



STRATEGY 2022-2024

LEARN. GROW. BELONG.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Huddle respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners upon whose ancestral lands we live, learn, work, and play. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, and acknowledge their continued connection to the land, waterways, and community.

We recognise the resilience, pride, and rich cultural heritage of Australia's First Peoples.



Artwork by Lorraine Kabbindi White



Born out of the role and value of sport and the influence Australian Rules Football plays in connecting people across different ages, genders and cultures; The Huddle was established in 2010 as the community arm of the North Melbourne Football Club in partnership with the Scanlon Foundation and the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

It was established to engage, support and empower young people to build on their strengths, increase their ability to participate in society and contribute to more socially inclusive communities.

SINCE INCEPTION, THE HUDDLE'S AWARD-WINNING PROGRAMS HAVE ENGAGED MORE THAN

100,000 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA



The power of sport

"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination".

- Nelson Mandela
(May 25, 2000)

Sport plays a significant role as a promoter of social integration and development in different geographical, cultural and political contexts. Used effectively, it can reach out to refugee and migrant communities, to support resettling into new communities and create a stronger sense of belonging.

Our sporting teams give us hope and role models inspire us, but it's beyond the playing fields and courts where sport can be a leader. The Huddle works with some of the most iconic sporting clubs in the world to help young people learn, grow and belong.

Through the design of its innovative programs, The Huddle leverages the power of sport to strengthen engagement and trust with young people, improving their confidence and self-esteem, health and wellbeing, resilience, education and employment. This strengthens local communities by preventing a range of complex social issues including crime and other anti-social behaviours, substance abuse, sexism, race based discrimination and violence, amongst other issues.

Our strategy

The change we want to make

Vision

Collaborate with our community to strengthen social inclusion.

Why we exist

Purpose

To improve education and employment outcomes for young people by leveraging the power of sport.

Our areas of expertise

Focus Areas

- Social Inclusion.
- Education.
- Careers.

Who we are working with

Participants

- Young people aged between 8 to 25 years old.

Partners

- Educators.
- Professional and Community Sports Organisations.
- Volunteers.
- Community Groups.

How we think and act

Values and behaviours

- Everyone should feel like they belong in the places where they live, learn, work, worship and play.
- Our attitudes and actions are real with a commitment to deliver on the promises we make.
- Young people are inspired and empowered to be bold to amplify their ideas and achieve their aspirations.
- We share a never beaten attitude with our people and partners as we collaborate to strengthen our communities.

