Fair Game Respect Matters
Evaluation of Phase One
(2008 – 2009)

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The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

**Background: primary prevention of violence against women**

Violence against women is a complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interaction of many factors – biological, social, cultural, economic and political (World Health Organisation, 2002). Violence against women includes domestic or intimate partner violence and sexual assault, and can take many different forms from bullying and harassment through to physical violence. The term *gender-based violence* is often used because it embraces all forms of violence against women, including physical, social, emotional and economic types of abuse in relationships, as well as sexual assault. Gender-based violence can occur in intimate relationships or be perpetrated by acquaintances, family members or strangers. While men can be victims of gender-based violence, they are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of violence against women, and women are overwhelmingly the victims (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2007).

There are three accepted levels of prevention of violence against women: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention aims to lessen the likelihood of gender-based violence occurring in the first place, through education and attitudinal and behavioural change strategies. Secondary prevention refers to reducing opportunities for violence by supporting individuals who are at-risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence, and tertiary prevention centres on violence interventions and victim safety once violence has occurred (Flood, 2004). By ensuring that the physical environment is safe for women, empowering men to work as partners in prevention, and promoting safe, respectful behaviours between individuals and communities, cultures that support (and even promote) violence against women may be changed (Dyson & Flood, 2007). Because *Fair Game Respect Matters* (FGRM) is a primary prevention strategy it is designed to introduce changes in culture towards these ends.

A key risk factor for men’s perpetration of gender-based violence has been identified as sexist peer norms and cultures. An association has been found between an environment in which ‘group disrespect’ is found (the presence of rude and aggressive behaviour, pornography consumption, sexualised discussion, and encouragement of group drinking) at both individual and group levels, and a culture that supports violence against women (Rosen
et al., 2003). Anecdotally some community football clubs display some of these characteristics. It is not the sport itself that leads to this culture of disrespect, but the existence of group norms that support these kinds of behaviours. Group norms are open to change, and in many clubs change has been underway for some time with a shift towards a more family-oriented environment in some clubs, and the inclusion of women and girls playing Australian rules football. Therefore community football presented fertile ground for the introduction of a culture change intervention such as FGRM.

In late 2008 the *Fair Game Respect Matters Program* (FGRM) was introduced into one Victorian community football league (the Northern Football League (NFL)). This phase of the program was introduced to NFL clubs through to the end of the 2009 football season. In 2010 FGRM received further funding to expand the program into another league. This report will focus on Phase One of FGRM in 2008/9.

**Summary of Findings**

The main findings of this evaluation will be briefly summarised in this executive summary under the headings Driver Orientation and Training, Organisation and Infrastructure, and Community Clubs. Recommendations will be addressed to AFL Victoria and the FGRM program and to areas where further research or evaluation is indicated, to more fully understand the outcomes and impact of the program.

A more detailed report on the background, methodology and findings of this two year evaluation of *Fair Game Respect Matters* follows the executive summary.

**Driver Orientation and Training**

Social norms are the rules or expectations of behaviour taken for granted, either in a culture wide or specific group (such as a family, workplace, sport club, school or religious institution). These are (often) unspoken standards of what is acceptable or not acceptable in our interactions with others. Within a group, conformity is maintained by both internal and external pressures. For example, social disapproval or punishment discourages violation of norms as can individual feelings such as guilt, shame, pleasure, or pride. Group or social

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1 Within the AFL women and girls’ football is known as ‘female football’. This terminology will be used throughout this report when referring to Australian rules football being played by women and/or girls.
norms may not coincide with individual attitudes. Pressure to conform to group norms can lead to an individual acting in a way that is inconsistent with their own values or beliefs and lead to ‘healthy’ behaviour being inhibited. For example, in a group situation many men feel that they are alone in disagreeing with their peers who make sexist jokes or comments at women’s expense, and remain silent. Silence is taken as agreement by the outspoken member of the group, and the norm is assumed to be acceptance of a behaviour with which others feel uncomfortable. This perpetuates violence supportive or abusive behaviours and suppresses dissent (Berkowitz, 1994).

Primary prevention is about changing cultures at individual, relationship, community, institutional and societal levels. Working with men to change social norms and encourage men to challenge and speak out against sexist or violence supportive behaviours is one approach to primary prevention (Dyson & Flood, 2007). The FGRM intervention recruited members from within participating clubs to act as facilitators of change. These were called Program Drivers. Drivers were trained and supported to carry out their role in their clubs. The evaluation found that greater attention is needed to assist Drivers and club members to understand the practical application of primary prevention in their clubs, particularly in relation to recognising and building respectful relationships and practicing bystander behaviours\(^2\) under a range of circumstances.

In the course of 2008/9 attention was paid to refining the FGRM toolkit and developing new resources, however this should be an ongoing area for work, based on the partnership between AFL Victoria and ARCSHS, and the development of print, online and human resources should be ongoing as the need to support the intervention in clubs arises.

Program Drivers have been the lynchpin of the program, and some have performed at a consistently high level to introduce culture change in their clubs. Systems for recognising the efforts of both Drivers and clubs that have achieved goals for change should be developed in the future.

\(^2\) Men who are approached as bystanders and witnesses to violence, and not as potential perpetrators, are more likely to be motivated to learn how to intervene to prevent violence.
**Organisation and Infrastructure**

It is important for change to occur from both the top down (AFL Victoria and league levels) and from the bottom up (club and member levels). This has been an ongoing focus of the program to date. Head office has been undergoing an audit of all policies and football development areas to ensure FGRM principles are addressed across the organisation. A planning group comprised of staff from the FGRM program, female football and football development in AFL Victoria was constituted in 2010, and meets monthly to ensure a co-ordinated approach to mainstreaming FGRM throughout the organisations. More work is suggested for the future development of the AFL Victoria Quality Club Program to include FGRM standards for both clubs and leagues. Approaches to the recruitment and engagement of community football leagues as leaders of change at the local level is also indicated, as are ongoing development in the areas of team work, communication and networking.

As AFL Victoria’s role in the introduction of FGRM in the Northern Football League (NFL) will end in the near future, work is required to develop, articulate and communicate an exit strategy and plans for sustainability of the program in the league and its member clubs in the long term. The plans should incorporate the ways in which the league will continue to support culture change in clubs and in which clubs will be resourced in future.

**Community Clubs**

More work is needed to understand the ways in which club cultures are maintained and the role of long-term members in this process. Unless long-term club members are recruited as program partners and as partners in prevention, the long term sustainability of the program may be compromised. More work is also needed to understand the role of coaches and player leadership groups in promoting or resisting culture change in clubs and in fostering respectful behaviours on and off the field.

One area where the program has excelled has been in the inclusion of females in clubs in a range of roles such as committee members, on-field roles, coaching and umpiring. Alongside FGRM there has also been an increase of women and girls playing Australian football competitively. The evaluation finds that while this is an important outcome of the project, that there should not be an expectation that increasing the numbers of women and girls in
clubs will automatically change the culture or men’s behaviour. Therefore the program should include more practical information and resources about men’s behaviour change, respectful relationships and learning how to practice bystander skills in different circumstances.

There is also evidence that messages about violence against women and primary prevention have not been translated so that club members understand and support prevention, and that attitudes about the role of women in society may be more conservative in the football community than national attitudes. There are implications for this in the design, delivery and support of the FGRM program at all levels, and for the way the title of the program is abbreviated to Fair Game. This emerged during interviews with club members, most of whom had no idea what the ‘Fair Game’ project was about and guessed that is was about playing fairly on-field, rather than about women’s safety and inclusion.

**Recommendations**

1. **Program**

The analysis of evaluation data in this report highlights some areas where the program should focus attention in future. Based on the findings, we therefore recommend that:

1.1 The program should continue to develop an orientation and training plan that can be replicated in different settings. The plans should respond to the specific needs of junior and senior, as well as combined clubs, and also to the needs of clubs which require greater support to introduce change. Further, an overall plan and specific session plans should be developed that clearly identify session goals, achievable objectives, activities and notes to enable delivery across different settings in future.

1.2 In addition to providing information about the incidence and extent of violence against women in the community, the program must also work towards including education and practical strategies to assist all clubs members to understand the behaviour that can support or lead to violence against women, in order to assist members to practice respectful relationships and become effective bystanders.
1.3 As the evaluation identifies new areas for resource development, the Program Planning Team should consider the recommendations of the evaluation, and work towards adding further resources to the FGRM toolkit to support clubs.

1.4 In all future planning for FGRM attention should be paid to considering the ways in which the program can ultimately become self-administered in the long term, and how it can be supported by other aspects of football development in the organisation (AFL Victoria and the participating league/s).

1.5 Early attention should be paid to exit and succession plans for the FGRM program in the NFL to identify the future of the program in that league.

1.6 The possibility and potential for the development of a fully trained and resourced FGRM speakers’ bureau drawn from selected Program Drivers should be explored to identify its potential for supporting the program in future.

1.7 AFL Victoria should develop model policies and codes of conduct on which clubs can base their own policies and make these available to clubs using both the website and hard copy communications. The development of a template for clubs to use to develop their own policy booklet for members should also be explored.

1.8 Consideration should be given to using the full name of the program (Fair Game Respect Matters) or shortening it to ‘Respect Matters’, in order to communicate the intention of the program more clearly to members.

1.9 To ensure effective communication about the program creative and multiple methods of communication should be explored with participating clubs and Drivers, whilst maintaining sensitivity in not overburdening the volunteers upon which the program is dependent.

1.10 FGRM management should work to develop networks with the Victorian Office of Women’s Policy and as they work towards implementing the Victorian 10 year plan to prevent violence against women, A Right to Respect. Further, they should work to identify agencies and services that can potentially provide support for the program or resources for clubs and foster networks with them at the local level. This may also be achieved by involving peak level agencies on the FGRM Reference Group.

1.11 Information about what community resources are available to provide practical support to participating clubs should be communicated to clubs through their Drivers. This must focus on working with boys and men as well as on referral and support for victims or
survivors. It is not enough to tell Drivers about community resources without making sure that the resources can provide the kind of support that is needed, thus two way networking and communication is essential.

1.12 To ensure sustainability of the program in clubs and maintenance of culture change, the recruitment and selection of Program Drivers should be more rigorous to ensure that they have influence in their clubs and that they will be able to report to and involve the club’s committee of management. Because of the voluntary nature of clubs this may prove difficult, however, greater efforts to purposively select Drivers should be attempted.

1.13 The introduction of respectful and bystander behaviours into the program should also be further explored in conjunction with current research and education programs in education settings that focus on primary prevention.

1.14 To support the incorporation of FGRM into the Quality Club Program, consideration should be given to including policies (appropriate to the different levels) that clubs will:

- Expect respectful behaviours between all members on and off the field.
- Encourage women and girls to participate in all on and off-field activities and responsibilities in the club.
- Make sexism, racism and homophobia in all forms unacceptable.
- Locate responsibility for maintaining community standards on the field with club coaches.
- The player leadership group should be responsible for players’ understanding and adhering to FGRM expectations concerning respectful behaviour in all club related activities, including on field, post-match entertainment and end of season celebrations.
- Create minimum standards for any entertainment associated with the club to be non-exploitative, non-sexist or inappropriate to a family-oriented environment. This includes male and female strippers and comedians whose material is racist, homophobic, sexist or sexually explicit.
- Develop issue/incident protocols for when there are breaches in the club’s expected standards, and how to liaise with the league and AFL Victoria for assistance and support.
- Develop policies to deal appropriately with breaches of these policies.
2. Research/Evaluation

This report of the development and implementation of the FGRM program in the Northern Football League in 2008/9 highlights a number of areas where further research is indicated to understand the ways in which culture change works and identify ways in which the program can be implemented and sustained into the future. Based on the findings of this research, we therefore recommend that:

2.1 Research should focus on identifying the ways in which junior and senior clubs differ and on the approaches that best meet the needs of different clubs. The differences in the outcomes and impact of FGRM in junior and senior clubs, as well as between different clubs, and the implications of this for the delivery of the program should therefore be the focus of further research.

2.2 The introduction of respectful and bystander behaviours into the program should be further explored in conjunction with current research and education programs in education settings.

2.3 The evaluation should focus on exploring the types of resources needed by Program Drivers to support them as facilitators of change in their clubs and on making recommendations to the Program Planning Team about what is needed to meet these needs.

2.4 Research is required to understand the ways in which community development can be best used in structured settings such as sporting clubs to introduce cultural change.

2.5 Further work is indicated to understand the role of coaches for promoting respectful behaviours among players. It is also indicated for understanding the role of the club player leadership group in supporting and promoting culture change, particularly in senior clubs and among adolescent boys in junior clubs.

2.6 Further research is required to understand how to recruit long-term club members as program partners to support the culture change in their clubs.

2.7 The evaluation should focus on clubs with Drivers who meet the criteria of ‘early adopters’ (as defined in this report) and explore the best ways to draw on their successes to inform and promote the program more widely throughout their league (and others).
2.8 Further research is indicated to explore the ways in which the organisation and program structures promote or work against the agency needed by program drivers to achieve culture change, and to suggest future directions for the program.

2.9 Further research is indicated to understand the ways in which primary prevention education can best be delivered and for developing a framework of principles against which future programs can be evaluated.
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1. Introduction

**Background**

**Prevention of violence against women**

Violence against women in contemporary Australia has a profound and devastating effect on women, children, young people, families and the whole community. More than half of all Australian women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by the age of 16. Women are at least three times more likely to be victims of intimate partner violence than men, and this kind of violence is one of the leading causes of death, disability and ill health in women aged 15 to 44 years. Apart from the devastating person-cost of violence, the cost to the community exceeds $13.6 billion and this figure is increasing (A Right to Respect, 2009).

Violence against women is a complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interaction of many factors – biological, social, cultural, economic and political (World Health Organisation, 2002). Violence against women includes domestic or intimate partner violence and sexual assault, and can take many different forms from bullying and harassment through to physical violence. The term *gender-based violence* is often used because it embraces all forms of violence against women, including physical, social, emotional and economic types of abuse in relationships, as well as sexual assault. Gender-based violence can occur in intimate relationships or be perpetrated by acquaintances, family members or strangers. While men can be victims of gender-based violence, they are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of violence against women, and women are overwhelmingly the victims (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2007).

There are three accepted levels of prevention of violence against women: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention aims to lessen the likelihood of gender-based violence occurring in the first place, through education and attitudinal and behavioural change strategies. Secondary prevention refers to reducing opportunities for violence by supporting individuals who are at-risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence, and tertiary prevention centres on violence interventions and victim safety once violence has occurred (Flood, 2004). By ensuring that the physical environment is safe for women, empowering men to work as partners in prevention, and promoting safe, respectful behaviours between individuals and communities, cultures that support (and even promote) violence against women may be
changed (Dyson & Flood, 2007). Because *Fair Game Respect Matters* (FGRM) is a primary prevention strategy it is designed to introduce changes in culture towards these ends.

To understand why men perpetrate violence against women it is important to identify the factors which lead to, or support, violence. A key risk factor for men’s perpetration of gender-based violence has been identified as sexist peer norms and cultures. Other contributing factors include high alcohol consumption, heterosexism and homophobia, use of pornography, and general norms of women’s subordinate status (Boswell and Spade 1996; Sanday 1996). An association has been found between an environment in which ‘group disrespect’ is found (the presence of rude and aggressive behaviour, pornography consumption, sexualised discussion, and encouragement of group drinking) at both individual and group levels, and a culture that supports violence against women (Rosen *et al.*, 2003). Anecdotally some community football clubs display some of these characteristics. It is not the sport itself that leads to this culture of disrespect, but the existence of group norms that support these kinds of behaviours. Group norms are open to change, and in many clubs change has been underway for some time with a shift towards a more family-oriented environment in some clubs, and the inclusion of women’s football. Therefore community football presented fertile ground for the introduction of a culture change intervention such as *Fair Game Respect Matters*.

Interventions to respond to women who have experienced violence, and to assist men who are violent to change their behaviour, have been established over the past four decades. However, while programs of this nature are essential to attenuate the effects of violence and to lessen its continuation, they do little to diminish the ongoing high rates of violence against women in the community. As a result, an approach called primary prevention has come to prominence in recent years which addresses the root causes and conditions that support violence against women. Frameworks for primary prevention identify a spectrum of relevant strategies, addressing factors associated with violence against women at individual, relationship, community, institutional, and societal levels (Davis, Parks, & Cohen, 2006; Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2008; World Health Organisation, 2002).

