



FUTURE DIRECTION OF FOOTBALL AND NETBALL



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review was commissioned by the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission to “examine the sustainability and viability of the current competitions in the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission”. This review aims to develop, design and recommend a model for the future of all competitions in the region, ensuring long term sustainability and viability for all affiliated clubs.

Following a “Review of Football in Country Victoria” released in 2011, Region Commissions were established and charged with the responsibilities of:

- Enhancing competition structures to meet growth demands in the local area.
- Promoting competition equalisation.
- Increasing pathway effectiveness.
- Football sustainability within regions.
- Development of the game and junior pathways.
- Better considering geographic and economic factors currently restricting and burdening some country football clubs and competitions.

The Review also concluded: “Sustainability of clubs is the critical issue, not necessarily the sustainability of leagues or governing bodies. For country Victoria to maintain its status, and indeed grow, the clubs must be vibrant and financially sustainable. It is incumbent on administrators of all governing bodies, including leagues (senior and juniors) and umpire associations, to consider this for the future well-being of the clubs and the game.”

REVIEW - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Competition Review was conducted under the framework of, and in accordance with, AFL Victorian Country Rule 4.7 (AFL Victoria Country Reviews – Implementation and Appeals), managed and overseen by the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

This review aims to identify the best long-term structure of football and netball in the AFL Yarra Ranges region. The principles areas of the AFL Yarra Ranges Review were as follows:

- League Structure Senior.
- Northern and Southern Region Structure.
- Junior Structure- Male and Female.

Other key considerations of this review were:

- To provide competition structures that allow for entry levels for new clubs and provide optimum competitive balance for existing clubs.
- The structure of umpiring, netball, female football, facilities, and volunteers.
- Talent and representative programs.

PURPOSE

To examine the sustainability and viability of the current competitions in the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission. This review aims to develop, design, and recommend a model for the future of all competitions in the region, ensuring long term sustainability. It will consider both competitive balance and financial viability for all affiliated clubs. Where appropriate, the AFL Yarra Ranges has informed the neighbouring commissions and leagues of this process.

AFL SOUTH EAST REVIEW

March 2018 saw a substantial shift in the football landscape in this region, leading to the scope of the review changing significantly. The AFL South East Commission, under a separate football and divisional review, proposed the development of a 3-tier competition featuring all thirty-one senior affiliate clubs in the South East Commission. As per the AFL South East review document, the recommendations from this review was as follows:

Full Divisional structure – Initially 3 divisions, for example a “Premier” Division with a minimum of 10 teams, then Divisions 1 and 2 below comprising the balance of teams.



This process was to occur over a two-year implementation period, commencing with the creation of two divisions from the Nepean and Peninsula competitions in 2019 and the addition of South East Football Netball (SEFNL) clubs in 2019. The second stage of this process will not occur, following a club driven change to the Mornington Peninsula Football Netball League (MPNFL) Constitution. MPNFL clubs implemented a change to their constitution, which mandated that 75% majority of clubs had to vote any competition changes i.e. seventeen of the twenty-two affiliated clubs. Therefore a 75% club majority of MPNFL passed a motion not to allow the SEFNL clubs to enter a combined competition in 2019.

The AFL Yarra Ranges was requested by the AFL South East commission, to present an alternative divisional model to SEFNL clubs which took place at Casey Fields on Monday March 5th. This proposal was aimed to create a three divisional structure made up of clubs from the AFL Yarra

Ranges and SEFNL. This was one of many options made available to the existing eight SEFNL clubs. Following multiple consultation meetings with AFL South East and all SEFNL clubs, six SEFNL clubs formally applied to join the AFL Yarra Ranges on Wednesday August 1st, under AFL Victoria By-law 3.8 (ii).

These clubs are: Beaconsfield, Berwick, Doveton, Narre Warren, Pakenham, and Officer were formally accepted by the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission on Thursday August 2nd. A new entry level club, Berwick Springs, have been accepted on this date.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The review considered all influences, both positive and negative, on the leagues and its affiliated clubs to make informed recommendations including:

- Club sustainability & viability.
- Financial viability.
- Facilities.
- Participation and growth.
- Player access and numbers.
- Volunteerism.
- Netball.
- Other matters deemed appropriate.

AFL Yarra Ranges has concluded its ***Future Direction of Football and Netball Review*** and presents the following report for the information of all stakeholders.

AFL Yarra Ranges thanks all Clubs, and the Yarra Ranges Umpiring Association for their support, participation and feedback received to provide a sound foundation allowing this review to be affectively by undertaken. The club participation and input received in our surveys, attending Interviews and providing feedback has allowed all recommendations to be consider.



