



HOW CAN MULTICULTURAL CRICKET TEAMS THRIVE?

**Practical Strategies for Players,
Team Leaders, Parents and
Cricket Administrators**



Frontmatter

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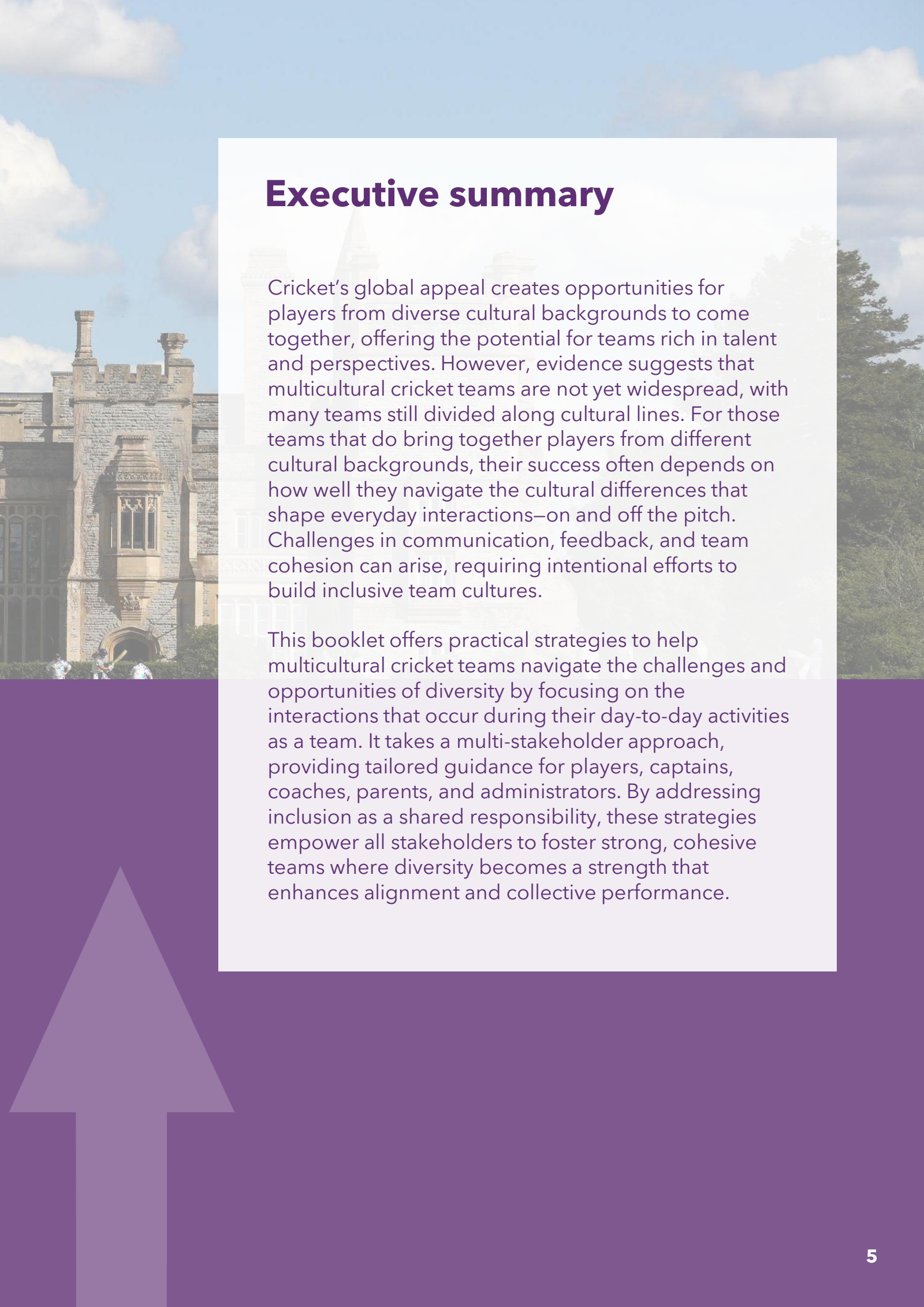
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Executive summary

Cricket's global appeal creates opportunities for players from diverse cultural backgrounds to come together, offering the potential for teams rich in talent and perspectives. However, evidence suggests that multicultural cricket teams are not yet widespread, with many teams still divided along cultural lines. For those teams that do bring together players from different cultural backgrounds, their success often depends on how well they navigate the cultural differences that shape everyday interactions—on and off the pitch. Challenges in communication, feedback, and team cohesion can arise, requiring intentional efforts to build inclusive team cultures.

This booklet offers practical strategies to help multicultural cricket teams navigate the challenges and opportunities of diversity by focusing on the interactions that occur during their day-to-day activities as a team. It takes a multi-stakeholder approach, providing tailored guidance for players, captains, coaches, parents, and administrators. By addressing inclusion as a shared responsibility, these strategies empower all stakeholders to foster strong, cohesive teams where diversity becomes a strength that enhances alignment and collective performance.

Background and project mission: Fostering inclusion and unity in multicultural cricket teams



Cricket teams thrive when every player feels valued, respected, and united around a shared purpose. Yet, as highlighted in the [Holding up a Mirror to Cricket](#) report, a significant portion of cricket's community—South Asian migrants—continues to face barriers to full participation and integration within the sport they love. This challenge is not unique to the UK and perhaps represents a critical opportunity for the sport globally to evolve and better reflect the multicultural societies it serves.