Violence prevention efforts also have been developed for particular institutional and cultural contexts, including college fraternities, sports and the military, either in response to perceptions of high rates of violence against women in such contexts or reflecting the goal of developing programs appropriate to local contexts. A rapidly emerging area of violence
prevention concerns behaviour change education with men. Violence prevention programs aimed at men have proliferated in North America on college (university) campuses. Violence prevention education with men has been prompted by three insights: (i) that prevention efforts must address men, because largely it is men who perpetrate this violence; (ii) that constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping sexual assault and domestic violence; and (iii) that men have a positive role to play in helping to stop violence against women.

In 2004 the Australian Football League (AFL) was confronted by a series of allegations concerning AFL players who were accused of sexual and physical assaults against women. In the wake of these alleged incidents the AFL announced their intention to address the issue of violence against women within the league and beyond. As a result, the organisation announced the adoption of a *Respect and Responsibility* program designed to create safe and inclusive environments for women at all levels of Australian Football and beyond.

The *Respect and Responsibility* initiative was formulated and managed in collaboration with violence prevention agencies, and launched in November 2005. It incorporated model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its member clubs, and changes to AFL rules relating to problematic or violent conduct. A major plank of *Respect and Responsibility* was, and continues to be, the education of players and other club officials, combined with a public education program (Australian Football League, 2005).

The AFL used *Respect and Responsibility* to emphasise its community and social responsibility, and public commitment to preventing violence against women. This is framed in the Policy, which is concerned with creating a safe and inclusive environment for women and girls at all levels of Australian Football. The policy calls for the development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure safe, supportive and inclusive environments for women. The policy states that the AFL will:

Foster a culture that creates an environment of equality between women and men. It is difficult to ensure that an environment of equality is generated where women are not appropriately represented at all levels of club administration, or are portrayed as sex objects or otherwise marginalised, rather than being recognised for their skills and contributions. Football clubs are an important part of Australian society and thus need to be safe, supportive and an inclusive environment for women. … [This] moves beyond the development of formal legal compliance procedures to cultural change within the AFL, AFL clubs and community systems.
The *Respect and Responsibility Policy*, therefore, frames an organisational approach to violence prevention, not only player training or interventions with men. Player training has received a great deal of publicity, as have rule changes, however the organisation has also committed to long term cultural change at all levels. As a result, in 2007 the AFL commissioned research to understand what community football clubs are like for women and girls and developed a strategy and toolkit for the introduction of culture change in community clubs. VicHealth funded the proposed community roll out to introduce culture change in community clubs and leagues, and to monitor its progress. The community component of the AFL’s prevention strategy is *Fair Game Respect Matters*. FGRM is underpinned by the understanding that change must occur from both the top down—that is from the organisation—and from the bottom up, at the individual and community club level. This involves changes in governance, policy, and day-to-day practices for managers, staff, volunteers and participants.

**Introducing culture change in community clubs**

A number of common factors have been identified for a ‘successful’ sporting club. These include a commitment to including others, a strong family and social focus, valuing and rewarding members, and having and regularly promoting policies that ensure the club is safe and inclusive for all members. Features of clubs that have continued prosperity and longevity include playing a sport that has long-standing importance in the local area and members being aware of and proud of the club’s history. The club ethos is an important factor in a well-functioning (‘healthy’) club. In healthy clubs, members tend to see themselves as part of the broader community; they are likely to respond to community needs by developing specific programs and holding social events that generate goodwill, which is often reciprocated by other community members and organisations. They also share their facilities willingly with other groups, take an interest in the health and wellbeing of their members and the wider community, and celebrate and respect the history of the club, while actively and strategically planning its future (VicHealth, 1999).

**Evaluating Fair Game Respect Matters**

This report will describe and discuss the evaluation of a two-year intervention to achieve cultural change in the member clubs in one Australian Football League (AFL) community football league in Victoria, Australia. The report will outline the purpose and background to the intervention and discuss culture change theory. The design of the intervention and
associated resources, and the introduction of the intervention will then be discussed. This will be followed by a description of the methodology used for the evaluation, the findings and some discussion and recommendations for the future. The findings will be organised by organisational infrastructure, the intervention and its tools, change processes in community clubs, and attitude and behaviour change.

To provide some background and context for the program, a brief description of the research carried out in 2007 with women in community clubs for the AFL in 2007 by La Trobe University and AFL Victoria will be discussed. This research was carried out to establish an evidence base upon which to propose a culture change in community football clubs. Women who were members of community football clubs in Victoria were consulted to seek their views on priority areas for establishing safe, supportive club environments for women and girls. Five focus groups were held with women who held a variety of roles in community football clubs, and one was held with men. In all, 55 women and 28 men participated. A disconnect was apparent between how women perceived their safety and inclusion in clubs and how this was perceived by men. Women reported that at times they felt excluded, talked down to, unsupported and discouraged from taking on anything other than menial roles in their clubs. Women in positions traditionally held by men, such as coaching and umpiring, reported that they were at times treated with outright hostility by men in their clubs or during games.

Women also expressed the view that they brought a different attitude and approach to the club, in that they demanded respectful and responsible behaviour, and a family orientation. Both the men and women focus group participants agreed that women were willing to volunteer and contribute to their clubs more readily than many men. Many women indicated that they were seen as good enough to take on men’s roles if no men were available, but in the presence of a male counterpart, they were expected to take a back seat. Attitudes in the men’s group were more divided. There were some men who feared football clubs would be ‘ridiculed’ if women ‘took over’, and that men would be denied their fun by expectations of ‘responsible’ behaviour.

Apart from feeling denigrated and belittled in their clubs, the major issues raised by women focused on the poor physical facilities. Female players and on-field officials reported a lack of appropriate shower and change rooms. In many clubs the toilets were reportedly dirty, poorly lit and often outside the main building. The majority of facilities (which belong to
local government authorities and are rented by clubs) were designed in a time when women did not play or even belong to sporting clubs, and have not been upgraded to reflect women’s role in society in the 21st century.

Another area of concern raised by the women related to alcohol consumption in the club rooms. Many women join clubs because members of their family belong, and belonging creates opportunities for shared family time and interests. The female participants in the research were all football enthusiasts and shared a love for the game. However, particularly among those from senior clubs, many reported that heavy drinking could create a sense of unease among women and their children, and this was raised as a serious issue. The women acknowledged that many clubs are dependant on bar sales for income\(^3\), but expressed concern about a culture of excessive alcohol consumption.

Based on the findings of this scoping research, La Trobe University developed a resource for use in community football clubs to assist with the implementation of an intervention titled *Fair Game Respect Matters* (FGRM). The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) subsequently funded AFL Victoria to introduce the proposed intervention into 46 clubs in one community football league in Victoria, and nominated La Trobe University as best placed to evaluate the intervention.

**Community**

Despite suggestions that sporting clubs may foster violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours, they are an important community resource. A sense of community has been defined as ‘a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together’ (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). While football clubs have traditionally been viewed as masculine territory, women are in fact active participants in the AFL football community. Around half of all football fans, and 30% of community football club members, are women (AFL Victoria, 2007). Women are significant participants in their clubs; they play an important role in succession planning, as they bring children and young players into clubs, and they often stay involved as volunteers, thereby ensuring ongoing membership and future participation. The relational qualities of clubs can make an important

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\(^3\) While most clubs are able to obtain financial support from sponsorship from local traders and businesses, this is often insufficient to cover the cost of running a club, thus alcohol sales are often an important source of income for clubs.
contribution to women’s sense of belonging if they are valued as members. However, if clubs (or their members) do not value women’s participation, or actively demonstrate disregard for women and girls, particularly those who take on non-traditional roles, this could also be detrimental to women’s health and wellbeing.

Membership in a club or team provides a sense of community, offers camaraderie and fosters kinship. Sport is ordered and predictable, it has rules, promotes fair play and justice—simplicity not complexity—and promotes a sense of purpose and meaning, a chance to temporarily escape from everyday life (Segrave, 2000). Sports grounds are also often culturally significant places, celebrated as repositories of folklore and sentiment. For participants—whether players, coaches, officials or other kinds of volunteers—organised sport can foster a sense of belonging that is unlikely to be present in individual physical activity pursuits, thereby fostering social inclusion, community, and a sense of belonging for those who are included.

**Community Development and Culture Change**

Community development is a strategy used in the health and welfare sectors to promote health and to assist communities to come together for collective gain and positive outcomes. The United Nations (1963: 4) defined community development as:

> The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united … to improve the … social and cultural conditions of communities… This complex of processes is, therefore, made up of two essential elements: the participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements.

Community development, therefore, is a process which involves people in a community working together to improve social and cultural conditions in their community, supported by the provision of technical and other services in ways that encourage initiative, self-help and mutual support to make these more effective. Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups by providing them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities. The *Fair Game Respect Matters* approach used to assist community football clubs to become more inclusive and safer places for women has fundamentally been a community development approach.
Community Development and Violence Prevention

Good violence prevention strategies engage the whole community and do not focus on individual interventions at the expense of understanding the ways in which the built environment and social structures are implicated in violence against women. Change must occur not only between individuals, but in communities. Phases of community mobilisation for change include:

**Phase 1:** Community assessment – gathering information about attitudes and beliefs concerning violence and building relationships with the community.

**Phase 2:** Awareness-raising – increasing awareness about violence, including what it is, why it happens, and its negative consequences for women, men, children, families and the community.

**Phase 3:** Building networks – encouraging and supporting community members and services to change practices. Building networks to strengthen individual and group efforts.

**Phase 4:** Integrating action – making actions against violence part of everyday life in the community and integrated into institutional policies and practices.

**Phase 5:** Consolidating efforts – strengthening preventative actions and activities to ensure they are sustainable and continue to grow and progress (Hayes, 2006; Michau & Naker, 2003).

These phases are grounded in community development principles, and might include:

- Partnerships between agencies such as local government, community health and other local organisations and stakeholders who can provide support, resources and assistance to bring about change.

- An approach that combines individual empowerment with public advocacy, education and adherence to the values of sporting behaviour.

- A clear understanding of issues concerning forms of violence and women’s safety within the club environment and beyond.
• Innovative policies and practices to encourage a gender balance in all aspects of the club – including players, coaches and officials, volunteers, members and spectators.

• Providing training for implementing safe and inclusive policies and practices, and ensuring that this is sustainable using a train-the-trainer approach and ongoing support.

• A focus on conciliation between women and men in all aspects of the intervention.

• Building in excellent evaluation and follow-up mechanisms to promote sustainability.

**Culture Change**

In employing a theoretical concept to frame the evaluation, Rogers’ (1995) *Theory of Diffusion of Innovations* provided a useful approach. The theory explains how innovations (ideas, behaviours, or anything that is perceived as new by the audience) are adopted by a population (Robinson, 2009). Diffusion of innovations is informed by three insights into the processes of social change:

• The qualities of an innovation which make an innovation spread successfully
• The importance of peer-to-peer conversations and networks
• Understanding the needs of different user segments.

Five qualities are recognised as factors in the success of an innovation:

1. Relative advantage: the degree to which the innovation is seen as better than the idea it supersedes – in terms of factors such as economic advantage, social prestige, convenience or satisfaction, depending on the perceptions and needs of the user group.

2. Compatibility: the innovation is compatible with the values and context of the organisation and its members.

3. Degree of complexity: if the changes are too difficult to adopt, there is less chance it will be adopted. Keep it simple.

4. Trial period: if people get a chance to try out proposed changes they are more likely to commit to them. If the trial is successful, others are more likely to adopt it.
5. Observable and tangible benefits: changes are more likely to be accepted and others to adopt them if there are obvious benefits that result from the changes.

Early adopters are those people in a group who are quick on the uptake of new ideas and to test them out. They are also respected by their peers and what they say about an innovation tends to be respected by their peers. Robinson (2009) offers insights about how to work with early adopters:

- Offer strong face-to-face support.
- Listen to their ideas about how the innovation needs to change to be more efficient and effective.
- Reward them for their work with recognition, for example (but not limited to) media attention and awards.
- Promote them as leaders.
- Maintain relationships with regular feedback.

**Organisational Change**

Organisations pass through a series of stages as they change. Interventions should be focused on moving them from one stage to the next. Groups may be resistant to change and may need encouragement, new skills and confidence to make a successful transition.

**Stages of Change**

- Defining the problem and identifying solutions.

- Initiating action to address the problem.

- Working through changes to implement desired outcomes.

- Cementing the changes as an ongoing part of the organisation/group.

A key premise is that organisational structures and processes influence member’s behaviour and motivation. An analysis of problems that interfere with optimum performance is required to implement change. Organisation members collectively identify problems and generate solutions and action plans. Ideally the entire organisation participates later in evaluating the
outcomes of the problem-solving measures used to cement change (Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, 2010).

The stages of change are not necessarily sequential, and may be somewhat cyclical as participants move on and change, particularly in the context of community clubs which have a constant turn-over of members and office bearers. Thus, different clubs may be at different stages of change and require different kinds of intervention or support. At the time of writing this report, the final stage of change mentioned above—cementing changes as an ongoing part of culture change—has not been adequately addressed.

Cultural (or social) change theories suggest that to achieve change in groups, it is important first that individuals understand the issues that need to be changed. Attitudes that support violence against women are deeply engrained, and to achieve the social changes that are needed to make communities safer and more inclusive for women, individuals and communities need to:

- Understand the problem and its consequences.
- Believe that the proposed changes will reduce the risk or prevent the problem.
- Believe that the benefits of the changes being introduced outweigh the costs.
- Be committed to maintaining changes (Ohio Domestic Violence Network, 2010).

According to research carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2007), principles for primary prevention programs in the community, such as FGRM, include:

- The use of participatory methods for effectively engaging participants.
- Fostering an enabling social environment to increase the likelihood that positive behaviour change will be sustained.
- Employing and training facilitators with high quality skills.
- Providing long term follow-up to support and sustain changes brought about by the program.
- Combining education with wider advocacy and community mobilisation activities.

Taken together, these principles are important both in the development and ongoing evaluation of any culture change intervention, and constant reflection on, and attention to ensuring they are embedded in all aspects of the program is essential.
**Adult Learning**

As the intervention has involved education sessions, the style of the approach can have an impact on whether or not participants adopt the messages necessary to carry out their roles effectively. Research has demonstrated that individual learning styles differ, and that different approaches are appropriate to maximise learning. Much adult learning is non-formal, and essentially a social process. “Learning is not just a psychological process, but is intimately related to the world and affected by it. People take on the knowledge, values, beliefs and attitudes of the society in which we live” (Jarvis, 1987, p. 11). Because the program was carried by Program Drivers, whose responsibility was to introduce and drive change in their clubs, adult education was an important aspect of the program. Thus, understanding and application of adult learning techniques in education sessions has been (and continues to be) essential. The principles of adult learning suggest that the following need to be addressed in any adult learning setting:

- Clear goals and objectives and the relevance of each session to their context and experience should be clearly communicated to all participants.
- Participant expectations for each session should be explored.
- Participants’ expertise and knowledge should be recognised, respected and drawn on.
- Both experiential and cognitive processes should be employed (Dyson & Flood 2007).

**The Community Football Context**

AFL community football clubs are divided by region and each region is managed by a league. All community football clubs in each region are members of their league which is governed at state-level by AFL Victoria. In the case of the intervention league for FGRM, the Northern Football League (NFL), there are 46 member clubs, each with memberships of various size, but overall in excess of 29,000 members. Clubs are managed by volunteers, and many also have paid staff members. Many senior clubs pay their players and coaches as well as other staff. There are many differences in the makeup, structure and management of clubs which also differs by league. Generally in the NFL there are junior clubs, which have members up to the age of 16 or 18, and senior clubs which have members aged over 18 years. While some junior and senior clubs share clubrooms, they often have completely separate management,
budgets and areas of responsibility. A few clubs combine junior and senior clubs; however, these clubs may also still have separate management structures. Parents of players in junior clubs pay membership fees. Some clubs have large member bases; others struggle to find enough members. In practice each club has a similar structure, but is completely individual in character and operation.

While staff at AFL Victoria and the NFL have an understanding of the ways in which clubs work, early in the introduction of the intervention the minutiae and complexities of club life were not always clear to everyone involved in the program and the evaluation. To produce resources and provide support for the introduction of a culture change intervention requires a sound understanding about the context, which takes time. This lack of understanding played out in the early days of the intervention when some clubs were critical of the resources provided by the AFL (discussed in more detail in the Findings) but also provided opportunities to demonstrate that responsiveness and flexibility were built into the program.

