

Athletics in Essendon Strategy

1. Introduction

For athletics to flourish in Essendon, and our surrounding districts, and draw larger number of participants an integrated and collective approach is suggested between the main groups that use the Moonee Valley Athletics Centre as their base. The aim is to encourage others to call it their 'home' or to establish new entities and programs to meet community needs.

Over the past decade or so we have seen many participants move away from traditional sports clubs and track and field athletics unfortunately falls into that category, with only 60,000 members in Australia, while there are over 4 million that register for fun runs annually and more than 1 million that use parkrun for their exercise and sporting needs. Indeed, Maribyrnong Park Run regularly attracts more numbers than we have in our membership. We can all discuss the merits of these two fun examples compared to the track and field competition "of real athletics" that we and other clubs offer.

The concept of this strategy is to explore how we can build an integrated and collaborative approach to reposition the clubs in the Essendon area as being more relevant to people who would like to run, compete and improve their skills, no matter their age.

From the recent survey additional information has been collected, together with individual conversations with ELC, coaches, and Committee members to explore ideas around the priorities we should consider

MVAC is the sole public accessible all weather athletics centre in MVCC so having this is as the Home of Athletics for Essendon and Moonee Valley is the focus of the Strategy. The nearest athletics clubs to MVAC are: Keilor St Bernard AC, (Grass track and school owned), Brunswick AC no home track, Coburg Harriers AC, Melbourne University AC (limited facilities), Williamstown AC, Collingwood AC. With MAC, Collingwood and Coburg not able to run a T&F program our MVCC is critical to the success of athletics in the region as well as local draw.

2. Strategic Focus

Vision - Athletics at the heart of Essendon's community choices for exercise, club sport and sporting development

Mission - To collaboratively create environments at MVAC and other domains to encourage greater participation for all, irrespective of their abilities to encourage them to better themselves from the skills and experiences we provide them.

Values -We are committed to developing a culture that is:

- Inclusive, belonging and connected
- Safe and welcoming
- Educational, developmental and aspirational
- Fun, exciting and community focused
- Transparent, collaborative and partnership focused

Strategic Pillars

Governance, Partnerships & Sustainability	Environments	Participation	Pathways
<i>Work well</i>	<i>Excel well</i>	<i>Play well</i>	<i>Win well</i>
A Work well commitment with an integrated focus, creating collective aspirations, achieving success together to	Ensuring the facilities are safe, friendly for all and create the best training facilities we can afford our future	A Play well philosophy to be inclusive, and provide a range of opportunities for the community to learn how to get the best out	A Win well focus, that inspires the next generation of athletes, by being athlete focused, performance

Governance, Partnerships & Sustainability	Environments	Participation	Pathways
grow our clubs and the sport in a sustainable manner	participants and champions	of running and track and field activities	driven and exceptionally well led

3. Priorities

The following priorities are identified for consideration as part of the Strategy

3.1	Governance, Partnerships and Sustainability – Work Well	
Focus	A Work well commitment with an integrated focus, creating collective aspirations, achieving success together to grow our clubs and the sport in a sustainable manner	
Aim	Our committee, volunteers, coaches and team managers will support the creation of an inclusive and family friendly, safe and thriving environment, where the local community and athletes want to attend to enjoy, participate, excel their skills and abilities and have the opportunities to compete.	
Priorities	Our commitment over the next 3 years	Responsibilities
1	Establish joint working groups with other stakeholders to collectively make a difference in key areas of Coaching and participation, asset investment and others that may arise	
2	Update the AE Constitution to reflect contemporary thinking	
3	AE to ensure that the committee reflects the roles that are needed in the club and also to encourage younger voices to be heard and be part of the club development	
4	To recognise and reward volunteers, coaches and administrators as we grow the club	
5	Develop exemplar governance practices by being part of Sport Integrity Australia’s Play by the Rules program to ensure that our systems and policies support our people to create safe, transparent and contemporary environments for other members and participants	
6	Development of a joint annual game plan that encourages joint initiatives in the environment, coaching and participation programs all offer. Encourage Council involvement in this Game Plan	
7	Explore the development of a Future Champions Fund to support athletes that could excel for 2032 by providing them and their coaches with access to funding and pathway programs	
8	Promote our Club Assistance programs so that no participant should have finance as a real barrier to belonging to our clubs	
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3.2	Environments – Excel Well	
Focus	Ensuring the facilities are safe, friendly for all and create the best training facilities we can afford our future participants and champions	
Aim	To work collaboratively and across all clubs to create environments that will allow coaches to excel and athletes to train, develop, participate and compete to the best of their ability in safe, inclusive and inviting environments	
Priorities	Our commitment over the next 3 years	Responsibilities
1	Development of a LAC / AE group to explore joint priorities for MVAC development over the next 3 years	
2	Work with Council to enhance the parklands with lights to allow safe access to the track in the winter and around the parklands for running and training	

3.2 Environments – Excel Well	
3	Explore a Future Equipment Fund, for all equipment that needs replacing over the next 3 years and where possible jointly fund between all clubs
4	Work with the Coaches group to identify coaching equipment that will enhance their ability to coach and produce future champions
5	Explore off site training environment and programs that will increase the opportunities for our athletes to train and gain improvements
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3.3 Participation – Play Well	
Focus	A Play well philosophy to be inclusive, and provide a range of opportunities for the community to learn how to get the best out of running and track and field activities
Aim	To have a seamless “access Point” for everyone who is interested in participating and joining one of our clubs or programs, irrespective of age, ability, interest and aspirations.
Priorities	Our commitment over the next 3 years Responsibilities
1	Finalise a joint approach that allows all to have an understanding of what is offered at the “track” so that we can all jointly attract more people of all ages, abilities and interests and join the right organisation(s) for them
2	Explore Club membership dues across all clubs and programs that remove barriers of joining more than one club / organisation depending upon interests
3	Development of clearly defined programs and membership offerings to attract more members /participants across all clubs and organisations. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational focus: - running program for women, older people, kids etc • Junior Aths Options – beginners, improvers and specialists, between ELAC and AE, so that young people have the best options that will meet their needs and aspirations • Adult Aths Options – Introduction, skill development, event specific and competitive programs on track, country and road in AV comps, masters comps and State/National Championships
4	Grow participation numbers between all three clubs from XXX to YYY over the next 3 years
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3.2 Pathways – Win Well	
Focus	A Win well focus, that inspires the next generation of athletes, by being athlete focused, performance driven and exceptionally well led

Aim	To develop a strong coaching entered culture that supports and develops athletes to the best of their ability. This will include providing competition pathways in Victoria, nationally and where possible internationally	
Priorities	Our commitment over the next 3 years	Responsibilities
1	Development of a cross club coaching program where we can build the next generation of coaches for all clubs	
2	Encourage senior coaches to develop a range of junior coaches from athletes and ex-athletes to ensure that all events can be covered and succession planning is in place	
3	Establish a cross club coaching group to support each others development programs	
4	Identify pathway programs (e.g. schools, fun runs, park run etc) that can feed future potential participants and talent ID athletes to Essendon	
5	Support all coaches with Professional Development	
6	Work collaboratively with AV, LAV, VIS, ATFCA and AA to source Exemplar coaches education as part of a continual coach education program.	
7	Ensure that all coaches are qualified, have the appropriate insurance and meet our clubs values, and priorities	
8	Develop a pathway program from ELAC to AE pathway programs to ensure easy and safe transitions.	
9	Secure funding from grants to target specific cohorts to becomes members and part of our programs	
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Feedback and suggestions for improvements are sought