At the University of Warwick and Monash University, our project seeks to address the need for inclusive practices in multicultural cricket teams. Through in-depth interviews with South Asian migrants and other members of local cricket teams, we have gathered valuable insights into the dynamics of inclusion and cohesion. By centring the voices of migrant players, coaches, and administrators, we aim to highlight both the challenges they face and the opportunities for creating inclusive and cohesive teams.

Our mission is to provide practical strategies for players, team leadership (such as captains and coaches), parents, and cricket administrators to foster inclusion in their everyday interactions. By addressing the specific barriers and dynamics encountered by migrant players, we aim to strengthen team unity and create pathways for diverse communities to feel genuinely integrated within cricket teams across the UK and Australia.

We recognise that many cricket teams in these countries remain culturally divided, with some composed predominantly of white players and others largely of migrant communities. This division reflects broader social tendencies for groups to remain within familiar cultural circles, limiting opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement. Cricket, with its unique role in communities, has the potential to bridge these divides, demonstrating how sport can bring together diverse groups and foster inclusion both on and off the field.

The strategies in this resource draw directly from the experiences of migrant players and team members, offering essential knowledge and practical approaches to help teams and cricket organisations create stronger, more unified multicultural teams. By equipping stakeholders with these tools, we aim to empower cricket teams to thrive on the richness of their diversity.

A note on our methodology

To understand how multicultural cricket teams experience inclusion and cohesion, we conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with male and female cricketers in the UK and Australia. These interviews, totalling 20 hours of rich data, invited players to reflect on their experiences within diverse team environments, sharing stories of initial team integration, moments of cultural connection or conflict, and their broader perceptions of belonging and unity. This approach allowed us to gather a deep and nuanced understanding of the dynamics within multicultural teams.

Our analysis followed a thematic approach, identifying recurring patterns in players' accounts to uncover the key factors influencing inclusion and cohesion. In line with good practice in qualitative research, we engaged in a careful process of coding the data, categorising responses into meaningful themes while remaining open to emerging patterns that went beyond our initial expectations. We reviewed these themes iteratively, refining them to ensure they accurately captured the nuances of players' experiences. This analytical approach allowed us to stay close to the participants' voices, ensuring that our findings genuinely reflect the perspectives and complexities of team interactions in multicultural contexts. Throughout this process, we maintained a focus on both individual and shared experiences, recognising the interplay between personal stories and broader team dynamics.

Through our thematic analysis, we identified recurring patterns that highlighted both the barriers to and enablers of inclusion in multicultural cricket teams. By examining these themes in depth, we developed a set of claims that illustrate what teams can do to foster greater inclusion, cohesion, and unity. These claims capture the actions, behaviours, and values that players and team leaders identified as important for creating an environment where all members feel respected and supported. Our analysis aimed not only to document these experiences but also to translate them into actionable insights that teams and organisations can use to thrive.

In the rest of this booklet, we present these claims as **challenges**, designed to inspire reflection and action. These challenges encourage teams to consider how they can apply the lessons from our research to their everyday interactions, fostering stronger, more inclusive team cultures.

Can your multicultural cricket team rise to these challenges?

Ten insights from our data

The challenges we present here are rooted in the claims developed from our research and shaped by the experiences shared by players, captains, and administrators. They reflect the key areas where teams can grow to foster inclusion and cohesion, drawing attention to the actions, behaviours, and values that help multicultural cricket teams thrive. These challenges are designed to inspire reflection and action, inviting every stakeholder to consider how they can contribute to building stronger, more unified teams in their everyday interactions.



1. Can your team make inclusion an everyday practice?

Our data suggests that multicultural teams can thrive when inclusion becomes part of their daily interactions. Can your team commit to fostering inclusion through small, meaningful actions, such as inviting quieter players into conversations, listening to different perspectives, and showing respect in every interaction? Inclusion isn't a one-time act—it's something that everyone contributes to, all the time, every day.

2. Can your team welcome new members from different cultures effectively?

Our data emphasised that culturally sensitive welcoming rituals are critical to establishing trust and belonging in multicultural teams. Simple acts that make newcomers feel valued can reduce uncertainty, build confidence, and lay the foundation for a thriving team environment. Can your team create welcoming practices that ensure every new member feels genuinely included and supported from the start?

3. Can your team use off-pitch conversations to build stronger bonds?

Our data revealed that social interactions off the pitch are vital for building cohesion in multicultural teams. Inclusive opportunities for connection—such as hosting neutral events, respecting different social preferences, and encouraging informal conversations—help players form deeper relationships and bridge cultural divides. Can your team harness the power of off-pitch social interactions to foster deeper bonds and bring diverse members closer together?

4. Can your team foster a culture of respect for everyone?

Our data revealed that respect is essential for fostering unity in multicultural teams, but it can be expressed and understood differently across cultures. Participants emphasised the importance of developing shared understandings of respect and addressing issues of disrespect in constructive ways. Is your team creating an environment where respect is consistently demonstrated and culturally inclusive?

5. Can your team build a shared identity that also celebrates differences?

Our data indicated that multicultural teams thrive when they align around shared values while respecting individual cultural identities. Participants emphasised that finding common ground—such as a shared love for the game—helps foster unity, while celebrating the diversity within the team enriches its culture. Can your team create a strong, cohesive identity that equally values unity and the unique contributions of its members?