**Design of the FGRM Toolkit**

The toolkit consisted of an ‘audit’ and goal setting tool, and a series of posters and brochures directed at different segments of a club, including coaches, senior players, parents and spectators, and the club ethos and environment. These were cartoon style drawings, with messages for the particular group at which they were aimed. The toolkit was developed based on the findings of the 2007 preliminary research in community clubs about what needed to change in club cultures to make them more inclusive and safer for women and girls.

AFL Victoria has a number of model codes of conduct and policies for community football clubs, and it was felt that if these were being practiced clubs would be operating well. As a result questions about how these policies and codes of conduct were being used by clubs were incorporated into the audit tool. It was divided into sections which included clubs’ policies and codes of conduct, club ethos and environment, communication and values, and respect and responsibility. At the end of the audit space was provided for setting goals for culture change within their club.

The intention of the audit was that participating club management committee members would complete them in private and then discuss their answers, focusing on any areas of disagreement. The audit’s primary aim was to encourage discussion and debate among committee members and identify ways to work towards change. Program Drivers were asked
to facilitate this discussion and the goal setting activity. The outcome of this process was a set of short, medium and long term goals for change that were unique to each club, with Program Drivers assisting with or leading implementation.

**Principles For Primary Prevention Education**

In recent years, considerable work has gone into developing principles for the introduction of primary prevention of violence against women programs. The principles identified here represent an amalgam of work done by VicHealth (Dr Michael Flood and Lara Fergus; the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) and the World Health Organization.

**Programs should be developed on a program logic that:**

- Is based on a theory of change and an understanding of gender and power
- Understands the social, cultural and individual factors that lead to violence against women
- Aims for skills development, positive behaviours in relationships and responsibility for behaviour, and
- Understands the difference between attitude and behaviour change

**Programs must be inclusive, relevant and culturally sensitive**

- Assumptions within the program should be acknowledged and discussed
- Based on consultation with community leaders or representatives from relevant cultural groups when appropriate
- Consider the needs of marginalised groups

**Programs must be evaluated**

- Identify clear and realistic processes for program evaluation
- Ensure that outcome indicators are identified in program planning and design
- Build in strategies for long-term follow up
- Disseminate learnings widely
- The evaluation should reflect on the program logic and framework

**Community programs must be based on adult learning principles, including:**

- The use of participatory methods for effectively engaging participants
• Fostering an enabling social environment to increase the likelihood that positive behaviour change will be sustained

• Employment and training facilitators with high quality skills

• Providing long-term follow-up to support and sustain changes brought about by the program

• Combining education with wider advocacy and community mobilisation activities

**Implementation of Fair Game Respect Matters**

In late 2008 the *Fair Game Respect Matters Program* (FGRM) was introduced into one Victorian community football league (the Northern Football League (NFL)). This phase of the program was introduced to NFL clubs through to the end of the 2009 football season. In 2010 FGRM received further funding to expand the program into another league. This report will focus on Phase One of FGRM in 2008/9.

**AFL Victoria**

The AFL Victoria goals of the FGRM program were to work with one Victorian community football league (Northern Football League), and its member clubs, to foster an environment that is safe and inclusive for women and girls.

The project objectives were:

• To identify and recruit Drivers within AFL Victoria and the participating league, and raise their awareness about the primary prevention of violence against women, train them to use the FGRM toolkit and introduce culture change in their clubs.

• To provide ongoing support for Program Drivers and their clubs as needed.

• To support the Northern Football League and member clubs to review their own culture and environment – including policy and practices, attitudes and beliefs, affecting women’s safety and participation.

• To assist the participating league and clubs to identify goals for change, and to plan and implement these goals.
• To implement a range of training and support strategies to assist participating league/clubs carry out culture change plans.

• To progressively monitor the intervention to track developments, identify barriers and understand the implications of events as the project progresses.

• To engage local government as a key stakeholder to build networks and partnerships that foster culture change.

• To engage with and build on existing violence prevention programs, including relevant projects funded under the VicHealth Respect and Responsibility Preventing Violence Against Women Program.

• To introduce incentives and recognition awards for the league/clubs that participate and to implement change strategies.

**Project Evaluation Objectives**

• To develop and implement an evaluation strategy that provides continuous learning and improvement, using qualitative and quantitative methods.

• To compare the intervention in NFL with another comparable league where no intervention has been introduced.

**AFL Victoria and the Northern Football League**

Initially, co-ordination for FGRM was located in AFL Victoria’s Female Football Development section. The female football development manager was involved in the 2007 research with women in clubs, and was consulted in the development of the toolkit; this was therefore a logical position in which to initially locate co-ordination. The program team also included the community development manager from the NFL and the program evaluator. Early Driver orientation sessions were carried out by this team. Because an intervention of this kind and scope has not been carried out before, the team felt their way and learned on the job as the program developed.
Community Clubs

To introduce the intervention, information about FGRM was circulated among clubs, which were asked to nominate two program ‘drivers’ to liaise with the program and facilitate its introduction in their clubs. A Program Driver position description\(^4\) was developed with the intention that two drivers, a man and a woman, who held positions of influence in their clubs would be nominated to these positions. As it turned out whoever was nominated by their club took on the role of Driver and no quality control was possible in terms of suitability for the position. In practice, some held positions of influence, while others were largely ignored by the club’s management. One of the vagaries of a community development program such as this is that in practice the organisation has little control how clubs decide to respond to requests, thus change can be a slow and patchy process in some cases.

The intervention was piloted with three clubs\(^5\) late in 2008, and with a further three clubs early in 2009. Following the pilots the remaining 40 clubs were invited to attend further orientation sessions over the next few months.

Sessions with Drivers involved an initial orientation session that included information about the primary prevention of violence against women and how to use the toolkit, and a follow-up session about six weeks later. Once clubs had gone through the review process and set goals for change, a club Driver training calendar was set up for the remainder of the season, culminating in a ‘recognition night’ for Drivers and club presidents in October 2009. Thus, the first session was called the ‘orientation’, the second session, ‘follow-up’, and subsequent sessions ‘training’. The use of the term ‘training’ is somewhat loose, and involved speakers, and group discussion, although no formal training schedule was planned. The lack of structure for the monthly Driver sessions is being addressed in 2010 by the development of a ‘curriculum’ to ensure Drivers receive the support, knowledge and skills they need to effectively drive the program in their clubs.

The toolkit was used as the basis for introducing the intervention in clubs. Program staff were introduced, the program manager presented some background information on violence against women, and how to use the kit, and questions and discussion between the project

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\(^4\) The position description for Drivers can be found in Appendix Two.

\(^5\) Early in 2008 FGRM was launched at a breakfast in the NFL, to which all clubs were invited. At the launch, the proposed intervention was explained and volunteers called for to be the first pilot clubs to participate. The pilots were carried out with these volunteers.
team and the Drivers followed. The evaluator attended all sessions. Drivers were asked to go back to their clubs, introduce the intervention, facilitate the club review with committee members and set goals for short, medium and long term change in their clubs, based on the results of the audit discussions. Several weeks after the first introduction to the program, Drivers were invited back to discuss progress in their clubs. Once the intervention had been started, Drivers attended monthly meetings for the rest of the football season\(^6\) to provide them with support and education.

2. Evaluation

Methodology

Evaluation goals and questions

AFL Victoria’s goal for the intervention was to work with one community football league and its member clubs to foster an environment that is safe and inclusive for women and girls. The evaluation goal was to monitor the progress of the intervention, so the questions focused on different sections of the organisation where the program was to be introduced. From the start it was clear that change would be encouraged from the top-down as well as from the bottom-up throughout the organisation, thus the questions were framed at the different levels of this structure.

AFL Infrastructure

1. In what ways does the existing culture in the organisation promote or work against women’s safety and inclusion?

2. In what ways can existing policies and procedures be adapted to include gender, and how can they be utilised in clubs as part of the intervention?

Fair Game Respect Matters Intervention

3. To what extent does the *Fair Game Respect Matters* toolkit facilitate culture change processes and in what ways can it be adapted or changed to better meet these needs?

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\(^6\) The season runs between April and September. Some clubs attended out of season orientation, however clubs go into recess out of season and the club rooms are used by other sporting clubs. As a result the amount of time available to introduce change is limited.
4. What other support or resources are needed to embed culture change throughout the organisation including leagues and member clubs?

**Community Clubs**

5. Who are the potential change agents in clubs and in what ways can they assist the implementation of the culture change intervention in the short and long term?

6. Who are the key stakeholders in the community and how can they be mobilised to assist the implementation and maintenance of culture change in community clubs?

7. Which interventions work, what are the barriers to sustainable change, and what is required to ensure the project goals are achieved?

In the context of social programs, evaluation is a means of documenting what has happened, identifying what worked and what didn’t work and assessing outcomes. Process evaluation tells the ‘story’ behind the program. Outcome evaluation focuses on the effects of the program; the extent to which its goals and objectives were met, and any unexpected outcomes. Impact evaluation reports on the long term results of a program, analysing, for example, the long-term maintenance of desired behaviour or culture change resulting from its implementation. In the first phase of this evaluation, the focus was on process and outcomes.

To ensure that the evaluation process was responsive and flexible, constructivist (fourth generation) evaluation was employed. This approach consists of two phases: discovery and assimilation. In the discovery phase the evaluator attempts to describe what is going on, which according to Guba and Lincoln (2001), refers to both the matter under investigation and the context. There are many ways in which these questions can be answered. The assimilation phase represents the evaluator’s efforts to incorporate new discoveries into the existing construction or constructions to explain what’s happening, enable core problems to be resolved or more clearly defined, and to move towards change.

Constructivist evaluation is a valuable planning tool in that it provides feedback on where a project is up to and helps to reach a higher level of accountability, continually improve the program as it develops, increase organisational and personal capacity to deliver the program and promote a better understanding of the issues. In social science, observation in practice
settings is an important method of data collection. It provides opportunities to view the operations of a phenomenon in a ‘natural’ setting, or as it happens.

**Ethnographic Evaluation**

The evaluation was planned prior to the intervention starting and without a clear understanding of the context in which clubs operated, thus an ethnographic approach allowed the evaluator to become immersed in the organisation and the program. As discussed above, the first year of the intervention created a steep learning curve for all involved including the evaluator, who had less background in community football than the program staff. This is not to suggest that an ‘insider’ would necessarily be better placed to evaluate an intervention of this kind. The ‘outside’ evaluator brings no preconceived notions about the context, can ask naïve questions and explore issues that might be inaccessible for insiders.

As outsider observers ethnographers bring a fresh eye, professional skills of documentation and analysis and an understanding of the unfolding work (Ford Foundation, 2006, 2)

The Ford Foundation identifies the key features of this type of work, which include:

- Immersion by the evaluator in the social and organisational structures of the program and participation in everyday events and processes.

- Documentation of the subject on its own terms, whether recording the normal state of things or analysing a time of change – which often reveals unexpected outcomes.

- A focus on hands on, continuous learning for all – what is being learned is fed back to stakeholders.

- Wide ranging questions – which may shift as the ethnographer becomes more immersed in the program and sees new opportunities to learn.

- Interest in tacit as well as explicit knowledge – unspoken or implied knowledge defines a good deal of the culture of a system.

- Incorporation of multiple points of view, which can help broader understandings of how a situation is experienced by different stakeholders.
These principles were used as the intervention progressed, and both individual feedback and more formal written interim reports were delivered at various points when new knowledge emerged or areas for change were identified. The evaluator was introduced to Drivers as a member of the team with a brief to evaluate the project, and the relationship between AFL Victoria and La Trobe University described as a partnership. This enabled familiarity to develop and fostered trust and acceptance between all participants and team members.

**Methods**

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach. An online survey was conducted before the intervention in both the NFL and a comparable control league, and repeated after two years. Three evaluation clubs were selected to gain an in-depth understanding about the intervention in practice. Interviews with club leaders and focus groups with club members were the planned approach. In practice the evaluation needed to be flexible to follow the program more responsively, which was possible because the evaluator was embedded in the program. Using constructivist methods meant maintaining a close observation brief in all aspects of the program. This included attending meetings, sitting in on orientation and training sessions, visiting clubs, and interviewing staff at intervals as the program progressed, in addition to the planned quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

Ethics approval for the evaluation was obtained from the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee.

**Recruitment and Sampling**

**Survey**

The online survey recruited participants from all clubs in both the Northern Football League (NFL) and the Essendon District Football League (EDFL). The EDFL was recruited as a control group while the NFL was the intervention group. The potential number of members who could have participated in the survey was 29,000 in the NFL (the intervention league with 46 clubs) and 11,000 in the EDFL (the control league with 22 clubs).

AFL Victoria carried out recruitment via their networks. An incentive was offered by AFL Victoria for clubs to participate in both the 2008 and 2010 surveys. The club in each league which had the most members complete the survey were offered a reward. In 2008 this was
$1000 for the club with the most participants and $500 for the second, and in 2010 it was a package of football gear to the value of $1000 for the club in each league with the most participants. AFL Victoria recruited participants for the survey and to assist with the recruitment a poster and flyers were developed to encourage participation. These were circulated in print and via email to all clubs in each league. Overall, from the potential thousands of participants in the NFL and the EDFL, there was a very limited response to the survey. In total, in the first administration a total of 190 responses were received from both leagues combined, and in the second administration, 174 were received.

Before they could enter the online survey all participants were provided with information about the evaluation and their rights in relation to the research and by ticking a box that signalled their consent they were able to enter the survey. Overall the response to both survey administrations was slow.

Of the 181 survey responses in the 2008 survey, 54% (n=98) were from NFL – the league where the FGRM program was introduced– and the remainder 46% (n=83) were from the EDFL – where there was no program in Phase One. The EDFL respondents included 27 junior clubs and 56 senior clubs, and the NFL clubs included 33 junior clubs and 65 senior clubs.

In 2010, of the 174 participants, 56% (n=97) were from the NFL, and the remainder 44% (n=77) were from the EDFL. Among the EDFL member clubs were 34 junior clubs and 43 senior clubs, and from the NFL, 60 junior and 37 senior clubs.

The survey was designed to make it possible to track attitude change over time in participants who completed each survey. A coding system was built into the survey so that participants could identify themselves and remain anonymous. In the second survey only 30 participant actually identified themselves as repeating the survey (EDFL n=11, NFL n=19), making this comparison impossible.

**Evaluation Clubs**

Because the intervention was introduced over an eight month period, there was some delay in being able to recruit evaluation clubs. Selected Program Drivers were approached by email and invited to sound out their committees of management about becoming an evaluation club. In this email they were informed about what would be asked of them and their rights in
relation to deciding whether to participate or not. Criteria for being selected as an evaluation club included having Drivers who appeared to be ‘early adopters’. Some clubs that were invited declined to participate, which, given that approaches began very early during the intervention’s introduction, was hardly surprising. Suspicion of AFL bureaucracy was observed in a number of clubs in the early days of the intervention, and there appeared to be a fear on the part of some more cautious clubs that participation in the program would lead to ‘big brother’ surveillance, although this was only hinted at anecdotally.

Ultimately three evaluation clubs were recruited: one junior, one senior and one combined junior/senior. The combined club was represented by a Driver from the club’s junior committee. Evaluation clubs were all guaranteed anonymity if they participated and will not be named in this report.

**Key Informants**

Key informants in the evaluation clubs’ local communities were also sought through Program Drivers, who were asked to nominate sponsors or other members of the local community who were familiar with the club, such as members of parliament, local government, or police. Clubs were very protective of the people in these categories, and only limited success was achieved in recruiting key informants. Despite the fact that clubs list their sponsors on their websites for public access, it was decided that to best maintain the evaluation club’s trust, only those key informants nominated by the club would be approached. Interviews were carried out with nine key informants including sponsors, local government employees, and Members of Parliament (state and commonwealth).

Key head office and league staff were also considered key informants, and were recruited for interviews as known participants because of their involvement in the intervention.

**Program Drivers**

Program Drivers were recruited for the program by AFL Victoria. Drivers were therefore known participants as they were nominated by their club and attended Driver meetings. Of the 46 clubs in the NFL, 5 club Drivers attended all sessions, and another 14 Program Drivers were regular attendees. The remaining clubs either only attended once, withdrew or did not participate at all.
At the first Driver meeting the role of the evaluation and relationship between the evaluator and the intervention were explained, written participant information was provided to each Driver and signed consent for the observation was obtained. Some clubs sent two Drivers, others one. Attendance at monthly Driver meetings varied between 10 and 20 participants. At special events, such as a presentation by an AFL football player, attendance was higher.