KEY STRATEGIC PILLARS

The following form the **7 key strategic pillars for AFL Yarra Ranges** which align to AFL Victoria's pillars. The objectives and key strategies identified within each will provide the focus and direction of the football review.

PARTICIPATION

- Initiate and support programs to increase player and umpire participation rates at all levels of football and netball in order to facilitate growth of the games.

COMMUNITY

- Support leagues, their clubs and schools to provide quality management and environments to motivate volunteers, coaches, teachers and sports trainers for all levels of football and netball.

ENGAGEMENT

- Develop stakeholder and community engagement initiatives that support the vision, values and mission statement of AFL Yarra Ranges while enhancing social value and equal opportunity for all.

DEVELOPMENT

- Provide and promote development programs including pathways for players, umpires, coaches and administrators.

FACILITIES

- Develop region wide plans to advocate for and collaborate on facility development for leagues, their clubs, umpires and schools.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, government, other sports and community organisations

PEOPLE & CULTURE

- Attract, develop and retain quality people and develop a culture of excellence in line with AFL Yarra Ranges key objectives and values.

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND KEY FINDINGS: SENIORS

The club consultation process was extensive, and the input was valued. The Panel initially conducted an online survey to gain preliminary data and feedback from clubs which, in turn, directed the consultation process. All clubs completed this survey.

The Panel has conducted twenty-five interviews with clubs, groups and associations involved between November 2017 and June 2018. All senior clubs were offered follow up meetings following the announcement of the SEFNL proposal. Four meetings with club executives were held across the AFL Yarra Ranges and South East Region two separate surveys were undertaken by all clubs, in late 2017 to mid-2018. The key findings from the consultation process were as follows:

Competition Structure

- 80% clubs believed that the commission needed to grow the competition for the long term sustainability of both competitions (football and netball).
- Fifteen out of the nineteen AFL Yarra Ranges clubs supported the inclusion of existing SEFNL clubs. Two clubs strongly opposed and two others had no position.
- All clubs supported divisional football, with promotion and relegations options.
- 90% of clubs did not believe that all current Yarra Ranges clubs would be in existence in ten years.
- The northern region clubs identified that they believe clubs within the proximity of metropolitan Melbourne assisted them with recruiting and retention players, with many recruited from other competitions with Melbourne.
- Though overall clubs supported the addition of South East clubs, they had clear concerns around the following areas- Travel, growth corridor and Under 18's.



Juniors and Under Age

- Most clubs believe they have good relationships with their junior clubs.
- 80% believe they have a strong representation of home grown players.
- 45% of clubs identified they have a transition program.
- 40% of clubs identified they wish to transition to the one club model, i.e. senior, juniors and netball clubs incorporated as one club.
- Most clubs supported the current permit system for the under eighteen competition.
- 80% of clubs prefer Saturday mornings for under eighteen/nineteen (game time).
- Saturday night was the most popular alternative time slot for under eighteens.

Club Sustainability

- Most clubs believed the salary cap should remain as is i.e. \$110,000 division one and \$80,000 division two.
- Clubs were asked to nominate their preferred Salary Cap amount for each of our proposed divisions. Indications from clubs are:
 - Premier \$124,000.
 - Division 1 \$103,000.
 - Division 2 \$79,000.
- 95% of clubs found operating within the proposed salary cap was achievable.
- Only 25% of the competition felt that the Salary Cap was effective. 15% felt that it was not, whilst 60% advised it was too early to make valued assessment.
- Only 20% of clubs believed the point and salary cap system improved recruiting, with most clubs identifying neighbouring competition points and salary cap levels as a major obstacle.
- 75% of club believe the points system evened up the competition. Not one club identified that it was not working, with the remaining 25% unsure whether it made any difference or not.

Travel

- Between 15 minutes to one hour was identified as the ideal travel time for clubs.
- 45% of clubs identified that travel had an impact on recruiting. This figure increased with clubs located further from the CBD.
- 80% of clubs felt that travel affected gate takings in a negative manner.
- Only 35% of clubs felt travel affected retention of under eighteen/nineteen players.
- Creating more regional and/or area-based competitions based on geography was not well supported by clubs. 60% of clubs felt it would have no impact or adversely affect recruiting and player retention.

Clubs: Volunteers and Financial Sustainability

- 90% of clubs found it difficult to recruit volunteers.
- 75% clubs identified that they do not have a retention or training strategy for volunteers.
- 40% of clubs had paid employees or support workers.
- 45% of clubs identified that they would consider paid volunteers in the future.
- 65% of clubs believe they have a broad mix of ages in their volunteer network. Those that do not identified that most of their volunteer network is over forty.
- Support from members: 5% said excellent, 50% said good, 45% felt it was poor to ok.
- 60% had role descriptions for their volunteers.

