



**WE ARE  
FOOTBALL**

THIS IS OUR VISION  
WHOLE OF FOOTBALL PLAN



# FOREWORD



## **Frank Lowy AC**

CHAIRMAN, FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

Today, Football in Australia is in more households, more local parks and more hearts and minds than ever before. The game is now part of the mainstream of our society in a way that is tangible and permanent.

It's taken a lot of hard work and heartache over the past decade, but we're here to stay and Australia is a better place for it.

That doesn't mean it is time to relax. The challenge to improve and strengthen our game is a constant and much hard work remains ahead of us. But it is now time to convert confidence into certainty, and stability into prosperity.

Ten years ago at the outset of Football's new beginning, publishing a Whole of Football Plan for the decades ahead would have been premature and overly optimistic. Today, the game has a solid foundation and the time is right to look further ahead. This Plan is the result of an unprecedented

level of consultation within the Australian football community. People everywhere; from the FFA Board to community volunteers have had their say in its development.

Our success to date has been built upon this unity of purpose and we must remain united. Each member of the football family – the FFA, the Socceroos, the A-League, the State Federations, fans and players at all levels – contributes to our overall well-being and sustainability. That is why I believe it is fundamentally important that we maintain a strong and independent FFA to act as the principal custodian of the game. As such it is entrusted to make decisions in the best interests of the overall game and not favour individual football family members whose needs and ambitions will inevitably vary from time to time.

Much of what is included in this Plan will be delivered many years into the future. But there is a lot on the agenda for the near term. This includes an expansion of FFA's programs to grow the pool of young potential Socceroos; the development of coaches for young players; and, the expansion of our schools program. We want to press on with these issues as a matter of urgency.

I commend the Whole of Football Plan to you as a document to help guide our strategy in the years ahead and I thank all those who have contributed to this vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Lowy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

5 May 2015

# FOREWORD



## **David Gallop**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

Football is on a mission to become the largest and most popular sport in Australia. It's a bold idea, but now is the time for the Australian Football community to bring it to life.

The Whole of Football Plan gives everyone in Football long-term targets that we need to achieve in order to fulfill our potential.

Whenever an A-League club, a community club, a school or a local association ponders its place in Football's future, the plan should provide a context and a constructive framework.

If a fan, player, referee, coach or volunteer wonders where they fit in Football's ecosystem, the plan should provide a sense of identity, purpose and belonging.

Some of the projections in this plan are momentous. The plan seeks to have 15 million Australians as part of the Football Community

and to have 75% of participants as fans of our Top Tier clubs.

There are goals to have 500 elite male and female players in every age group, providing a pipeline of talent for our National Teams and professional clubs.

Importantly, the plan puts an emphasis on a redistribution of resources to community Football so that the game will continue to thrive at the grassroots.

There's a lot of hard work and difficult decisions ahead, but as Football's national, state and local administrations develop yearly operational plans and four-yearly strategic plans, all should take into account the WOFP vision.

This plan is the work of many and our numbers are our core strength. I thank you all.

We Are Football.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'David Gallop' with a stylized flourish at the end.

5 May 2015





# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Whole of Football Plan (WOFP), a vision for Football in 2035.

The plan is a set of ambitious, yet tangible goals that everyone in Australian Football can work towards over the next 20 years as we strive to become the largest and most popular sport in Australia.

Along the way, Football will nurture a life time connection to the game for all our people in all our diversity. We all want Football to live and breathe beyond the 90 minutes.

The WOFP is a collaboration involving all of Football's stakeholders; everyone from national, state and territory governing bodies to the community participants, from Top Tier clubs to fans on the terraces and in digital communities.

The WOFP represents the game's collective wisdom at this point in time. We hope reading the plan will give you the sense that the game is on the move and that our best years are ahead of us.

We need to harness the unity of purpose, energy, confidence and ambition that exists in Australian Football in 2015.

Like any game of Football, the WOFP will inevitably spark debate and become a contest of ideas where the outcome cannot be easily predicted. That's the nature of any grand undertaking.

In developing this plan, Football has made a decision not to be limited by the game's resources in 2015. We have a firm conviction that Football's best years are ahead of us. This growth will bring the promise of greater revenues and new incomes streams, enough to fund the future.

But we can say with certainty that without an inclusive national plan with a long-term vision, Australian Football cannot possibly reach its potential.

This is our plan. We Are Football.



# THANK YOU

## THE WHOLE OF FOOTBALL PLAN IS THE VISION OF THE FOOTBALL COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA.

- Over 20,000 people logged on to the Whole of Football Plan portal to give their views on the future of Football in Australia.
- Thousands of people took time out of their busy schedules to attend Whole of Football Plan forums across Australia.
- Dozens of 'Friends of Football' provided us with their expert insights on topics ranging from coach education to digital engagement.
- The nine Member Federations of Australia were thoughtful and visionary throughout the creation of the Whole of Football Plan.
- The A-League and W-League clubs contributed to the Whole of Football Plan, showing a commitment to the long-term success of Football in Australia.
- The commercial partners embraced the Whole of Football Plan and are invested in the long term success of Football in Australia.

These views were supported by a detailed analysis of the sporting landscape in Australia and internationally. Experts from around the world helped inform the Whole of Football Plan, including our peers at DFB (German Football Association) and MLS (Major League Soccer); we left no stone unturned in delivering a vision for Football in Australia.

## MEMBER FEDERATIONS



## TOP TIER CLUBS



## SPONSORS AND PARTNERS





# FOOTBALL ECOSYSTEM

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Our vision is for “Football to be the largest and most popular sport in Australia”.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- It means having more **Grassroots** participants than any other code.
- It means having more **Fans** than any other code.
- It means having world class **Elite Players**.

These three targets are embedded in the Football Ecosystem, which has nine interconnected components. The ultimate success of Football is dependent on each of these nine areas working together with a unity of purpose. As such, no one section is more important than another.

Women’s Football will not be viewed in isolation; instead it is a critical consideration across every part of the Football Ecosystem.

In this virtuous ecosystem, as our number of participants grows and their experience improves, the benefits will be seen in growing support of our Top Tier clubs and in a prodigious pipeline of elite players.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

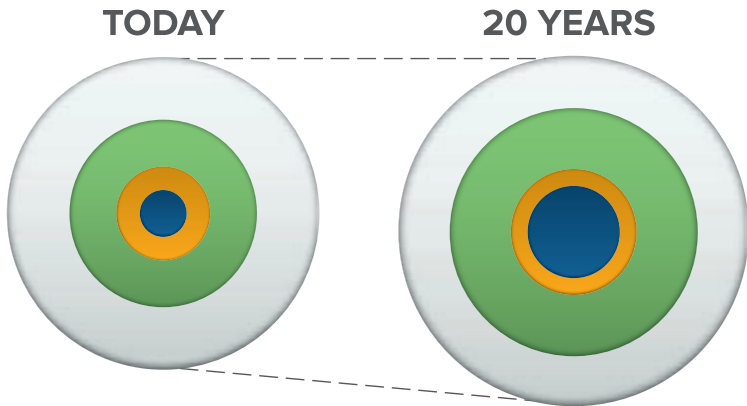
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## FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

Football will have a community of 15 million people by 2035 when Australia’s population is forecast to reach 30 million. This community will reflect the ever-changing diversity of the Australian population, who will be able to enjoy Football “Anytime, Anyhow, Anywhere”. Football will be seen by government and education authorities as a key sporting and social movement in achieving social cohesion, health and well-being and optimal international relations.

Football participation will change in the years ahead. MiniRoos will introduce all children to football in a fun safe environment. Every Football club in Australia will have a girls’ team. School football and social football will be a key pillar of Football’s future, and private enterprises and traditional clubs will provide flexible participation opportunities.

	TODAY (MILLION)	20 YEARS (MILLION)
Australian population	23.6	30.0
Football community	7.5	15.0
Football participants	2.0	4.0
Registered Participants	0.6	2.0



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## COACHING

In the future there will be 100,000 recognised coaches who display the essential behaviours and football acumen necessary to coach Australia’s players. In 2015, Australia has only 24,000 registered coaches. Coach development will focus on delivering a quality experience for Football’s participants by giving coaches the support and resources they require.

3

## FACILITIES

A National Facilities Strategy will bring a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of traditional facilities and will be implemented by Football's Member Federations. There will be more support for facility providers and more access to pitches for Football's participants. Non-traditional facilities will become a key theme in the provision of football facilities. Football will be "Anytime, Anywhere, Anyhow".

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## REFEREEING

The number of referees and standard of refereeing will improve when we retain referees and educate them. Football needs to work towards achieving a retention rate of 90%, up from the rate of 64% in 2014. In order to achieve this, Football needs to focus efforts on culture, education, recruitment and the alignment of referees with the broader game. Football's referees will be recognised as respected game facilitators not just arbitrators of the Laws of the Game.

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## ADMINISTRATION

Football's administration will be unified and integrated behind the Whole of Football Plan vision. Reform and improvement should be a constant in the administration of the game. Administrators at all levels have the responsibility to take up the challenge on an ongoing basis to seek, identify and adopt continuous improvement measures. Our overriding principle will be "streamlining, national consistency, unity of purpose and efficiency". A new national working party representing Football's key stakeholders is to be established to undertake a review of the current model.

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## FAN CONNECTION

Football in Australia will offer fans the opportunity to be fully engaged in the game 24/7. The connection will be personalised at every touch point; community, social, digital and media. Football will give fans a sense of belonging. There will be one unifying identity that everyone in Football will associate with and 75% of junior participants will follow a Top Tier Australian club.



## COMPETITIONS

The A-League and W-League will be competitively balanced, stable and sustainable leagues. These Top Tier competitions will provide a clear pathway for the elite Footballers of Australia. Clubs will connect with their communities and entertain Australia's fans in atmospheric stadia. New entrants to the A-League will be introduced within a strategic framework open to everyone. A ONE club mentality will permeate through Football as clubs actively invest in elite men's and women's teams.

The National Premier Leagues (NPL) will be an elite competition comprised of elite clubs. Programs to improve professionalism, raise exposure and commercialise the NPL will be developed. The FFA Cup will continue to be the unique connection between grassroots and the Top Tier of Football in Australia.

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## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Australia must dramatically increase the number of elite youth players in a world class development environment. In 2015, only the 24 scholarship holders at the FFA Centre of Excellence in Canberra can be said to be receiving world class development. The goal is to have a combined pool of 3,000 male and female players from 12 to 19 years of age receiving this level of development. The guiding principle, identified in this document, will nurture these players. Top Tier clubs and NPL clubs will have accredited academies that are supported by both schools and centralised infrastructure. Elite player pathways will acknowledge and cater for the demographic, geographic and cultural diversity of Australia and provide an optimal structure to engrain an Australian style of Football in our youth players.

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## NATIONAL TEAMS

Australia's National Teams will represent the true diversity of the Australian population. National Teams will be the role models that our children look up to and we will ensure that they play in a distinctive manner that inspires all Australians. Our National Teams will be based at a dedicated Home of Football and Australia will bid to host a FIFA Women's World Cup.







FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

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FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

FOOTBALL  
PLAYERS

# FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

**All Australians who love, watch and play Football**

## SITUATION

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Football reaches into more households, more parks and school grounds and more hearts and minds than any other sport in Australia. In 2015, the Football Community comprises 7.5 million Australians who have Football in their lives, including almost two million who actively participate in the game. When it comes to Football, they all love to talk about, watch, play, connect with and support the game and its participants. The community is truly national, incredibly diverse and welcomes all comers. Football is the face of modern Australia, inclusive of all genders, cultures and age groups.

## CHALLENGES

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Australia is one of the most multicultural nations in the world. It is a constantly evolving society that absorbs cultural, social and economic waves. Over the next 20 years Football needs to respond to:

Population growth and urbanisation. Australia will have a population of over 30 million people by 2035 and will become increasingly urbanised.