6. Can your team create a fun AND inclusive environment?

Our data revealed that informality and humour are vital for team bonding and creating an enjoyable atmosphere. However, participants shared examples of how differences in humour or informal behaviours could unintentionally exclude certain members.

Teams that balance fun with an inclusive approach build stronger connections across diverse groups. Can your team create an environment where humour and informality bring everyone together, ensuring both fun and inclusivity thrive?

7. Can your team redefine its shared practices to include everyone?

Our data suggested that shared practices (or comfort zones) in multicultural teams often reflect dominant cultural norms, which can unintentionally exclude others.

Participants highlighted the importance of expanding shared practices to create a more inclusive environment. Can your team challenge its existing norms and adapt its comfort zone to ensure all members feel they belong?

8. Can the team's leadership help efforts to build inclusion?

Our data emphasised that leadership plays a crucial role in shaping inclusive team cultures. Participants noted that leaders who embrace diversity and actively seek to include all voices foster greater trust and alignment within multicultural teams. Can your team's leaders create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and every member feels empowered to contribute?

9. Can your team use its purpose for playing to help foster inclusion?

Our data revealed that some players—particularly those new to cricket or trying it for the first time—may feel excluded when skill or experience becomes the primary measure of respect. Multicultural teams often include players with diverse motivations for joining, from exploring a new sport to meeting new people to competing at their best. Teams that are clear about their purpose—whether it's focused on competition, enjoyment, or development—and consistently orient themselves to this purpose can create environments where players find common ground around their reason for playing.

10. Can your team overcome financial barriers to inclusion?

Our data suggest that financial barriers can disproportionately impact players from migrant backgrounds, limiting their ability to fully participate in cricket. Participants shared how costs associated with equipment, uniforms, and travel often became obstacles for inclusion. Teams that actively seek ways to reduce financial burdens—such as equipment-sharing initiatives or community support funds—can help ensure that cricket is accessible to for everyone. Can your team take steps to address financial challenges and create opportunities for all players to thrive?

Practical strategies

Addressing the challenges outlined above requires more than good intentions—it demands practical actions from everyone involved in and around multicultural cricket teams. To reflect this, we have developed strategies tailored to four key categories of stakeholders: **players, captains and team leadership (including coaches), parents and administrators of the game**. Each of these groups plays a unique and critical role in fostering an inclusive environment, and by working together, they can create the conditions for multicultural teams to thrive.

These strategies are grounded in the data we collected through interviews with players and team members from multicultural cricket teams. In some cases, we have drawn directly from practical suggestions offered by participants, highlighting actions and behaviours that have already proven effective. In other cases, we have theorised strategies based on patterns and challenges raised in the data, using these insights to propose new, evidence-based approaches to foster inclusion in multicultural cricket teams. By addressing the specific needs and responsibilities of different stakeholders, these strategies establish a shared commitment to inclusion, ensuring that all members of the cricketing community can contribute to and benefit from the team's success.

While the strategies presented here focus on four key stakeholder groups—players, captains and team leadership, parents, and administrators of the game—it is important to recognise that these are not the only stakeholders involved in fostering inclusion in multicultural cricket teams. Other individuals and groups, such as community leaders, local businesses, or even spectators, may also play meaningful roles in creating inclusive environments. The focus on these four stakeholders reflects the findings from our data, which highlighted their centrality to the challenges that need to be addressed.



PLAYERS



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP



PARENTS



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME





1.

How can your team make inclusion an everyday practice?

For multicultural cricket teams to thrive, inclusion must be a continuous, shared responsibility embedded in everyday interactions. Our data revealed that achieving this requires intentional effort to bridge cultural differences and foster a sense of belonging. In this section, we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to help make inclusion part of your team's everyday practices, ensuring diversity becomes a strength and everyone feels valued.



PLAYERS

- **Actively include team-mates in conversations and activities**
Pay attention to who is participating and who may be left out. Invite quieter or newer members into conversations during breaks or downtime to ensure everyone feels involved.
- **Show respect and interest in team-mates' backgrounds**
Simple acts like asking about their cricketing journey or interests outside the game can foster connections and make team members
- **Model inclusive behaviours**
Lead by example: speak up against exclusionary jokes, and ensure your actions reflect the team's inclusive values.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Establish and communicate the team's philosophy on inclusion**
Hold a meeting to define what inclusion means for your team. Share this philosophy with existing and new players to ensure everyone understands and embraces it.
- **Recognise and address exclusionary behaviours**
Be observant of dynamics within the team and intervene constructively when someone is left out or disrespected.
- **Create inclusive traditions and rituals**
Introduce small rituals, such as team shoutouts for contributions during practice or games, that acknowledge every member's efforts, regardless of their skill level or role.



PARENTS

- **Encourage inclusive attitudes at home**
Talk with your child about the importance of inclusion in their team. Discuss how they can actively involve team-mates in conversations and activities during practice and games.
- **Model inclusion during games**
When attending matches, interact with other parents across cultural lines. Show your child that inclusion extends beyond the pitch to the broader team environment.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Develop and provide resources to educate clubs on inclusion**
Offer workshops or signpost materials on fostering inclusion in multicultural teams. Equip leaders with the tools they need to promote an inclusive culture.
- **Recognise and reward inclusive clubs**
Develop awards or recognition programmes for teams and clubs that demonstrate outstanding everyday inclusion practices, encouraging others to follow suit.