- 90% of clubs identified costs as a major concern.
- 14% of clubs identified their financial position as strong. 81% believe they live year to year, whilst 5% identified that they often have poor years or make a loss.
- 60% of clubs recorded a small profit, whilst 20% broke even. 10% made a small loss, whilst 10% had a major loss, which contradicts previous commentary.
- Players and coaches and affiliations/fees were identified as the two major financial concerns for clubs.
- The primary source of revenue for senior clubs was sponsorship, bar and food sales, player registrations and functions.
- Functions, sponsorship, and fees are the revenue streams clubs find most difficult to maintain.

Netball

- 60% of clubs did not find putting four netball sides out a challenge.
- 65% of clubs put equal focus into both netball and football. The remaining 35% said they didn't consider this as a key focus for their club, however felt they needed to address this area.
- 80% invested financially into netball paying players and coaches, most of the financial investment was into coaching.
- 88% of clubs believe that netball provides significant benefits to their club, both on and off field.
- 90% of clubs supported netball equalisation in some capacity. 40% believe some modifications and improvements to our current rules were needed.
- 20% of clubs believe netball equalisation is working. 75% said it was too early to offer an opinion.
- 80% of clubs support the introduction of junior netball. The South East Clubs already have established junior netball with under thirteens, fifteens and seventeen age groups.



Female Football

- 33% of senior clubs have a female football team, whilst 25% are working towards teams for 2019.
- 70% of clubs identified female football as a priority.
- 60% of clubs do not believe their existing facilities are adequate for females.
- 80% of clubs believe they have strong female representation within their existing committees.
- 85% believe their club is an inclusive place for women.

Umpiring

- 30% of clubs felt the level of umpiring was at or above a satisfactory level. 40% felt it is poor, whilst 30% believe umpiring requires expansion, development and attention.
- Quality of umpires and the cost of umpiring were identified as the two major concerns for clubs.
- Most of our clubs support the introduction of a Director of Umpiring, a person to develop, recruit and train umpires.

Facilities

- 50% of clubs felt their facilities were extremely good to excellent. 40% felt they were below the standard required.
- 70% of clubs have a major facility project planned over the next five years.
- Female friendly facilities, change rooms, playing surface and lighting were the key facility focuses across our region. Facilities (female and Change rooms) were the biggest priority indicated by all clubs.
- 65% of clubs did not believe their facilities affected their ability to recruit.
- All clubs recommended league support for facility upgrades.



RECOMMENDATIONS- SENIOR FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL KEY OUTCOMES

- Ensure the long-term viability of the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission and Affiliated Clubs.
- Increase competition competitiveness.
- Improve promotion of Senior Competitions, further divisional structures.
- Identify a preferred under age structure for the region with further consultation and discussions.
- Increased promotion and engagement through media, website, social media and other outlets.
- Implement new Club Sustainability measures, training and support of committees and volunteers.

Recommendation 1: Implement Commission and Competition names that engage all councils and Local Government Area's (LGA's) represented in the region.

Following the review, the commission will represent the following LGA's: Cardinia, Casey, Yarra Ranges and Murrindindi. The review committee recommends that the names of competitions greater reflect the region, factoring in the North East (Murrindindi), Outer East (Yarra Ranges) and South East (Casey and Cardinia).

The review Committee recommends the following:

- The commission to be known as AFL Outer East.
- Junior Competitions to be known as Outer East Juniors.
- Senior Competition to be known as Outer East Football and Netball.



Please note: - For the remainder of the document, the AFL Yarra Ranges will be referred to by its new commission name AFL Outer East.

Recommendation 2: Develop and Enhance Senior competition structures, through the amalgamation of the Yarra Ranges and SEFNL Competitions.

All senior football and netball competition structures in the Outer East Region should promote the sustainability of Clubs, whilst factoring in the following:

- Competitive balance.
- Meet the growth demands within the Region.
- Provide all clubs the opportunity to find their competitive and sustainable level.
- Promote competition equalisation as or if required.
- Consider geographic and economic factors that restrict and/or burden Club members.

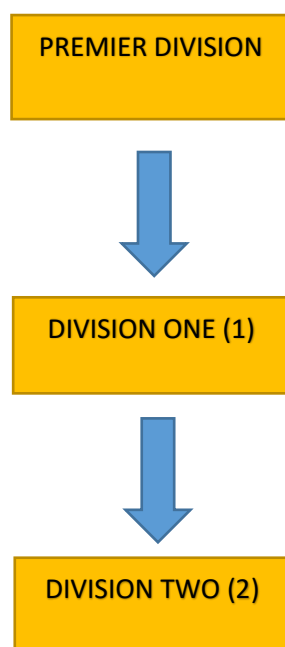
The competition will become a three-division competition effective from 2019. In the initial stages of implementation, division structures may change as new clubs enter and competitive balance is assessed.