Football will become more than just a sport. It will have an increasingly important role to play in social cohesion, community integration, physical health and well-being, and international relations and economic development, particularly in Asia.

Personalisation. Australians will engage with Football on their own terms beyond the traditional club structures and will expect Football to be flexible to their needs.

Everybody's game. Men and Women will play Football to an older age and the game needs to accommodate the waves of non-European migration and Indigenous populations of Australia.

The Asian Century. The rise of Asia will mean changes to who populates Australia, who we trade with and where we source capital from, an evolution that will change everyday life in Australia.

These trends represent a great opportunity for Football and Football is perfectly placed to respond. It's a simple, safe and skilful game. It's fun for all shapes and sizes. It's inclusive and accessible. It can be practiced in a few square metres. It's the game we play in the global village.



## TARGETS

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In the future Football will;

- Have a Football Community of 15 million people that reflects the ever changing diversity of the Australian population.
- Meet the needs of participants who want to enjoy Football “Anytime, Anyhow, Anywhere”.
- Have one brand and a unifying identity that makes people feel like they belong no matter what format of Football they engage in.
- Take a lifetime view of participation so each individual stays part of the community even as they go through life stages as player, coach, parent, volunteer, referee or fan.
- Welcome newly arrived residents or people who develop a new found affinity for Football.
- Be seen by government and education authorities as a key sporting and social movement and a powerful force in achieving social cohesion, health and well-being and optimal international relations.

The Whole of Football Plan provides the platform for a game-wide approach to enhance participant experience and fan engagement, based on these principles;

- Invest in the Grassroots. Football must redistribute resources to focus on improving participant experience and providing pathways for our best players.
- Nurture a cohesive and coordinated movement. Football stakeholders must align their efforts on the same goals for the common good.
- Embrace Asia. Football will lead Australia’s sporting and social engagement with our neighbours across Asia. Football will provide a platform for both commercial partners and government to build meaningful relationships with our Asian neighbours.
- Recognise our stars. Not only the players on the pitch, but the people who make everything possible; volunteers, coaches and referees.
- Celebrate our history. Football must establish a Football Museum to acknowledge the history of Football in Australia and establish a strong connection between Football’s present and its past.

## THE FOOTBALL COMMUNITY

### A SNAPSHOT OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE WANT FROM THE GAME

#### CHILDREN AND YOUTH PLAYERS



Children just want to have fun playing Football and make new friends. They should be free to acquire skills naturally while staying active and healthy, and at the same time develop important life and social skills. Children should be able to play as much Football as they want, without the imposition of a competitive environment.

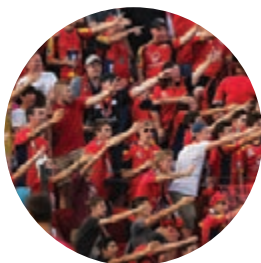
Youth players over 12 years of age should be allowed to find their way into their level of skill, enjoyment and participation; elite development, community club based Football or social / informal Football. Whether it's outdoor, indoor, school or social.

#### CASUAL PLAYERS

Whether as part of traditional Football or social Football, casual players want affordability, enjoyment and exercise. To deliver these elements we need to provide facilities, coaching, administration and referees.



#### FOOTBALL FANS



Fans want to belong to their clubs and for their clubs to belong to their communities. They want to see world class Football played by their Australian heroes. They want to be valued, revered and included in every aspect of the game.



## ELITE PLAYERS

Elite players, including people with a disability, need infrastructure that will enable them to reach their maximum potential and qualified coaches to guide their careers. Elite players require the coordinated support of clubs, associations and zones, member federations, FFA and government.

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## COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

Want direct relationships with the members of the Football Community and commercial connections that bring economic benefits for all. They want to be recognised for the critical role they play in supporting Football's ecosystem.

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## SCHOOLS

Schools want Football to provide participation opportunities that bring health, well-being and harmony within the school walls. They want all students to have the opportunity to participate in sport regardless of their physique, cultural or socio-economic background.

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## COACHES

Coaches want to educate and develop Footballers while providing the best experience possible for players. They need easy access to education and coaching infrastructure. Coaches need to be respected by the Football Community as a key element of participant experience and leaders of the game's technical development.





## CLUBS

Clubs want to have a place in the heart of the Football Community, with active members and connections to like-minded organisations and sponsors. Clubs that grow and provide opportunities are the engine rooms of Football's future.

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## REFEREES

Referees need to be valued more than they are now and be seen as game facilitators, not law enforcers. Referees deserve RESPECT.

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## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers want to make Football a fun and rewarding experience for participants and be recognised for their contribution. Volunteers need support and guidance. They need to feel part of something bigger.

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## PRIVATE PROVIDERS

Private providers, whether they be “for profit” or philanthropic, want to be acknowledged for providing a service and contribution to Football. Anyone wishing to help grow the game should be encouraged to do so, but should also operate within the framework of the game.





## ADMINISTRATORS

Administrators need a clearly defined mandate and objectives that are transparent to their members and stakeholders. Administrators need to be held accountable in the implementation of strategies. They must work for the common good of the game and the broad interests of their constituents.

## GOVERNMENT

They want to see Football as a partner to help deliver major social, community and health benefits. As Football grows as a political representative force, governments will expect consistency in policy and implementation.



Australian Government



# PARTICIPATION - FOOTBALL PLAYERS

## SITUATION

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Football is the most popular team sport in Australia. Football has almost two million participants outnumbering the other football codes combined. The key factors contributing to Football's popularity are:

- **Simplicity:** Football is a simple and beautiful game, easy to understand and requiring the minimum amount of equipment.
- **Skill:** Football is a game that rewards technical skill, not merely athletic prowess or physical ability.
- **Accessibility:** Football is Australia's most accessible sport, as it caters to all genders, across all age groups, all shapes and sizes and seamlessly spans the barriers of language, religion and culture.
- **Safety:** Football is a low-contact sport, not a collision sport.
- **Multiple Formats:** Football can be played in a variety of formats to suit the location and occasion. Football is unique as a sport where game skills can be practiced by an individual alone.
- **The World Sport:** Football is the World Game and is universally popular. It transcends all divides and is a uniting force for good in the world.



## CHALLENGES

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In the face of strong, well-financed, competition Football needs to grow its participation numbers to maintain its place as Australia's most popular team sport. In this way, Football will help Australians stay active, healthy and engaged in exercise throughout their lives.

Football lacks funding and commercial income commensurate with its size and influence in Australian society. These historical factors have forced Football to be largely self-reliant for funding at the community level. This burden is reflected in the cost of playing Football, which is higher than it would otherwise be if external funding reached an optimal level.

Due to a shortage of opportunities and emerging trends in personalisation Football players have increasingly been looking to play football outside of traditional club structures. This has been evident by the growth in social Football. Currently, much of social Football is operated by private providers who operate outside the scope of Football's administration.

Football is yet to fully capitalise on female participation as the greatest growth opportunity. In 2015, females account for over 20% of registered Australian outdoor players or about 100,000 players, but the growth trajectory suggests removal of barriers and better promotion would see this number rise quickly.

Schools Football was historically the domain of other football codes, but Football's popularity now places demands on schools' infrastructure and expertise to cope with the boom.

## TARGETS

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The Whole of Football Plan evaluates key elements of participation, such as facilities and coaching in later sections, but, in addition to these elements, Football needs to have coherent and coordinated participation opportunities.

### WOMEN

In order for Women's Football to reach its undeniable potential, Football must achieve the goals of having a girls' team in every club as soon as possible and then work to have a girls' and women's team in every age group within each club. To assist this process, every Member Federation, association and zone must have a dedicated women's Football development officer/s. In the US around 40% of participants are females, there is no reason why Australia with similar demographics can't achieve a similar ratio.

## SCHOOLS

Schools are Football's biggest opportunity to grow the game. Football bodies need to provide schools with user-friendly tools to support the delivery of Footballing opportunities. The game must build a Football network within the schools system by educating and supporting teachers. Participants must seamlessly transition between schools and clubs. A national schools tournament along the lines of the FFA Cup should be established to provide a focus for development efforts.

## COMMUNITY CLUBS

Football will support clubs by making club administration as easy and efficient as possible. Where necessary, administrators will also receive guidance on key club functions like finance and regulatory matters. Football needs to help traditional clubs deliver social football opportunities. Finally, existing administrations will assist new club development, especially in areas of population growth.

## SOCIAL FOOTBALL

Football will support the growth in social Football by focusing on delivering suitable alternative facilities and participation opportunities. This will include working with businesses that own and operate social Football facilities and by helping traditional clubs to deliver social Football opportunities.

Futsal will be a key component of the growth in social Football. Futsal's small sided and dynamic nature makes it a perfect match to Australia's increasingly urbanised cities. The format's flexibility also means it can be efficiently delivered to Australia's more remote areas.

## MINIROOS

Football wants participants to fall in love with the game. For this to happen, participants must have fun from the very first time they play the game. Football's introductory program MiniRoos will be affordable and at a price point equivalent to other sporting and leisure options. MiniRoos will also nurture our Football fans of the future.

## SUMMARY

If Football were able to significantly improve the participant experience and address the key components that enable Football to be played and enjoyed, a total active participant base of four million people is achievable over a 20-year period, with two million of these being registered participants in formal structures of the game.







# COACHING

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# COACHING

## SITUATION

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Coaches have more influence over the enjoyment of participants than any other person in the game. This is particularly so for participants at the start of the journey; young boys and girls.

Coaches have the unique opportunity and responsibility to nurture children's psychological growth and development. Football is a way for children to develop health and well-being, a positive self-image, sporting skills and life skills, such as socialisation and group behaviour.

The same is true throughout the lifelong participation pathway. At every age group, a coach who provides a positive environment will have happy players. At the elite level, the same basic expectations remain, with the added complexity of high performance and the associated pressures. Whether they are helping six year olds or developing world class players, coaches have a huge responsibility to carry on behalf of the game.

### CHALLENGE

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Currently, Football focuses its education resources too strongly on coaches working with elite players. As a result, Football is failing to provide adequate support to grassroots coaches. This means too many coaches don't enjoy their experience because they are ill-equipped for the task. Being unable to give players the experience they want produces frustration for coaches, participants and parents alike. Even at the elite level, advanced coaching education has been inaccessible for many people because of cost, infrequency of courses or distance from learning centres. To further complicate matters, Australia's coaches are a diverse array of individuals who each require outcomes that are customised to their individual needs.

## WHO ARE AUSTRALIA'S COACHES?

### FOOTBALL HELPERS

Football Helpers are mostly parents who coach because of their children's involvement or teachers who want to provide children with harmonious sporting opportunities. Few are interested in gaining "accreditations", which the game must accept as a necessary concession. It's more important that these coaches enjoy their experience and exhibit the essential behaviours that ensure children enjoy their experience.

### COMMUNITY COMMITTED

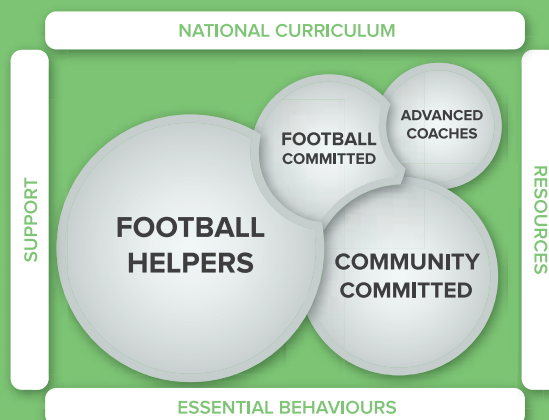
The Community Committed coach is likely to be an ex-community player or parent who has stayed after their children have moved on. They are there because they like coaching. They also gain a sense of identity and status from the role. They like the social part of sport and often take other roles around the club. These people are the life blood of Football in Australia and must be formally supported and recognised.

