the opportunity to establish a junior girls team in the inaugural Yarra Junior Football League Junior Girls competition. In 2012 WCJFC has 44 female players and members (and their families) that were not at the club in 2010 before they started out on their female football journey. The club is now investigating extending their female football pathway into the open age space.

Testimonials

'It's fun to get dirty without getting into trouble'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'My daughter was a couch potato. Now she goes out with friends more, she socialises and is more active. She is fitter and best of all she has more confidence in herself. Football has been the turning point for her'

- mother of a Youth Girls player

'When I'm away she texts me, telling me when the games is on and how she been training'

- father of a 13 year old Youth Girls player

'Playing football has become a cool thing and something to be proud of at our school'

- 15 year old on her school football team

'The Saturday morning ritual of standing on the sidelines with the other parents and family members has become a social event for us, and I the one activity we do together every week'

- parent of two Youth Girls.

'I just really love playing football, it's definitely my favourite sport. It keeps me fit and I have great friends.'

- 16 year old Youth Girls player

'Passionate about footy, love the way game's played, love the adrenaline I get when I'm holding the ball'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'I love being a part of a team and working together to achieve the same goal. I love learning about the game and testing how far I can push myself'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'I get to learn from my mistakes, I get useful advice and it increases my skill level and football knowledge'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'It made me motivated to get a team together for interschool sport'

- 14 year old Youth Girls player

'It gets you fit, gives you something to do on weekends, you get to make new friends, it's fun, and now my niece and nephew want to play as well.'

- 18 year old Youth Girls player

'Playing footy has helped me to stand up for my rights unlike before I was scared to'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'Learned new skills I didn't know, made lots of new friends, got to know my favourite sport again since leaving the boys' comp'.

- 16 year old Youth Girls player

'I feel a lot healthier inside'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'I really like footy because I am not very good at school work and so during the week I have something to look forward to, and it's made me more confident.

- 15 year old Youth Girls player



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

TheFootball Club is interested in participating in a Youth Girls competition.

We would like AFL Victoria to make contact with our club to discuss the process for getting a team together. Completing and returning this form to AFL Victoria does not commit our club to establishing a Youth Girls team, however it simply expresses our interest in getting involved in a Youth Girls competition.

Contact details for Youth Girls team

Name: _____ Position in team: _____

Postal Address: _____

Ph. _____ w. _____ m. _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Signed Endorsement of Club Executive

The Football Club Executive supports our club's participation in a proposed Youth Girls competition.

Name: _____ Position on Executive: _____




Postal Address: _____

Ph. _____ w. _____ m. _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Signature: _____

Please return to: Chyloe Kurdas

 chyloe.kurdas@aflvic.com.au	Fax (03) 9654 8684
 03 8663 3042/ 0418 572 902	 PO Box 4337 Melbourne VIC 3001