Preference long term will be for nine or ten team divisions, as these provide an even home and away fixture, providing the ability to play every opposing team twice.

COMPETITION STRUCTURE 2019

The commission can confirm its preferred structure for 2019. Final team placements will be confirmed prior to the conclusion of the division one finals series of 2018. Please note that the final structure may change following the completion of the review process. A final five finals series will be retained under all future structures.

Season 2019 will have a minimum of sixteen to eighteen home away games, this will also be ratified prior to conclusion of division one finals series.



PREMIER

8/9 Team Comp in 2019

- Top 5 AFL Yarra Ranges Division 1
- Top 3 SEFNL

DIVISION 1

8/9 Team Comp in 2019

- Bottom 5 AFL Yarra Ranges Division 1
- Bottom 3 SEFNL
- 1 team from YR Division 2- By Application

DIVISION 2

8 Team Comp in 2019

- Sides to be made up of existing AFL YR Division 2 Clubs

Table 1.1 Divisional Structure 2019

Proposed Division Entry Guidelines

- There is an option for one club being placed into Division 1 in 2019 from our existing Division 2 competition. Current ladder position in 2018, whilst considered, will not be the only consideration in club promotion.
- Entry for either ninth team competitions would be by application only, addressing the below criteria as a minimum standard.
- Should a Club who qualifies for Premier Division successfully request to start in Division 1, their place would be offered to the next best placed club from their completion.
- A request to start down a division would need to be submitted via a formal application to the commission and required in writing (signed by executive club officers) prior to October 1st, 2018.

Clubs that participate in the SEFNL or AFL Yarra Ranges Division 1 Senior Grand Final will be automatically placed in Premier Division for 2019.

Some of the Key Selection Criteria's for which clubs will be assessed for inclusion in Premier or Division 1 in the initial year (2019), include but are not limited to, are:

- On field overall club performance over the past 5 years.
- Both football and netball will be considered allowing a whole of club assessment to take place.
- Financial sustainability and payment performance.
- Ability of the club to compete in the higher division from a financial point of view.
- Club financial statements (audited) for past 2 years to be provided upon request.
- Quality and commitment towards both junior boy's and girl's football and development pathway.
- Must have under age football or a clear pathway to in 2019
- Facilities, including capacity for crowds, netball, all-ability access, females (including future development plans).
- Netball – fill all senior grades.
- Past compliance to SEFNL, Yarra Ranges and AFL Victoria's rules & regulations.

Note: - any divisional changes will be at the sole discretion of the commission.

Promotion and Relegation

The preferred Promotion and Relegation criteria will be one club up and one club down

- In 2019, promotion from Division 2 will be by application or invitation only, subject to commission approval and assessment.
- By 2021, the aim is to have promotion and relegation across all divisions, with no qualifying parameters attached.
- In the initial stages of the implementation of the Outer East Football Netball competition, the commission may utilise different promotion and relegation strategies to find competitive balance. This may include strategies such as two up or down, no relegation or promotion only. A consultative process will always be undertaken under this potential consideration.

Recommendation 3: Implement Sustainability measures that promote long term sustainability and viability of clubs within our region.

The objectives of the Community Club Sustainability Program are as follows:

- support equalisation of community football competitions;
- ensure teams fielded in the Competitions are strong and as equally matched as possible;
- provide the best opportunities for players to develop and display their skills;
- provide opportunities to compete at a community level within an orderly and fair system;
- enable team spirit and public support;
- encourage community and corporate sponsorships of Community Clubs;
- reduce the inflationary nature of player payments to assist clubs survive financially and reduce financial pressure;
- burden/stress on Clubs;
- promote player loyalty and junior development;
- support the role volunteers undertake in managing their Clubs

Key implementation measures to achieve this in 2019 in the Outer East Football Netball competition are as follows:

Salary Cap and Player Points

The recommendation for 2019 is as follows:

- a. Increase player point levels to match neighbouring competitions, EFL, NFL, AFL SE and AFL Gippsland.
- b. Utilise a tiered points system in each division to enhance competition equalisation.
- c. Set Salary Cap levels that consider neighbouring competitions, club sustainability and competitive balance.
- d. Undertake Player Point and Salary Cap Audits consistently across the season, with a minimum of two reviews per competition annually this is to ensure adherence.

Points will be increased to the following levels

PREMIER	DIVISION 1	DIVISION 2
44	44	47

Table 1.2 Points levels 2019

Tiered points will be applied to clubs in any division by the commission where required to achieve competition balance. Factors in determining application of this will include, but not exclusively consider:

- Strong Junior Participation numbers.
- Long term/on-going premiership success.
- Extended periods of poor on field performance.
- Sustained periods of salary cap spend higher than league average spend.

