# Census data brings people together through football

In North West Sydney, the 'world game' of football (soccer) is bringing people together and helping new migrants and refugees adjust to the local community and Australian culture.

The non-profit Melrose Park Football Club is committed to reflecting the spirit in which football is played across the globe – participation regardless of financial circumstances and transcending language and cultural barriers.

The Club uses Census regional population data to better understand the profile and make-up of the local population in the Melrose Park, Ermington and Ryde communities.

Census data underpinned its business model and business case by highlighting the need for a club to focus on social inclusion in grassroots football.

Club President Julie Crane said the aim is to increase participation of families from diverse backgrounds in sports and community activities, in turn positively contributing to the community's social dynamic. Census data is used to help achieve this.

"We specifically target migrants and refugee families, members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, low socio-economic and vulnerable families, girls and women, as well as anyone not currently participating in sports or other local activities," Ms Crane said.

The Club also used Census data in a grant submission to Ryde Council for its Street Football World Cup Tournament and Intercultural Community Festival held each November.

"The Tournament encourages people who do not currently play sports to participate as a player, coach, manager or supporter, while the Festival brings together and celebrates the region's many different cultural and language groups," Ms Crane said.

"Around the Tournament and Festival, community groups also promote and share their culture through market stalls, food and music.

"Migrant families interact in positive ways with each other and the broader community, creating cross-cultural friendships, increasing awareness and understanding of each other, and breaking down social barriers."

"Census data is really important for us to understand the make-up of our community. It helps us tailor our programs to different groups and our communications for different languages," she said.