### FOOTBALL COMMITTED

Football Committed are typically teens or young adults. They may have shown some leadership qualities while playing and they have a sense of pride about being invited to coach. Their motivations are quite different to Football Helpers and Community Committed. They are usually involved for personal benefit; they see coaching as a career or as a means for professional development. Pragmatically, it's also a chance for them to earn income.

### ADVANCED COACHES

Advanced Coaches are often ex-professional players who are seeking to make a career out of Football. They will likely be looking for accreditations and will seek out opportunities for full-time coaching roles in club academies or in elite environments. They may potentially want to gain specialist knowledge in specific areas of Football, for example, player conditioning.



## TARGETS

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In 2015, Australia has just 24,000 registered coaches. In the future there will need to be 100,000 recognised coaches who display the essential behaviours and football acumen necessary to coach Australia's players. Football will embrace all of Australia's coaches and target teachers to become coaches. Coach development will focus on delivering a quality experience for Football's participants by giving coaches the support and resources they require.

### A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COACHING

Football must take a holistic approach to coaching, with every strand interconnected and with pathways easily integrated. A structure that incorporates formal and informal strands of learning opportunities must be developed. Good coaching will be measured by a coach's ability to help a player enjoy Football and fulfill their potential at whatever level that may be. By providing this support we will encourage more people to become coaches. There will be four elements to Football's approach to coaching:

#### ESSENTIAL BEHAVIOURS

All coaches will undertake training in essential behaviours. Football will target coaches who naturally exhibit these qualities; whether they have played Football or not. All coaches, no matter what level they are at should be:

##### RESPONSIBLE

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure a safe environment is provided for all participants; where players are both physically safe and encouraged to learn through trial and error without criticism.

##### ORGANISED

"Fail to prepare, prepare to fail". Coaches need to be organised in order to facilitate a training session appropriately and evaluate the performance of players and, crucially, themselves.

##### POSITIVE

Football should be enjoyable for all participants. Coaches who give positive reinforcement, encouragement, instruction and less criticism have players with higher levels of self-esteem who enjoy Football more.

##### PLAYER FOCUSED

The players' development must be at the centre of every training session. This does not just mean merely the players' technical development. For example, coaches who increase coach-player interaction, intra-team cohesion and promote participation in Football as an opportunity for achievement rather than failure, will have happier players and better retention rates.



## NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The National Curriculum is Australia's instrument to compete on the world stage. However, it can only be disseminated across the country via the support and commitment of our coaches. The best way to become an expert in the National Curriculum is to become an accredited coach, but it's understood that many coaches do not want this. As an alternative, we will provide practical coach education to all coaches.

### COACH EDUCATION (PRACTICAL)

As well as being educated in essential behaviours, all coaches will be educated in practical applications of the National Curriculum. This will not be technical education, but simple, easy to follow guides in how to coach players in the fundamentals of Football.

### COACH ACCREDITATION (TECHNICAL)

A coach does not need to be an ex-player to work at the elite level. Anyone who wishes to gain accreditation should be treated equally. However, in acknowledgement of ex-players' Football acumen, the system must help them gain accreditations while ensuring they exhibit the behaviours expected of all coaches.

In order to be successful on the world stage, Australia needs more accredited coaches. To attract more coaches, we need to make accreditation more accessible and affordable. Indeed, there is a direct link between the cost of coach accreditations and success on the international stage. Germany and Spain have some of the most affordable courses in the world and are the winners of the past two FIFA World Cups. The cost of all accreditations must be reduced so that they are some of the cheapest in Asia, specifically, working towards a C-Licence that costs under \$500.

The geography of Australia poses a unique challenge to coach education because centralised programs are not suitable. There must be staff in every Australian state and territory delivering C-Licence accreditations, while other accreditation courses (Futsal, B and A) must be run in every state capital on a regular basis. Furthermore, the C-Licence must be broken down into manageable sections to allow aspiring coaches to undertake the course in a manner that fits around their daily routine, rather than as a compulsory block.





## SUPPORT

### A NETWORK OF MENTORS

Every coach in Australia must have access to a coach mentor. Mentors will provide on the ground guidance to coaches. The coach network will link together mentors at every level of the game. Mentors will be the conduit between clubs and educators.

### A NETWORK OF EDUCATORS

A network of educators will be created to guide coaches in the essential behaviours required to coach and educate them in the national curriculum. The network will create an environment of knowledge sharing between the different levels in Australian Football.

## RESOURCES

### DIGITAL RESOURCES

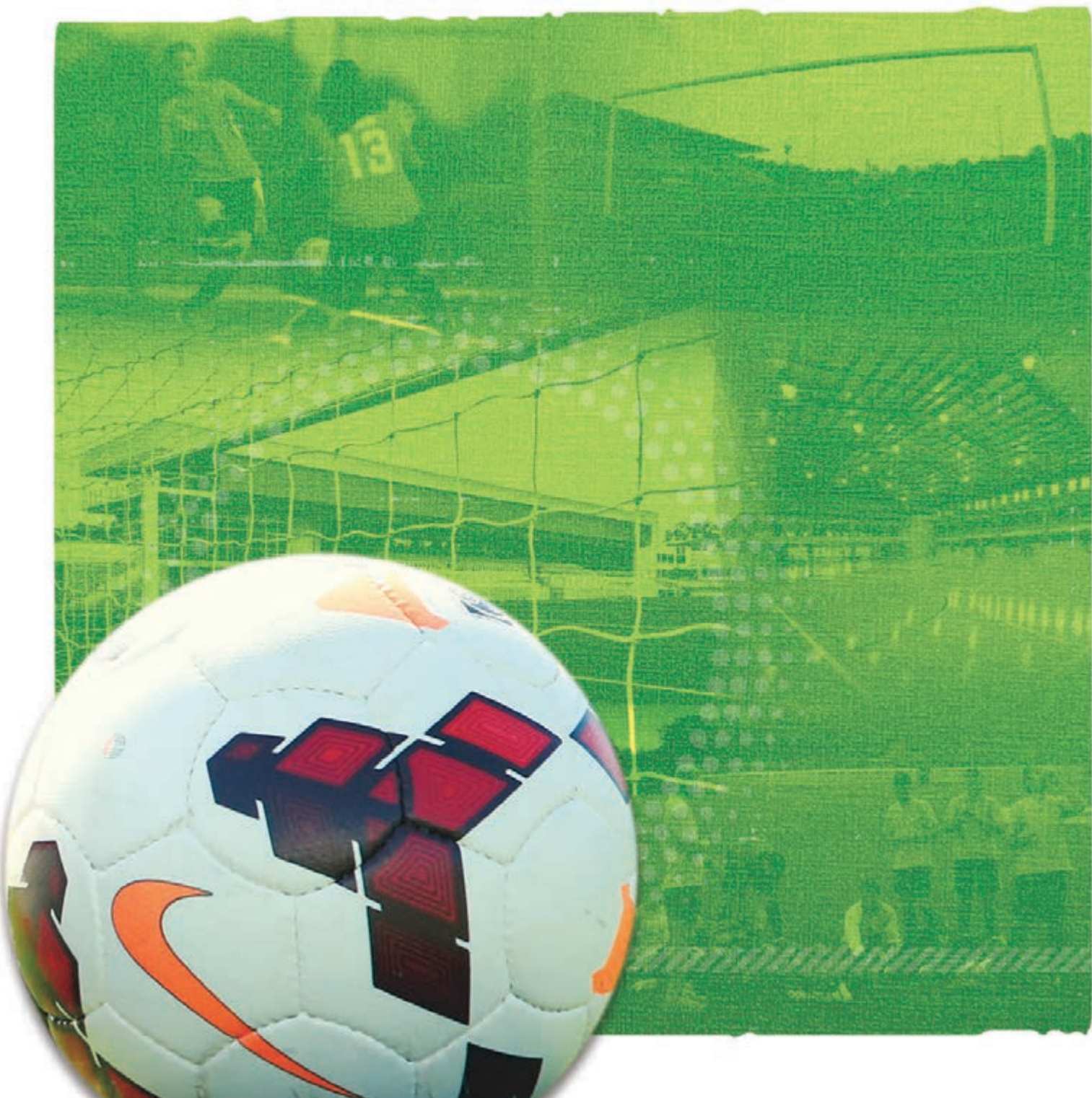
A consistent plea at the town hall forums for the Football community was that coaches need digital resources to support their endeavours. Online modules must be available to support grassroots coaches. The first of these modules will be based on the “Essential Behaviours” expected of all coaches. Additionally, optional Football modules will support coaches at all levels of the game.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

For those coaches who are thirsty for knowledge, seminars will be organised at the state and territory level. These will provide an opportunity for coaches to come together and discuss the technical aspects of the game. These seminars will be supported by an annual conference.

### REAL TIME DEVELOPMENT

National Team coaches will host special practical training sessions for elite coaches. Coaches will be invited to attend National Team training sessions and matches where they will be able to see the training patterns identified in the National Curriculum in action.





# FACILITIES

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# FACILITIES

## SITUATION

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Footballers need space to play. Whether it's a full-sized synthetic pitch, a rooftop Futsal court or a local park for social games, facilities are fundamental to Football's future health and popularity.

The provision of good quality facilities to Football's participants will be a critical focus. Facilities are central to the following outcomes:

- Enjoyment of Football by two million players in 2015 is in part determined by the standard of facilities. Retention of over 600,000 registered club participants is dependent upon facilities.
- Growth and popularity of Football in the decades ahead will be dependent on increasing and improving the facilities base.
- Technical development and skills acquisition for elite players, young and old, is affected by the standard of facilities and thereby affects national performance.

By way of illustrating the deficit of facilities, the 2010 National Facilities Audit commissioned by FFA found that of 562 Local Government Areas across Australia that were contacted, a total of 162 reported as having no facilities to support the training and/or playing of football.



## CHALLENGES

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Football faces a severe deficit of good quality facilities, based on existing research and feedback from the Whole of Football Plan forums and online portal. The challenges facing Football in 2015 are stark:

- 56% of participants say their current facilities are not up to scratch.
- The majority of clubs do not have enough facilities and are turning people away.
- Most state and territory Member Federations have no permanent Home of Football to provide a hub for the community and to help develop elite players.

The problem is becoming more acute as Australia's capital cities are expanding at an ever increasing rate. Both Sydney and Melbourne are expected to reach over five million residents within the next 20 years. Much of this population growth will be accommodated through increases in the urban density and space for new Football facilities will be at a premium. Furthermore, sport is becoming more and more personalised as people want exercise that fits in with their busy daily routines, so a greater number and variety of facilities will be required.

