

COMMON FACTORS OF SUCCESS IN WHEATBELT WINTER SPORTS CLUBS

BACKGROUND

During 2019 and 2020 the Department of Local Government, Sport and Culture together with the WACFL, Netball WA and Hockey WA investigated the common factors of success in winter sports clubs and associations in the Wheatbelt. Specifically, the investigation considered the success factors of sports competitions and governance that led to improved participation on and off the field.

DESIRE FOR CHANGE

Clubs that improved their competition and or administration for improved participation on and off the field commonly did so because they had a **strong desire to keep families together and continue strong social and community cohesion**. The desire for improvement came from a club level rather than an association level and was often staged or implemented over a period of between 2 – 10yrs.

COMMON FACTORS OF SUCCESS

Clubs that identified the desire to

- move towards streamlining administration (either at club or association level); reducing volunteer fatigue;
- increasing sports participation and/ or;
- restructuring game day competitions

achieved this when club leaders sowed the seeds for change and led from the front. They did this by:

- demonstrating cohesive leadership behaviours themselves;
- actively seeking to understand other winter sports if the improvements in competition or administration was going to impact them;
- focusing on participation, social cohesion and putting volunteers first and;
- approaching the improvements for the common good of sport and rural communities.

CHALLENGES IN IMPROVING COMPETITIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

It was observed that clubs and associations that strive for improvements but struggled in implementing them often have similar challenges to overcome. These include:

- parochial club or association culture;
- the rotation of association 'books';
- a desire to protect club or association funds;
- fears for a loss of identity, history or tradition;
- a lack of commitment by club or association leadership and/or;
- a lack of capacity to approach complex issues due to time and resource poor volunteers.

GOING FORWARD

Club leaders who have a desire for their sport and rural community to continue to be successful commonly demonstrate consultative, forward thinking and informed leadership. Their focus on sports participation, community and social cohesion as well as putting club volunteers first all assist in enabling change and seeing improvements come to fruition.