



TOOL 2 - Role of a welcoming officer

Champions of change are active

welcome

Why should your club have a welcoming officer?

Joining a club for the first time can be both exciting and overwhelming. The role of a welcoming officer is to greet new members and their families and help them settle into the club. Undertaking this role requires the ability to know when to offer help and when to step back. A welcoming officer needs to provide support without putting pressure on new members and their families or making them feel as though they stand out from other members.

What does a welcoming officer do?

Some ideas for a welcoming officer:

- Attending the club's registration day to introduce themselves to new members and their families.
- Providing information about the club. For example, an information pack with a welcoming message from the president, the names and contact details of committee members, and a copy of the club's statement of purpose and values (see TOOL 1) and code of conduct (see TOOL 10).
- Being available to new members and their families to answer any questions and help with practical issues such as getting a uniform, club fee payment options, loaning equipment and getting to and from training and games.
- Asking members if they have any special needs – for example, those related to diet, religion or cultural events and access considerations.
- Making sure that new members, their partners, families or friends are invited to social events and other club activities.
- Letting new members and their families know that they can contact the welcoming officer throughout the season if they need support with participation.

Welcoming members from diverse communities

Be conscious that Aboriginal people and people from culturally diverse communities are not all the same. While welcoming officers aren't expected to have extensive knowledge of every background and culture, having a little bit of cultural sensitivity will help them with their role if needed.

✓Empathy

As with anyone, patience and understanding are essential when welcoming people from diverse communities to the club.

✓Communication

For some people English is their first language and for others it is their second or third language, so assuming a high level of understanding may result in misunderstanding. However most people will have some English skills so just be prepared to speak clearly and avoid slang. Keep it simple, make it visual and avoid shouting or speaking slowly.



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✓ Asking questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions. It is okay to ask people about their cultural background and what sports they like playing.

✓ Talking with parents

Offer to talk to parents to explain the club's activities. Depending on the cultural background and experiences of the person you might need to get the help of an interpreter or a community worker. With Aboriginal people the family network plays a very important role and family approval and acceptance of their involvement in the club is important.

✓ Getting consent

Consent from parents for children and young people under 18 years is essential and often difficult. Access generic translated parent consent forms at www.cmy.net.au.

✓ Offer a variety of roles

All members – regardless of their culture, gender or sexuality – should be encouraged to follow their interests and reach their potential in the club.

The cost of participation (for example, uniforms and equipment) and transport can be major barriers to participation for Aboriginal people, migrants and newly arrived refugees and other members of your club. Make sure your club develops policies that respond to these issues and tries to find solutions that are sensitive and respectful where members experience difficulties.