

Media Release

Mr Frank McGuire MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Prevention



Tuesday, 15 September 2020

PREVENTING YOUTH CRIME THROUGH SPORT

The Victorian Government is using the power of community sport to connect with disengaged young people across the state with an early intervention program led by Football Victoria.

Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Prevention Frank McGuire today announced \$150,000 in funding for the Empowering Lives through Football program, which will draw on skills developed on the football field to inspire self-improvement.

The program is designed to encourage better decision making by at-risk young people by building a greater sense of belonging and boosting positive engagement, such as school attendance and connection with family and friends, that can help prevent offending.

Up to 50 participants between 12 and 16 years old will engage in eight sessions that vary from one-to-one and small group settings. Throughout the pandemic these will primarily be delivered online.

The program will prioritise participants across the Ballarat, Brimbank, Melton, Greater Dandenong, Moreland and Hume regions. Participants will be nominated by Victoria Police, council staff and service providers.

The program will also give an opportunity to refer young people and their families to on-going support services.

The Empowering Lives through Football initiative is part of the Victorian Government's Sports Alliance. The Alliance was set up in June 2020 as a coordinated effort to build the capacity of the sport and recreation sector to address the causes of crime and build safer, more connected Victorian communities.

The Alliance includes members from the Australian Football League, Basketball Victoria, Melbourne Storm, Football Federation Victoria and Netball Victoria.

As part of the Sports Alliance announced this year, the Government has invested \$1.4 million to deliver sports projects as crime prevention initiatives in 2020-21. These include the design and development of initiatives for at-risk young people, as well as programs to support successful outcomes for young people in the youth justice system.

This forms part of a broader \$11.3 million package to support Victoria's multicultural and multi-faith communities recover from the COVID-19 emergency.

Quote attributable to Minister for Crime Prevention Natalie Hutchins

"We are always looking for better ways to prevent crime – this evidence-driven initiative with Football Victoria is another example of how we are getting to the root causes of crime by supporting at-risk young people."

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Prevention Frank McGuire

"This program is a great initiative to keep communities safe and help young people to build positive connections – it aims to keep them on the right path by joining a team."

Quote attributable to Minister for Community Sport and Youth Ros Spence

"We know that sport is a fantastic way to create camaraderie and cohesion across cultures – and this funding is all about harnessing that power to help young people most at-risk."

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