**So how does Football improve facilities for current players while also acquiring infrastructure that can support long-term growth?**

## DEFINITIONS

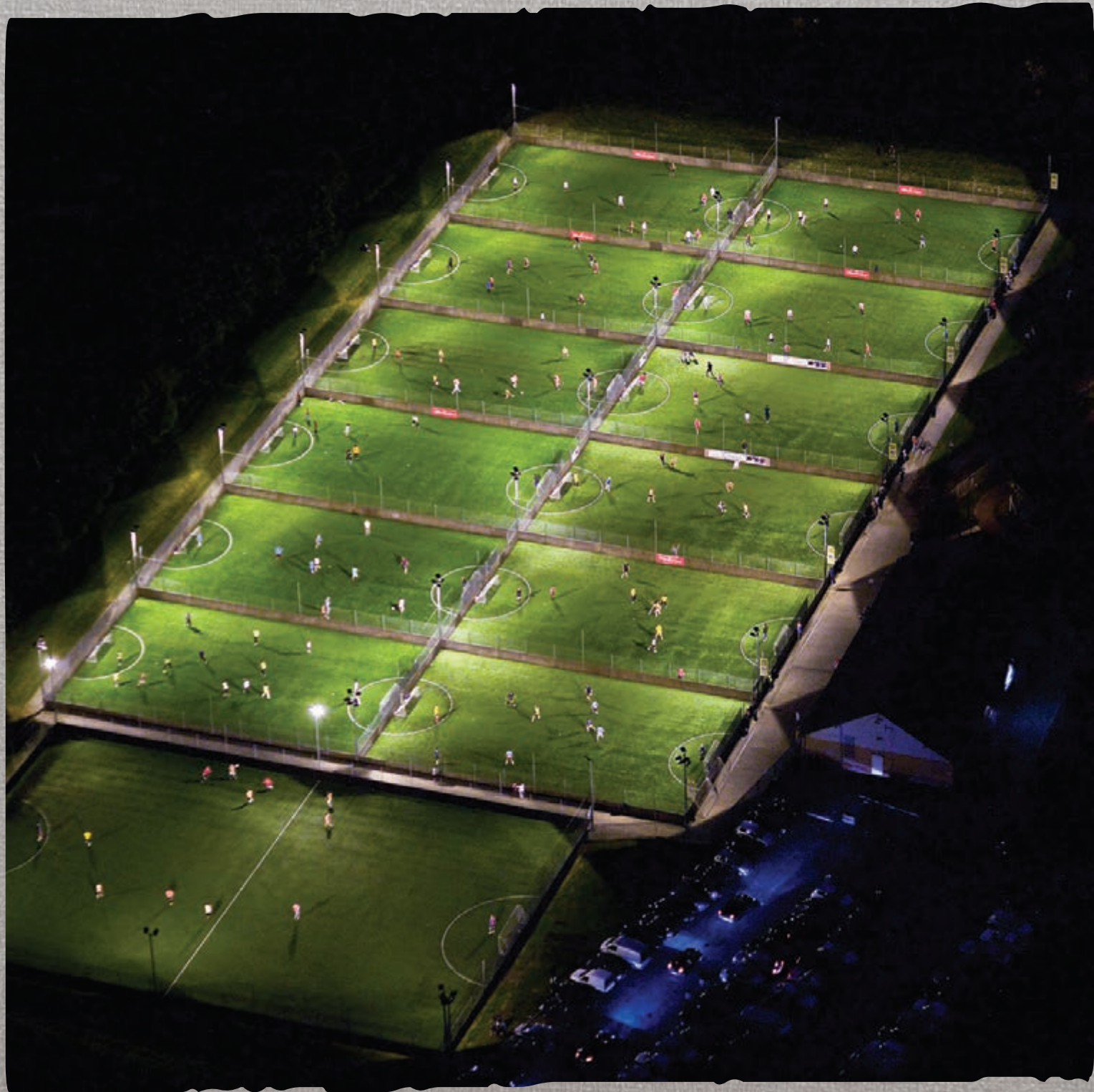
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### TRADITIONAL FACILITIES

Traditional facilities are outdoor grass or synthetic full-sized pitches that are laid out to accommodate 11-a-side Football. This is where the majority of Football's 600,000 registered participants currently play Football.

### ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES

Alternative facilities refer to all facilities that are "non-traditional" in size or surface, for example, Futsal courts, urban facilities such as rooftops, shared facilities with other sports such as tennis, basketball and netball, and beaches. In the future, alternative facilities will represent a significant number of Australia's overall Football facilities.



## TARGETS

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### TRADITIONAL FACILITIES

- Football will commit to develop a National Facilities Strategy. The focus of this plan will be twofold. First, the game will conduct a detailed needs analysis identifying both the state of facilities and where the gaps in our facilities are. Secondly, the strategy will direct Football towards the smarter use of available resources.
- Member Federations will continue to be at the forefront of facilities provision. Every Member Federation will have a facilities strategy that supports the local community. This will include every Local Government Area having access to some kind of Football facilities.
- Football will engage stakeholders across the game to develop an online Facilities Resource that will clearly detail the expected standards of every kind of Football facility. This resource will act as a guide to the Football Community detailing lessons learned and providing templates for practical applications, such as, business plans, permits and funding.
- Football will change the way it engages with key decisions makers in Government. It will be the role of the FFA, Member Federations, and Zones and Local Associations to work together to engage with various levels of government and help them fund and provide the Football facilities this nation needs.
- In order for Football to deliver the best possible facilities it needs to partner with adjacent stakeholders. This will include working with schools, property developers and complementary sports to open up access to more facilities for our players.
- Every Member Federation in Australia must have a Home of Football to support Football in that region that acts as a community hub and supports the development of elite players. Likewise, we believe Australia must have a National Home of Football.
- A Facilities Fund must be established for the grassroots. As Football starts to receive the kind of funding enjoyed by many of Australia's other codes, this fund will provide a focus for governments and stakeholders. Football will provide expert advice on funding options, planning and financial management.

## ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES

The guiding principle of “Anytime, Anyhow, Anywhere” will drive the policy towards alternative facilities, based on the following:

- Football is the simplest of all sports, and as such it can be adapted to the changing face of Australia’s cities and society like no other sport can.
- Football is the most flexible of all sports. It can be played on any surface, from floorboards to sand, and it can be played on any size pitch.
- Football is a great form of exercise. It provides a high intensity workout which is safe and accessible to everyone.

In response to changing participation habits Football will utilise existing urban facilities and foster the development of more urban sports spaces. Further, Australia is blessed with the most beautiful beaches in the world, so why not use them? These types of facilities will provide the kind of playing experience that Australians will demand. As a sport we need to:

- Embrace all forms of Football, with a focus on Futsal, and recognise their importance to participation and to developing world class players.
- Help Football access alternative facilities. This will include school facilities, existing community spaces and unused urban spaces.

**In the future Football will be recognised across Australia as an enjoyable, safe and accessible form of exercise for everyone.**





# REFEREEING

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# REFEREEING

## SITUATION

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**“A GOOD GAME OF FOOTBALL HAS A GOOD REFEREE” - COMMENT FROM THE FLOOR, CANBERRA WOFP FORUM, 11 NOVEMBER 2014**

The essential role played by referees and assistants was succinctly put by this contributor in Canberra. By extension, we can say “no referee means no Football match can be played”.

In 2014, there were 9,169 referees registered in Australia; 47% of these were 18 and under. Community Football referees play a pivotal role in Football over and above that of a laws enforcer; they are game facilitators and educators who are at the heart of the participant experience.

### CHALLENGE

For Football to grow it needs more referees and more referees who are ready to stay in the game and improve their refereeing skills. Unfortunately, Football loses around 36% of our grassroots referees per year. One of the primary reasons for this high drop-out rate is the lack of respect referees receive from spectators, players and coaches.

## TARGETS

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The standard of refereeing will only improve if we can retain referees and educate them. Football needs to work towards achieving a retention rate of 90%, up from the current rate of 64%. This will both increase the total number of referees and, through a clear development pathway and coordinated approach to education, improve refereeing standards.

## CULTURE

Referees must be shown RESPECT as qualified service providers who provide a high quality experience for participants. Nurturing this culture is the responsibility of the entire Football community.

### ADMINISTRATORS

We must create a culture where every single referee in Australia feels comfortable to take charge of a match and socialise with the participants afterwards. The adversarial nature of many referee-coach and referee-player exchanges must stop.

It is the governing bodies' responsibility to run RESPECT campaigns to educate players, coaches and clubs in the Laws of the Game and the pivotal role that referees play. It is also the role of A-League officials to set an example by showing a clear and consistent support for A-League referees.

### REFEREES

Referees need to understand the role they play as game facilitators and not just law enforcers. Furthermore, they need to create an open dialogue with players and club representatives, explaining decisions and acknowledging that like players, they also make mistakes.

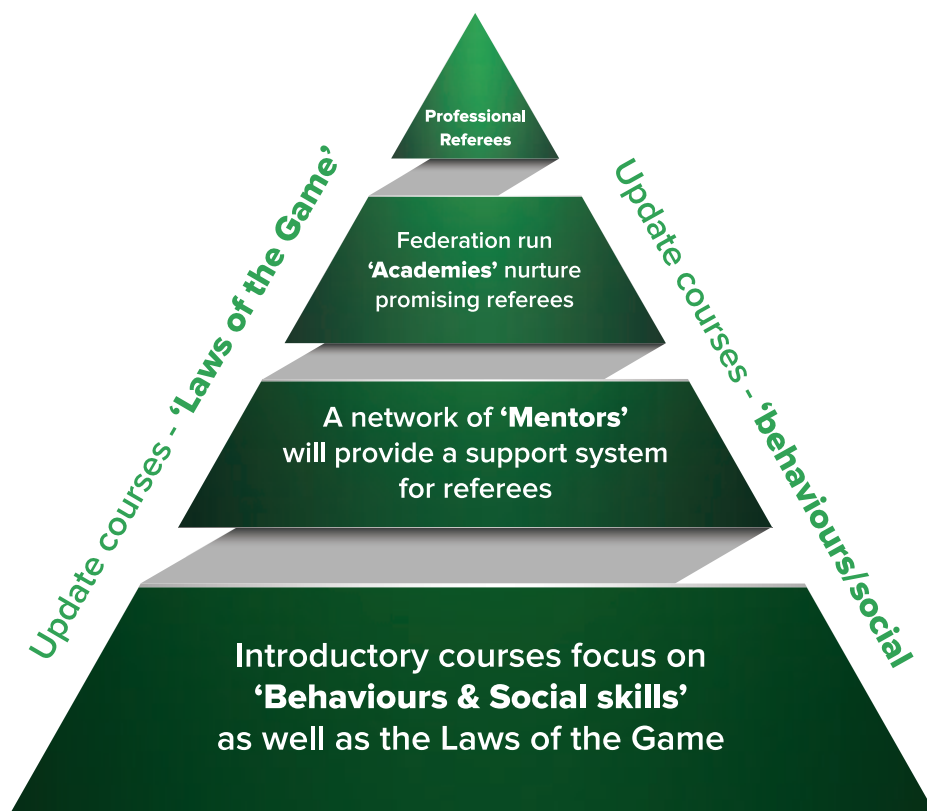
### CLUBS

Football needs to change our culture and this starts and ends with the culture of our Football clubs. In the future it will not just be players who are punished for ill-discipline; coaches will have to take responsibility for their own actions and the actions of their players particularly where junior referees are involved. Consistent ill-discipline by players and coaches will result in people being mandated to undertake courses in the Laws of the Game and to officiate in junior matches. If a club consistently shows ill-discipline, sanctions will be placed on the club, for example, exclusion from competitions like the FFA Cup.



## EDUCATION

To improve retention, recruitment and the culture surrounding referees we need to ensure our referees are highly trained and educated. This will require renewed education programs, better amenities at matches and good training infrastructure for referees.



## ADMINISTRATION

In some areas the administration of referees has traditionally not been fully integrated with Football's administration. However, the role of referees is too important for this to continue. In the future, we will work towards aligning the administration of referees with the strategic direction of the rest of the game.

## RECRUITMENT

Football needs to have a referee recruitment policy that attracts more people with "Football common sense". This means targeting ex-players to become referees at the grassroots level. To attract ex-players we need to promote the benefits of being a referee; the respect of the Football community, a healthy environment in which to perform this challenging role and appropriate remuneration. In addition, we must provide a clear pathway to the very top of the game and the ultimate opportunity of a professional career in a Top Tier competition and international Football. Furthermore, we must ensure that there are suitably flexible arrangements for all referees that respond to the demands of everyday life.









# ADMINISTRATION

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# ADMINISTRATION

## SITUATION

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The first decade of the Football Federation Australia (FFA) era 2004-15 has produced the most cohesive and progressive period ever seen in the administration of Australian Football at national, state and territory and local level.

The headline achievements include gaining membership of the Asian Football Confederation, qualifying for six FIFA World Cups for men and women, and establishing Australia's first fully professional competition, the A-League.