**Club Members**

The evaluation clubs were represented by two junior clubs and one senior club. In this report the senior football club will be referred to by the abbreviation SFC, and the junior clubs JFC1 and JFC2. Ordinary club members were the most difficult group to access for the evaluation. Approaches were made to all three evaluation clubs for consent to attend a public function at the club to interview members, but only two clubs were able to comply because of the demands of the new season and the timing of the request. Interviews were carried out on game days at both JFCs, one on sign-up day for the 2010 season, and the other on a practice day. When a parent signs their child up to play in a junior club they automatically become members. Some of the parents interviewed did not initially identify as members when they were approached for an interview, which may have implications for their sense of connection to the club beyond their children’s involvement. Participant information was provided and signed consent to record the interview obtained. One participant declined to have her interview recorded and field notes were made after the interview.

A female and male interviewer attended these events to interview members of their own gender. In all, 29 interviews were completed, 12 with women and 17 with men. Men appeared to be more willing to be interviewed than women, however the difference can also be explained by the fact that in many cases football is a father-son activity and fewer women were in attendance at the new season enrolment day than men. Many women who were approached for interviews declined, mainly because they were there to watch their children and did not want to be distracted.

**Data Collection**

**Survey Design**

The online survey was designed based on findings from the 2007 research with women in community clubs, and covered four main areas:
- AFL and league policies and codes of conduct relevant to community clubs;
- Club values;
- Communication; and
- Attitudes towards women.

Table 1 describes the areas covered in the survey.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demographic information</td>
<td>League, club, role in club</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal information (non-identifiable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>About your club</td>
<td>Knowledge of policies and codes of conduct</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding and practise of policies and codes of conduct in the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Inclusion, safety and respectful behaviours in the club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role/s of women and girls</td>
<td>On- and off-field roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recruitment and mentoring</td>
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<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>Personal attitudes and</td>
<td>Violence against women</td>
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<td>behaviour</td>
<td>Roles of women in society</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bystander behaviours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Responses called for multiple-choice answers to most questions. In the first survey questions were geared towards clubs regardless of whether they were junior or senior clubs. Some respondents provided feedback to the effect that some senior club members felt the questions were too geared to junior clubs. In the second survey administration some minor changes were made to allow junior clubs and respondents from senior clubs to answer different questions depending on how they identified themselves. This was possible due to the ‘skip logic’ function in the survey tool. 

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7 Zoomerang was the survey tool used. See [www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com)
Program Drivers

The evaluator attended all Driver orientation meetings and follow-up sessions and observed proceedings. Extensive field notes were taken during the observation phase. At some sessions the evaluator facilitated small group discussions at which a scribe volunteered to keep notes about the discussions, which were also treated as data. Feedback from these round table discussions was given at the start of the following session.

Interviews

To gain a meaningful understanding about the ways in which the intervention was being implemented in the three evaluation clubs, semi-structured interviews were used. A number of themes were developed based on the implementation of the *Fair Game Respect Matters* audit tool. The themes included:

- Using the ‘*Fair Game Respect Matters*’ toolkit, including the audit and goal-setting activities and the resources provided in the kit
- Acceptance of the intervention and changes in the club
- Understanding *Respect and Responsibility* and the FGRM program
- The involvement and role/s of women in the club
- Barriers and challenges

Club Key Informant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also completed with the club-nominated key informants, based on the following themes:

- The informant’s relationship with the club which nominated them and with other clubs
- How the club is viewed in the community
- What they expect from the club as a sponsor or community representative

Club Member Interviews (*vox pop* interviews)

The aim of these interviews was to understand what, if any, changes ordinary members were aware of in their club. Questions covered:

- Awareness of, and knowledge about, *Fair Game Respect Matters* in their club
• Awareness of changes in the club’s culture in the past year
• Attitudes and opinions about the club in general

Staff Key Informants

Semi-structured interviews with AFL Victoria and league staff were designed around the program goals and objectives, and the implementation process. Because these were staff members who were involved in FGRM in some way, they were considered key informants. Participants were informed that if any quotes from these interviews would be used in reporting they would have the opportunity to veto the information prior to publication. Interviews were conducted early in 2009 and repeated early in 2010. These interviews also provided a sounding board for staff to debrief and share their concerns, and sensitivity to the confidentiality of the interviews has been used in deciding which parts of the interviews to include as data and which to exclude from this report. Overall these interviews provided valuable background information and opportunities to provide feedback to the project team while maintaining each worker's confidentiality. Individual and group evaluation feedback was provided to the FGRM staff team periodically throughout the year, and where appropriate, this included information gained through these interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were recorded and transcribed; in some cases field notes were taken. These were analysed thematically, with the assistance of data analysis software NVivo. Quantitative data were analysed to compare changes in awareness, attitudes and self-reported behaviour over time, with assistance from data analysis package SPSS. This report will include the sections concerning attitudes to gender and violence against women. In 2005 VicHealth conducted a community attitudes survey concerning violence against women in Victoria (published in 2006). In 2009 using the same survey instrument, VicHealth carried out a national survey (published in 2010). A selection of questions from the VicHealth survey were reproduced in the FGRM surveys to enable comparison not only between the intervention league and a comparable control league, but also with a national sample.

3. Findings

This section of the report will discuss the findings, using the project objectives and the evaluation questions as a framework. First the effectiveness of the FGRM toolkit will be
considered as well as the other resources that are needed to support the program. This will be followed by the findings concerning the organisational infrastructure that supports ‘top down’ change and findings about outcomes in community clubs. Finally the findings in relation to knowledge, attitudes and understanding about gender-based violence and the introduction of the intervention and outcomes in clubs will be discussed.

In agreeing to participate in the evaluation clubs were assured of anonymity; in this report they will not be identified by name, and will be referred to as JFC1, JFC2, and SFC.

**Driver Orientation and Training**

The toolkit was the primary resource for clubs to introduce the FGRM program and facilitate change. Data concerning this aspect of the evaluation came from observation and discussion at regular Driver meetings, and from interviews with committee members in the three evaluation clubs. As expected, considerable differences were found between participating clubs in the areas of innovation, knowledge and understanding about the program.

The toolkit was accepted as a useful resource in a number of clubs, and it is notable that acceptance appears to correlate with effectiveness in introducing the program and innovation in the club. The Drivers who used the toolkit most effectively were those enthusiastic about the program from the start. The toolkit did come under fire from a number of sources. A number of Drivers from senior clubs thought the FGRM kit was too geared to junior clubs. In the senior evaluation club (SFC) this issue also arose, with the female Driver stating:

> I brought the kit back and we did the actual audit. At the start there were quite a few men who had been on the committee for a few years, who said ‘it’s all rubbish, it’s a waste of time’ and all that. But they did it, got the results and they came around a bit. Everybody said ‘that was really hard’ because it was more targeted to junior clubs. And even though you say, you know, think of it as a senior club question, some of them you just couldn’t, and so and that was a bit of an issue. To the ones that were resistant to start with it was just another little bit of “Oh look [the AFL] can’t even do something for a senior club!” Even the posters were a bit babyish as well.

When asked whether they had used posters and brochures from the kit in the club, the same participant reported:

> ... the pamphlets are around but no one’s sort of picked them up, but I think the posters work better than the pamphlets because the pamphlets just get, I don’t know, they use them as Frisbees and things like that, they just fly them around, or they just sit in the committee area, for people that come in. But the posters were around the actual social rooms and also there’s one in the change rooms.
However the most useful aspect of the kit from the SFC’s perspective appeared to be the questions related to codes of conduct and policies.

We had a new committee this year and the questions in the audit about policies, all the older members ticked no, they knew nothing about it – all the old ones! And when I was going through the audits that just leapt out at me.

In JFC2, the kit was held in higher regard:

I thought it was good, and the posters they just explain themselves; the ugly parent syndrome, yelling abuse, you know? It’s visual, and it’s obviously contrary to the codes of conduct so it’s a visual aid and we hang them in our club rooms for all to see. It’s funny you know, people actually acknowledge them. And the audit, it’s actually a fantastic tool. When you’re making a self assessment and to be completely honest you just work out ‘Gee, where are we lacking? What can we improve on?’

Similarly, JFC1 found the kit helpful. They saw it as a way of identifying what needed to change. One participant said ‘it opened my eyes’ to how little many parents know about the club. She continued to explain:

Parents come down every week and might volunteer and maybe they are not aware of a lot of things, or problems. Problems with mums not feeling comfortable, maybe not even knowing the rules and policies. Maybe they are not even aware of how much they can get involved. Maybe a lot of women would get involved if they knew about it.8

Committee of management participants in all three evaluation clubs had difficulty identifying the goals their club had set as part of the audit process. The participants who were also Drivers were able to articulate the goals, but these were less well understood by others.

Feedback from Drivers about using the toolkit was also mixed. A few Drivers reported that their management committees saw this as an attempt to infiltrate the club and impose external regulation by the AFL. Some reported the audit easy and unthreatening, others viewed it with audit. Those clubs which engaged with the program and made a commitment to change found it easier to use than those who struggled with it or were suspicious about its intent. One Driver reported that the toolkit ‘provided an opportunity to review what is and is not known about the operations of the club by committee members’. Another explained that ‘it provides a focus and direction, a starting point for discussions about the operations of the club’.

8 This idea that not many women who bring their children to the club necessarily know about how the club works, or how they can be involved, was borne out by some of the comments made by women in the interviews on the ground with members. These will be discussed later in this report.
The audit initially assumed a certain degree of sameness among clubs, a problem that occurred as a result of the limited understanding about the culture of community clubs by the program designers discussed earlier. The context and operations of junior and senior clubs are quite different⁹, and some questions in the audit tool were not relevant to junior clubs. As a result the audit tool was reviewed and tailored junior club and senior club versions developed. Based on the evaluation learnings, it was decided to change the name ‘audit’ to ‘review’ because of the association between being ‘audited’ and being ‘policied’.

The first draft of the audit also had a scoring system, which in practice detracted from the intention behind the tool, which is designed to promote reflection and start conversations, not to rank or rate club performance. Feedback about the scoring system being problematic in some cases led to its removal, with clear instructions about using the tool for reflection and discussion provided. Another misunderstanding about the toolkit was in relation to setting goals. At the end of the audit, short, medium and long term goals are called for, with spaces for four goals in each of these sections. This led to some clubs interpreting that this meant a total of 12 goals had to be set. Some clubs struggled to ‘make up’ goals to fill the spaces on their worksheets. Some clubs found the idea of achieving goals within the short (6 weeks), medium (6 months) and long (12 months) term time frames overwhelming. This matter was addressed in later training sessions, where clubs were informed that the number of goals was not important, and that they should be realistic, achievable and able to be evaluated. This problem may be associated with sports culture, in which scoring is highly valued, which conflicts with community development, where flexibility and reflexivity are more highly valued.

While some clubs were able to work through the audit, set goals and move forward with relative ease, others appeared to require more support to continue with the program. This observation is consistent with the WHO guidelines for primary prevention programs, and with the objectives of the project. At the time of writing this report, direct contact between program management and clubs (beyond the Driver training and follow up sessions) has been limited, and other clubs have not sought support.

⁹ These differences can also be seen across clubs and leagues, which has implications for the delivery of culture change interventions such as FGRM.
**Driver Orientation**

The two-year FGRM program officially started in April 2008, however, this did not mean the program was rolled out in clubs from the beginning. By the time the resources were in place and implementation plans developed, it was late in 2008 before orientation with clubs was piloted. Because the football season is April through September, this meant that only one year of the intervention has actually occurred. After October 2009, clubs were closed and no further interaction occurred between AFL Victoria and participating clubs until the start of the 2010 season.

The FGRM tool kit provides a structured framework for identifying what needs to change in clubs to make them safer and more inclusive for women, and identifying and initiating ways of working towards these changes. However, while the toolkit was designed to be self-administered in clubs, some introduction to the rationale and expectations of the culture change intervention and instruction on how to use the toolkit was necessary to resource the project Drivers to take the program back into their clubs. This became the main task of the program co-ordinator.

The information provided to Drivers in the orientation process concerning violence against women had a considerable impact, although not all Drivers were sure about how to communicate this back into their clubs. There was also uncertainty about how increasing the participation of women and the kind of culture changes suggested was connected with preventing violence against women. In the senior evaluation club, the Driver explained:

> …actually with that information and the stats and everything, it was mind blowing how much it’s actually out there. I sort of came back [to the club] with some of the stats, I even sat with a group of players, a leadership group, and told them about it as well. And they were a bit amazed, some of them said but ‘we haven’t got female footballers here’. But when you go through some of the stats and everything they sort of sat back a bit and sort of took stock a bit as well. And [having that information] helped me; for me personally it was a very good tool.

When asked, the same Driver indicated:

> [Being part of the Driver group] made me think about certain things that we can do within our club to promote that sort of atmosphere and therefore extend it into the local community. It’s made me think more about it, which I wouldn’t say I had before.
Not all clubs were able to take the information back into their clubs with such ease. Some reported that the information about the incidence of violence against women in the Driver training sessions had a profound impact on them, but that they felt inadequate to communicate about this and its relationships to FGRM back in their clubs. In response to this feedback, efforts were made at AFL Victoria to start developing more resources for Drivers, however by the end of the second year these had not yet been trialled in clubs.10

While few clubs sought support beyond the orientation sessions, there were no back-up resources for clubs which wanted them. In training, Drivers were encouraged to network with community services to assist them to promote change, sexual assault services were particularly identified. However links with such services were not well developed and this led to some difficulty in one case. One junior football club that was keen to introduce changes, wanted to engage a speaker to speak to players about respectful behaviours. They contacted a local centre against sexual assault and requested a speaker, but the centre had none available to address issues of respectful behaviours with a group of boys. The reasons for this appear to be complex. The service to which the request was made had not been briefed by AFL Victoria or the NFL about the FGRM program or what might be needed or appropriate in such a session (for more discussion on networking see pages 37–40).

This experience also raises another issue: the introduction of a cutting-edge culture change strategy (such as FGRM) may find that the broader community itself has not developed education and support services to keep pace with the change. For example, sexual assault services offer targeted crisis support for victims of violence with limited capacity to deliver primary prevention11. Little work has been done in any sector on how best to do this with boys and young men. Primary prevention is still a new field and the entire community is learning how to best introduce and promote intentional culture change of this kind.

Driver Sessions

Evaluation of Driver sessions was based both on observation, and formal and informal participant feedback. Drivers initially came together to learn how to use the toolkit and introduce the FGRM program into their club, and again around four to six weeks later to

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10 In 2010 the resources (DVD and booklet) were introduced to participating clubs in the NFL and the EDFL. At the time of writing this report these had not been evaluated, however they were received with enthusiasm.
11 There are some notable examples of primary prevention programs for boys, however these tend to be located in education institutions. The Victorian Women’s Trust program ‘Be the Hero’ is one such program. There is a real need to develop programs for boys and young men in sporting and other community based settings.
discuss how the introduction had progressed in their clubs. These sessions were called Driver orientation. This phase of the project was spread over six months, due to recruitment difficulties and club schedules.

Driver orientation sessions were facilitated by the FGRM/female football development manager, the NFL community development manager was also present at all sessions, which focused on explaining the toolkit, how to use it, and the reason for FGRM (primary prevention of violence against women). These sessions had no written plan, and objectives were not communicated to participants. The follow-up sessions provided valuable insight into the practical effectiveness and acceptance of the toolkit in clubs. Not all Drivers understood primary prevention and the different levels of culture change needed for junior and senior clubs. At this stage of the project the adult learning principles and program logic for Driver sessions (described on page 14) were not being used in the development of the training.

Another challenge for the program was the use of a ‘one size fits all’ approach in the Driver training, and it was up to clubs to interpret the introduction of changes in their clubs. This lack of clarity needs to be addressed. In school-based primary prevention junior age groups are exposed to respectful relationships and senior age groups to more in-depth understanding about why respectful behaviours are an important aspect of prevention. In this model men and boys are engaged as partners in prevention and effective bystander behaviours can be discussed and practiced to assist individuals to understand how to intervene safely to prevent violence from occurring.

The implementation process proved quite fragile. For example, some Drivers who demonstrated enthusiasm early left the program unexpectedly at various points. Anecdotally this was because of family or other personal problems, or because of the politics within the club (for example, one Driver who was also a club president resigned from the club because of internal conflict). The reasons for people dropping out of the program are not always apparent, however for the program to succeed, continuity and succession planning are important. The relationships and communication processes between the program team and clubs developed through the program may help to ensure continuity, however the magnitude of the task (with the number of clubs involved) makes this difficult.