PREMIER	DIVISION 1	DIVISION 2
39	41	44

Table 1.3 Tiered Points levels 2019

Note: - Top three clubs from SEFNL playing in Premier Division will be limited to 39 points for season 2019 and reviewed annually.

The recommended Salary Cap limits for Season 2019 were developed following consultation from the clubs.

PREMIER	DIVISION ONE (1)	DIVISION TWO (2)
\$125,000	\$110,000	\$80,000

Table 1.4 Salary Cap levels 2019

Salary Cap amounts are to be reviewed annually

- Club consultation is paramount in any changes to points or salary cap changes.
- Premier Division Salary Caps should closely align to MPNFL and EFL Division one competitions.
- Club average spend data should be utilised in all Salary cap assessments.

Salary Cap amounts are to be reviewed annually. The review committee recommends the following:

- Club consultation is paramount in any changes to points or salary cap changes.
- Premier Division Salary Caps should closely align to MPNFL and EFL Division one competitions.
- Club average spend data should be utilised in all Salary cap assessments.

Note: The 2019 Figures have taken neighbouring competition Salary Caps into account, with focus on where competitions are proposed to be by 2020.

Region	League and Competition	APP for 2018 season	2018 PPS
Gippsland	Ellinbank & District Football League	\$ 80,000	38 - 46 pts
Gippsland	Gippsland Football League	\$ 160,000	38 - 46 pts
Gippsland	West Gippsland Football Netball	\$ 120,000	38 - 46 pts
Goulburn Murray	Kyabram District Football League	\$ 85,000	41 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Premier	\$ 225,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 1	\$ 150,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 2	\$ 100,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 3	\$ 75,000	47 pts
Metro	Northern Football League Div. 1	\$ 225,000	47pts
Metro	Northern Football League Div. 2	\$ 150,000	47pts
Metro	Northern Football League Div. 3	\$ 100,000	47pts
Metro	Southern Football League Div. 1	\$ 200,000	47 pts
Metro	Southern Football League Div. 2	\$ 150,000	47 pts
Metro	Southern Football League Div. 3	\$ 100,000	47 pts
South East	MPNFL Div. 1	\$ 150,000	39 pts
South East	MPNFL Div. 2	\$ 150,000	39 pts

Table 1.5 Neighbouring Competition Point and Salary Cap levels 2018

Region	League and Competition	Proposed APP 2019/20	PPS
Metro	Eastern Football League Premier	\$ 200,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 1	\$ 140,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 2	\$ 110,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 3	\$ 90,000	47 pts
Metro	Eastern Football League Div. 4	\$ 70,000	47 pts
South East	MPNFL Div. 1	\$ 140,000	40 pts
South East	MPNFL Div. 2	\$ 140,000	40 pts

Table 1.6 Neighbouring Competition Point and Salary Cap levels 2019 2020

Recommendation 4. Offer “points of entry” for new, existing or expansion clubs to plan to enter the AFL Outer East competition.

Growth of new clubs from the South East region has been restricted due to limited entry level of potential new clubs. It is vital that new clubs are established in the South East corridor to ensure competitive balance and to provide varied levels that considers a range of playing capabilities. As seen in Appendix 1.1, priority should be placed on the development of clubs in the Casey region.

The first step in this process will be see the introduction Berwick Springs Football Netball Club in season 2019. Initially the club will compete in under nineteen level and Netball, becoming a senior club we anticipate by 2020/2021.

Future competition growth is expected to be developed from the following sources:

- Competitive divisional structures that will attract clubs to both our Football Netball competitions.
- Development of South East Junior clubs into sustainable senior clubs within our divisional structure.
- New club development within surrounding growing suburbs, particularly Pakenham and Officer.



Though growth in Berwick, Narre Warren and Beaconsfield will be minimal over the next 20 years (appendix 1.4), there remains an under representation of football netball clubs in the region, which needs to be addressed as a priority to ensure competitive balance. A key consideration is the population demographics of Casey, in particular the high percentage of the population that come from diverse, multicultural backgrounds (appendix 1.3).

Recommendation 5: Provide long term stability and competitive balance for clubs in the North of the region.

The long-term sustainability of our affiliated Northern clubs is a key focus for the AFL Outer East in 2019 and beyond. Clubs ability to compete and remain viable both medium and long term will underpin any work undertaken in this space. Any changes to the structure of football in the region must consider:

- Ability to recruit from Melbourne and surrounding suburbs.
- Club viability and long-term sustainability.
- Financial viability.
- Travel.
- Competitive balance.