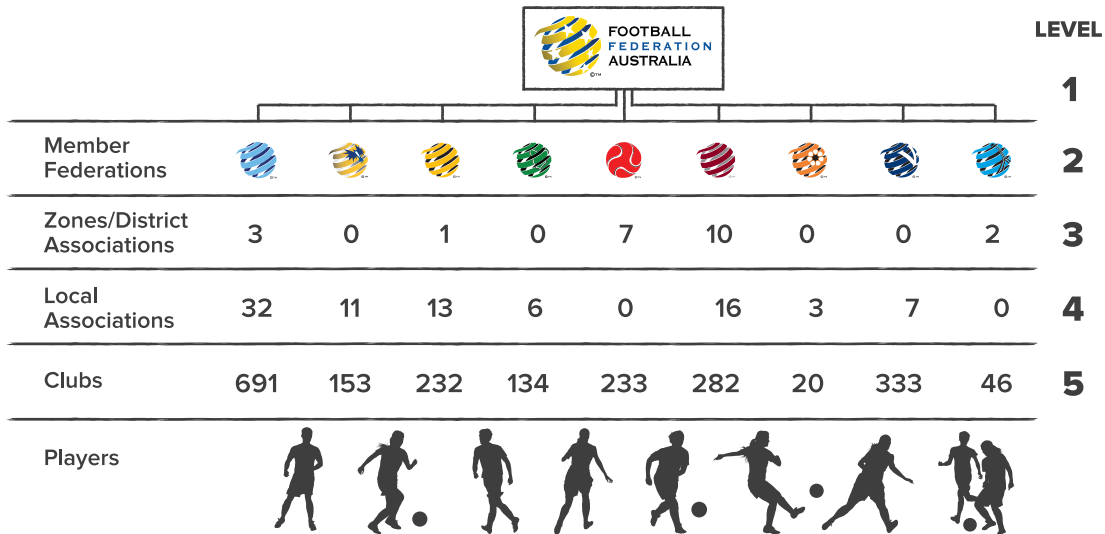
Historically, the administration of Football has been fragmented and fractious. The first national body only lasted 10 years before being superseded in 1921. In 1960, Australia was expelled from FIFA for three years because of administrative in fighting between rival governing bodies. In 2003, a Federal Government inquiry resulted in the national body being disbanded and the demise of the National Soccer League.



Australian Football has used a federated model of national, states and territories governing bodies since the first state body was established in NSW in 1882.

Local associations and regional zones were set up within the states and territories as Football expanded and from time to time informal groups of clubs have augmented the formal structures.

Today, there is one national governing body, nine state and territory federations and over 100 district, regional and local zones and associations.



In addition there are about 100 unaffiliated organisations covering schools, regional, ethnic community, corporate and church Football competitions. There are also a large number of private providers who operate events and competitions.

In summary, the administration of Football has grown in an organic way to meet local demand under the governance of a traditional federated model. Much of the boom in participation over the past two decades has occurred in areas not controlled by the official structures of the game, such as schools and indoor and the array of casual, church and ethnic community competitions.

**The question for Australian Football: is the current model with its overlapping official jurisdictions and many unaffiliated organisations the right one for the 20 years ahead and the century beyond?**

## CHALLENGES

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Based on the direct feedback of the game's administrators, public Whole of Football Plan forums and online portal results, Football's administration faces these challenges;

- The sheer scale and size of the Football community place enormous pressure on resources and capabilities. Football has over two million participants, with around 600,000 in highly organised, registered outdoor club competitions. Each and every individual wants a quality experience and value for subscription fees. No other Australian sport is required to service as many participants.
- The geographical spread of the Football community over a huge island continent is a burden when trying to achieve equality of access, consistent quality experience and to be on the ground to help grow Football in rural and regional communities, especially those with indigenous populations.
- In some areas there are five levels to Football's administration. This can result in five conflicting perspectives, five different administrative fees and five different sets of behaviour. This structure confuses government and is not delivering the most cost effective and efficient system it can and should to its participants.
- Football has been unable to deliver the commercial outcomes that are necessary to reduce the cost of participation and improve community facilities. Brand and organisational fragmentation affects the game's ability to garner, maximise and retain corporate support. Football has many mouths to feed and not enough to go around.
- The game's objective to be the largest and most popular sport in Australia means converting more participants into fans, but the tangible links between Top Tier clubs and community Football remain underdeveloped and this is inhibiting growth.
- Overlapping jurisdictions and cluttered engagement across the Football Community has made it difficult for participants to choose suitable participation opportunities. For example, the feedback from school administrators speaks of confusion and lack of clear direction. Furthermore, the multitude of service providers makes it difficult for participants to feel part of something bigger.
- National programs, such as the roll-out of the National Premier Leagues, should be able to be implemented in as timely, efficient, cost effective and nationally consistent way as possible. Administration in this context should be an enabler of positive initiatives not an obstacle. The focus on the experience of the participant is often not top of the agenda.

- Private providers offer a range of Football services including Football camps and training programs. By their very “for profit” nature, the bulk of private providers are focused on generating revenue not the development of the game. The majority of social Football is also currently delivered by private providers.
- Schools deliver Football to thousands of children around the country. Currently, a wide range of stakeholders offer services to schools; as a result Football lacks one clear coherent direction in schools.

## TARGETS

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Once the content of the Whole of Football Plan is digested by Football’s stakeholders and then translated into specific strategies and action plans for the next few years, it’s important that there is also clarity over the roles and responsibilities for those entrusted with delivering the strategies to remove unnecessary duplication.

While no single answer emerged during the consultation to the question “how should the game be administered”, there was a broad consensus on the principles that should underpin the administration of the game and any reform of current administrative and organisational structures.

The overriding common themes were “streamlining, national consistency, unity of purpose and efficiency”.

There was also consensus that change is and should be a constant and the administrators of the game at all levels have the responsibility to take up the challenge on an ongoing basis to seek, identify and adopt continuous improvement measures.

This requires an understanding of the current system, identification of current roadblocks or simply areas where things could work better, and a commitment to change to bring about better results.

A new national working party representing Football’s key stakeholders is to be established to undertake a review of the current model.

## ALTERNATIVE MODELS

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There are many administration models that are available to Football as the game's stakeholders take a longer term view of what's best to meet the game's challenges and opportunities.

An Australian Sports Commission discussion paper identifies three possible models of administration that can form the basis of formal consultation across the game:

- 1 Federated model:** This model is based on a single national body with affiliated state/territory member federations, each with their own Board of directors, operating as separate businesses. The traditional federated structure creates layers of administration and management.  
  
This structure leads to duplication in strategic planning, reporting, financial management, marketing and commercialisation and therefore a large number of inefficiencies for the entire sport. Such inefficiencies often impact on a sport's ability in generating sufficient revenues to be a sustainable business, as such, sports operating under this model are synonymous with 'bottom-up' funding.
- 2 National Behaviour model (or One Management model):** This model is based on a federated governance structure, but the administration is based on centralised services and management structures. State/territory member federations are still governed as separate organisations.  
  
This model demonstrates behaviours such as trust, transparency, integrity, collaboration and recognition. Some of the results from the alignment include: a collective targeted investment approach; shared services; one strategic plan for the sport; a more agile organisation; and a collaborative approach to budgeting where funding is allocated on merit to projects aligned with the highest whole of sport priorities.
- 3 Unified model:** This model removes the administrative inefficiencies inherent in the federated structure and retains the one management efficiencies of the National Behaviour model. This model delivers substantial advantages from the perspective of strategic direction and operational implementation. Each state/territory member federation operates as a branch of the single national body. State committees play an advisory consultative role providing the national body and its state officials critical local guidance. The model adopts a unified management structure where finances and other services are centrally pooled.





# FAN CONNECTION

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# FAN CONNECTION

## SITUATION

Fans are the heartbeat of Australian Football. The popularity of the game in the modern era is a tribute to the passion and commitment of fans that follow club and country in ever-increasing numbers. In the Australian sporting landscape, Football fans are unique for the atmosphere they create and the sense of pride and belonging they display. In particular, active supporters are redefining what it means to be an Australian sports fan by the songs they sing, the colours they wear and the banners they display.



From existing research in 2015, Australian Football fandom is based on:

- **Tribalism:** fans want to belong and feel part of something bigger.
- **Identity:** fans want Football to be part of who they are.
- **Loyalty:** Football fans want to be valued by their club and, in return, will support them whether they win or lose.
- **Social:** fans want to spend time with their friends and family.

## CHALLENGES

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The percentage of the Football Community who are fans of Top Tier clubs remains low. Research shows that 22% of junior participants are fans of an A-League club. The conversion rate is below what is required to deliver sustained growth. Other Australian sports count up to 70% of their junior participation base as fans of their Australian clubs, although these other sports do not have the complication of attractive international club brands, as Football does. In any case, the Australian Football fan base needs to grow exponentially to include more people who already love the game as participants or who are fans of international Football brands. The fan base needs to be commercialised for the common good of the game. For this to happen, Football's commercial partners need to be connected to fans and the broader Football community, who in turn need to accrue value from the relationship.

The equation is not about one side extracting value from the other; rather it's about growing the size of the economic pie to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Attracting junior fans is a critical element for the growth of football. Australian Football must aim to convert more junior participants into fans; this would transform the game's attendances, TV ratings and digital audiences which would flow into greater commercial revenues and in turn more funds to invest in community Football and elite player development.



# TARGETS

## HOW DO WE INSPIRE AUSTRALIANS TO BECOME FANS AND TO CONNECT WITH AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL?

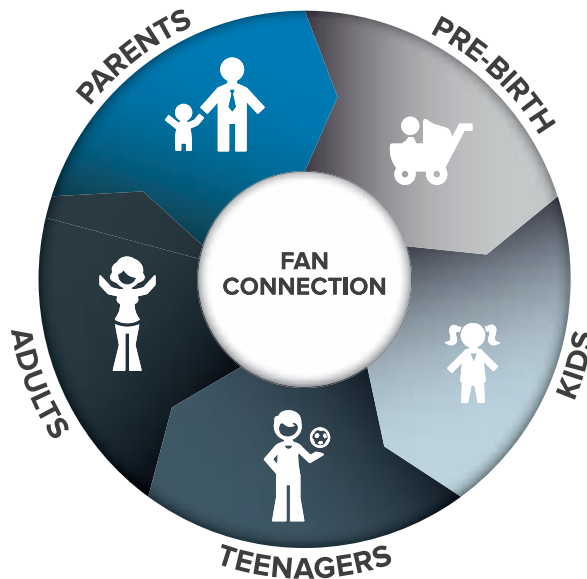
### ➤ Football will be “Anytime, Anyhow, Anywhere”

There will be one brand and a unifying identity that encompasses every element of Football and covers all Football’s stakeholders. The unity of purpose will increase the popularity and visibility of Australian Football. 75% of junior participants will support an Australian Top Tier club. The objective is to increase the size of the Football Community from 7.5 million to 15 million, and in doing so lift the percentage of those participants who are fans. This will mean more Australians interested in Australian Football and more connected as fans.

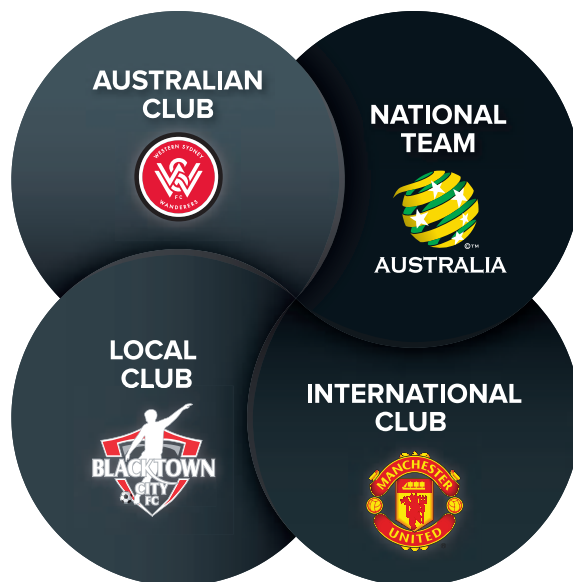


- Football will focus on digital channels to connect with fans
  - The youth of Australia grow up in a digital world that's evolving towards personalisation and catering to individual preferences.
  - Australian Football already skews towards a young demographic and digital channels will enable a lifetime connection.