A key learning from the first year of implementation was that Driver orientation was more effective and showed better results when delivered in smaller groups. The Drivers and their
clubs could then be known individually by the program team, and the progress of implementation in clubs could be resourced and followed more closely. The first two pilot groups had no more than three clubs represented, while later groups had up to 30 clubs. As a result there are plans for smaller groups to be facilitated in the second league to introduce FGRM in 2010.

Feedback from Drivers about the timing of the program’s introduction and training events revealed that timing was always problematic for some clubs, regardless of when it was introduced during the season. Those who participated in October had to wait until the start of the season in March; those who participated in May wanted it to be introduced later in the season or pre-season. The dissatisfaction about the timing of the program by some participants in every group is likely to be a reflection of the twin pressures of time and expectation that community football clubs participate in a number of health promotion and community development programs. FGRM is for many just another in a long line of programs for which they receive very little support. Senior clubs in particular are continually focused on income generation to ensure their survival, which has implications for the ongoing introduction and uptake of programs such as FGRM if income generation is seen as more important than culture change. As anticipated, by the end of year two the benefits of participation and successful outcomes had encouraged more clubs to become involved, in line with community development and culture change theory.

Responsibility for change in clubs must be shared by decision makers and ultimately by members, but in FGRM it is the responsibility of the Driver to carry the message and facilitate the change process in the club. Driver recruitment was intended to target people with influence in their clubs, who would be ‘heard’ by their committee, or be a member of the committee. While this message was communicated in writing, because of the voluntary nature of clubs the program had to accept whoever clubs chose to nominate. In practice some clubs sent Drivers who had considerable influence in their clubs while others ‘dobbed in’ the person who was available, regardless of their power or influence in the club. In some clubs, Drivers reported that they had little influence and that their committee was not interested in participating in the program. However the majority of Driver positions were filled by members of the committee who were able to influence the program in their clubs.

By the end of 2009 some of the Program Drivers had already left their club, taking with them the accumulated knowledge and understanding about FGRM and violence prevention. At the
start of 2010, some clubs thought that they no longer needed to participate in FGRM and effectively dropped out.

Unless Drivers are able to influence their club and carry the changes in culture forward, it is unlikely that the program or the culture changes associated with it will survive. It is also important for Drivers to be both men and women so they can bring a shared understanding about club culture to the task.

An ongoing problem for the program has been communication between program workers and club volunteers. Despite many attempts to reach Drivers this has proved one of the most difficult issues to resolve and has led to some problems. Messages about date and venue changes for meetings have not reached some Drivers, resulting in some not attending meetings and others going to the wrong venue. Program workers have tried to address this problem, and at the time of writing the program manager had introduced an SMS texting system to ensure direct communication with Program Drivers as a group. Because club members are all volunteers with busy lives, communication is an important part of the program, and finding ways of communicating without burdening volunteers is an issue that requires sensitivity and creative solutions. One way this can be addressed is to ensure accurate record keeping and asking individuals the best method of communicating with them, rather than assuming ‘one size fits all’.

By the end of 2009, as part of the intervention, a film was produced showcasing a number of clubs that had made progress in implementing changes as a result of the FGRM program, and released on DVD. A booklet was also produced to accompany the film, and these were distributed at the start of the 2010 season. In addition to the intervention, other resources were developed through the female football program. These included a poster ‘You kick like a girl, good on you’ and a booklet promoting gender, race, all ability and sexual diversity inclusion.

The program posters and pamphlets were also distributed to participating clubs. As discussed earlier there was criticism of these resources from some clubs, although other clubs used them and had no complaints. One issue was the junior/senior club division in the NFL, with senior clubs being quite resistant to the style of the posters in particular. Most of the clubs in the EDFL, the next league in which the program is being rolled out, are combined.
junior/senior clubs, so this may not continue to be such an issue. It is worth considering the production of more realistic posters for senior clubs to use in addition to the existing posters.

At the time of writing this report little direct support had been provided directly to clubs; it was offered but no clubs requested further assistance. Rather than ‘blanket’ offerings of support, more direct contact in the form of visits may be indicated in order to develop closer relationships between the program and participating clubs.

*Organisation and Infrastructure*

The FGRM intervention is led by AFL Victoria. In addition to changes in culture in community clubs, a number of areas for change were also identified for head office. This approach combine the ‘bottom-up’ approach of culture change in clubs with a ‘top-down’ approach in head office. Program objectives relating to the organisational infrastructure included:

- Reviewing existing policies and procedures;
- Introducing incentives and recognition awards for the leagues and clubs participating in FGRM;
- Development of networks with the range of relevant community stakeholders to foster culture change initiatives; and
- Mobilisation of support for the leagues and clubs undergoing changes.

This section will describe some of the implementation processes and outcomes in terms of changes at infrastructure level.

*League Engagement*

The first priority for the intervention was to introduce the program into the league and member clubs. In the early days of the intervention the program was part of the female football manager’s position, with some administrative support and the team was completed by the community development manager in the NFL. Each of these workers added *Fair Game Respect Matters* to their existing workload, and most of the work in the first two-thirds of the program in 2008/9 was focused on clubs.
Over the course of the first year of implementation the organisation went through a steep learning curve as the program moved from being seen as an add-on to business as usual to a major project with implications (and potential benefits) for the entire organisation. This change was not seamless or easy, however the relationship between the organisation and the evaluator was such that critical feedback was heard and responded to, and learning was incorporated into practices as time progressed.

Before engaging with community clubs, league buy-in to the program is essential. This needed to involve orientation and training of the league’s board and staff; clarity about expectations, roles and responsibilities; and the importance of a team approach to the program. There are co-ordination issues to be addressed when working across a head office/regional office structure, particularly when high levels of autonomy are built into the organisational structure. This issue is being addressed, but it requires ongoing attention as the long term sustainability of the program in clubs is largely dependent on league engagement. In future a more structured approach to league engagement is indicated.

As the program moved into a second league (the EDFL) early in 2010, senior league management appears to be more fully engaged with the program. This is an artefact of time and learning from experience rather than a failing of the NFL. However, further work is needed to ensure this aspect of the program continues to improve.

**Head Office**

Networks and partnerships with community agencies is an important aspect of the program, however in Phase One of the program (2008/9), networking opportunities remained relatively undeveloped. The difficulties created in clubs by the lack of networking has been discussed above, however, networks with Statewide organisations are important to prepare the wider field for the ramifications of cultural changes at the local level. In 2008, an AFL Victoria project reference group was formed to contribute to the implementation of the FGRM program. Membership was drawn from community agencies with knowledge of violence against women and sport. Members represent local government, VicHealth, Victoria Police, the AFL *Respect and Responsibility* program and the White Ribbon Foundation. The reference group meets quarterly. In 2010 the membership of the reference group was expanded to include a wider range of community stakeholders including government departments (Sport & Recreation, Office of Women’s Policy), and the Victorian Equal
Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. It is important that this reference group understands the program and can contribute not only to advising on its progress, but to communicating about its implications for their own work at the local level.

It should also be noted that the primary prevention of violence against women is a rapidly growing field. Late in 2009 the Victorian government introduced its 10 year plan to end violence against women, thus drawing many players into the field who had not been actively engaged before.

A new full time program manager with specific responsibility for the FGRM was appointed late in 2009, which enabled greater concentration on the program than had been possible with a part time co-ordinator. AFL Victoria is auditing its own operations to identify areas where change is needed to ensure it is inclusive and promotes respectful relationships. The implications of the program for all parts of the organisation, including community development, coaching, training, policies and codes of conduct and publicity are being examined to ensure an integrated approach. The Quality Clubs Program\textsuperscript{12} is being reviewed to add FGRM as a module, so that all clubs with Quality Clubs Accreditations are able to demonstrate that they are respectful and inclusive of women and girls, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disabilities and so forth. This approach to mainstreaming them principles of FGRM throughout the organisation is underway, and at the end of Phase One of the program had yet to show quantifiable results. This will continue to be monitored in Phase Two (2010–2013).

Australian football has for a long time been masculine territory, with a culture developed over time in which men have been free to behave in ways that have increasingly become unacceptable in mixed company and inappropriate in community and family-orientated settings. This culture is in a process of change, because of changed community standards as well as the FGRM program, and incidents\textsuperscript{13} that might have been accepted ‘normal’ in the  

\textsuperscript{12} The Quality Clubs program assists clubs and leagues to effectively administer and manage their operations. Awards are given for reaching a range of standards at the bronze, silver and gold levels. At the time of writing no standards for safe inclusive environments were included in the QC program, however the program is being adapted to include such standards.

\textsuperscript{13} From time to time the media have reported incidents of behaviours in football clubs deemed inappropriate in by the AFL and community standards. These have included entertainment by strippers, inappropriate postings on YouTube and the like. In the past these types of entertainment have been acceptable in senior clubs, and anecdotally have been provided as rewards for players, as well as at end of season celebrations. (In a few cases sexual harassment and assault have also occurred.) Under contemporary community standards and the AFL’s \textit{Respect and Responsibility} policy, entertainment that exploits women is not acceptable in community football clubs; however it appears that some clubs have not accepted this. Rather than ending the practice, in a few cases
past do come to public attention from time to time. These incidents range from inappropriate to criminal, and community tolerance for this type of behaviour has diminished. Thus, whereas in the past they tended to stay ‘under the radar’, the new policy landscape prompted by the introduction of the Respect and Responsibility program has called attention to them, the media has become interested and such incidents demand a response from the organisation. During the course of the intervention several incidents occurred that did require intervention, and as a result an incident response protocol was developed. As noted, these incidents often come into the public gaze through media reports, although from time to time during the FGRM program staff members became aware that clubs planned ‘events’ and were able to intervene early. Culture changes slowly, and it is likely that such incidents will continue to be planned or to take place as, through FGRM, clubs come to terms with the new female- and family-friendly culture that is being promoted. This is an area that will require continued vigilance, as well as swift and consistent responses to incidents as they arise, until the message that the exploitation of women and disrespectful behaviours in football club settings are unacceptable becomes the norm.

At the end of 2009 a Driver recognition night was held by AFL Victoria for all clubs in the NFL that had participated in Fair Game Respect Matters. The gala event was held at the MCG and the Drivers were celebrated and awarded with a plaque for their efforts. This event met the principle of recognising ‘early adopters’ efforts discussed above, however, all Drivers received the same recognition despite the fact that some had done very little while others had made significant changes. The production of the booklet and DVD discussed above did celebrate and promote the work of the early adopters, and therefore mitigated the effect of giving all Drivers the same recognition to some extent. In future the principles for working with early adopters discussed on page 7 above should be addressed to build on the strength of their work and promote it to others.

Community Clubs

The program objectives were to recruit Drivers from clubs, and prepare them to take FGRM back into their clubs, to provide them with ongoing support and resourcing, to assist clubs to identify and carry out goals for cultural change, to monitor the intervention and track developments as the program progressed.

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these have gone ‘underground’, some club members are even surprised when they are advised this is unacceptable within the AFL.
Progress in Evaluation Clubs

In this section the report will focus on the interviews with committee members in the three evaluation clubs. Many other clubs made progress towards culture change and these will be reported in the next section.

Community sporting clubs are important community resources. A number of examples of this were apparent in the interviews. People tend to bring their children to junior clubs because they hear about them through word-of-mouth from other parents at school. In some cases the clubs are known across generations; parents who came to their local club as children later bring their own children to the same club. Some parents get involved through AFL Auskick, others follow their children through the junior club ranks and transition into senior clubs as spectators and volunteers, in some cases their involvement has lasted for decades.

JFC 2 has taken their role as a resource in the community further than any other club identified; they have involved people with disabilities as players, coaches and in other voluntary roles. They have ‘come and try’ days for children with an intellectual disability and have modified the club rooms to accommodate the needs of one of their coaches who is in a wheelchair. This club’s Driver also discussed plans for inviting residents from local nursing homes to come and watch games. To further engage parents and spectators, the club makes efforts to invite them into the club rooms and meet other parents to ‘broaden their networks’. This club also has started to address the inclusion of women, both by encouraging mothers to become involved, and by inviting a female netball club to amalgamate with the football club.

There is a continuing theme in sessions with Drivers that women have an important role in moderating extremes of masculine behaviours. This is in part because the increase in female participation has been promoted as a desired program outcome, and culture change through respectful relationships has not been addressed as much as has gender inclusion.

A male participant in the SFC interviews reflected this when he explained that he thought women who came to the club ‘would not return if they did not feel comfortable, and that the program could mould younger players to think in different ways’. He also suggested that these younger players could influence older players’ attitudes towards women. When asked about the culture of the club and tolerance of sexist language this participant said ‘it’s not only in football clubs, it happens right through society’. While increased female participation in clubs is one outcome measure for the program, it should be because women want to come
into the club because it feels safe and comfortable, not to bring about change by sheer force of numbers. It is important to maintain the primary prevention principle concerning men’s behaviour change in the planning and delivery of the program.

In the SFC the committee participants reported that in general, players were more aware of what they said and that the atmosphere in the club was friendlier as a result of FGRM. A female participant in the SFC reported that she had talked to some of the players about why their girlfriends did not come to the club, and was told that the toilets were not acceptable. This led to efforts to clean up the facilities. The response had been very positive; she said ‘something so little, but it’s amazing the changed it has made’. Other clubs made similar improvements in female toilets with equally positive results.

During 2009 an incident at another senior club (that was not part of the intervention) became public when a newspaper broke the news that the club had employed strippers for senior players as a reward for winning. This kind of entertainment has been part of the culture of many clubs in the past, however the AFL has made it very clear that it is no longer acceptable under the Respect and Responsibility policy, although, as discussed above, it appears to have been slow to filter down to some community clubs. Steps were taken by the AFL and AFL Victoria to deal with this infraction of the code, and it was clear that the event had an impact on the Program Drivers. This was addressed at the following Driver session by the program manager, thus taking the opportunity to use current events as a learning opportunity.

Referring to this incident, a female participant in the SFC reported on the response in her club:

When I was talking to a group of spectators [about the incident], a group of men, they were going ‘Oh what’s wrong with that?’ And I said ‘But there’s kids and everything there, you’ve got to see it from their point of view. What would you think if your eight year-old son walked in on it?’ And some of them were still saying ‘There’s nothing in it’.

It is apparent that community football clubs are undergoing a process of change concerning gender and the nature of club involvement, which parallels changes in the wider community. The differences between junior and senior clubs are also important factors in culture change in the sporting context. While some of the long time (male) members in senior clubs are reported anecdotally to hold more conservative views about women and their role in clubs, it may also be among these older members (both female and male) that hope for long term
change lies. There is a constant turnover of membership in clubs as people move on and their interests change. Yet it is the long time members who carry the culture of the club forward. One male participant in the SFC indicated how he understood things had changed when he said ‘Look, those things we used to tolerate 20 years ago we wouldn’t tolerate now and nor should you’.

Differences were noted in the evaluation between the culture in senior football clubs and junior football clubs. In junior clubs parents want the best for their children and most bring with them contemporary views about child rearing that have a strong influence on club culture. Clubs are selected by parents based on word-of-mouth and personal recommendation, and clubs are well aware that parents ‘vote with their feet’ by going to other clubs if the club is not nurturing and supportive of their children. A female participant in JFC1 alluded to this:

You’ve got to keep people informed about what the club is doing so people feel part of it and understand. It’s all about the kids really, so you’ve got to make sure that everybody feels comfortable coming here—the mums, the umpires, everybody that comes to visit out club, our opposition teams. It has to be really family friendly and you’ve got to be a clean, safe environment. So that’s what our club is trying to push this year.

Disrespectful behaviour also occurs in junior clubs but appears to be more likely to be dealt with than it is in senior clubs. Asked how their club deals with bad behaviour when it occurs, a male participant from JFC2 reported:

Well straight away that’s addressed by a committee member. At most games we’ll have a member there to oversee. And if there’s anything that needs addressing that will be done straight way and then it will be sent back to the committee for discipline.

Because the program appears to have made less progress in senior football clubs, and the evaluation has not yet been able to assess the intervention in more than one senior club, more information is needed about how change occurs in these settings. What is apparent is that in general junior clubs are focused on the children and having a good time, senior clubs are focused on competition and playing football. These differences make it likely that different kinds of intervention and resources are needed in junior and senior clubs.
**Barriers to Change**

In the interviews, age was repeatedly raised as a barrier to change, which supported the findings of the 2007 research. As in that earlier research with women, some older men were identified as having more conservative attitudes towards the involvement of women in clubs.

