

APPLECROSS MT PLEASANT JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB NAIDOC ROUND CASE STUDY

WHY NAIDOC ROUND MATTERS

Our NAIDOC Round is an important opportunity for the Applecross Mount Pleasant Junior Football Club community to recognise, celebrate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and achievements.

For our club, **football is about more than what happens on game day**. It is about creating a welcoming environment where young people from all backgrounds can participate, build friendships, learn from one another and feel that they belong.

NAIDOC Round gives us an opportunity to celebrate the diversity within our club and to acknowledge the important place Aboriginal culture and connection to Country has in our wider community.

“NAIDOC WEEK PROVIDES OUR PLAYERS, COACHES, FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN, LEARN AND SHOW RESPECT.”



Image Credit: Applecross Mt Pleasant Junior Football Club





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WHAT DOES NAIDOC WEEK REPRESENT TO YOUR MEMBERS?

NAIDOC Week provides our players, coaches, families and volunteers with an opportunity to **listen, learn and show respect**. It encourages our young players to understand and appreciate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contributions, while recognising the strength, resilience and continuing connection of First Nations peoples to Country, culture and community.

For our junior members in particular, it is an opportunity to **learn through participation** – not just through words – and to understand that football can be a powerful way of bringing people together.

A particularly meaningful part of our NAIDOC Round is our relationship with **Clontarf Aboriginal College** and the Clontarf students who join us on the football field. Having these young men and women participate alongside our players creates genuine opportunities for connection, friendship and mutual respect.

It allows our club community to **build relationships through a shared love of football** and provides our junior players with the opportunity to engage with and learn from their peers.



Image Credit: Applecross Mt Pleasant Junior Football Club





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HOW DOES IT ALIGN WITH OUR CLUB'S VALUES?

NAIDOC Round reflects the values we want to see at Applecross Mount Pleasant Junior Football Club: **inclusion, respect, community, teamwork and belonging.**

Our partnership with **Clontarf Aboriginal College** brings these values to life. When Clontarf students take the field with our teams, football becomes a shared space where young people can connect as teammates, support each other and celebrate what they have in common.

We want our club to be a place where everyone feels welcome and valued, regardless of background or experience.

Our connection with Clontarf and our NAIDOC Round helps us demonstrate to our young players that respect and inclusion are not simply words – they are things we can practise through the way we play, the way we treat one another and the relationships we build within our community.



Image Credit: Applecross Mt Pleasant Junior Football Club

“NAIDOC ROUND IS ABOUT COMING TOGETHER, BUILDING UNDERSTANDING AND
CELEBRATING CULTURE THROUGH THE POWER OF COMMUNITY AND FOOTBALL.”





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WHAT THE CLUB DOES

Every year we host a NAIDOC round but this year we wanted to elevate the importance of the week to **show solidarity to our players who have faced forms of discrimination** from other players in the competition.

In consultation with Clontarf, we determined that Friday 31 July would be the preferred date to host an event, delaying it from recognised NAIDOC week 5th – 12th July this year. This allowed any Clontarf students not returning from school holidays immediately for various reasons sufficient time to get back, additionally the largest cohort of Clontarf Students play in the Year 11/12 boys, scheduled to play that night at home along with the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 girls teams allowing for a great, expected turnout.

The event was conducted by **Rod Garlett** who performed the Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. On the night we also had some Indigenous Market Stalls to allow attendees purchase hand crafted goods. The night was well attended with players, officials and supporters from AMPJFC opposition, non-playing Clontarf students and the Mayor from City of Melville attending.



Image Credit: Applecross Mt Pleasant Junior Football Club



IMPACT ON THE CLUB

The culture has always been great at the club especially due to the relationship we have with Clontarf.

The players and the staff feel safe and inclusive at AMPJFC with the support from the other parents, teammates, officials support volunteers around the club.

Feedback from the community regarding this year's event was proud and they would like to attend the event in 2027.

LEARNING & GROWTH

The club acknowledges that reconciliation is more than just one week out of the year and needs to be “business as usual” and part of the everyday conversation.

The committee will continue to lead in this space knowing there is so much more that is needed to be done to ensure that all Indigenous players, and those from diverse backgrounds, feel safe, included and have the courage and support to speak up if they don't.

“RECONCILIATION IS MORE THAN JUST ONE WEEK OUT OF THE YEAR AND NEEDS TO BE ‘BUSINESS AS USUAL’ AND PART OF EVERYDAY CONVERSATION.”



Image Credit: Applecross Mt Pleasant Junior Football Club





ADVICE FOR OTHER CLUBS

For any junior football club considering recognising NAIDOC Week, **our advice is simple: start somewhere, make it meaningful and build genuine relationships.**

You don't need to have everything perfect from the beginning. NAIDOC Week can start with a dedicated round, an acknowledgement of Country, sharing information with players and families, or creating an opportunity for young people to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The most important thing is to **make it more than just a one-day event.** Look for ways to **build genuine connections** within your local community and **create opportunities for your players** to learn and engage.

For us, our relationship with Clontarf Aboriginal College has been particularly valuable. Having Clontarf students participate alongside our junior players creates a genuine connection through football and allows young people to build friendships, learn from each other and develop greater understanding and respect.

We would encourage other clubs to **reach out to local Aboriginal organisations, schools, Elders or community groups** and ask how your club can support and participate respectfully. **Listen first, build relationships and allow the community to help shape what NAIDOC Week looks like** for your club.

Most importantly, **don't be afraid to start small.** What matters is that the recognition is **genuine, respectful and connected to your club's values.** Over time, it can grow into something that becomes an important part of your club culture and something your young players look forward to every year.

“NAIDOC WEEK IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR JUNIOR CLUBS TO USE FOOTBALL TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, CREATE UNDERSTANDING AND CELEBRATE THE RICHNESS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES.”

