



## **COVID-19 Return to Tennis for underrepresented communities**

With tennis activity ceasing recently due to COVID-19, this has given tennis clubs an opportunity to stop and assess their local community. Have you considered what your club might look like within your wider community? You may now be able to resume some tennis activity at your club, and in doing so Tennis Victoria is encouraging community tennis clubs to reflect on how well they are serving their local communities, how inclusive they are and what changes they could make.

Tennis Victoria is committed to making tennis a safe and inclusive sport for all Victorians, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. Please take a moment as a committee to consider:

- Is your club a reflection of your local community?
- Do you see all the different people that you see in the supermarket also playing tennis on your courts?
- Are there people in your community that you have always wanted to engage in your club but haven't been able to?

### **Now is the time.**

Due to the easing of restrictions in Victoria, there is an opportunity to plan differently and consider how to ensure your club is truly welcoming and inclusive to these underrepresented groups. Some underrepresented groups you could consider engaging are:

#### **People with a Disability**

Disability sport and recreation groups were some of the first to shut-down during the COVID-19 Pandemic, due to their participants being in higher risk groups for COVID-19. We have an opportunity to open up tennis to this group of people who can enjoy the game in a safe way whilst practicing social distancing.

A SportAus survey of 900 people with disability found that 75% wanted to be more active, and 83% who were not active wanted to be. [AAA play](#) is a fantastic resource to promote your activities, your club and your coach.

[Scope also has a range of communication aids](#) relating to COVID-19 in Easy English you may wish to use.

#### **Cultural Diversity**

Victoria is home to one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Of Victoria's total population;

- 28% were born overseas in over 200 countries
- 49% were born overseas or born in Australia with at least one parent born overseas
- 26% spoke a language other than English at home
- 59% follow one of more than 130 different faiths

[Department of Health and Human Services](#) has resources in other languages or you could use [translation services](#) to convert some of your current promotional material into other languages.

#### **Aging**

There are more than 1 million Victorian's over 60 and nearly 40% of Victorians aged 65 to 85 are volunteers.

Each of these groups will have great diversity within it too – and together this represents a community of people who can benefit from playing tennis whilst also helping clubs to thrive. Please consider the vulnerability of this valued group and how the club may protect them.

#### **Aboriginal Communities**

If your club is looking to support Aboriginal communities, the Victorian government has [COVID related resources](#)



### Things to Consider

- Everyone is different. Speak to the player first about what support they may need to return to play. *Be curious.*
- Some players with a disability may be more susceptible to respiratory infections and/or have other underlying health conditions, help them assess how safe it is for them to play. *Be safe.*
- Skills may have regressed during isolation. *Be patient.*
- The nature of the players' disability may make social distancing and the changes to their usual tennis experience difficult to convey. *Be clear.*
- People with a disability experience higher levels of unemployment as well as experiencing the costs associated with having a disability. *Be flexible.*
- Players requiring additional support may not have access to the volunteers who once helped them for their own medical reasons. *Be supportive.*

### Recommendations and Resources

- Talk to your players and your partner organisations to find out how the club can support players to return to play safely.
- Encourage facility users to download the COVIDSafe app to assist with participant tracking in the case of a positive COVID-19 test result of a participant.
- Scope has a range of communication aids relating to COVID-19 in Easy English available [here](#).
- [AAA Play](#) is a fantastic resource to promote your activities, your club and your coach. To list your club, coach and available programs contact [request@aaaavic.org.au](mailto:request@aaaavic.org.au).
- COVID-19 translated resources are available [here](#).
- The Tennis Victoria ACE Grants program will eventually be made available to clubs and coaches aiming to engage/re-engage underrepresented communities.

Please contact your [Club Development Officer](#) for further support in re-engaging under-represented communities.