2.

How can your team welcome new members from different cultures effectively?

Welcoming new players into a multicultural cricket team is crucial for fostering inclusion and helping them integrate smoothly. Our data shows that intentional, culturally aware welcoming practices can significantly ease anxieties and make newcomers feel valued. This section offers practical strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to create meaningful rituals and team norms that help new members from diverse backgrounds feel comfortable and supported as they join the team.



PLAYERS

- **Take the initiative to welcome new members**

Greet newcomers warmly, offer to show them around, or invite them into informal conversations during downtime. These simple actions can make a big difference in reducing anxiety.

- **Learn each other's names and backgrounds**

Make an effort to learn and correctly pronounce names. Take time to ask about their cricketing experience or cultural background, creating connections from the start.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Create a welcoming introduction ritual**

Establish a standard practice for introducing new players, such as a brief "get-to-know-you" session at the start of training. Pair new members with a buddy to guide them through their first few weeks.

- **Acknowledge the courage of joining a new team**

Publicly recognise and appreciate the effort it takes for new members to step into an unfamiliar group, particularly those from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds. This sets an example for the rest of the team.



PARENTS

- **Welcome new families**

Take the initiative to introduce yourself to parents of new players. A simple conversation or invitation to sit together during games can make families feel part of the team community.

- **Help new parents understand team culture**

Share tips and information about the team's norms or events with new parents. Helping them navigate the club culture ensures they feel included and comfortable.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Develop practical onboarding resources to help teams**

Create guides or toolkits with actionable steps for clubs to welcome players from diverse cultures effectively. These can include tips on communication, cultural awareness, and culturally sensitive team-building activities.



3.

How can your team use off-pitch conversations to build stronger bonds?

Cricket provides unique opportunities for meaningful conversations on match days, moments like watching your team bat from the sidelines offer natural chances for connection. Our data revealed that these casual interactions can play a vital role in strengthening bonds and fostering a sense of belonging.

However, in multicultural teams, differing expectations around social interactions—such as preferred topics or what feels inclusive—can sometimes limit these moments of connection.



PLAYERS

- **Take initiative in social situations**

Make an effort to include team-mates in conversations during downtime or invite them to join social activities after a game. Building rapport off the pitch can help bridge cultural differences.

- **Respect varied social preferences**

Be mindful that some players may prefer different types of social activities. Avoid pressuring team-mates to engage in activities that might make them uncomfortable, and look for ways to compromise.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Organise neutral social events**

Plan team gatherings in neutral spaces, such as a local park or community hall, to ensure no one feels out of place. This is especially important in multicultural teams where players may not feel comfortable in unfamiliar or culturally specific environments.

- **Encourage inclusive activities**

Choose activities that allow for easy participation regardless of cultural background or familiarity, such as a casual team lunch or a friendly match between players' families.

- **Facilitate connections during downtime**

Use the natural downtimes in cricket, such as waiting to bat or field, as opportunities for informal conversations. Encourage team-mates to mingle and rotate conversational groups during these moments.



PARENTS

- **Model inclusive social behaviours**

When attending games or team events, actively engage with parents from different cultural backgrounds. Your openness can set a positive example for your children and help create an inclusive team environment.

- **Encourage participation in team activities**

Support your child in attending team social events, even if they feel uncertain. Reassure them of the value of building friendships beyond the game and being part of the team's social fabric.

- **Organise family-friendly gatherings**

Offer to host or help organise family-inclusive events, such as picnics or casual meet-ups. These gatherings can provide an opportunity for parents to connect and strengthen the team's sense of community.



4.

How can your team foster respect for everyone?

Respect is essential for any thriving team, but in multicultural cricket teams, it takes intentional effort to navigate differences in how respect is understood and expressed. Our data revealed that cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings or feelings of exclusion if not addressed.

On the following page, we outline strategies for how players, team leaders, parents, and administrators can build a shared understanding of respect and ensure that every team member feels valued and recognised.



PLAYERS

- **Learn and adapt to different ways of showing respect**

Take time to understand how team-mates from different cultural backgrounds express and interpret respect. For example, some cultures may place greater emphasis on formal greetings or titles, while others value informality.

- **Challenge disrespectful behaviours**

Speak up when jokes, comments, or actions cross the line into exclusionary or disrespectful territory. Set the tone that respect for all is non-negotiable in your team.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Facilitate a conversation about respect**

Hold a team discussion to explore what respect looks like in practice and how cultural differences might affect perceptions. Use this to develop a shared agreement on respectful behaviours.

- **Lead by example**

Model respectful behaviours at all times. Acknowledge contributions, address disagreements constructively, and ensure no player is dismissed or overlooked based on ability, cultural background, or role.

- **Recognise and celebrate team values**

Use team meetings or events to celebrate behaviours that exemplify respect and inclusion. Publicly acknowledging these actions reinforces their importance to the team culture.



PARENTS

- **Discuss respect with your child**

Emphasise the importance of respecting team-mates from all backgrounds. Encourage your child to think about how they show respect in their actions and words.