The evaluator observed some practice matches in one of the senior clubs (not an evaluation club) at which loud curses and sexist language (unacceptable by community standards) was heard. On these occasions no intervention from coaches on the field was heard, which indicates that at least in some cases disrespectful behaviour and language is ignored or accepted as normal in football culture. Unless coaches and other men who hold positions of influence and power in the lives of young men expect respectful behaviours on and off the field, they will continue to be barriers to cultural change. Coaches and players are the heart and soul of clubs and must be recruited as partners in prevention if the program is to succeed in the long term.

Another serious barrier to the inclusion of women and girls in clubs is local government, which owns the club rooms and grounds upon which clubs depend for their existence. Local government expect compliance from clubs in a number of areas as grounds for the use of facilities, yet most grounds lack basic facilities such as inside toilets and shower/change rooms that are necessary for women and girls to play on-field roles in clubs. In JFC2, the facilities are run down and in need of repair, and the club has repeatedly sought assistance from their local government authority to upgrade the facilities. At the time of writing these efforts had been unsuccessful.

Another barrier is the lack of community infrastructure to support clubs that wish to provide education about respectful behaviours to the young men in their clubs. JFC2 attempted to get a speaker (as discussed elsewhere in this report) to no avail. If FGRM is to become self-sustaining, and eventually self-administered, local community resources and good networks will be an essential resource to support these efforts.

**Club Goals and Achievements**

As expected, in some clubs change was slow to occur, however a number of clubs did set goals and worked towards implementing changes. One club Driver commented that: ‘thought processes are changing in the club as a result of the program’. Feedback at Driver follow up
sessions identified a number of initiatives. These will be organised here under the headings Codes of Conduct and Policies, Environment Change, Communication and Increased Female Participation.

**AFL Codes of Conduct and Policies**

The program shifted the focus of a number of committees of management onto ensuring that all members are aware of codes and policies and putting them into practice.

- A junior club developed a booklet containing all codes and policies and distributed it to all families and players at the start of the season on registration day.

- A senior club made posters of their codes of conduct and policies and displayed in the club rooms.

- As a result of doing the audit, a number of clubs identified that newer committee of management members lacked knowledge about codes and policies, and developed strategies (for example, an orientation kit) to communicate the information more effectively.

- At one club all coaches and players were invited to a ‘meet and greet’ night and handed a handbook containing all the club’s codes and policies.

**Environment Change**

- A number of clubs identified the need to improve lighting and maintain a better standard of cleanliness, maintenance and upkeep in the clubrooms to make them more women- and family-friendly.

- *Fair Game Respect Matters* posters were used by some clubs to demonstrate a more inclusive environment.

- Wheelchair access to the clubrooms and toilets has been introduced in some clubs.

- Some clubs identified that little attention had been paid to the upkeep of the female toilets and initiated innovations such as sanitary disposal units, better lighting and cleanliness.
Communication

- Some clubs have introduced a regular *Fair Game Respect Matters* item in their club newsletters.

- One club promotes its values via a mission statement, ‘We’re not about winning; we’re about developing team spirit and having fun’.

- Some clubs are planning education events for members and plan to invite speakers.

- Some clubs have used negative publicity about football as an opportunity to educate their members about *Respect and Responsibility*.

- One junior/senior club identified that their club record did not include any information about juniors; they have addressed this by including items about juniors, and promoting positive behaviour.

- One club attached a letter to the club newsletter introducing *Respect and Responsibility* and *Fair Game Respect Matters* to all members.

Increased Female Participation

This was the area in which most activity occurred. By early 2010, many Drivers reported an increase in the number of women (ranging from a few to more than half) sitting on committees of management and holding office. Several have amalgamated with local netball teams and others already offer female football. Some reported that their club had recruited female coaches, score keepers and umpires, and most clubs were examining how to upgrade their facilities to include female change rooms. A number of other indicators of change towards the inclusion of women were apparent in the Driver reporting sessions.

- Some clubs formed women’s groups and held women’s events.

- Some clubs surveyed female members to get input on how they would like to change the club rooms to make them more female friendly.

- One club developed an email list for female club members to improve communication.
- One junior club was working towards recruiting and mentoring a female coach to be accredited for the 2010 season.
- Some clubs recruited more women to their committees of management.
- One club recruited a female goal umpire.

**Future Driver Engagement and Training**

As the year progressed with program Drivers, a core of the group shifted from being individuals from competing clubs to becoming a cohesive collaborating group. The Drivers noted this in a session where they commented that the FGRM process was the first time they had worked together and shared information rather than competing with each other. As well as noting some of their needs for future training and support, these Drivers also expressed creative ideas about the roles they could play in the sustainability of the program and its roll out into new clubs.

Drivers asked for resources to help them introduce the program in their clubs, and for training to help build confidence to do this. The Driver orientation has been quite a personal journey for many, who had not previously been exposed to the extent and nature of violence against women. This was an important process, but did little to prepare them to communicate the messages back to their clubs. As noted earlier, some drivers came from work backgrounds that prepared them to do this, others felt ill-prepared and inadequate. Drivers sought not only print and web-based resources but also assistance from speakers and other community resources to supplement the program in their clubs. Unfortunately, these resources were not readily available in the community.

At least one club had cemented FGRM into their ongoing operations, by introducing an amendment to their constitution at their annual general meeting. This created a permanent position on the committee of management for a FGRM representative to monitor change in the club and report to the committee.

The core group of engaged drivers was also keen to contribute to the program in other ways. For example, a speakers’ bureau was suggested, from which Drivers could volunteer, be trained and make themselves available to speak on the program from time to time. It was
suggested that clubs not yet engaged with the intervention might be more open to a speaker from another club.

One area that requires more work for both Drivers and their clubs is linking with local community services and networks to support and resource them in their work towards change. At the end of 2009 an NFL Driver session was held to which a range of community agencies and services in the Northern region were invited to present on their services. These included Victoria Police, the North East Centre Against Sexual Assault, local government, community health, the White Ribbon Foundation and others. This represented a good start, however speakers were not fully briefed about the FGRM program and the presentations were not entirely relevant to the needs of the group. The session was received well and a repeat has been requested. This kind of linking will be important in future when the program does not have the level of resourcing it currently has.

Given the expectation that the leagues will show leadership in implementing FGRM in their territory in future, it is important that these links not only be fostered for clubs, but also for league staff and management. While leagues currently have strong links with some aspects of local government, the program would benefit from a broadening of networks at the league as well as club level.

**Member Engagement and Understanding**

While most of the focus of FGRM in the first years was on club management, member knowledge and understanding were identified as outcome measures for the success of the program. Once the busy nature of life for volunteers and members in clubs was recognised, the plan to run evaluation focus groups with members was abandoned in favour of individual interviews with club members. Brief, on-the-ground interviews were carried out in two of the three evaluation clubs.

Very similar themes emerged in interviews in both clubs. Few had heard of FGRM or *Respect and Responsibility*. Only two women had heard about FGRM, but they were vague about the purpose of the program. Both mentioned having seen information about it in the club’s newsletter. One woman said ‘I don’t know much, it’s about respect for women in community and sporting facilities’. Most participants had indicated that they thought FGRM was about making sure that all children ‘had a go’ and that the game was ‘fair and included everyone’. Given the two interview groups were in junior clubs this is not surprising.
None of the female members interviewed were very engaged with their club, but none indicated that they felt excluded. Most described their involvement in terms of their children; when asked to describe the club, positive words were used such as ‘a good family environment’, ‘good for the kids, fun, a good committee’. This woman was not interested in participating in the social life of the club, a sentiment echoed by others. Another woman said there were many ‘nurturing dads’ at the JFC1.

A theme concerning vigilance about the way the children were treated in clubs emerged from the female member interviews in both junior evaluation clubs. Comments such as ‘... it’s always been a good club and his dad is here to watch’ and ‘as long as the coach is nice’ were common. One woman commented that her club’s car park was poorly lit, which was a problem looking for the children on a dark winter night, but that was the only criticism that was heard concerning the club environment. The administration of both JFC’s was praised by all interviewees, who used words such as ‘well organised’, ‘social’, ‘good communication’. The coaches were also praised. Asked about whether they had noticed any changes in the club in the last year, most in JFC1 had noticed the improvements to the women’s toilets, and a few had noticed posters in the club rooms.

Among the men interviewed were coaches, committee members, and ordinary members. The men appeared to be more aware of changes in their club’s policies, facilities and membership which may be an artefact of their level of engagement in the club. As with the women, men in both clubs were full of praise for the club’s committee of management and their efforts on behalf of the club. The men however, were also vague about FGRM; they thought it was about ‘giving the kids a go’ and associated FGRM with playing football rather than culture change. Again very positive words were used to describe the club: ‘community oriented, encouraging, opportunities for the kids’, and ‘family, friendship and inclusion’ are two examples. One man (a coach) who had played at the club himself as a child said:

Compared with when I played as a kid [the club] is much better. No swearing and carrying on, respect the umpire. It’s a million miles from when I played footy. So that’s good.

At JFC2 on practice day, respect was apparent in the exchanges off the field between players, and between players and senior members of the club. Children were observed to shake hands with club officials on arrival and were greeted and treated respectfully by those officials. Whilst still engaging enthusiastically in the games on the field, no altercations were observed
and the children played together without incident off the field in a family atmosphere that was generally celebratory and peaceful.

As part of the implementation of *Fair Game Respect Matters*, JFC2 had recently formed links and were in the process of amalgamating with a local female netball club. By chance, a member of the netball club who was present on the day member interviews were carried out was approached for an interview and she willingly consented. She indicated that there were financial and physical advantages for the netball club to be amalgamated with the football club, as well as the potential to recruit new members through the football club. She was also full of praise for the football club in their negotiations towards amalgamation, but also indicated that they were proceeding with caution because they had some reservations based on the reputation of football clubs. She said:

> Footy clubs have a reputation for being blokey and we do have a lot of girls playing. Footy clubs do have a bit of a booze culture so we don’t want to throw the girls in at the deep end and wonder if they’ll sink or swim.

This caution on the part of the netball club may represent a much wider (and perhaps reasonable) suspicion about football clubs based on past performance. This apprehension will need to be understood and addressed if it is to be overcome, and the culture that earned the suspicion must be changed if football clubs are to be truly inclusive for women and girls.

**Key Informants**

Key informants were interviewed because they had a relationship with one of the evaluation clubs and were able to bring an outsider’s perspective. The interview themes included the informant’s relationship to the club, knowledge about *Respect and Responsibility* and *Fair Game Respect Matters*, how the club is viewed in the wider community and how significant this is to their relationship with the club. Among the key informants interviewed there were state (n=3) and local government (n=3) representatives and sponsors (n=3). Some of these had relationships with more than one evaluation club because of differing government and football geographic boundaries.

Key informants (KIs) from local government tended to be familiar with club operations. Their relationship to clubs is spread fairly thin, as one local government sport and recreation worker might have 40 or 50 grounds to manage. All local government informants acknowledged that their contact with clubs was mainly ‘when something goes wrong’ or
‘when clubs want improvements to their facilities or there are residential complaints’. One KI described his role as ‘supporting clubs, encouraging them to get involved in the Good Sports Program’. The importance of programs like Good Sports was acknowledged:

Clubs that are prepared to approach these policies/programs - alcohol, respect and so on - tend to be more successful and attract more players, involvement, and sponsorship. It’s harder for clubs to survive these days. Those clubs that don’t embrace programs like these can lose out, players go to other clubs.

Local government KIs had very positive feedback about the evaluation clubs in their areas and acknowledged their important role as community resources. Words like proactive and committed were used to describe them. A male local government informant spoke about the importance to council of a club having a good reputation:

It’s very important that the clubs are viewed in a good light, council puts a lot of money in supporting clubs, it doesn’t want to support something that is not community minded and that has wider benefits for the community. They need to be in it for all the right reasons.

A female key informant from local government had been at the launch of FGRM in the NFL and was well acquainted with the program. However, she acknowledged a wider community perception that football clubs are not always comfortable for women:

… from the general community, well sometimes women don't feel comfortable at certain football clubs. My partner plays football, so I mean I don't generally like going to his football club, that's just my personal feeling.

State government representatives were not as well acquainted with clubs in their electorates, although they were very positive about the role of clubs as community resources. One of the representatives was an electorate officer, who was much more familiar with the operations of clubs and who had a long list of areas where she had been involved in supporting clubs. This included advocacy concerning the grounds and upgrades to facilities, supporting them to get funding and providing photocopying. With regard to the reputation of clubs in the community she acknowledged hearing ‘little things now and then about a coach, nothing serious’. In relation to the clubs in her area she said they were well run, and an integral part of the community. Another issue raised by this electorate officer was the ‘ugly parent’ syndrome:

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14 This program provides training and accreditation for the responsible service of alcohol in community sporting clubs.
More than anything, junior footy clubs should address the culture of umpire abuse from parents. The kids see that the parents are doing it and then they do it too.

A State Member of Parliament compared JFC1 to other clubs in his electorate:

Oh, [they are] sensational compared to some of the others, yeah. There are a lot of people in the background who get very little recognition. A lot of people don’t appreciate how much work goes into making a club work for the season. Right from registration day through to the end of the season, it’s a hell of a lot of work.

The sponsors were adamant that it was essential for a club to be viewed positively in the community if they were to sponsor them. The sponsors interviewed were all long-time club members and had good knowledge about how the club worked. A number of Program Drivers were also sponsors, and it is does not appear uncommon for members who are in business to take on the dual role as sponsor and member. It is interesting to note, however, that none of the KI sponsors had much knowledge about *Respect and Responsibility* or the *Fair Game Respect Matters* program. Clubs could make more of the work they are doing in relation to culture change to market themselves to sponsors, although anecdotally, JFC2 has seen an increase in the number of businesses sponsoring the club as a result of their work. This is an area where further research is indicated.

**Attitude and Behaviour Change**

The aim of the survey was to understand participant’s attitudes towards gender, practices in clubs, and to identify what, if any, changes in attitudes and behaviour could be observed in the intervention league compared with the control league before and after the intervention. In 2005 and again in 2009 VicHealth conducted population-based community attitudes surveys concerning violence against women. A series of questions from the Victorian-based 2005 survey were reproduced in the FGRM surveys (see Appendix Two for details), and these were asked again in the 2009 VicHealth national survey, providing an opportunity to compare the responses of the football community survey responses in 2008 and 2010 with national data from 2009. The national survey conducted telephone interviews with 10,000 people from all over Australia, whereas the FGRM surveys were administered via an online survey tool. The attitudes to gender and violence against women were only a small part of the overall surveys, as described on page 21 of this report. Here we report on attitudes towards women
and girls, and towards violence against women as reported by participants in the FGRM surveys in 2008 and 2010, and compare them with the national data.

A high degree of social desirability was observed in both surveys. Participants appear to have attempted to portray their club in the best light possible, to the extent that they inflated information that could be verified. For example, many more claimed that their club had gold or silver Quality Clubs Accreditation\footnote{The Quality Clubs program is designed to assist clubs to effectively administer all aspects of club management. Clubs can work their way through bronze, silver and gold levels of accreditation. The program was voluntary at the time of writing this report, however the Northern Football League was working with all clubs in the league to attain bronze accreditation as a minimum standard. It is of note that while at the time of writing this report the Quality Clubs program did not include accreditation safe, inclusive environments, AFL Victoria were working to amend the program to include these areas of management and administration in future.} that actually have, and as members are loyal to their clubs, this is not surprising. This makes the overall findings from the survey difficult to interpret and somewhat unreliable. Another confounding factor in interpreting the survey data was the small number of participants that returned to do the survey from 2008 to 2010: overall in both leagues this was a total of 30 people.

Attitudes about gender and violence against women can be analysed alongside the 2009 VicHealth National Survey Of Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women (Macgregor, 2010). When examining these questions the overall picture that emerges is of far greater uncertainly about what constitutes violence against women, and about the role of women in society among the football communities surveyed compared with the national sample. Of the range of options offered in response to the statements in the survey, many more were likely to respond that they neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know, than to take a definite position either way. Overall, the opinions expressed were not out of line with the national sample. Graphs relating to the questions about gender and violence against women are detailed in Appendix Three.

**Attitudes about gender**

Five questions were asked about attitudes to the role of women that focused on education, work, political leadership and motherhood.