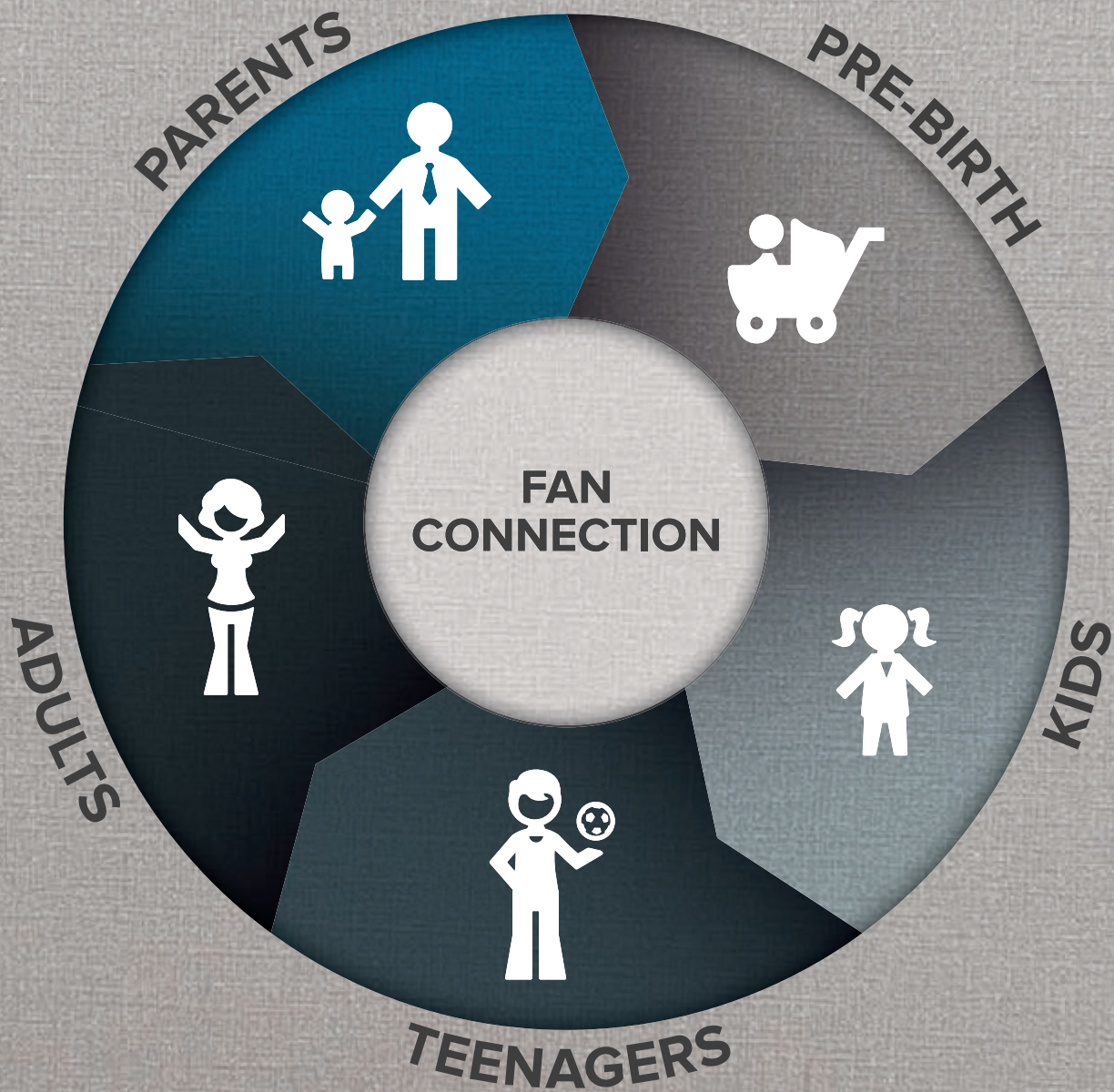
The creation of a 'fan loyalty program' that delivers value to fans and commercial partners alike is a key objective.



- Supporting one team will not stop you supporting another
  - Fans will connect with multiple clubs at one time; some Australian, some international. Clubs deliver that sense of belonging that is so unique in Football and it will be clubs who will be the focal point to drive participants into fans.







# LIFETIME RELATIONSHIP



## PRE-BIRTH

The lifetime relationship with Football should begin before a child is born, as the parents will be fans who understand the values and culture of Football and the benefits the game brings. The club that a family supports will become part of their identity and Football will become even more entrenched in Australia's culture.



## CHILDREN

A child's first experience of playing Football will be Miniroos, in a pre-school, school or club environment. Miniroos will encourage kids to have fun while they sample Football and enjoy a positive first experience. From this point, Football's Top Tier clubs will be visible in the community. This will include: regular community visits, co-ordinated school programs and a co-ordinated approach to grassroots clubs.

For this to happen, FFA, Member Federations, local associations, zones, clubs and schools need to work in harmony to deliver programs that put children first.



## TEENAGERS

Teenagers make up one of Football's biggest participation groups and are among the most avid fans and biggest consumers of digital content. In these years, Football offers participation opportunities, skills development, health and well-being, social time with friends and the sense of belonging so important to adolescents.

There are stakeholders who can ensure teenagers develop a lifetime affinity.

### Grassroots Clubs and Schools

Clubs and schools can create a bond between individuals and an allegiance to a team that becomes a gateway to fandom even when playing days are over.

### Clubs

A-League, W-League and NPL clubs must connect with community clubs and schools in their catchment to provide opportunities for teenagers to engage with the brands and see their stars, in particular via digital channels.

### Gamers

Gamers are an active part of the Football community. National tournaments will be created and gamers' talents will be recognised. These events will be used to nurture gamers to become fans of Football in the real world.



## ADULTS

Football's lifetime relationship with fans will mean that in 20 years Football will have one million members (ticketed and non-ticketed).

- Football will work with fans to ensure their opinions are valued and included. This will mean regular feedback sessions and dedicated fan resources.
- Clubs will be actively engage in communities and respect the responsibility they have to the Football Community.
- The most atmospheric stadiums in Australia will be used to provide a unique experience for fans.
- Our Competitions will entertain fans with world class Football.

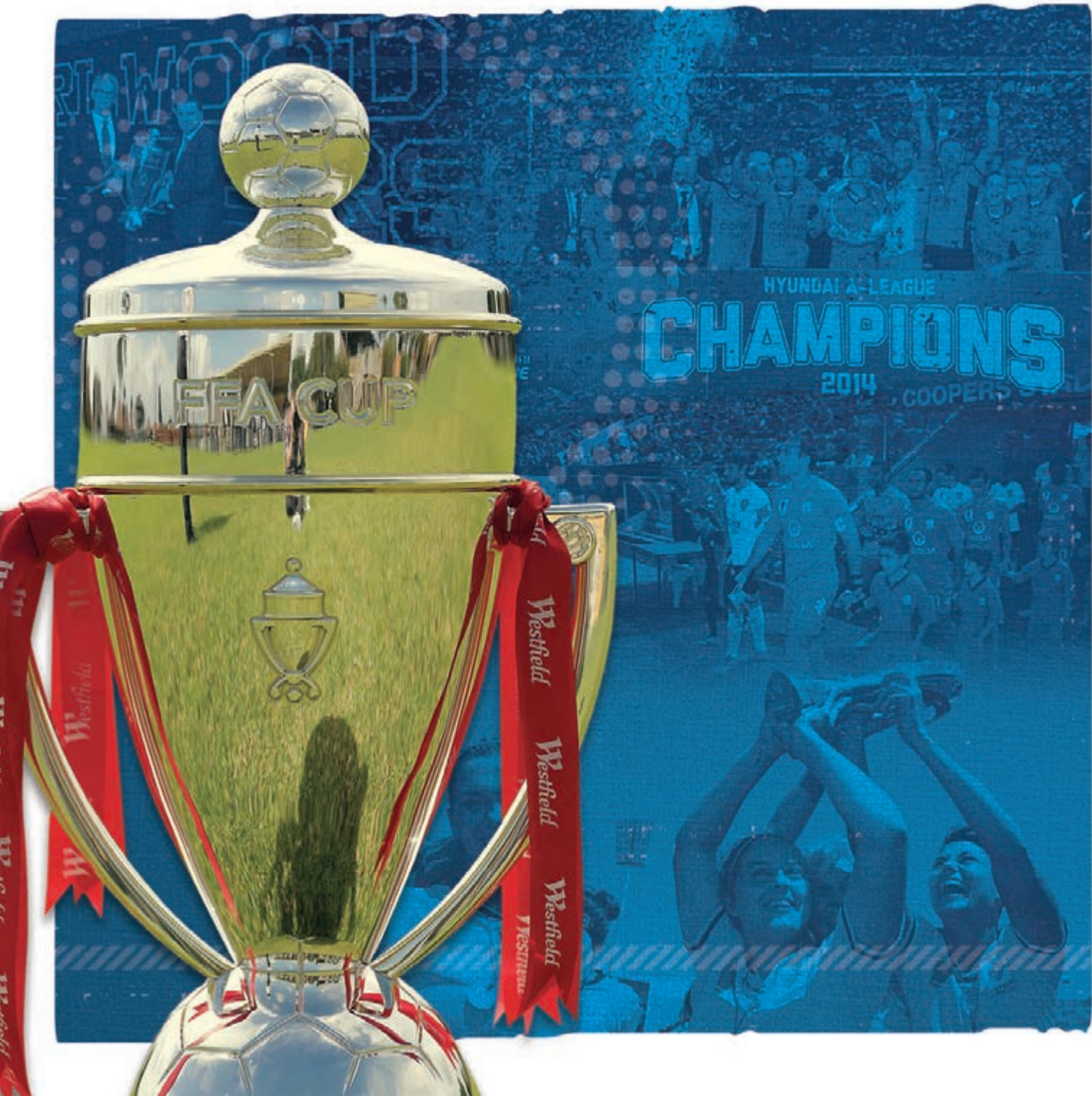
Fans will then repay this engagement by continuing to create the best atmosphere in Australian sports, becoming the sport's biggest advocates and connecting with commercial partners in a way that provides unique value.



## PARENTS

Football must hold the objective of being the sport of choice for parents in Australia. Football must continually promote its virtues as the most accessible and inclusive sport in the world. Football has an obligation to make sure the game retains its hallmarks as a safe, simple and skilful recreation and to ensure parents choose Football we will ensure that it is: Affordable and Fun!





HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS

2014

COOPERS

Westfield

Westfield

Westfield

Westfield



# COMPETITIONS

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# COMPETITIONS

## SITUATION

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Australia's Top Tier competitions, the A-League and W-League are the showcase of Football's endeavours to make the game the biggest and most popular in Australia. The key elements of community relations, fan engagement, elite player development and commercialisation come together in these competitions.

They are the weekly shop window of Football and their clubs are what make fans feel like they belong. Australia currently has four elite competitions:

- The A-League is the Top Tier competition for men's Football in Australia. Football's overall broadcast rights and sponsorship income are anchored by the A-League. The live TV and radio coverage of every match is a key marketing, promotional and fan acquisition tool for Australian Football. The competition plays a key role in the elite player pathway through the National Youth League. Its clubs provide approximately 25% of Socceroos players.
- The W-League is the Top Tier of women's Football. It is one of the premier women's leagues in the world, attracting some of the best players and producing some of the best women's Football anywhere. It is one of the only women's competitions in the world to have regular live TV coverage.
- The National Premier Leagues is Australia's Second Tier competition. Launched in 2013, it includes over 100 semi-professional clubs playing in eight states and territories. The NPL is the engine room of elite player development from 12 to 18 years and into senior Football and a pathway for referees and coaches who aspire to perform in the Top Tier.
- Australia's national knockout cup competition, the FFA Cup, connects the grassroots with the Top Tier and provides an opportunity for every Footballer to reach for the stars. Over 600 clubs enter the knock out rounds. Community and NPL clubs can dream of hosting an A-League club and pulling off a giant-killing upset. The FFA Cup is a unifying force in Australian Football and has become an instant hit with live TV and digital audiences.