How we want to provide our services

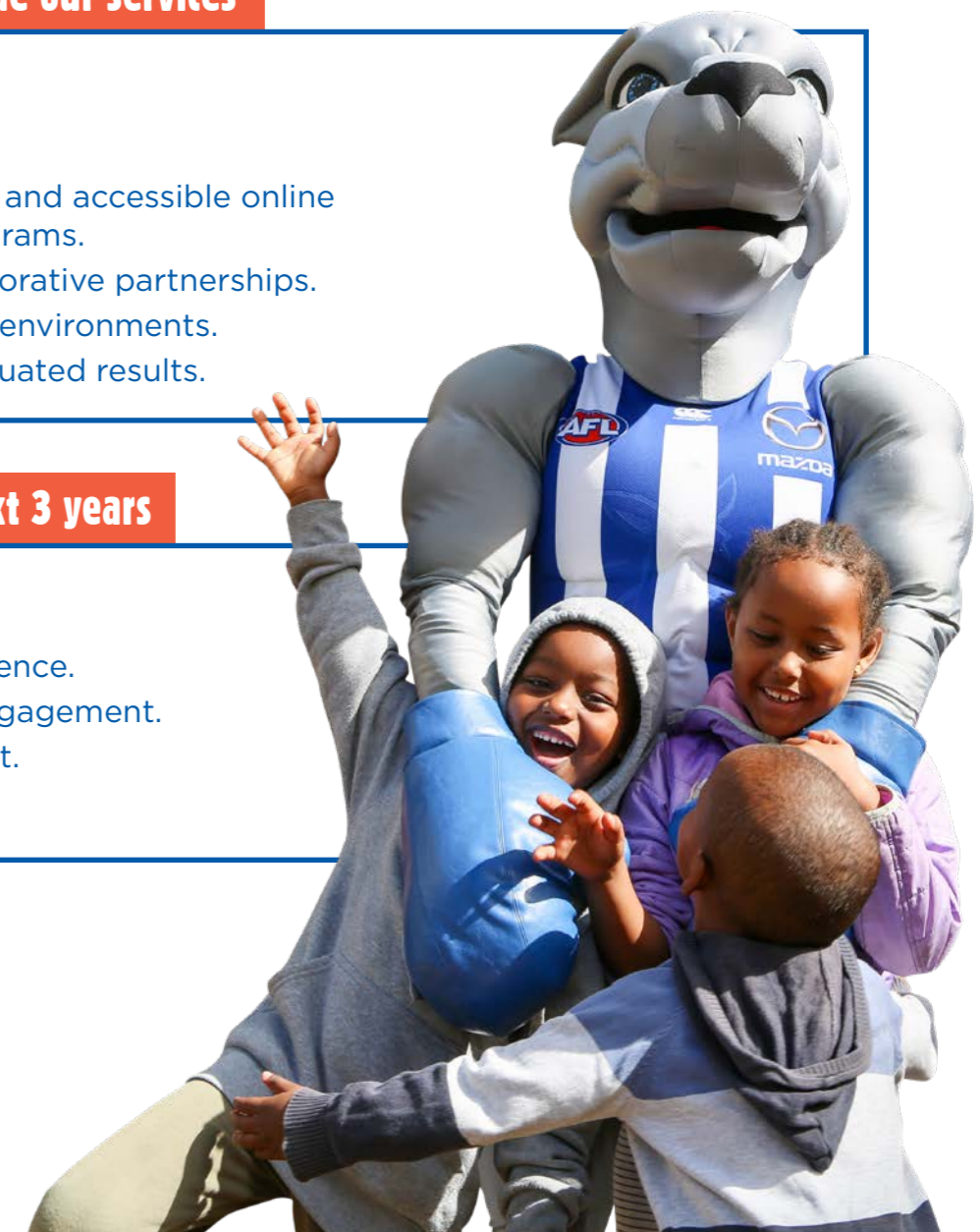
Principles

- Youth-centred.
- Community based and accessible online products and programs.
- Trusted and collaborative partnerships.
- Safe and inclusive environments.
- Impactful and evaluated results.

Our focus over the next 3 years

Strategic priorities

- Operational Excellence.
- Strengthen our Engagement.
- Grow our Footprint.
- Tell our Stories.



Theory of change

Our Theory of Change describes how and why we believe The Huddle will create long term change for young people.

If The Huddle

- Provides products and programs to young people that offer new experiences and opportunities to learn, grow and belong

By

- Building positive connections and pathways to meaningful social inclusion, education and employment outcomes

This will result in

- Young people being more physically and mentally active, with confidence to try new things;
- Increased awareness of self and others; leadership, self-efficacy and resilience skills; and trust in external services;
- Confidence and communication skills to amplify ideas and stories;
- Participate in authentic work experiences and have the skills and knowledge to be job ready

And eventually lead to

- Young people having the confidence to explore, identify and access diverse education and employment pathways;
- Being engaged in community and civic participation, education and employment;
- Feeling a sense of belonging within the wider community;
- Having the skills to navigate change;
- Accessing to a wider range of employers and opportunities.

Our focus areas



CAREERS

Our children are raised to dream big. We encourage young people to strive for success, to build on and even exceed the accomplishments of previous generations. We do this because we hold great hopes for our youth and we know the future prosperity of our communities is in their hands.

COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions have reduced youth employment by more than 11%, making it extremely difficult for many young people to gain any 'work experience' over the past 18 months. Lack of work experience continues to be a barrier to employment for many young people, and COVID-19 has only widened the gap between those that have access to professional networks and those that don't.

The Huddle builds the capacity of young people to imagine a future of possibilities, expand their networks and gives them real-world experiences through local partnerships to help shape career pathways.



EDUCATION

Australia's diverse and dynamic generation of young people are a significant resource. To reach their full potential however, they will need to be prepared to take on new opportunities and be empowered to lead a changing world.

To rise to the challenge, young people will need to be confident and develop skills that make them innovative.