Working with AFL Goldfields and AFL Goulbourn Murray, during the 2019 season the AFL Outer East Commission will investigate the below two options: -

Option 1: Forming of a District league competition from our existing Northern based clubs, Kinglake, Yea, Thornton Eildon and Alexandra, with consideration of clubs located within the North East including Kyabram and District, Riddell, and Ovens and King Competitions.

Option 2: Integration of Northern Clubs into the Outer East Structure as a District Model

Key areas to address in this process include:

- Creating clear pathways from Junior to Senior Saturday Under age competitions.
- The preferred under age competition structure seventeen, eighteen and nineteen in the region.
- Alignment with Seymour District Juniors and senior football into one aligned region.
- Netball structures within this newly proposed region.

Recommendation 6: Appoint a Media Manager to improve promotion, communication and community engagement.

Implementation:

- Increased and improve radio Coverage in the region, providing potential of multiple game. Broadcasts each week, inclusive of preview and review shows.
- Grand Final days to be stand alone and avoid clashes with neighbouring competitions.
- Broadcast the League Presentation Night and other major events.
- Improve the coverage of Interleague and representative games at both senior and junior levels.
- Improve promotion of local of clubs, players and the region.
- Highlight our clubs and communities better through special interest stories, volunteer recognition, past legends, key dates and events.
- Continue to grow our social media footprint.
- Monitor and update content within website, football record and newspaper articles.
- Improve promotion of business partners, local councils and key stakeholders.
- Assist with the further development of sponsors.

Recommendation 7: Develop and implement strategies that promote transition from Junior Football to Senior Competitions.

The preferred structure at underage level remains a key discussion for all competitions across Victoria, with no ideal structure yet to emerge. The amalgamation of the two competitions poses challenges at underage level, with different age progression in South East Juniors (seventeen to nineteen) and AFL Yarra Ranges (sixteen to eighteen).

A phased in approach, supported by evidence, will be utilised in establishing preferred the preferred structure for under eighteen and nineteen football.

In season 2019, the following structure will be implemented:

- Two underage options will be offered under eighteen and nineteen football. Clubs can nominate a team in either age group or both.
- Maintain Current permit structure.
- Clubs will be provided the option of entering multiple teams at underage level.
- Preference will be given to alignment with seniors over grading of competitions.
- Alternative Fixturing and times will be utilised and encouraged (Friday/Saturday Night).

Other initiatives to be trialled include:

- Double headers in round one - three on Friday nights or other key dates for season 2019.
- Increased media cover and promotion of under eighteen and nineteen football.
- Clearer pathways for our interleague program.
- Appointment of Interleague Coaches in September/October of 2018 at all levels including junior and senior coaches.
- Assistance for clubs in the development of better relationships with Junior and senior clubs for transferring players from Junior to senior football.
- Implement a development evening to assist our coaches and captains to discuss further ideas within the development of all age groups.

An extensive study will be undertaken in 2019 designed assess and recommend a preferred underage football model for 2020 and beyond. Clubs, coaches, parents and players will be consulted in developing recommendations for the 2020 season. Working with AFL South East, the following options will also be explored:

- Outer East Juniors to assess odd year core age groups, nine, eleven, thirteen and fifteens.
- Under seventeen football played on Saturday mornings.
- Consistent age groups across the region sixteens and eighteens or seventeens and nineteens.
- Graded competitions to ensure competitive results and retention of our youth.





Recommendation 8: Identify and implement operational efficiencies that will assist in the decline in volunteer workload.

Volunteer workload was a consistent concern amongst all clubs through the review process.

Endeavour to decrease the demands and workload on all volunteers, particularly on match day will be a major focus: -

- Review game time periods (Length of games), time on seniors, quarter and half time breaks and the overall length of quarters.
- Identify preferred reserve/bench numbers for each division, including at reserves level.
- Trial rules that take pressure off player numbers such as 16 side competitions in Reserves and no boundary umpires in under eighteens.
- Decreasing match day paperwork through the development of an online paperwork record system.



NETBALL

KEY OUTCOMES

- Develop junior Netball across the region in under thirteen, fifteen and seventeen age groups.
- Introduction of a clear talent pathway for all netballers in the region.
- Increase and further develop the region umpiring panel.
- Improved Netball facilities and facility capacity, inclusive of courts and change rooms facilities.
- Increased promotion and recognition of Netball.
- Develop representative programs equivalent to those available in football, with the support of Netball Victoria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 9: Appoint a Netball Development Manager.

This key appointment is required to develop and execute all Netball review recommendations and grow Netball in the region. The review committee recommends the role is structured similarly to the regions Football Development Manager position, with participation growth and development a key focus. Operations staff should continue to manage day to day operations.

Recommendation 10: Create player pathways for all clubs, through the introduction of underage Netball.