- **Model respect at games**

Avoid negative comments about players or coaches during matches. Instead, model constructive and respectful behaviours that reinforce positive values for the team community.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Incorporate respect into club policies**

Encourage clubs to include respect as a core value in their mission statements, codes of conduct, or team charters. Provide templates or examples for teams to adapt.

- **Deliver training on respect in multicultural settings**

Offer workshops for team leaders and coaches to help them navigate cultural differences in respect, ensuring they can mediate conflicts effectively and maintain a cohesive environment.



5.

How can your team build a shared identity that also celebrates differences?

Our data reveal that multicultural cricket teams thrive when they strike a balance between celebrating individual differences and building a sense of shared identity.

While cricket provides a natural common ground, differing expectations about the purpose of playing—whether for competition, fun, or socialising—can create friction. The challenge is to align players around shared values and goals without losing the richness of their diverse backgrounds.

Here we consider how this can be achieved.



PLAYERS

- **Find common ground through cricket**

Use cricket as the unifying thread by sharing stories about what the game means to you or discussing memorable cricketing moments. This helps build a sense of camaraderie around your shared passion.

- **Appreciate cultural differences**

At the same time, aim to learn about your team-mates' cultures and how their backgrounds shape their approach to cricket. This fosters mutual respect and a deeper understanding of one another.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Encourage collaboration across cultural lines**

Design training drills or match-day tasks that pair players from different cultural backgrounds. This encourages collaboration, helping players build connections while working towards shared goals.

- **Audit team symbols and rituals to ensure inclusivity**

Ensure symbols or rituals of unity, such as team logos or chants, avoid stereotypes or practices that might unintentionally belittle or exclude any culture represented within the team.

- **Showcase collaborative success**

Celebrate moments when diverse contributions lead to success, such as a strategy inspired by cultural perspectives or a unique playing style that benefits the team. Highlighting these instances reinforces the value of diversity in achieving shared goals.



PARENTS

- **Support inclusive team activities**

Encourage your child to participate in team-building activities and rituals that celebrate diversity. Offer to assist the team leadership in planning or supporting inclusive initiatives that highlight the richness of different cultural contributions.

- **Celebrate diversity through shared meals**

Sharing food is a natural way to build connections, spark conversations, and create a sense of unity across cultural differences. Encourage and help the team to organise potluck-style meals where families bring dishes that reflect their cultural backgrounds.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Promote diversity in team representation**

Encourage clubs to showcase their multicultural teams in promotional materials or events, highlighting how shared identities can thrive amidst diversity.

- **Provide tools for building team identity**

Offer resources, such as workshops or activities, to help teams develop a shared identity while celebrating the distinctiveness of their members.



6.

How can your team create a fun AND inclusive environment?

The informal and social nature of sports teams is a key part of their appeal, but for multicultural cricket teams, some behaviours that play out in informal contexts can become a barrier to inclusion.

Our data revealed that some forms of humour, banter, and casual interactions—often intended to build camaraderie—can inadvertently alienate players from different cultural backgrounds.

Here we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to ensure casual and relaxed conversations in and around the game of cricket foster inclusivity and strengthen team bonds.



PLAYERS

- **Be mindful of your humour**

Pay attention to how jokes or banter might be perceived, especially when they rely on stereotypes or target someone's background. Aim for humour that brings the team together rather than isolating individuals.

- **Create space for everyone in social interactions**

During informal chats or banter, ensure all players are included or have people to engage with. Rotate conversational groups and make an effort to bring quieter players into discussions.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Set expectations around humour and banter**

Discuss with the team how informal interactions should align with the team's values. Highlight the importance of fun that respects everyone's boundaries and cultural backgrounds.

- **Model inclusive informality**

As a leader, set the tone by engaging all players in light-hearted activities, showing that informality can be fun and inclusive simultaneously.

- **Lead inclusively in casual settings**

If you notice someone being excluded or the tone of banter becoming divisive, step in and redirect the conversation. Small actions can set the standard for a more inclusive atmosphere.



PARENTS

- **Guide your child on inclusive humour**

Talk to your child about how jokes or banter can affect others, particularly in multicultural settings. Encourage them to think about how their words contribute to a positive and inclusive team atmosphere.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Develop and provide education on inclusive team dynamics**

Offer training or materials to clubs on how informal team behaviours, such as humour and banter, can affect inclusivity. Equip leaders with tools to navigate these challenges constructively.

- **Establish a process for addressing inappropriate behaviours**

Create a clear and accessible reporting system for players, parents, and team leaders to raise concerns about behaviours like racist humour or exclusionary comments. Pair this with guidance for clubs on how to respond constructively and ensure accountability, fostering a safe and inclusive team environment.



7.

How can your team redefine its shared practices to include everyone?

The behaviours and routines that feel comfortable in multicultural cricket teams are often shaped by dominant cultural norms, which can unintentionally exclude others. Our data revealed that expanding shared practices and behaviours is essential for creating an environment where everyone feels they belong. Here we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to help challenge existing norms and foster a more inclusive team culture.



PLAYERS

- **Be open to new practices**

Embrace opportunities to learn about and adapt to cultural practices or preferences that might differ from your own. For example, try participating in cultural traditions or rituals shared by team-mates.

