

IMPACT



**CITY IN THE
COMMUNITY**

**Impact Report
2025/26**



LUKE DAVID
MELBOURNE CITY POWERCHAIR CAPTAIN

3

**MESSAGE FROM THE
HEAD OF COMMUNITY**

4

**OUR
PURPOSE**

8

**CITY
FUTURES**

10

**TWINNING
PROJECT**

11

**HEALTHY
GOALS**

12

**YOUNG
LEADERS**

14

**BUILDING COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS**

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY



IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR CITY IN THE COMMUNITY, MARKED BY CONSOLIDATION, GROWTH AND A CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO CREATING MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE VICTORIA.

At a time when many young people face increasingly complex challenges, our work has never been more important. Through the power of football, we continue to engage, inspire and support young people to build confidence, resilience and stronger connections within their communities.

This year has seen several significant milestones.

CITY FUTURES program has continued to expand within schools and was strengthened by the release of an independent evaluation by Federation University, which highlighted positive outcomes in student engagement, school connectedness and wellbeing.

TWINNING PROJECT also reached new milestones, with support from the FIFA Foundation enabling expansion into additional correctional settings. Research undertaken with the University of Oxford has further reinforced the program's positive impact on participant wellbeing and successful reintegration into the community.

COLLABORATION with Reflect Forward and Melbourne Victory FC to deliver initiatives challenging racism and strengthening social cohesion through football. These programs demonstrate the unique ability of football to bring people together and create positive change.

None of this would be possible without the commitment of our staff, Young Leaders, partners, funders and supporters. Most importantly, I thank the young people who continue to inspire us every day. Their achievements remind us why this work matters.

I hope this Annual Report provides a snapshot of the breadth of our work, the strength of our partnerships and the positive impact we are creating together. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. Menon'.

SUNIL MENON
HEAD OF COMMUNITY

OUR PU



4

**AT CITY IN THE COMMUNITY,
WE EMPOWER HEALTHIER
LIVES FOR CITY YOUTH
THROUGH FOOTBALL.**

CITY

IN

PURPOSE

13K

YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED ACROSS
VICTORIA (INCLUDING 4,500 GIRLS)

1,980

HOURS OF
COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

50



WORKING WITH OVER 50 PARTNERS
FROM SCHOOLS, COUNCILS, NOT FOR
PROFITS, COMMUNITY GROUPS
AND CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

84

YOUNG LEADERS TRAINED
AND MENTORED



800



YOUNG LEADERS VOLUNTEERING
OVER 800 HOURS IN THE COMMUNITY

124

OVER 124 LOCATIONS

OUR PU



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Having completed the Young Leaders program a few years ago, I came back to CiTC this year to begin coaching and assisting on matchdays.

Working in a local secondary school, I have seen firsthand the impact the programs and especially the coaches have had with students. I am excited to be on the other side of delivery now, impacting young people through football and being a mentor on and off the pitch.

NIHAAL SINGH
CITC COACH

”

STORIES OF IMPACT

PURPOSE

“

I joined the Young Leaders program at City in January 2023. I did not want to go, I knew no one and thought what am I going to get out of this?

Fast forward to 2026, after volunteering with the community team I secured a casual role coaching in the City Futures program, while supporting the A-League Men's team with operational duties. This season I secured a full-time position as the A-League Women's Operations Coordinator, helping the team secure the A-League Premiers Plate and Championship.

When you put yourself out there, anything is possible!

JACOB DE KRETZER
FORMER YOUNG LEADER,
A-LEAGUE WOMENS
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



THE



STORIES OF IMPACT

CITY FU

CITY FUTURES REMAINS OUR FLAGSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM, EMBEDDING FOOTBALL COACHES WITHIN SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO COMBINE FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION WITH MENTORING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Designed for students in Years 7 to 10, the program integrates practical football sessions with workshops focusing on leadership, teamwork, respect and goal setting. The program aims to improve school engagement, strengthen relationships, reduce behavioural incidents and foster positive educational outcomes.

Over the past 12 months, City Futures continued to expand, welcoming Hallam Secondary College alongside existing partner schools including Narre Warren South P-12 College, Gleneagles Secondary College and Timbarra P-9 School.

The program was further strengthened by the release of an independent evaluation undertaken by Federation University and the Collaborative Evaluation and Research Centre, which demonstrated measurable improvements in student wellbeing, school connectedness and engagement, while recommending expansion of the program into regional Victoria.

**OVER 300
YOUNG
PEOPLE
ENGAGED**

**ACROSS 4 SCHOOLS | 2 TOURNAMENTS
AT CASEY FIELDS | IMPROVING SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT**

In addition to the program this year, students were able to

ACCESS up to 10 Immersion Days at City Football Academy, going behind the scenes of the football club, watching A-League training, hearing from coaches and learning about careers in sport.

VOLUNTEER at A-League, AFC Champions League, Socceroos and Matildas matchdays, learning about the operational and event side of sport.

ATTEND Victorian Parliament and presenting the findings of the City Futures Evaluation from Federation University to Victorian Education Minister – The Honourable Ben Carroll.