The aim of the AFL Outer East Commission is that by 2021, all senior clubs participating in the region to have junior Netball sides across all age groups. To achieve this, in 2019 the following will be implemented:



- Introduce under age netball in the eleven, thirteen and fifteen age groups.
- Provide divisional Netball in junior ranks for clubs with strong numbers.
- Work closely with local junior netball competitions within our region.
- Build numbers in the seventeen and under age group.
- Development of club-based Net-Set-Go programs.
- Introduction of underage representative Programs.

Recommendation 11: Increase promotion of Netball competitions and participants.

Further promote Netball coverage to continue to mirror the levels of football competitions. All future media and promotional planning must consider Netball. Specifically, the following should be considered from 2019:

- Improve media coverage of Senior Finals, including live stream and commentary for the A-Grade Grand Finals.
- Continue to promote netball through weekly previews, reviews and feature stories.
- Maintain a social media presence across all platforms.
- Introduction of player of the week and monthly awards.

Recommendation 12: Introduce clear representative pathways for Netballers in the region.

The development of a Talent pathway is vital to achieve the desired growth at Junior Levels. The long-term aim is to have a talent program at junior level that mirrors the junior football pathway. Greater emphasis on senior representative programs is required. The structure and management of the squads is an area that requires improvement, particularly coaching, selection and squad composition. Key implementation strategies will include:

- Improve the Senior Interleague Program, with the Interleague Side to represent as the best talent in our region.
- Appoint a Netball Manager as the Head of Interleague, with coaches and support staff working as coordinates.
- Develop Junior Association and representation squads that provide talent identification opportunities for talented players in our region.
- The Association championship squads at a senior level to become an Under 23 program, providing opportunity for players to be identified and create an improved pathway for the senior squad.
- Clear and defined coaching principles, code of practice, development standards, team strategies and transition through the talent pathway.
- Umpiring development program to ensure our competitions are umpired by umpires developed within our region.



Recommendation 13: Develop Netball Facilities that can facilitate the growth of the game in our region.

To continue to develop female friendly facilities at all affiliated clubs, a focus on increased capacity for participation will underpin all facility development in the region. Working with local and state government and Netball Victoria facility development we aim to:

- Ensure Netball facility development is considered in all regional facility and master planning processes.
- Improve Netball venues (lights, change rooms, spectator areas etc).
- Develop and improve court capacity to enable clubs to host additional matches (two courts where grounds permit).
- Develop female friendly change rooms for netball participants.
- Ensure court surfaces are safe for training and matches.
- Develop a suitable minimum standard checklist.

Recommendation 14: Focus on the development and growth of the regions umpiring pool.

Growing the capacity and number of umpires in the region to support competition growth is vital. A key driver of this will be improving the conditions for Netball umpires in our region. Particular focus will be made on improving remuneration structures, umpire education, training and development.

To achieve these key drivers, the following will be implemented:

- The region is to manage umpire payments commencing 2019. All official umpires will be paid monthly, provided with pay slips, and will include work cover insurance coverage.
- Support our head of umpiring to build the expertise, capacity and depth in our umpire pool. A focus on the development of club umpires into pool umpires will be another key driver.
- Improve Umpire development, training and education, offering coaching and development sessions that provide both accreditation and improvement.
- Ensure all A and B grade games are umpired by accredited competition umpires each week. We are committed in providing all grades with official approved umpires and move away from club-based umpires.

Recommendation 15: Continually review and modify the Netball by-laws to suit current needs.

Football Netball competitions constantly face challenges with the differences between how the highest levels of the sports are managed and structured. Player movement between clubs and in some instances, regions, affect club sustainability. In 2017, a Premium Player assessment was introduced, designed to ensure clubs focused on building a playing list from within, instead of seeking short term solutions with external recruitment.

The current Netball transfer system poses many challenges, with a large amount of unrestricted Netball players permitted to compete in many competitions, inclusive of mid-week and weekend competitions. This will not change in the short term.

From the commencement of season 2019 the By-laws will aim to:

- Minimise player movement between affiliated clubs.
- Create senior competitions at various standards to ensure all players can find their suitable playing level.
- Minimise player payments, with investment focused on the development of Coaches, equipment, and/or facilities.
- Assist clubs in building a sustainable player development, growth & retention model.
- Encourage VNL level or higher players entering our competitions, with a reasonable spread across the clubs to assist with competition growth and competitiveness.
- Ensure all by-laws encourage junior development and provide a clear club pathway.

Recommendation 16: Facilitate club and volunteer development in Netball.

It is recognised that the greatest resource is our people. Clear focus is required to effectively manage and support the regions netball volunteer network to aid volunteer retention and help recruit new volunteers. The aim is to build the capacity of individuals, clubs, and communities, with specific focus on the following:

- Coach Development.
- Netball Committees and subcommittees.
- Governance.
- Leadership and people management.
- Planning.
- Junior Development.