- **Broaden conversation topics**

Conversations that rely on shared cultural knowledge or inside jokes can be valuable for building rapport with team-mates who understand them, but it's important to be mindful of how they might unintentionally exclude others. Look for ways to bring everyone into the conversation, such as explaining a reference or inviting others to share similar experiences.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Help expand the team's collective comfort zone**

Challenge familiar routines or norms that might unintentionally exclude others. For example, if a team tradition feels alienating to some players, suggest ways to adapt or evolve it so it's more inclusive. Encourage open discussions about what makes the team feel like a welcoming and unified group.

- **Highlight the value of adaptability**

Reinforce the idea that adapting as a team makes the group stronger. Share examples of how stepping outside comfort zones has led to personal or collective success.



PARENTS

- **Encourage inclusive social habits**

Help your child recognise how their actions and words can shape the team's environment. Discuss ways they can include team-mates who may feel left out, such as involving them in conversations or shared activities during games or team events. Also, help them understand the importance of being mindful of topics or actions that might unintentionally alienate their team-mates.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Develop guidance on how to build inclusive team norms**

Provide clubs with resources or signpost materials that can help them reflect on and challenge dominant cultural norms that may shape their team's behaviours. Encourage teams to identify practices or routines that unintentionally exclude and adapt them to foster a more inclusive environment.

- **Use examples from high-performing teams to inspire inclusivity**

Share stories of successful multicultural teams that have embraced inclusivity to enhance their performance and cohesion. Highlight how these teams expanded their shared practices, valued diverse perspectives, and created environments where all members felt they belonged. These examples can serve as inspiration for clubs to adopt similar approaches.



8.

How can your team build leadership help efforts to build inclusion?

Our data revealed that leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the culture of multicultural cricket teams. Captains and coaches set the tone for how team members interact, resolve conflicts, and align around shared goals. Leading a multicultural team requires cultural awareness, adaptability, and an intentional commitment to inclusion. Without inclusive leadership that values diversity, teams risk division, miscommunication, and missed opportunities to strengthen cohesion. Here we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to help leaders foster a culture of inclusivity.



PLAYERS

- **Support your leaders in promoting inclusion**

Recognise the efforts of captains and coaches to unite players from diverse cultural backgrounds. Actively contribute to inclusion initiatives, such as welcoming team-mates from different cultures or mediating cultural misunderstandings.

- **Provide honest feedback on team dynamics**

Openly discuss with team leaders how multicultural aspects of the team are being managed. Share insights on what is working and where there may be cultural blind spots that need addressing.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Develop cultural competence**

Make an effort to understand the cultural backgrounds of your players, including their values, communication styles, and expectations. Use this understanding to create a more inclusive and supportive team environment.

- **Model inclusive leadership behaviours**

Lead by example through fairness, respect, and openness to all players, regardless of their cultural background. Actively involve players in decision-making processes, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and valued.

- **Address multicultural conflicts with sensitivity**

Be prepared to manage conflicts that may arise from cultural misunderstandings. Don't belittle people's concerns if raised. Approach these situations with empathy, using strategies that bridge cultural divides while maintaining respect and cohesion.



PARENTS

- **Engage with leaders to reinforce inclusivity**

Proactively engage with captains and coaches by asking how you can support their efforts to foster inclusion. Whether it's helping organise a culturally inclusive team event or offering feedback on their approach, your involvement strengthens the team's inclusivity.

- **Model respect for multicultural leadership**

Show respect for team leaders as they navigate the complexities of leading a diverse group. Your behaviour sets an example for players and helps reinforce the team's culture of mutual respect.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Develop multicultural leadership guidelines**

Create frameworks for team leaders to follow, offering practical tools for addressing cultural tensions, fostering respect, and uniting players around shared goals in multicultural contexts.

- **Facilitate peer learning among leaders**

Organise forums or networks where captains and coaches from different clubs can share experiences and strategies for leading multicultural teams. Highlight real-world examples of successful approaches to managing cultural differences and building inclusive team environments.



9.

How can your team use its purpose for playing to help foster inclusion?

Our data revealed that respect in sports teams is often tied to ability, which can disadvantage players who are new to cricket or have had fewer opportunities to develop their skills. This dynamic can be particularly challenging for those from migrant or non-traditional cricketing backgrounds, who may face additional barriers to inclusion. Multicultural cricket teams often include players with diverse motivations for joining, from exploring a new sport to socialising to competing at their best.

By clearly defining the team's purpose—whether it's focused on competition, enjoyment, or development—and consistently aligning to this purpose, teams can create environments that value effort and participation, ensuring everyone feels welcome and respected. Here we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to help teams align around their purpose and foster inclusion.



PLAYERS

- **Seek ways to reduce pressure to perform (if possible)**
Recognise that migrant players might feel extra pressure to prove themselves, believing that strong performances are key to gaining respect and a sense of belonging. This tension can lead to heightened anxiety or embarrassment if they perceive themselves as falling short. Offering encouragement and valuing effort over outcomes can help ease this pressure and create a more supportive environment.
- **Share knowledge and skills**
Offer guidance to less experienced players, such as tips during practice or informal mentoring. This builds camaraderie and helps newer members feel supported.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Set clear team values about ability and inclusion**
Facilitate a discussion to clarify the team's priorities—whether it's about fun, competition, or a mix of both. Communicate these values openly and ensure they reflect a commitment to welcoming players of all abilities if that is your reason for playing.
- **Create or signpost pathways for skill development**
Organise training sessions or mentorship opportunities specifically designed for newer players. Providing resources to help them improve shows that the team values their growth and participation.
- **Recognise contributions beyond performance**
Highlight the positive impact of players who enhance team spirit, foster inclusion, or strengthen social dynamics. This reinforces that contributions off the field are also integral to the team's success.



