

## Proposal for the Committee

1st December 2014

### Coolbinia's Inclusive Team Proposal:

On putting together some recent Sponsorship proposals it got me thinking about our club strengths and how to promote those to potential new Sponsors. Things that came to mind were a club focus on Participation and an inclusive environment for everyone. It then got me thinking, although we have Children at the Club participating in our Teams with various disabilities, (myself included) what about all the other kids with disabilities that aren't involved? What can we do for them?

The local men's team supports a team for adults with disabilities 16 years and over, but on researching I have found nothing at all for younger Children in the area let alone in WA. There's lots of policies printed but real clubs just don't seem to be providing focused programs for these kids.

### Let's be the first:

I would like to propose we expand our club to actively promote and include a Junior Team or Teams for season 2015 so children with a disability can play.

The key to this is providing an inclusive community engagement for the Children as well as the parents. We don't want to just have a team, running under our banner and shoved off into the corner training by themselves once a week. They should be made to feel a part of the club.

As such the best way to do this initially would be to run in conjunction with our Auskickers on a Sunday morning under the same concept of training and intra club games. The team initially will cover a wide age group, of 5 to 12 year olds (Primary School Age) and based on demand it certainly is an area that could easily expand into the youth age bracket in future years.

### Catchment area:

**Public and Private Primary Schools in our area.** Most if not all Schools in our catchment as well as neighbouring local Schools, will have children attending that have various special needs. Some will be fine participating with their peers whilst many others will not be playing Club or team sports at all. As part of our Club promotion into Schools a specific focus in conjunction with the headmaster, can be made of our new team and Newsletters or emails sent directly to specific families. This also provides a great way for us to get into these Schools to promote all our other teams.

**Sir David Brand School:** Located on our doorstep another prime focus. One of the Grandmothers at Coolbinia PS, was until last year the principal. She can help with contacts and promotion.

**The Centre for Cerebral Palsy:** Again our immediate neighbour. This organisation however covers all of WA, so a focused approach would be required otherwise we potentially will be inundated with new members.

**Beatty Park Swim School:** provides a program called "Angelfish" which caters for swimming lessons for children with special needs. I have spoken to the co-ordinator of that program about the idea and if it eventuates they are very keen to help push the concept to some of their local families.

## Challenges:

**Space:** Depending what is happening with our Sunday Mods sides may cause issues with space, however nothing that can't be overcome with the use of the Men's neighbouring oval, and a bit of planning.

**Coaches:** Obviously never having done this before we don't have coaches in place. I envisage as per any Junior team that we will engage coaches from the families involved. Being the Children will have additional needs, a high ratio of coaches to players will be required.

**Professionals:** We may wish to work in conjunction with professional Physios, and Occupational therapists to develop a program for the kids, but again nothing that can not be overcome. I am sure both TCCP and Sir David Brand would eagerly throw their resources behind the concept.

**Equipment:** We may need to consider some specialised equipment, such as Balls with bells for visually impaired players, balls and gloves with Velcro to help some children catch the ball. Other equipment such as balls and Goal posts are a negligible cost. To start with though we will just kick it off and see what comes.

**Perception:** My lingering concern on this is how this will be perceived by others. We don't wish this to be seen that any kid with a disability HAS to join this new team, I see it more as a way of allowing another option for more children to join the club. I think the overriding philosophy remains that if any child wishes to participate in his or her Year group's team they are encouraged to do that, regardless of their perceived skill or disability status. This is just another way for us to be more inclusive.

## Positives outcomes:

For the children and families that will be involved in this team, the chance to be part of a mainstream community club, to enjoy the laughter and fun that comes with that will be priceless.

For us as a club it will build closer ties with our community, create a strong sense of inclusion and create a strong bond between all the children. I've seen from the local Coolbinia PS, how the teachers in Pre Primary take the kids to Sir David Brand for visits and play sessions. The Kids don't see disabilities, they play with each other as kids. Only the Adults see an issue. If we can encourage this as a club our children will be all the better for the experience.

Longer term if this concept evolves we should be encouraging other clubs in the district to do the same, ultimately with the aim for the children to play some sort of regular game against their peers, whilst representing the Coolbinia Bombers JFC.

## **Building Relationships:**

As mentioned I have seen the positive effects of the relationship between Sir David Brand and Coolbinia PS.

At a club level we could empower our own children. I think from time to time that some of our older teams may go to this group to help with Training sessions. Creating a "Buddy system" where we see kids helping kids eg Year 6's might be "allocated" a day to conduct training.

In conjunction with their coach they may plan a session then "Buddy" up with players to try and teach them various skills of the game. It certainly would be an empowering exercise for the children and one I see as extremely positive for all concerned.

## **Fees:**

I would propose Fees and inclusions are set the same as per our Auskick groups. Being we don't know demand at this stage additional merchandise may need to be ordered once registrations have been completed.

## **Long Term Funding:**

Although not the goal of this idea, providing for this section of the community also has other potential spin off benefits for the Club. Specific disability funding opportunities will be available to us.

For example to help with extending the Clubrooms funding grants from organisations such as Lotteries West and the Disability services commission are likely to be accessible, particularly if we are including disabled access into the design. The same goes for other equipment the club may need to support this team.

But most importantly I think it is a fantastic opportunity for our Football Club to be the leader and show the rest of the Football community how it can be done.

## **Name:**

Now we just need to come up with a name and get the concept out there.