## CHALLENGE

Australian club Football has great momentum, but continues to lack the type of scale, reach and commercial revenues required if they are to become the most popular in Australia. Furthermore, Football operates in the most competitive professional sporting market in the world in the face of strong, well-financed competitor codes.

**How do we ensure the long-term sustainable growth of our national competitions?**

## TARGETS

### A-LEAGUE

**The A-League will be the most popular sporting competition in Australia.**

### STABLE AND SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURE

The A-League will be an actively managed and competitively balanced league within a stable and sustainable structure. What does that mean?

- It means that there will always be a role for a central body that can place the common good and long-term strategic objectives of the game at the heart of every decision.
- It means that the A-League will always be a competitively balanced league with the instruments of a salary cap, squad limits, player quotas and player acquisition rules.
- The best run and best organised clubs will rise to the top, but Australia's national league will be based on collective commercialisation of rights and a centralised distribution of revenue to ensure the A-League does not become unbalanced.

In order for the A-League to become a financially strong and stable league, it must:

- Strengthen the operations of clubs by centralising select administrative services enabling clubs to focus on Football.
- Expand club Football operations and community engagement activities.

- Hold clubs accountable for core functions and benchmarks that will help the league to grow.
- Support our players by educating them as they enter professional sport and by assisting them to transition out of the professional playing ranks at the end of their careers.

## COMPOSITION OF THE A-LEAGUE

- The A-League will aim to be the strongest Football league in our region.
- Every major Australian centre with a population over 500,000 has the market size to host an A-League club.
- A-League competition expansion will come as a product of sustainable commercial growth, via a managed process of “in and out” as circumstances arise, rather than a relegation and promotion system based purely on results. This is critical to retain the strategic market placement of clubs which underpins the commercial viability of the league.
- New entrants to the A-League will need to meet criteria based on funding, football development, stadium capacity and facilities, and community engagement that any NPL Club or New Consortium will need to satisfy:
  - In particular any NPL Club or New Consortium will need to be professionally run, and prove a concrete demand based on participation and population in a region.

## INTEGRATE CLUBS AND COMMUNITIES

The loudest message that we heard during the Whole of Football Plan consultation period is that Australia’s professional clubs need to play a more active and prominent role in their communities.

- Clubs will help nurture a “Lifetime Relationship” with their fans. Fans will follow clubs and not just players. This will mean each club will have a unique identity with a multi-generational heritage and fans will feel a strong sense of connectedness.
- Football will provide the platforms and the support necessary so that Australia’s clubs can play a prominent role in their communities. This will result in 75% of participants supporting one of our Top Tier clubs.
- Football will ensure that the game is widely available by providing football content across as many media platforms as possible.

- The popularity of Australia's clubs will be reflected in our growing membership numbers which will surpass one million members (ticketed and non-ticketed).

### STRIVE FOR TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

When we asked the Football community what you wanted from the A-League, the most popular answer was the “Best Australian players playing in Australia” – this must become a key objective. To achieve this we need to raise the standard of the whole league. This means that every Australian A-League club will have a world class facility and academy capable of producing world class Australian players.

### ATMOSPHERIC STADIA

Football generates an atmosphere like no other sport in Australia. The Sydney and Melbourne derbies are the envy of every Australian sport and we want to re-create these atmospheres across the country.

- As a long-term goal we will ensure that A-League games are played in intimate stadiums where fans feel, and are, part of the action.
- We will create a differentiated match day experience to broadcast experience – including providing exclusive digital content in stadia.





## THE W-LEAGUE

### A-LEAGUE AND W-LEAGUE – ONE CLUB

The W-League will follow the structure of the A-League. This means, at a minimum, that every Top Tier club in Australia should have an A-League team and a W-League team. This is important because:

- Unlike every other Australian sport, Football clubs will be able to connect to their communities by providing male and female role models.
- It makes commercial sense. Female customers are the most influential consumers in Australian society; Football will talk to them through ONE platform - clubs that have both A-League and W-League teams.
- Above everything else, Football fans appreciate good Football and the W-League is top quality Football that attracts male and female fans. Furthermore, having an A-League and W-League team will allow clubs to host more top quality double headers.
- The ONE Club mentality will spread throughout our Top Tier clubs, meaning that ultimately club academies will incorporate both boys and girls enabling us to attract all of the best athletes in Australia.

### GROWING LEAGUE

In order to harness the rapid growth in women's Football, it is crucial that the W-League is structured to provide a world class women's league. This means:

- The W-League will be between 20 and 30 rounds long. This extended season will allow W-League clubs to consolidate their status and create the potential of additional tournaments, such as a Women's FFA Cup. The W-League will generate more interest and help inspire potential Matildas.
- The growth in women's grassroots Football will support a commercialised and creditable alternative to dominant male sports. This commercialisation will enable the W-League to be a fully professional training and playing environment.
- Support our players by educating them as they enter professional sport and by assisting them to transition into roles that will help grow the women's game.
- The W-League will be underpinned by a women's NPL competition that will help provide a clear pathway for aspiring players.

## ENGAGED FANS

Clubs will build stronger relationships with the community and fans of W-League teams will enjoy W-League games in intimate boutique stadiums that provide a high quality platform for players. In addition, W-League fans will always be able to watch the W-League via a televised platform.

## THE NATIONAL PREMIER LEAGUES

- The National Premier Leagues (NPL) will be an elite competition comprised of elite clubs.
- Football's administration will work with NPL clubs to help them become more professional. A key part of this will be helping them to secure new sources of revenue through providing national exposure for the NPL. This will mean providing TV coverage of Australia's grassroots competition.
- NPL's clubs represent some of Australia's historic footballing communities. Clubs will continue to be pillars of their communities, being inclusive of all fans, and developing a life time relationship with their followers.
- NPL Clubs will maintain a high quality youth development structure that provides a pathway for their talented players. Clubs will be recognised and better rewarded for the critical role they play in player development.
- A WNPL will be created in every federation to both support the W-League and provide an elite second tier of women's Football in Australia. The WNPL will be underpinned by a vibrant junior structure that increases opportunities for girls.

## THE FFA CUP

The FFA Cup will continue to be the unique connection between grassroots and the Top Tier of Football in Australia. This means:

- Ensuring that any club in Australia can enter the tournament and has the ability to progress to play A-League teams.
- The FFA Cup Final will be positioned as the second biggest event on the Australian Football calendar after the A-League Grand Final. It will unite the whole Football community and be a celebration of Football at every level in Australia.







# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

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# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

## SITUATION

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Australians strive to be successful at everything we do. This winning mentality is part of our national sporting DNA and is respected and feared by nations we play against.

In Football, unlike most other sports, winning is rarely a product of size, aggression or athleticism. It is based primarily on individual skill and team tactics.

If the Socceroos and Matildas are to win the FIFA World Cup, we need to develop generations of world class, technically gifted players. If Australian players are the most skilful, combined with our winning mentality, we will be a world championship contender.

Traditionally, the majority of Australia's elite players have been developed by semi-professional National Premier Leagues (NPL) clubs who have provided good quality development environments, with dedicated parents in the background providing the support. A relatively small number of male players have been developed at the elite FFA Centre of Excellence (formerly AIS), with an intake of 20 or so players biennially, and by European Football clubs who have recruited young Australians in their teens.



## CHALLENGE

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### THE QUESTION IS: CAN WE RELY ON THESE METHODS TO DEVELOP AUSTRALIA'S WORLD CLASS PLAYERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

- In the men's game many of our Asian rivals are investing millions into player development. In Japan, every J-League Club has an elite academy and these are complemented by multiple centrally run training centres. In Qatar, the government has created the Aspire Academy that provides a dedicated environment for elite players and some of the best facilities in the world. European nations invest staggering amounts in club academies and central training centres. In addition, they have worldwide recruiters to identify the best young talent.
- In the women's game, the same trends are emerging. Canada invests more in female player development than male player development. Australia's women players lack the development opportunities of their overseas counterparts. The W-League has just 12 rounds while comparable overseas leagues have over 20 rounds.
- Overseas elite youth players experience a development environment that Australian clubs have struggled to match. In countries like Japan, Belgium and Germany elite youth players train seven times per week and are nurtured by accredited coaches over a 40 week season. Australia currently has 24 players at the FFA Centre of Excellence (formerly AIS) that enjoy a similar environment. Meanwhile, Germany has approximately 5,000 and Belgium, with an overall playing population smaller than our own has 2,000 youth players nurtured in this environment.
- In 2015, the player development system is highly exclusive. Players are often required to travel extensively to clubs and many players in elite junior competitions and programs have to pay well over \$2,000 per year for their development. Furthermore, many parents are supplementing their child's development through private academies, many of whom are focused on profit and do not adhere to the National Curriculum.

**What does Australia need to do to develop world class players that can compete on the World Stage?**



## TARGETS

Given that Australia is a prosperous, first-world nation, no Australian youth player should have to go overseas to receive world class development. We need to provide an environment that reassures every Australian player that they can be the best they can be by staying in Australia.

We have created a “Starting 11 of guiding principles”, that Football needs to deliver to ensure Australia can compete with the world’s best:



Introductory Football courses will focus on kids having FUN!

Before kids can play like a pro, they must enjoy playing the game like a kid. Elite Football should not start until children are aged 12.



No talent selection, but instead talent identification

At a young age players should be selected on their potential, not just because they are bigger, faster or stronger.



Every youth player in every youth team needs an educated coach

An educated coach is one who has been educated in the necessary behaviours and the National Curriculum to train aspiring players.



Every youth player will have access to top quality facilities

Whether it is on grass pitches, school pitches, Futsal courts or synthetic pitches, youth players need to play Football regularly on top quality surfaces.

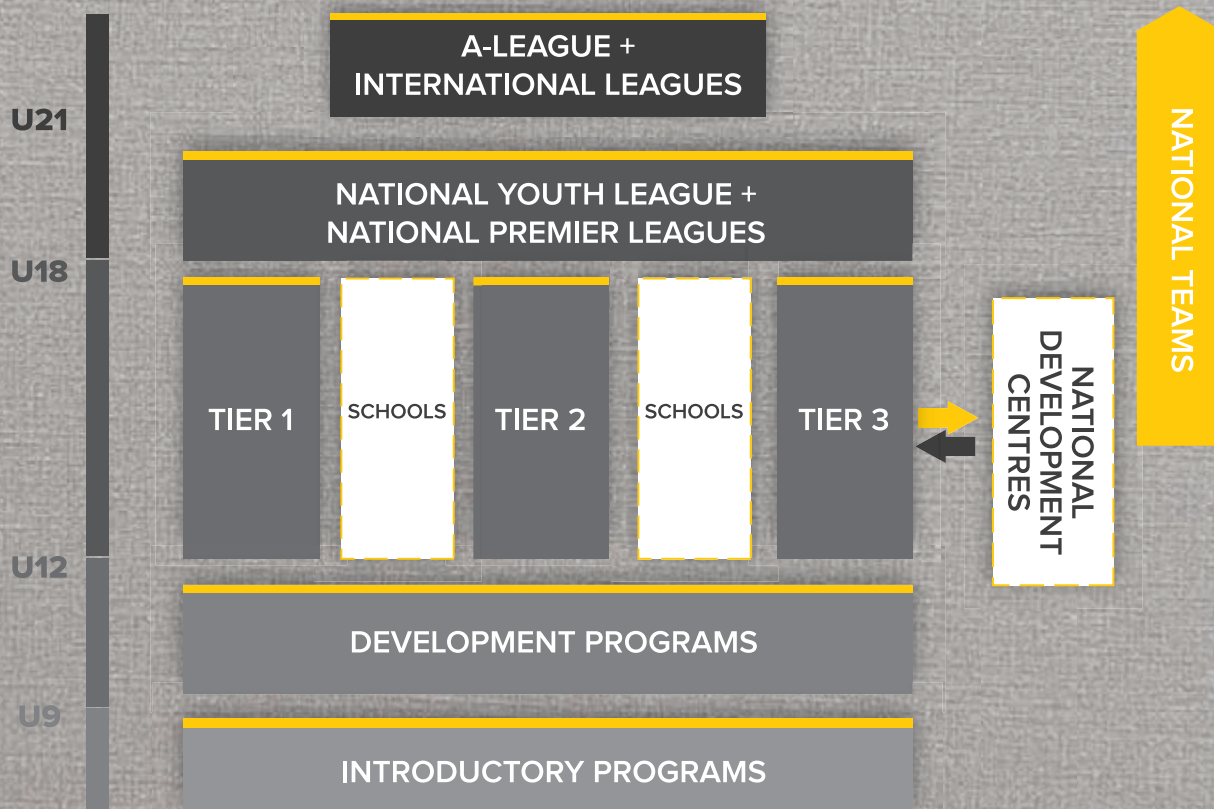


The pathway needs an individual approach for every player

Football needs to be flexible to the individual needs and circumstances of every player in the pathway.



