

All abilities netball begins again in Montrose

By Mikayla van Loon

Montrose Netball Club's all abilities netball program started again on Friday 19 August, offering people with either a physical or neurological disability a place to socialise and learn new skills.

Program coordinator Julie McDonald said the clinic first started in 2018 when she realised there weren't any all abilities netball programs in the Yarra Ranges.

"The closest program, at the time, was Vermont or Doncaster. So just as an initiative for Montrose Netball Club, we started up our own program," she said.

"Our first come and try session, three people came, we're now at 18 and prior to that, they hadn't been involved in any sporting club."

The success of the program hasn't just been seen through the participants themselves but also through the volunteers.

Having put out a call last Wednesday for volunteers to fill the program's dates, Ms McDonald said within just a few hours she had enough people put their hands up to help out but that doesn't mean others can't get involved too.

"We're always looking for participants and volunteers because obviously, without them, we can't run," Ms McDonald said.

"We do like to try and work one on one with the participants just so we can really develop them and get to know them and make sure they're progressing each week."

Although working on ball and coordination skills is the basis of the program, Ms McDonald said no netball experience is needed to volunteer or participate.

"They're obviously developing skills, physical skills, catching, throwing, fine motor skills, that kind of thing but then there's also the social interaction with everybody and there's the sense of inclusion," she said.

"We have a lot of young players and other parents involved that have never been involved in disability before who are out there working one on one with the participants."

Some participants have gone onto playing and training in the regular weekend competition but others have been coming to all abilities since the beginning.



Montrose All Abilities Netball presented participants with medals for their last season of skill building. Pictures: MONTROSE NETBALL CLUB.

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The All Abilities program covers ball skills, coordination and play simulation.



Different drills and games are set up ready for participants to enjoy every second Friday.

"Our program really caters to anyone, regardless of disability."

The program is broken down into two sessions. The first is more activity based to practice skills and have fun. The second is for building up towards that competition level, to challenge participants in a comfortable environment.

"I would encourage anybody to come along and give it a try. We've got such a varied range of ages, male and female, varying disabilities, some who really require one on one assistance and others not so much.

"So just anybody thinking about it and they want to give it a go, you don't have to sign up for the whole program, you could just come and try or just come and watch."

If the program does expand with more participants, Ms McDonald said "participants equals volunteers" and ensuring there is the right balance between the two is so important.

Ms McDonald said the only thing needed for volunteering is a willingness to help and of course a working with children's check.

"I've been involved with Montrose Netball Club for nearly 40 years as a player, a coach or on the committee and this is probably the best thing I've ever done."

The program runs fortnightly on Fridays at Kilsyth Basketball Stadium. The activities session begins at 4pm, finishing at 4.45pm and the game play session starts at 4.45pm, finishing at 5.30pm.

Enquiries can be sent to montrosenetballclub@gmail.com or by calling Julie McDonald on 0407 056 024.

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"I've been involved with Montrose Netball Club for nearly 40 years as a player, a coach or on the committee and this is probably the best thing I've ever done."

The program runs fortnightly on Fridays at Kiloah Basketball Stadium. The activities session begins at 9pm, finishing at 11.45pm and the game play session starts at 11.00pm, finishing at 11.30pm.

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