Adapting Competition and Program Formats for *Multicultural Inclusion.*



To provide practical guidance for Associations and Clubs on adapting competitions and participation programs to better meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), migrant and refugee communities.

Flexible and culturally responsive program delivery helps reduce barriers, improve participation and create welcoming environments where everyone feels they belong.

WHY ADAPTING PROGRAMS MATTERS

Creating an inclusive netball environment starts with recognising that one approach does not suit every participant or community.

People from multicultural backgrounds may:

- Be unfamiliar with how organised community sport operates in Australia
- Value the social connection, teamwork, confidence and sense of belonging that team sport provides
- Have competing work, study or family commitments
- Experience financial or transport barriers
- Prefer social, informal opportunities before committing to regular competition
- Have cultural or religious considerations that influence when and how they participate

By offering flexible participation options and making reasonable adjustments, Associations and Clubs can create opportunities for more people to experience the benefits of netball in a way that suits their individual circumstances.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO ADAPT COMPETITIONS AND PROGRAMS

Offer Flexible Participation Outcomes

Not everyone is ready to commit to a full competition season.

Consider offering:

- Shorter competition seasons
- Social competitions
- Casual “Come and Try” or “Turn Up and Play” sessions
- Flexible registration options
- Family participation days
- Flexible or no formal uniform

These formats reduce commitment while allowing participants to build confidence, skills and connections.

Adapting Competition and Program Formats for *Multicultural Inclusion.*



Promote Participation Pathways

Use existing participation programs as welcoming entry points into netball, including:

- Woolworths NetSetGo
- Walking Netball
- Social Netball
- Modified beginner competitions
- School and community-based programs

These programs provide supportive, low-pressure environments that encourage learning, enjoyment and social connection.

Schedule Programs with Community Needs in Mind

Where possible, consider:

- Offering sessions on different days and times
- Avoiding clashes with significant cultural or religious celebrations
- Being aware of prayer times where practical
- Providing programs during school holidays or community events
- Consulting participants about preferred scheduling

Small scheduling adjustments can significantly improve accessibility.

Consider Cultural and Religious Needs

Creating culturally responsive environments may include:

- Offering female-only participation opportunities where appropriate
- Ensuring female coaches or volunteers are available when requested
- Providing private changing facilities where possible
- Respecting cultural customs and family preferences, such as including halal and vegetarian options in canteen and function catering

These adjustments help participants feel safe, respected and comfortable.

Provide Inclusive Uniform Options

Uniform flexibility can remove an important participation barrier.

Associations and Clubs should:

- Follow Netball Australia's Uniform Guidelines.
- Allow culturally appropriate clothing such as:
  - Long sleeves
  - Full-length leggings
  - Sports hijabs
  - Modest playing attire
- Ensure coaches, umpires and officials understand and support inclusive uniform choices.

Participants should never feel excluded because of culturally appropriate clothing.

SUPPORT NEW PARTICIPANTS ON GAME DAY

Starting a new sport can feel overwhelming.

Simple strategies include:

- Buddy systems
- Volunteer greeters
- Orientation sessions
- Explaining game rules before matches
- Introducing coaches, umpires and volunteers
- Providing translated information where appropriate

Positive first experiences encourage long-term participation.

FOCUS ON PARTICIPATION BEFORE PERFORMANCE

Many participants are joining to:

- Meet new people
- Improve their health
- Learn a new sport
- Spend time with family and friends
- Build confidence

Programs that prioritise enjoyment, learning and belonging often achieve stronger participant retention than those focused solely on competition outcomes.

Adapting Competition and Program Formats for *Multicultural Inclusion.*



BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE PROGRAM DELIVERY

Adapting competitions and programs can:

- Increase participation from diverse communities
- Improve participant retention
- Reduce barriers to entry
- Strengthen community connections
- Support greater family involvement
- Create more welcoming and inclusive club environment
- Grow the long-term sustainability of netball

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Consider the following:

- Do our current programs suit people with different lifestyles and commitments?
- Are there opportunities for casual or beginner-friendly participation?
- Have we considered cultural or religious needs when scheduling competitions?
- Are our uniform requirements flexible and inclusive?
- How do we support participants who are new to netball?
- Have we asked our community what participation options would best meet their needs?

PRACTICAL ACTIONS

- Offer flexible participation options alongside traditional competitions.
- Promote entry-level programs such as NetSetGo, Walking Netball and social competitions.
- Review fixtures to consider cultural and religious events where practical.
- Support culturally appropriate uniform choices.
- Introduce buddy systems and welcoming volunteers for new participants.
- Regularly seek feedback from multicultural communities about program delivery.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Inclusive competitions and flexible participation opportunities help remove barriers and create pathways for people from multicultural communities to discover, enjoy and remain involved in netball. By adapting how the game is delivered, Associations and Clubs create welcoming environments where every participant has the opportunity to belong, contribute and thrive.