PARENTS

- **Encourage participation over perfection**
Reassure your child that their value to the team isn't based solely on performance. Encourage them to focus on enjoying the game and being a supportive team member.
- **Help build confidence in new players**
If your child is more experienced, encourage them to assist newer team-mates. Teaching others not only helps new players feel included but also fosters leadership skills in your child.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Promote inclusion in club policies**
Create or recommend club policies that prioritise inclusion over performance, particularly at the grassroots level. Encourage clubs to welcome players of all skill levels and offer development opportunities.
- **Subsidise development programmes**
If possible, provide funding or resources for clubs to run sessions or programmes that cater to players of all skill levels. These initiatives can help integrate newcomers into the team while offering opportunities for all players to grow and connect.



10.

How can your team overcome financial barriers to inclusion?

Our data revealed that financial constraints often pose significant challenges to inclusion, particularly for players from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including some migrant families. Costs for uniforms, equipment, and participation fees can limit opportunities for players to join or remain part of a team, creating barriers to growth and community building. Multicultural cricket teams must work together to address these challenges and ensure financial hardship doesn't exclude anyone. On the following page, we outline strategies for players, team leaders, parents, and administrators to collectively tackle financial barriers and foster a more inclusive team environment.



PLAYERS

- **Share or donate equipment**

Organise a team equipment pool where unused or spare items can be shared with players in need. This ensures everyone has access to the basics without additional financial strain.

- **Raise awareness about costs**

Discuss financial challenges openly with your team. Normalising these conversations can help reduce stigma and encourage creative, collective solutions.



CAPTAINS & TEAM
LEADERSHIP

- **Establish a team support fund**

Set up a small fund using team contributions or sponsorships to help cover costs for players who might otherwise be excluded. This can include assistance with uniforms or travel expenses.

- **Advocate for financial accessibility in your club**

Work with club administrators to explore options for lowering participation costs, such as reducing fees or providing payment plans for families who need them.

- **Promote cost-conscious practices**

Encourage the team to opt for cost-effective choices, such as simple uniforms or rotating shared equipment, to make participation more accessible for everyone. Think about these cost-conscious practices when organising social events, too.



PARENTS

- **Advocate for financial transparency and support**

Work with other parents to raise concerns about costs and suggest initiatives like fundraising events or sponsorships to ease financial pressures on families.

- **Organise fundraising efforts**

Coordinate simple fundraising activities, such as raffles or bake sales, to support players or families who may be struggling with costs. Involving the entire team in these efforts fosters a sense of shared responsibility.



ADMINISTRATORS
OF THE GAME

- **Provide financial assistance programmes**

Offer subsidies or grants to clubs specifically for players from migrant or low-income families. Ensure these programmes are well-publicised and easy to access.

- **Facilitate equipment donation drives**

Partner with larger cricket organisations or sponsors to organise donation drives for uniforms, gear, or other resources. These initiatives can directly benefit teams and players in need.

Bringing everything together

How can stakeholders of multicultural cricket teams work together to accomplish better inclusion?

Through this project, we have argued that inclusion in multicultural cricket teams is a collective responsibility involving multiple stakeholders, each contributing in unique and complementary ways. Players build connections, leaders set the vision, parents help foster the team community, and administrators provide the structural support needed to sustain inclusive environments. By working together and embracing these roles, stakeholders can ensure that multicultural cricket teams not only thrive but also become models of diversity, inclusion, and success for the broader cricketing world. Here's a summary of the points we have raised through this first phase of the project.

Players: building connections and leading by example

Players are at the heart of a multicultural cricket team's success, responsible for fostering connections and setting the tone for inclusion through their daily interactions. By welcoming new members (Point 2), supporting team-mates during social interactions (Point 3), and demonstrating respect across cultural boundaries (Point 4), players create an environment where everyone feels valued. They also play a vital role in encouraging effort over performance (Point 9) and finding practical ways to reduce financial barriers, such as sharing equipment (Point 10). Every player can model inclusive behaviours and take small actions that collectively build a stronger, more cohesive team.

Captains and team leadership: setting the vision and managing dynamics

Captains and team leaders are pivotal in shaping the team's culture, acting as role models and guiding the team's collective efforts toward inclusion. Their role involves articulating a clear and inclusive team philosophy (Points 1 and 9), ensuring that new players feel welcomed and supported (Point 2), and creating opportunities for players to bond beyond the game (Point 3). Leadership requires sensitivity to cultural differences in conflict resolution and team dynamics (Points 4 and 8) and active facilitation of shared comfort zones (Point 7). Leaders may be uniquely positioned to implement practical solutions, such as establishing support funds (Point 10) or promoting inclusive rituals, to help their team thrive.

Parents: supporting inclusive values and fostering community

Parents play a supporting but significant role in reinforcing the inclusive culture of multicultural cricket teams. By modelling respect for team leadership and engaging with other families from diverse backgrounds (Points 3 and 8), parents help create a welcoming atmosphere that extends beyond the pitch. They also encourage their children to embody inclusive behaviours and attitudes, such as supporting team-mates or respecting different cultures (Points 1, 2, and 4).