FEATURES



9

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I think it's a wonderful opportunity for schools to provide, suppose an experience for students to connect sometimes through an external provider. Because if they're already struggling with, you know, staff, other peers, this can help sort of, I suppose, be a buffer to help repair and get them to reconnect again.

TEACHER

I think I'm a bit more talkative now. I don't know. I've been through most of the program, yeah. Like, I'm much more confident in my life skills when it comes to soccer. And I'm just, like, I've become a better person in general.

STUDENT

The coaches, they're like role models. So, they demonstrate everything. We, sort of, learned from them.

STUDENT

”

THE

COMMUNITY

THE TWINNING PROJECT

60

OVER 60
PARTICIPANTS

4

4 CORRECTIONAL
FACILITIES

10

10 MENTORS ADDING
THEIR EXPERIENCE AND
GUIDANCE TO OTHERS AS
PART OF THE PROGRAM

10

CITY IN THE COMMUNITY continues to lead Australia in delivering the Twinning Project. With the support of Corrections Victoria, this innovative rehabilitation partners professional football clubs with correctional facilities to support successful reintegration into the community.

The program's impact continues to be supported by independent research undertaken in collaboration with the University of Oxford. The results of this global evaluation will be launched in coming months.



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Amazing Program.
Made me feel valued.
I have learnt to work
amicably even with
people I don't like and
to leave politics of
prison out and move
on. I have learnt to
respect people.

**TWINNING PROJECT
PARTICIPANT**

”

HEALTHY GOALS

THROUGH THE GLOBAL CITY FOOTBALL FOUNDATION 'HEALTHY GOALS' INITIATIVE, CONTINUES TO UPLIFT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS MELBOURNE.

The Healthy Goals campaign aims to create healthy spaces for young people to play football. In Melbourne, we are committed to creating football and art projects at local schools, working with students on understanding personal values, school values and how they want their football space to represent them.

This year we were proud to work with St Paul Apostle North in Endeavour Hills, where students who were part of the football program put together a mural showcasing their school values, what football means to them and their connection to City.



Our students have loved building a connection with City in the Community and Melbourne City. The mural captures how football brings people together and gives our students a real sense of connection to the Club and wider City community.

EMMA LUCAS
ST PAUL APOSTLE NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



YOUNG

OUR YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM PROVIDES MEANINGFUL PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS WHILE MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Through volunteering, coaching and event delivery, participants gain confidence, practical experience and employment-ready skills.

Many begin as participants before progressing into coaching and leadership roles across the club, and supporting global City in the Community projects, demonstrating the lasting impact of investing in young people.

12

PARISTONG

YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR



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I first came across City in The Community during a school visit when I was in Year 12. As someone who has always wanted to work in sport, the combination of the professional environment and the community impact had me hooked right away.

Over the last season I volunteered at matchdays at AAMI Park and Casey Fields, supporting pre-match and half-time activations. The thrill of a matchday and helping young fans have their first experience on the pitch is always great fun. I'm looking forward to many more opportunities with City!

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LE



13

LEADERS

THE

COMMUNITY

BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

BLUE RIBBON CUP

14



INTOJOBS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INTOJOBS, CITY IN THE COMMUNITY LAUNCHED KICKING GOALS.

A six-week employment and wellbeing program supporting young job seekers aged 18-24 across Melbourne's south east. Combining football with life skills, mentoring and employment support, the program helped participants build confidence, strengthen social connections and develop practical pathways into volunteering, further education and employment.

< OUR ANNUAL BLUE RIBBON CUP ONCE AGAIN BROUGHT TOGETHER STUDENTS, YOUNG LEADERS AND THE VICTORIA POLICE SOCCER CLUB IN A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY, REMEMBRANCE AND POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT.

Hosted at Narre Warren South P-12 College, the event honoured Victorian police members who have lost their lives in the line of duty while using football to strengthen relationships between young people and local police.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate football's unique ability to create dialogue, build trust and foster more inclusive communities.

REFUGEE WEEK TOURNAMENT

CITY IN THE COMMUNITY

held its annual Refugee Week tournament at our Dandenong blue pitch. The event celebrates the contributions refugees make in our community, bringing together key

agencies that provide critical support and services to people of refugee background.

The round-robin soccer tournament brought together clients and staff

from AMES Australia, South East Community Links, the Melbourne Afghan Soccer Association, the Big issue Community Street Soccer Program and the African Youth Alliance.



ANTI-RACISM PROGRAMS

FOOTBALL PROVIDES A POWERFUL PLATFORM TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, CHALLENGE DISCRIMINATION AND STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION.

This year, City in the Community partnered with Melbourne Victory and Reflect Forward to deliver an Anti-Racism Symposium at AAMI Park, bringing together students from six Victorian schools to explore practical solutions for addressing racism within their communities. Through interactive workshops and collaborative problem solving, students developed initiatives promoting inclusion, respect and cultural understanding.

The symposium was the platform for further workshop and programs delivered across schools.



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