# BOYS PATHWAY



## BOYS AUSTRALIAN PATHWAY

Stakeholders will work through a suitable process to identify the specific criteria of each of these components. Each component will then be periodically reviewed to ensure it attains world class standards.

- **Development Programs** will afford young players an opportunity to experience an enhanced Football environment which will prepare them for the technical and tactical challenges of elite Football. Existing development programs like the Skill Acquisition Program (SAP) and Skilleroos will be expanded to increase the number of kids entering the pathway.
- **Tier One Club Academies** will be licensed under a national system. They will typically be run by A-League clubs; however any club will have the opportunity to reach Tier One status. They will work in collaboration with schools to provide an elite environment for all their players. In the long term, Tier One club academies will provide no-cost scholarships. Academies will be fairly compensated for their player development efforts.
- **Tier Two Club Academies** will be licensed under a national system. They will typically be operated by NPL clubs; however any club will have the opportunity to reach Tier Two status. Academies will provide talented players with access to top quality coaching and facilities for a fair price. They will work in collaboration with schools to provide an elite environment for all their players. The best players from Tier Two club academies will receive additional training at National Development Centres. Academies will be fairly compensated for their player development efforts.
- **Tier Three Club Academies** will be licensed under a national system. They will typically be operated by NPL clubs; however any club will have the opportunity to reach Tier Three status. Academies will provide talented players with access to quality coaching and facilities for a fair price. The best players from Tier Three club academies will receive additional training at National Development Centres. Academies will be fairly compensated for their player development efforts.
- **National Development Centres.** FFA and Member Federation Centres will provide elite training to top prospects. Training will be in addition to the training they receive from their Tier Two/Three Club Academy. Players who are playing/training for Tier Two/Three academies and training at National Development Centres will be in an elite environment. Centres will be prevalent throughout the country. During the NPL season centres will provide training only.

- **Schools** have two key roles to play in the elite player pathway:
  - Schools will provide an opportunity for players to receive additional training to their club training. Schools will work closely with club academies to deliver the best environment possible for youth players in accordance with the National Curriculum.
  - Schools provide an opportunity for all Australians to be involved in Football and, as such, an annual National Schools Competition will provide an inclusive and no-cost opportunity for players to be scouted by Academies and National Development Centres.
- **The Season.** Elite youth players require a 40 week season.
  - Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three Club academies will play in the junior NPL competition.
  - After the NPL season has finished a league consisting of Tier One Club Academies and National Development Centres (comprised of the best players from Tier Two/Three Academies) will play a further competition.

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

**JUNIOR  
NPL  
SEASON**

**NDC's  
V  
TIER 1  
ACADEMIES**

## FUTSAL

- Futsal provides boys and girls with an important opportunity to develop technical skills.
- Futsal must be a key component of any player development pathway, particularly, at the introductory and development program level.
- In the long term Australian football will develop a separate pathway for talented FUTSAL player's which allows them to focus on this format of the game and compete at the highest level.



# GIRLS PATHWAY



## GIRLS AUSTRALIAN PATHWAY

Girls' player development faces unique challenges and, as such, requires a unique pathway. Stakeholders will work through a suitable process to identify the specific criteria of each of these components. Each component will then be periodically reviewed to ensure it attains world class standards.

- **Development Programs** will afford young players an opportunity to experience an enhanced Football environment which will prepare them for the technical and tactical challenges of elite Football. Existing development programs like the Skill Acquisition Program (SAP) and Skilleroos will be expanded to increase the number of kids entering the pathway. Girls will be afforded opportunities in both a mixed and single sex environment.
- **Girls Academies** will typically be run by W-League clubs; however WNPL clubs will also have the opportunity to run Girls Academies. They will work in collaboration with schools to provide an elite environment for all their players. In the long-term, Girls Academies will provide a no-cost pathway for players. Youth academy teams will compete in the Boys' junior NPL competition.
- **National Development Centres.** FFA and Member Federation Centres will provide elite training to top prospects. Training will be in addition to the training they receive from their Club Academy. Players who are playing/training for a Girls academy and training at National Development Centres will be in an elite environment. Centres will be prevalent throughout the country. During the NPL season centres will provide training only.
- **Schools** have two key roles to play in the elite player pathway:
  - Schools will provide an opportunity for players to receive additional training to their club training. Schools will work closely with club academies to deliver the best environment possible for youth players in accordance with the National Curriculum.
  - Schools provide an opportunity for all Australians to be involved in Football and, as such, a National Girls Schools Competition will provide an inclusive and no-cost opportunity for players to be scouted by Academies and National Development Centres.
- **W-League** will provide a high class competition for our players. An overseas partner league will enable our elite players to play in a top competition for 10 months of the year as they split time between the W-League and a major overseas league.





# NATIONAL TEAMS

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# NATIONAL TEAMS

## SITUATION

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Australia played its first international Football men's match in 1922 and the first international women's match in 1979. The Socceroos and Matildas have qualified for multiple FIFA World Cups and both National Teams have won the AFC Asian Cup. Australia competes internationally at under-age level, Futsal and Paralympic level with nine active National Teams in all. The "Green and Gold" colours are a unifying force for the game. In the modern era our National Teams are seen to represent Australia like no other national sporting selection can; our teams reflect the diversity of Australian society and play in all parts of the world. In recent times, our National Teams have embraced a distinctively Australian style of play which has resonated strongly with fans.

## CHALLENGES

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Australia's National Teams face unique challenges in competing on the world stage;

Football is the most competitive sport in the world. To compete at the highest level our National Teams need a pipeline of technically gifted players who are able to come together from clubs at home and abroad and mesh instantly.

Unlike the majority of our rivals, Australian Football does not have a dedicated Home of Football facility where players and coaches can strive for excellence in technical, tactical and sports science development.

Australia's distance from Football destinations and the crowded World Football schedule adds complexity to our National Teams program.

The resources required to support our nine National Teams are substantial. The National Teams program needs to be commercially viable to underpin the investment necessary for Australia to compete on the world stage.

## TARGETS

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### AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL TEAMS

In striving to make Football the largest and most popular sport in Australia, the game needs to make Football the sport of choice for Australian families and their children. A key driver must be positioning the Socceroos and Matildas as the natural representatives of all Australians and making selection the “childhood dream” of aspiring young players.

Our National Teams must be the role models that our children look up to and we will ensure National Team players represent themselves in a manner that inspires all Australians. There will be equal opportunities for all Australians to represent their National Team regardless of disabilities, gender or the format of Football that they play. Our National Teams will be seen as the “face of Australia” in all its diversity.

As identified in the player development section, Football must increase the number of elite youth players we produce. Part of this will include male and female representative teams throughout the elite player development pathway. Australia is competing in a global environment where our rivals have national representative teams at every age from 15 years and up. Football need to match this, so that our players are exposed to world class environments and opposition throughout the critical development years.

To ensure the National Teams are finding the best available talent, regular training camps will offer chances to players from across the elite player development pathway (Tier One, Tier Two and Tier Three club academies). This will allow young players to be immersed in the culture, to receive intensive technical and tactical development, and to create a cohesive bond that enables them to unite as they compete for major honours.

### THE AUSTRALIAN STYLE

The National Teams should represent Australian characteristics in the way they play and the way they conduct themselves. These traits will allow our National Teams to build an affinity with all Australians, whether they are Football community members or not.

For Australia to compete on the world stage we need to produce world class players. The National Curriculum provides “The Roadmap for International Success”. The curriculum will deliver an Australian playing and coaching philosophy based on analysis of top Football and scientific research, taking the specific circumstances of Australian Football into consideration.

Australia will play a proactive brand of Football, based on effective possession with the cutting edge provided by creative individuals. Defensively the key components are quick transition and intelligent collective pressing. The playing style is underpinned by a strong “team mentality”, capitalising on Australia’s traditional strengths.

We are already starting to see the fruits of this philosophy, the dynamic style of the Socceroos at both the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2015 AFC Asian Cup have inspired a nation. Crucially, this National Curriculum needs to be disseminated across the player pathway to ensure that all future Socceroos and Matildas are well versed in the Australian way. It will also be necessary for all future Australian National Team coaches to be experts in the Australian style of play.

As the brands of the Socceroos and Matildas grow in profile and popularity, a long-term view will be taken to commercialise this success to ensure our teams are receiving the support they deserve.

## EVENTS

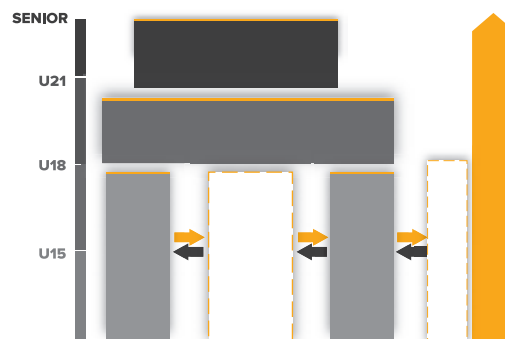
Australia has a long history of putting on world class sporting events, a capability shown in hosting the 2015 AFC Asian Cup. Indeed, hosting the event provided a great platform for the Socceroos to go on and lift the trophy.

In collaboration with Government we will continue to look for opportunities to host major Football events. This will include bidding to host the Women’s FIFA World Cup as early as the 2023 edition. Hosting a FIFA Women’s World Cup would provide a great showcase for the women’s game in Australia and inspire a generation of women to take up Football.

## A HOME OF FOOTBALL

Football needs a home for the National Teams. Currently, our National Team players are often required to train at multiple non-Football venues, while many of our elite youth players prepare for major tournaments in sub-optimal conditions.

An Australian Home of Football will provide a hub for all of Australia’s teams at all levels. It will act as the focal point for FFA’s coaching and player development work delivering thousands of courses a year, a centre for refereeing education and a world class sports science and medicine facility.



More than this, a Home of Football will allow Australia to look to the future, while also celebrating our Football history by encompassing a Football museum. It will act as a focal point for the whole Football Community.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

World class support services are imperative for our national teams to compete against the best in the world and to set best practice environments that attract the best young talent. Advanced performance analytics were a key ingredient to Germany's 2014 FIFA World Cup successes and the Socceroos victory in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup. The need for world class support services is particularly relevant in Australia where we have players based in every corner of the globe and are implementing a high intensity style of Football. The National Teams will utilise the latest technology in sports science and performance analytics to give our teams the best possible opportunity to beat the world's best.