Parents can contribute directly by organising family-friendly events (Point 3) or participating in fundraising efforts to address financial barriers (Point 10), helping to sustain a positive and inclusive team environment.

Administrators of the game: enabling inclusion through policies and resources

Administrators hold a strategic role in creating the conditions for multicultural cricket teams to thrive. They can provide clubs with the resources and training necessary to foster inclusive leadership (Points 8 and 10) and set policies that ensure respect and inclusion are prioritised across the sport (Points 4 and 9). Administrators also help reduce structural barriers by subsidising participation costs or facilitating equipment donation programmes (Point 10). By offering workshops on cultural competence (Point 6) and promoting diversity as a strength in team environments (Point 5), administrators enable clubs to build inclusive practices into their everyday operations.

Next steps for this project



This initial phase of the project was funded by a Warwick-Monash Alliance Seed Funding grant. Though its scope was limited, it aimed to provide impactful insights by focusing on the experiences of multicultural players through in-depth interviews. These interviews have laid a foundation for understanding inclusion and exclusion in multicultural cricket teams.

For Phase 2, we aim to secure additional funding to broaden the scope of the inquiry, both in terms of interviewees and data sources. This next phase will include interviews with a wider range of stakeholders across the cricket ecosystem, including established players, team leadership, coaches, administrators, and governing bodies. Crucially, we will also capture the perspectives of players from the home or host culture to provide a more holistic understanding of inclusion dynamics.

Additionally, we recognise the importance of examining real-time team interactions. Observing and analysing authentic communication—such as recordings from training sessions, match days, and team meetings—can reveal how inclusion is enacted, negotiated, or challenged in everyday team exchanges. Future phases will incorporate this interactional data to deepen our understanding of the specific language, behaviours, and communication patterns that foster or hinder inclusion.

By integrating insights from these natural interactions with our existing knowledge base, we aim to develop more robust, actionable strategies for stakeholders at all levels of cricket. This expanded research will not only enrich our findings but also provide a comprehensive toolkit for fostering truly inclusive and cohesive multicultural teams, setting a benchmark for diversity and inclusion in sport.

Keep in touch with the project

If you would like to stay in touch with the project and receive further updates, please reach out to Kieran File (University of Warwick) or Lucas Santos (Monash University).

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Help us by filling in a short survey

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the project, the material presented in this booklet and where we might take the project.

Please could you take two minutes to anonymously fill in a short survey? Click on the link below or scan the QR code:

How Can Multicultural Cricket
Teams Thrive?



<https://forms.office.com/e/jN9J3y8k1d>

Project team



Dr Kieran File

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Kieran File is a Reader in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, UK. His research examines how language is used in high-performance sports to manage relationships, build empowering and inclusive team environments, and communicate effectively under pressure. He has worked with leading sports teams and organisations worldwide, helping them understand the impact of language choices in achieving success.



Dr Lucas Santos

Monash Intercultural Lab, Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Australia

Lucas Santos is a lecturer in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics at Monash University. His research examines how social differences are expressed across institutional, organisational and community contexts, with a key focus on how global migration reshapes cricket's demographics and narratives. From 2023 to 2024, he co-chaired the Equity and Inclusion Group at Sport and Recreation Victoria, working to foster inclusive sporting cultures.



Professor Stephanie Schnurr

Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, UK

Stephanie Schnurr is a Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of Warwick. Her research focuses on leadership and teamwork, exploring the role of discourse in professional, medical, and sporting contexts. She has published widely and is currently involved in projects on communication in high-performance sports.



Professor Ruth Jeanes

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Professor Ruth Jeanes is a Professor of Sport, Physical Activity, and Social Exclusion at Monash University and Head of the School of Curriculum, Teaching and Inclusive Education. Her research focuses on addressing discrimination in sport and exploring its role in tackling social and health issues. She currently leads ARC-funded projects on informal sport's impact on community cohesion and gender equity in Australian sport.



Professor Paul Long

School of Media, Film and Journalism, Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Australia

Professor Paul Long's research explores the interaction of history, heritage, and archives within media and cultural studies, focusing on how cultural narratives shape identity and belonging. His work examines how histories are mediated through forms like popular music and vernacular archives, offering insights into the role of storytelling in fostering connection and inclusion across diverse communities.



Dr Tom Heenan

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Tom Heenan lectures in sport, global, and Australian studies at Monash University. He has written extensively on Australian and international sport, including the books *The Great Australian 'Sting': How and Why Melbourne Became the World's Sporting Capital* and *Brand it Like Ben Simmons: Gen-F(ranchise) and the Americanisation of Australian Cricket*. His current research explores the impacts of mega-events on marginalised communities and South Asian migration on cricket.



Daniel Howe

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Daniel Howe has a decade of experience in elite sporting environments, focusing on creating inclusive cultures, fostering team dynamics, and supporting high performance. As part of the research study, he has facilitated interviews, contributed to data analysis, and drawn on his expertise to provide valuable insights into team environments and performance dynamics.



Marianna Patrick

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Marianna Patrick is an interdisciplinary researcher focusing on storytelling and identity in the context of international mobility. Drawing on her own migration experiences, she explores how language shapes the construction of 'places' in personal narratives. As a research assistant, she has contributed to transcription and analysis, bringing her expertise in language and identity to the project.