The Huddle provides an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment to learn and grow and choose pathways that suit the skills, passions and motivations of the young person.

The Huddle works with educators, schools, sports and industries to prepare young people to be change-makers that can overcome societal challenges, solve problems through critical thinking and build connected and united communities.





SOCIAL INCLUSION

The ability to participate in society and to be free from discrimination and disadvantage is a basic and fundamental human right. Social inclusion is about participation, equal opportunity and empowerment.

Young people, in particular those from diverse backgrounds, are often socially excluded which can lead to poor physical and mental health, impacting their life expectancy.

Australia's prosperity is underpinned by diversity. The Huddle welcomes people from all backgrounds regardless of their cultural heritage, religious beliefs or economic conditions.

The Huddle celebrates the differences of young people and our communities and is committed to bringing people together through a range of initiatives including social and organised sports, recreation, forums and workshops to showcase their talents, ideas and aspirations.



Our approach

We work with people and organisations with a shared vision and common values to harness the energy and passion of youth and support them to develop their ideas, skills, grow networks and gain experiences so they are equipped to build a strong future. We leverage the power of sport in the design of our programs to inspire brighter futures and strengthen social inclusion. Our work is underpinned by the following principles.



1. YOUTH-CENTRED

In planning our approaches, we prefer to start from the perspective of the individual, focusing on what is required across all the dimensions of their lives rather than planning within established professional disciplines and service boundaries. We see every young person as entitled to dedicated and qualified services to support their intrinsic needs.



2. COMMUNITY BASED AND ACCESSIBLE ONLINE PRODUCTS AND PROGRAMS

We understand that all local communities are not the same. We take the time to listen and understand the underlying issues affecting young people in the places they live, learn, work, worship and play. The Huddle is designed to be citizen centric and responsive to local conditions and needs. With the movement to online environments, as a result of COVID-19, we understand the need to continue to adapt and ensure our products and programs can be delivered online.



3. TRUSTED AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Agreement to work toward a shared mission and improved collaboration between schools, sports, governments, corporates, philanthropy, community groups, leaders, families and volunteers to align efforts and deliver mutually reinforcing activities is essential. We will harness the energy and power of volunteers (including young people) to co-design programs and support high-quality delivery and evaluation of our work. We will share knowledge and hold ourselves accountable to those we seek support from, including funds. Most importantly we will pause to celebrate success with each other, no matter how small.



4. SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

By fostering safe and inclusive learning environments, we support young people to achieve positive learning and wellbeing outcomes. We know how important it is to give young people a safe space where they can voice their opinions and be heard, as well as work with and learn from their peers. We have a strong commitment of management, staff, players and volunteers to a workplace reflective of our community and child safety practises to keep children and young people safe from harm.



5. IMPACTFUL AND EVALUATED RESULTS

We have adopted a 'long-term' view and strategies that are informed by evidence that can be scaled for broader benefits. We will monitor, review, report and communicate effectively on our long-term progress, based on reliable data sources and work in partnership with independent researchers and evaluators. We will communicate and share our successes and the lessons we have learned along the way, to ensure other organisations and communities can benefit from our innovative approaches.



Strategic priorities and actions



1. OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We understand that to be able to support young people, collaborate with our partners and achieve the outcomes outlined in this strategy, we must have processes and procedures in place that are both effective and efficient. This will be underpinned by a culture of empowered staff and high-performing teams.



2. GROW OUR FOOTPRINT

We create exceptional sports-themed programs which improve education, careers and social inclusion outcomes for young people. We will increase the accessibility of our programs to engage more young people, more often through interactive and engaging digital experiences.



3. STRENGTHEN OUR ENGAGEMENT

To ensure we create stronger connections with young people and our partners, we will continue to collect, analyse and report on our data to inform the design of our programs and assess the impact of our work. The impact of our work will be demonstrated through our Theory of Change and measured through our associated impact measurement framework.



4. TELL OUR STORY

We understand the power of youth-led communication among young people. We will share the stories and amplify the ideas and voices of our young people to increase awareness and share the impact of our work.



Why we matter

We build trust and help young people learn, grow and feel a stronger sense of belonging in the places where they live, learn, work, worship and play.



GET IN TOUCH WITH THE HUDDLE

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