In response to the statement *men make better political leaders than women*, around one third of respondents in both surveys demonstrated uncertainty. In 2008, 33% of respondents and in 2009, 47.4% from the EDFL answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, and in the NFL in 2008 34.6% and in 2010 34% took this position (see Table 1
below). Among the national sample only 3% responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed. Almost three quarters of the national sample somewhat disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement, however in the NFL sample in both surveys over half somewhat/strongly disagreed; while in 2008 in the EDFL (where there was no intervention), over half somewhat/strongly disagreed and in 2010 this dropped to 38%.

**Table 1: Men make better political leaders than women**

Eighty eight percent of the national sample somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement *when jobs are scarce men should have more right to jobs than women*. This compares with the EDFL (2008: 80%, 2010: 74.5%) and the NFL (2008: 78%, 2010: 88%). In 2010 the NFL response to this question was the same as the national sample. Far more of the football participants in the EDFL neither agreed nor disagreed with this question than from the national sample (1.4%), which, when viewed alongside the shift in the NFL attitudes may signify less certainty in the EDFL than the NFL sample.

In response to the statement *a university education is more important for a boy than a girl*, 95% of the national sample somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed. Fewer in both the EDFL (2008: 84%, 2010: 85.6%) and the NFL (2008 and 2010: 82%) disagreed with this statement.

In the national sample 85.6% somewhat/strongly disagreed that *a woman has to have a child to be fulfilled*, compared with the EDFL (2008: 81.6%, 2010 88%) and the NFL (2008: 77.35%, 2010: 85.4%). A greater proportion in both the EDFL (2008: 13.4%, 2010: 9.2%)

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and NFL (2008 and 2010: 10%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this question compared with the national average (1%). In the national sample 88.6% somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement *a woman has to have children to be fulfilled*, which is comparable to the responses from the football surveys. However, as indicated above, the football sample appeared more uncertain, in responding that they neither agreed nor disagreed (NFL 2008: 20%, 2010: 10%. EDFL 2008: 13%, 2010: 9%) that the national sample (1.1%). Taken with the previous statement a slight shift in attitudes may be observed in the NFL after the intervention, however this, of itself, does not constitute a trend.

The final statement in this series was *it is OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent and not want a stable relationship with a man*. Overall responses from the football community were more conservative than the national average: 63.6% of the national sample strongly/somewhat agreed with this statement, compared with the EDFL (2008:53%, 2010: 38.6%) and the NFL (2008: 59.5%, 2010: 55.7%). Far more respondents in the football community were undecided about the statement compared with the national sample, where only 1.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. In 2008, 28% from the EDFL neither agreed nor disagreed, and in 2010, 36% and in the NFL in 2008, 19.8% gave this response and in 2010 31%. Thus, there appears to be more uncertainty about women as single parents in the football community than in the national sample.

**Attitudes about violence against women**

Eleven questions were asked about attitudes to violence against women that covered the incidence, ‘cyber stalking’, stalking and harassment, as well as the likelihood of intervening in a number of different kinds of physical assault. The majority of respondents in all surveys agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *violence against women is a serious issue for our community* although the football respondents were less certain about the seriousness of the issue.

**Table 2: Violence against women is a serious issue for our community**
In 2010 opinions about the prevalence of violence against women were more conservative or uncertain than the national sample. In both the NFL and EDFL, the leagues somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement *violence against women is common in our community*, and this was accompanied by higher levels of uncertainty which can be observed in the numbers neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

**Table 3.** Violence against women is common in our society

The next set of questions asked about whether stalking could be seen as violence against women and how serious different kinds stalking behaviours were. In both 2008 and 2010 a higher proportion of NFL respondents thought stalking was a form of violence against women (2008: 82%, 2010: 86.5%) than either the national sample (67%) or the EDFL sample.
(2008: 69%, 2010: 76.3%). Stalking was seen as very or quite serious by almost all respondents in both football leagues in both surveys and by the national sample. Taken alone, the higher proportion of NFL respondents could be seen as an artefact of the FGRM intervention; however the responses to one question do not form part of a trend, making it difficult to make a claim concerning the intervention.

With regard to how serious various kinds of harassment were, email and text messages were seen as very or quite serious by over 90% of the football sample in both 2008 and 2010, and by slightly fewer (87%) in the national 2009 sample. Similarly, harassment by repeated phone calls was viewed as very or quite serious by between 90% and 100% of respondents in all surveys; again, the football community responses were slightly higher than the national sample (92%) in both surveys.

The final three questions in this series asked participants about the likelihood that they would intervene if they witnessed a woman being assaulted. The first question asked **how likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a woman that you did not know was being physically assaulted?** In the national sample 80.6% responded that they would be very or somewhat likely to intervene. In all cases the responses in the football samples were higher than the national sample (NFL 2008: 89.5%, 2010: 88.6%) (EDFL 2008: 88.8%, 2010: 90.8%).

In response to the question **How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a neighbour that you did not know all that well was being physically assaulted by her partner in public?**, similar high levels of likelihood of intervening were recorded, with the national sample (86%), EDFL (2008: 91.3%, 2010: 88%) and NFL (2008: 91.3%, 2010: 93.7%) all responding that they would be somewhat or very likely to intervene.

When asked **how likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if you became aware that a family member or close friend of yours was currently a victim of domestic violence?**, an even higher likelihood of intervening was observed in the football respondents. Ninety four per cent of the national sample responded very or somewhat likely, while in the EDFL in 2008, 97.5% and in 2010, 97.3% and in the NFL in 2008, 97% and in 2010, 98% answered this way.

It is of note that in response to all three of these questions about intervening in a violent situation, responses from the football community are higher than from the national sample.
Because the EDFL had no intervention, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the intervention from these data. Because of the kind of masculinity associated with football in Australia these responses may reflect football culture. Anecdotally it is not uncommon to hear about situations where footballers have intervened in violent situations (not necessarily gender-based violence) and become victims of violence themselves. For this reason training about bystander behaviours, and discussion about how to safely intervene and when to call in the authorities is strongly indicated for future club-based training.

The questions about gender equity are particularly relevant to the culture change aims of the FGRM program. As discussed on page 2, an environment that tolerates group disrespect in the form of sexism and sexualisation of women is more likely to tolerate all forms of violence against women. The uncertainty that was observed in participant’s responses to questions about gender in the survey are representative of the attitudes of some members of community clubs, despite the best efforts of other club members to introduce a more inclusive environment for women and girls. The results of the survey have strong implications for further work to change entrenched sexist attitudes, which will require a long term approach.

Because high levels of social desirability were observed in the surveys overall, it is likely that it may also bias some of the responses to the questions about attitudes to gender and violence against women. The AFL Respect and Responsibility program and FGRM have been widely publicised in the media and throughout AFL networks and survey participants were well aware of the reason for the surveys. Furthermore, because club members care about their club they want them to be seen in the most positive light possible. As a result it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the effect of FGRM program in the intervention league from these results.

Regardless of the overall difficulty in interpreting the survey data, the higher levels of uncertainty among the football community do have indications for the FGRM intervention. When taken alongside the uncertainty observed among committee members and club members interviewed in the qualitative data collection, it appears that some attitudes towards women and knowledge and understanding of violence against women may be more conservative in the football community surveyed. The message about violence against women and primary prevention does not appear to be being effectively communicated to club members by Drivers. Greater attention needs to be paid to communicating this message and
what culture change would be like in clubs beyond just increasing the numbers of women and girls participating.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

This section will draw attention to issues arising from the evaluation findings reported above and make recommendations concerning both further research and *Fair Game Respect Matters* program. It will follow the same structure as the findings, under the main headings Primary Prevention and Culture Change, Resources, Organisation and Infrastructure, and Community Clubs. Some discussion will also address barriers to change that have emerged from the findings.

**Primary prevention and culture change**

Although Program Drivers were exposed to education concerning the extent and severity of violence against women in the community, and some were shocked by the extent and impact, they were less exposed to information about primary prevention and what this means in clubs, and for many it was not easy to translate the information into the context of their club environment. The practical application of culture change in club settings should be included in future training and the development of resources to support this should also be explored.

Driver training has not to date addressed junior and senior club differences. The preliminary evaluation data indicate that the program has gained more ground in junior clubs than senior clubs, although this is an area where more in-depth investigation is called for. The information in orientation sessions about violence against women is important to help Drivers understand the gravity of the issue underlying the program, and get their commitment as change agents. However, more work is needed to assist drivers to translate the information into what the program means in practice in their clubs. This means that greater attention should be paid to developing and incorporating into training, information about respectful and bystander behaviours that are relevant to both junior and senior clubs, as there are significant differences between the cultures of each.

**Recommendations**

*Research* should focus on identifying the ways in which junior and senior clubs differ and on the approaches that best meet the needs of different clubs. The introduction of respectful and
bystander behaviours into the program should also be explored with the FGRM program co-
ordinator and operational planning group.

**The program** should continue to develop a program plan that can be replicated in different
settings that responds to the needs of junior, senior as well as combined clubs, and also to the
needs of clubs which require greater support to introduce change.

**Resources**

Considerable progress has already been made in the development of resources to support the
program. As the Driver orientation and support process in the NFL progressed, the need
emerged for more specific resources to assist drivers to communicate about the issues in their
clubs. The FGRM booklet and DVD has helped with this to some extent, however greater
attention needs to be paid to identifying what resources Drivers need to effectively
communicate about the program and facilitate change in their clubs. The ways in which the
DVD and booklet are used in clubs should also be evaluated.

As clubs work towards change it is apparent that administrative improvements in terms of
adherence to AFL and league policies and codes of conduct have benefits for the culture of
clubs. Assisting clubs to gain funding and network with community resources may also
contribute to the overall goals of the FGRM program. To effectively deliver an orientation
and driver support mechanism a coherent program plan is needed to assist drivers with the
process as they facilitate changes in their clubs. This should address both club management
issues and primary prevention learning. The program manager is already developing a written
program for these sessions that can be evaluated and replicated in future. The program should
contain clear learning objectives, and adult education sessions that work towards achieving
these objectives. As this is formalised it will be possible to start to evaluate the need for
resources to support the program.

As the program has developed, so has the engagement of the participating leagues. Without
the support of the league in the short and long term the program is unlikely to succeed, and
there are clear benefits for the league in having well functioning clubs. In future a clear
orientation and training process for the engagement of leagues to be involved in the program
should be developed. This should cover board members and all staff, as well as allocating
staff responsibility for working on the program with representatives from AFL Victoria.
Recommendations

The evaluation should focus on exploring the types of resources needed by Program Drivers to support them as facilitators of change in their clubs and making recommendations to the AFL Victoria about what is needed to meet these needs. It should also progressively evaluate the ways in which the DVD and booklet are used by clubs.

The Program Planning team should consider the recommendations of the evaluation while developing resources and work towards further developing the FGRM toolkit.

The program should work towards developing a league training schedule that can be reproduced in new leagues as they engage with the FGRM program.

Organisation and Infrastructure

The FGRM program to date has been resource intensive, and this will continue over the next four years, however this level of resourcing is not sustainable. It is therefore important to view the introduction of the program into the two city leagues and one rural league as thorough and rigorous ‘demonstration projects’ which provide opportunities for AFL Victoria (and through them, other sporting bodies) to learn about how to introduce culture change to end violence against women. Through this, the program can increasingly move towards the goal of being self-administered. The monthly planning meetings held by AFL Victoria have started to take a strategic approach to mainstreaming FGRM into other development programs, and it is important this approach be maintained.

One of the issues that anyone planning a culture change intervention in a sports setting should take into account is the nature of sport itself. As noted in Segrave (2000), sport is ordered by rules and tradition, whereas community development is more complex, requires reflexivity, creativity and flexibility to achieve change. These two frameworks can be divergent, and while they are not incompatible, an awareness of the potential for conflict is important in the planning and delivery of any new program aimed at cultural change and the resources required to support it.

At the time of writing this report the future of FGRM in the first intervention league (the NFL) is unclear, as is the commitment of the league to the ongoing support and resourcing of FGRM in its member clubs. One area that should be addressed in the near future is that of AFL Victoria withdrawal from the program in the NFL and handover to the league for future
management of the program, which will in turn create a framework for future league exit and sustainability plans. This issue should be addressed early in FGRM Phase II.

In 2009, some of the NFL Drivers expressed an interest in contributing to a speakers’ bureau and this idea remains undeveloped. Some Drivers suggested at a meeting that they could speak to other clubs and at events related to FGRM and primary prevention. This suggestion should be further explored with experienced Drivers in clubs where FGRM has made headway. If it seems to be workable, Drivers should be purposively selected and the possibilities canvassed with them to ensure that interest remains. The possibility of participating in the VicHealth short course on prevention of violence against women should be explored with potential Driver/speakers. To further resource and support them they could also be linked in with the White Ribbon Foundation Ambassador program. Further training and support in public speaking, the development of a framework, and consistent resources for presentations in line with the values and intentions of FGRM should also be considered to support such a program.

**Recommendations**

**The Program**: In all future planning for FGRM attention should be paid to considering the ways in which the program can ultimately become self administered in the long term, and how it can be supported by other aspects of football development in the organisation (AFL Victoria and the participating league/s).

**The Program**: Early attention should be paid to exit and succession plans for the FGRM program in the NFL to identify the future of the program in that league.

**The Program**: The possibility and opportunities for the development of a fully trained and resourced FGRM speakers’ bureau should be explored to identify its potential for supporting the program in future.

**Research** is required to address the ways in which community development can best be used in structured settings such as sporting clubs.

**Policy Development**

One of the underpinnings of the FGRM program has been the implementation of AFL Victoria policies and codes of conduct in clubs. This is based on the comprehensive nature of
these and the idea that clubs would be operating well if they were putting them into practice. Organisational change is most effective when it works both from the top-down and from the bottom-up. The implications of this for AFL Victoria and its member leagues are that they must be seen to embrace change as well as to ask it of their member clubs. This has implications not only for policies and codes of conduct but also for gender equity throughout the organisation. Work is already underway at AFL Victoria on policy change and on embedding the values and purpose of FGRM in all parts of the organisation. It is important that as these changes are implemented they are seen to be implemented by all parts of the organisation, from members in clubs through to board members, networks and partner agencies.

One area that can provide support for the FGRM program and address issues of sustainability is the Quality Club Program. This is a program about standards in club administration designed to recognise and reward community football clubs for achieving a minimum base standard of club administration through to levels of excellence. During 2008-9 all clubs in the NFL achieved bronze, silver or gold accreditation, which although not part of FGRM was a by-product of participation. As yet, gender is not included in the Quality Club Program, but a review is underway to address this. This will be a valuable contribution to the suite of policies and codes of conduct that support the implementation and sustainability of FGRM in clubs.

**Recommendation**

**AFL Victoria:** To support the incorporation of FGRM into the Quality Club Program, consideration should be given to including policies (appropriate to the different levels) that clubs will:

- Expect respectful behaviours between all members on and off the field.
- Encourage women and girls to participate in all on and off-field activities and responsibilities in the club.
- Make sexism, racism and homophobia in all forms unacceptable
- Locate responsibility for maintaining community standards on the field with club coaches.
• Locate responsibility for players understanding the expectations of clubs in all club-affiliated activities including entertainment and end of season celebrations the responsibility of the player leadership group.

• Create minimum standards for entertainment associated with the club to be non-exploitative, sexist or inappropriate to a family-oriented environment. This includes male and female strippers and comedians whose material is racist, homophobic, sexist or sexually explicit.

• Develop issue/incident protocols for when there are breaches in the club’s expected standards, and how to liaise with the league and AFL Victoria for assistance and support.

• Develop policies to deal appropriately with breaches of these policies.

Furthermore, AFL Victoria should develop model policies and codes of conduct on which clubs can base their own policies and make these available to clubs. The development of a template for clubs to use to develop their own policy booklet for members should also be explored.

**Communication**

It was apparent from the interviews with junior club members that the shortening of the title of the program to Fair Game led to some confusion. There is no direct connection between the goals of the program and the title when it is expressed in this way, and the dominant assumption among those members interviewed was that the program was about making sure the game is played fairly, rather than about respectful behaviours. Until late in 2009 the program was referred to as *Respect and Responsibility*, or shortened to R & R, and this is how it is still referred to by Drivers in the NFL. The change occurred because of a perceived need on behalf of the AFL to separate the *Respect and Responsibility* program with professional players from the culture change intervention in community clubs.

Communication between Program Drivers, club management and the program has been difficult throughout the program. Some emails do not get responded to, written communication goes astray and direct telephone contact or leaving messages also proved difficult, which led to some Drivers missing meetings, or not knowing about events. This is a difficult issue; participants are all volunteers with busy lives. Providing effective communication while not bombarding volunteers with information is a fine balancing act.
Early in 2010 the program manager instituted a system of sending text messages to Program Drivers which was warmly received by some.

At the end of 2009 there was a celebration of the achievements of clubs in the NFL that had participated in the FGRM program, however there was no clear communication about the future of the program. This led some clubs in the NFL to assume that the program was finished and in some cases in Drivers leaving and not being replaced. An important focus of the program should be on keeping participants informed about what to expect not only from the next session, but also from the program. At the time of writing this report there are no clear plans in place about the future of the program in the NFL, however, once these plans are developed, it is important that they be communicated to Drivers so they know what to expect.

**Recommendations**

**Program**: Consideration should be given to using the full name of the program (*Fair Game Respect Matters*) or shortening it to Respect Matters, in order to communicate the intention of the program more clearly to members.

**Program**: To ensure effective communication it is important that the program continues to explore creative and multiple methods of communication whilst maintaining sensitivity to not overburdening the volunteers upon which the program is dependent.

**Networking**

FGRM is a program that cannot ultimately stand alone, but will require support from community in a variety of ways. For example, as clubs gain awareness about the impacts of violence and abuse and promote themselves as actively working for change they may have occasion to refer women or families to community resources for support or intervention. Some clubs have already reached out to bring in speakers from community agencies to speak to young players about respectful or effective bystander behaviours to no avail. At present no community infrastructure appears to be in place to support clubs as they work towards change, although a number of sites are working in this area, including local government and some local VicHealth-funded primary prevention projects.
Recommendations

**FGRM management** should work to develop networks with these important community resources, and with the Victorian Office for Women’s Policy as they work towards implementing the Victorian 10 Year Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, *A Right To Respect*. This can be achieved by both management-level networking and widening the involvement of networks through the FGRM Reference Group.

**FGRM management:** A co-ordinated approach to supporting and resourcing primary prevention is an essential, therefore local networks that can support clubs should also be fostered, and information about what community resources are available and how they can support clubs communicated to clubs through their drivers. This must focus on working with boys and men as well as on referral and support. It is not enough to tell Drivers about community resources without making sure that the resources can provide the kind of support that is needed, thus two-way networking and communication is essential.

**Community Clubs**

As noted above, club cultures can be entrenched and will not change overnight, however the program has demonstrated that there are many men and women who want the change to happen and are prepared to take an active role in promoting culture change in their clubs. It is also apparent that these changes can have benefits for clubs beyond the immediate goals of FGRM. The processes for organisational change noted on page nine (defining and working to solve problems, initiating actions, and collaborating in implementation) are being explored and change is well underway in many clubs. This is not only as a result of FGRM but also because of changing community standards, however FGRM has given many individuals the rationale and support they need to take action, and has given voice to individuals in clubs who had previously been silenced.

As time progressed in the delivery of FGRM some of the differences between junior and senior clubs, and between clubs, emerged. Some Drivers came from backgrounds such as management, community services, and education where adult learning and change management were familiar concepts. Others were less familiar with these ways of working. While some efforts to address the junior/senior club differences have been addressed in the program, this is an area where more work is required in future. For example, the focus of behaviour change with children and young people in junior clubs is appropriately respectful
relationships, while in senior clubs it is respectful relationships as well as bystander 
behaviour and gender equity that could effectively be explored.

As noted above, football clubs have been masculine territory for many years and changes in 
the role and status of women in recent decades has already started to change this as more 
women become part of clubs and take on non-traditional roles. The culture of clubs is carried 
by long time members, and many men have been involved in their clubs for thirty-plus years. 
These men carry the history and tradition of their club’s culture, and some may find the kind 
of changes that are already underway difficult because it challenges the norm. They may also 
find the kind of changes proposed by FGRM challenging, however because they carry the 
club’s culture, they are important as they have the potential to lead change as well as to resist 
it. Further work is indicated to identify how to recruit these men as collaborators rather than 
marginalising them.

It is also important to understand that violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours are not 
unique to men; both women and men have accepted these as the norm. Therefore, an 
awareness of how apparently small matters such as laughing at or ignoring sexist jokes or 
language that denigrates women and girls has led to a culture in which violence against 
women is hidden or acceptable is an ongoing need.

Two of the most important roles in carrying the culture of clubs and influencing boys and 
men in clubs are those of the coach and the player leadership group. It is understood that AFL 
Victoria is introducing FGRM to Level One Coaches Training. Coaches need to understand 
their role in promoting respectful behaviour on the field. More work is indicated to reach the 
player leadership group and to understand the ways in which they can work with or against 
the FGRM program in senior clubs. Indications from the senior evaluation club suggest that 
when they understand the program and its benefits for them and the club, this group can have 
considerable influence.

Any initiative that seeks to bring about changes in culture is likely to be met with some 
resistance, and there are some indications that there are pockets of such resistance in some 
clubs. Feedback from a SFC Driver that ‘some of the older men think there are too many 
women on the committee’ suggest this, and subtle comments about the role of women were 
noted in some of the committee of management interviews, particularly in the SFC. Many of 
the Program Drivers were not long-term club members, and some have already left their club.
This is not surprising as clubs do have a turn-over of members and office bearers. The long-term members identified above are likely to be the ones who carry the club culture, and they may also be an important group with the capacity to support or block culture change. It is therefore important to recruit them as partners in prevention wherever possible, rather than trying to work around them. These members have an investment in their club and want to see it succeed. One way of dealing with this desire for success is nostalgia for former times, however if the benefits to clubs of participation in FGRM can be ‘sold’ to these long-term members they are likely to become the program’s most influential allies.

**Recommendations**

**Research:** The differences in the outcomes and impact of FGRM in junior and senior clubs as well as between different clubs, and the implications of this for the delivery of the program should be the focus of further research.

**Research:** Further work is indicated to understand the role of coaches in promoting respectful behaviours among players and fostering leadership from the club player leadership group, particularly in senior clubs and among adolescent boys in junior clubs.

**Further research** is also required to understand how to recruit long-time club members as program partners in cultural change and in overcoming resistance.

**Drivers**

There are indications that Drivers who have more status and influence in their clubs have a better understanding of change in their clubs. Those Drivers who were club presidents, secretaries or in other ways influential in their clubs were better able to articulate their club’s goals for the program than drivers who indicated that they lacked the support of their committees of management. Other factors in whether or not the FGRM program made progress in clubs included the degree to which the Driver understood and believed in the issues and the engagement of committee members.

Some Drivers displayed the characteristics described by Rogers (1995) as ‘early adopters’. These people were quick to embrace the intention of the program, involve other club members and implement creative and innovative ideas in their clubs. They also provided informal leadership in the Driver group with their enthusiasm and initiative. These early
adopters are important for the future of the program in clubs, and as they emerge and are identified, should be given appropriate recognition. This needs to be done with a degree of caution, and more research is needed to understand the best way to do this without setting them apart from the group, which could lead to them being alienated.

Football clubs are a structured environment, and the FGRM program provides a structured approach to the introduction of innovation and change. It is of note that the extent to which the program works (or not) in clubs is dependent on the agency of the Program Drivers. This is an issue that also needs further exploration in the research as it is possible for there to be a clash between the structures within clubs and the agency required to lead change. It was apparent in the research that an enthusiastic club Driver who has influence and respect in their club can influence even hard-line older members. Although the evidence is based on a limited sample, there does appear to be considerable importance in peer-to-peer networks and conversations and a demonstrated understanding and respect for differing needs and ideas within the club.

**Recommendations**

**Program**: To ensure sustainability of the program in clubs and maintenance of culture change, the recruitment and selection of Program Drivers should be more rigorous if possible, although because of the voluntary nature of clubs this may prove difficult.

**Research**: The evaluation should focus on clubs with Drivers who meet the criteria of early adopters and explore the best ways to draw on their successes to inform and promote the program more widely throughout their league.

**Further research** is indicated to explore the ways in which the organisation and program structures promote or work against the agency needed by program Drivers to achieve culture change, and to suggest future directions for the program.

**Female Participation**

Many clubs worked to increase the participation of women. This was done by reaching out to women’s sports like netball and moving towards amalgamation, as well as by working to make the club environment more welcoming and female friendly. A few clubs have started to recruit and mentor women into non-traditional roles, and many have increased the
participation of women on their committees of management. These are all positive steps, however while increased female participation is important, it should not be the primary focus of the program. There is no point in simply increasing women’s participation if an undercurrent of sexism and misogyny remains unchallenged.

It also appears that the messages about violence against women are not being translated into a form that can easily be understood by club members in the context of their clubs. Consideration must be given to the way in which Driver training is delivered, the support given to drivers and the resources provided to them to carry the message back into their clubs.

The (erroneous) assumption that women will modify the behaviour of men by sheer force of numbers should be recognised. This attitude has been expressed in a number of ways by many people involved in the program. Both women and men are implicated in cultures that supports attitudes that denigrate women, and it is the implicit acceptance of these attitudes and behaviours as normal that maintains it. Efforts to change attitudes and behaviours must include all members and participants in clubs.

Nonetheless, many men and boys are confused about gender relations and acceptable behaviours, and some specific work with men is also indicated. This should include information about the roles that men can play in prevention and bystander behaviour – including how to behave in different circumstances. Jokes at women’s expense, treating them as inadequate when they take on non-traditional roles, and remaining silent in the face of sexist or insulting behaviours all contribute to violence-supportive attitudes. Most people have no idea how to intervene or speak up when these things happen even if it does make them uncomfortable.

**Recommendation**

**Further research** is indicated to understand the ways in which primary prevention education can best be delivered and to developing a framework of principles against which future programs can be evaluated.

**The program** must work towards including education to assist all clubs members to understand the behaviour that leads to violence, and assist them to practice respectful relationships and become effective bystanders.
Barriers to change

Whilst in general the *Fair Game Respect Matters* program was taken up by participating clubs and some progress towards the kind of outcomes identified before the program commenced\(^{16}\) was made, there were also some barriers to change.

**Improved Female Facilities**

As discussed earlier in this report, community sporting facilities are owned by local government, and many were built in a time when women did not play sports. As a result, many lack female change facilities and some have outside toilets. A number of Program Drivers reported that efforts to get their local government (LG) sport and recreation department to work with them towards improved facilities have failed. In part this is because of the expectation that clubs will pay for improvements to the club rooms, despite the fact that they do not own them and must comply with LG rules for the use of the grounds. Some clubs have started fundraising to improve their facilities, and AFL Victoria and the NFL have both provided support, yet improvements are not on the horizon. At the time of writing this report local government stands as a major barrier to clubs becoming safer and more inclusive for women and girls.

**Driver Recruitment**

Another barrier to change was in the selection of drivers. While a position description was developed and clubs were asked to identify a male and female driver to represent their club and report back to the committee of management, in practice this did not happen. In clubs where Drivers had no influence or status their job was difficult, and this appeared to reflect a lack of willingness on the part of their club to actively participate in FGRM. In future greater attention needs to be paid to actively recruiting Drivers who meet the selection criteria, rather than taking whoever the club sends. This could be done by having more direct communication with clubs and club presidents in the lead up to the introduction of the program, rather than using a ‘scatter gun’ approach to recruitment and training of drivers.

\(^{16}\) These included greater inclusion of women in all aspects of clubs, women feeling safer and more respected, women feeling supported to move into non-traditional roles, club codes of conduct and policies understood and practiced, and improved facilities for women and girls.
**Club Culture**

While FGRM aims to change the culture of community football clubs, and while change is already underway, there is a deeply entrenched culture associated with football at all levels that has in the past excluded women and girls, and been an environment in which men have enjoyed entertainment and sociality that denigrates women. This can be seen in the employment of strippers to entertain senior players, and in sexist and misogynist jokes that are somewhat normalised in our society among men only groups. It is unlikely that FGRM alone will sweep out these old norms, and that they will be driven underground to some extent among some men in the club environment. One reaction to FGRM from some men (and women) is likely to be resistance to the program. To date the evaluation has not seen more than a hint of such a reaction, but the continued assumption that ‘adult’ entertainment that is no longer acceptable within the AFL can be held in community clubs also points in this direction. It is also important that this culture is addressed both on a case-by-case basis and in broader social marketing and education strategies from all levels of the organisation.
5. References


National Sexual Violence Resource Ctr (NSVRC).


Appendix One: Fair Game Project Driver Position Description

Position Goal: To mentor a community football club to implement the *Fair Game Respect Matters* intervention and support members as they work towards becoming a *Fair Game Respect Matters* Club.

Position Summary: The AFL has a clear position on community and social responsibility and has publicly committed to preventing violence against women. It recognises that women are involved at all levels of community football. *Fair Game Respect Matters* is a project of the *Respect and Responsibility Policy*, which is concerned with creating a safe and inclusive environment for women and girls at all levels of Australian Football. *Respect & Responsibility* was launched by the AFL in November 2005 to address the issue of violence against women. The Policy’s broad intention is to firmly position the AFL as a leader in advocating cultural change that will lead to safe and inclusive environments for women and girls, across all levels of Australian Football.

*Fair Game Respect Matters will work to:*

- Support community clubs to audit their culture and environment to ensure women feel safe and included in all roles.
- Assist clubs to identify and develop a change strategy to meet their specific needs.
- Implement a range of training and support strategies to assist participating league/clubs carry out culture change plans.
- Progressively monitor the intervention to track developments, identify barriers and understand the implications of events as the project progresses.

It will do this by facilitating clubs to work through the *Fair Game Respect Matters* toolkit, and supporting them as they implement the plans arising from their work.

Selection Criteria

Project Drivers will work in teams of two as they guide and support clubs through the change process. They will be honorary positions.

- It is essential that the project Drivers are passionate about community football and able to commit time to the project.
- Wherever possible, the Driver team will consist of a man and a woman.
- They must be prepared to commit to participating in training run by the NFL and AFLV, and in regular update meetings to report on progress.
- They must have a commitment to preventing violence against women, and be prepared to develop and understanding about community development, primary prevention and culture change.
- They will be able to support the goals of the project.
Responsibilities

- Participate in training and ongoing update meetings.
- Working as a team (with the other project Driver) facilitate club committee of management (COM) members to work through the audit in the *Fair Game Respect Matters* Toolkit.
- Facilitate discussion among committee of management members about similarities and differences in responses to the different sections of the audit.
- Facilitate the identification of areas where change can be implemented, and the development of goals and actions to start implementing these changes.
- Facilitate a communication strategy for the change process throughout the club.
- Facilitate the implementation of the resources in the *Fair Game Respect Matters* toolkit in the club.
- Assist the committee of management to manage resistance to change.

Encourage, enthuse and promote the *Fair Game Respect Matters* program whenever and wherever possible to assist the club as they work towards achieving their goals.
### Appendix Two: FGRM Gender and violence against women questions

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<td>When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than women</td>
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<td>A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.</td>
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<td>A woman has to have children to be fulfilled</td>
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<td>It’s OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent and not want a relationship with a man.</td>
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<th>Not that Serious</th>
<th>Not at all Serious</th>
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<td>Do you regard harassment via repeated phone calls to be a form of violence against women?</td>
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<td>Do you regard stalking as a form of violence against women?</td>
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<td>Do you regard harassment via repeated emails, text messages and the like to be a form of violence against women?</td>
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<td>How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a woman that you did not know was being physically assaulted by her partner in public?</td>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>Somewhat Unlikely</td>
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<tr>
<td>How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a neighbour that you did not know all that well was being physically assaulted by her partner in public?</td>
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<td>How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if you became aware that a family member or close friend of yours was currently a victim of domestic violence?</td>
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Appendix Three: Data Tables

Table 4. When jobs are scarce men should have more right to a job than women

Table 5. A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.
Table 6. A woman has to have children to be fulfilled

Table 7. It’s OK for a woman to have a child as a single parent and not want a relationship with a man
Table 8. Violence against women is a serious issue for our community

Table 9. Violence against women is common in our community
Table 10. Do you regard harassment repeated phone calls, text messaging and the like a form of violence against women?

Table 11. Do you regard stalking as a form of violence against women?
Table 12. How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a woman that you did not know was being physically assaulted?

Table 13. How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if a neighbour that you did not know all that well was being physically assaulted by her partner in public?
Table 14. How likely would you be to intervene in any way at all if you became aware that a family member or close friend of yours was currently a victim of domestic violence?