CONSULTATION PROCESS AND KEY FINDINGS: JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Junior clubs and parents completed an online survey to gain preliminary data which, in turn, directed the consultation process. All clubs completed this survey. A junior club forum was undertaken in November 2017 and a follow up meeting, focusing specifically on fixturing was held in July 2018.

The key findings from these two meetings were:

Participation

- Clubs identified both under sixteen and eighteen girls as being the two most difficult age groups to establish teams and find players.
- 64% of clubs prefer even age groups. However, junior clubs were clear that they would support either, placing the decision in regard to core age preferences with senior clubs.
- Regarding permits, 54.5% supported the current system, whilst 45.5% preferred capped number of players.
- 84% of parents said that the ideal number of weekly training sessions should be one up to U12's.
- 70% of parents said that two training sessions a week would be ideal for U13's and above.
- 43% of parents said that starting pre-season training in February is the most ideal.
- 74% of parents believe coaches on the field is beneficial at Under 9's level.
- 95% of parents find the current length of games is suitable for all boys' age groups.
- 64% of parents believe the current system is the best option for permit players.
- 68% believe the current age group structure will support player retention and growth.
- 76% of parents support the grading system in some age groups, with 48% in U14 and 51% in U16.
- 81% of parents believe that the time for the U16's is appropriate being the last match. 49% said they'd be open to U16's playing Saturday morning before the 18's.

Fixturing

- Clubs unanimously agree changes to the current fixturing system is required.
- Clubs were unanimous on retaining traditional home fixturing where possible.
- Clubs were unanimous that fixtures should be delivered in two blocks, round one-four and five-fourteen.
- Clubs acknowledged that flexibility when playing away would be required, and that not all teams from an away club would be together.
- 30 minutes or under is the preferred travel time between games for away games according to both parents and clubs.
- 81.5% of parents were happy with current length of games.
- 73% of clubs believe the current time slot is ideal for under sixteens.
- Clubs support playing sixteens at an alternate time, however were clear on the need for significant notice of any change in time.
- Friday night and Saturday morning were the preferred alternate time slots for under sixteens.
- Clubs preferred flexible game times over flexibility in venues
- 71% of clubs supported the trial of equalisation methods. No percentage was the most popular (42%)
- 82% of clubs supported a standalone grand final.

- 80% of clubs would prefer to play one less round than play in the middle week of the school holidays (July).
- 73% of parents believe that the junior grand finals should be stand alone.
- 74% of parents agree that the league presentation and vote count should be merged into one night.
- 48% of parents believe flexibility in fixtured game start times will facilitate the fixture space change.

Equalisation

- Clubs did not support equalisation measures that focused on scoring.
- 80% of clubs supported grading within all age groups.
- Clubs supported grading, on the condition it was identified early in the season and no changes to the nominated system occurred during the season proper.
- 85% of parents supported some element of grading.

Non-Competitive

- 64% of clubs supported the introduction of zones in non-competitive age groups.
- Clubs do not support playing multiple non-competitive games at the same time across the ground.
- 73% of clubs believe they have an excellent relationship with their Auskick centre.
- 55% of clubs have Auskick Transition strategies.
- 45% identified Auskick as a major club focus. 55% are happy with the current Auskick status.
- All clubs were positive about their relationship with local primary & secondary schools.
- 64% of clubs identified improving recruitment out of local schools as a major focus.
- 55% of clubs have the Auskick Coordinator as a committee position with a further 18% of clubs looking to introduce this idea.
- 86% parents believe 8:30am or later is a suitable time for the U9's to start on a Sunday. 40% said yes to non-comp games on Friday nights.
- 65% of parents said they would support U9 and U10 games being played on modified fields.



Junior Senior Pathways

- Only one junior club is formally aligned with its senior club, i.e. one club structure.
- 70% of junior clubs believe their relationship with their senior club is good or better.
- 30% believe the relationship needs more attention, which contrasts corresponding data from our senior clubs.
- 63% of junior clubs do not believe there is a satisfactory transition program from under sixteens to under eighteens.
- No junior club currently believes becoming a one club model is feasible over the next 5 years.
- Functions and events are a key area senior clubs offer the most support to junior clubs.
- 74% of parents believe their club has a good or strong relationship with their senior club.
- 68% of parents are unsure whether their club has a transition program.
- 75% of parents believe their club has very good or excellent coaching.

Volunteers

- 63% find recruiting volunteers difficult.
- 82% of clubs do not have retention strategies for volunteers.
- Clubs in general, do not find it difficult to find goal or boundary umpires on game days.
- Despite the difficulty clubs identified in finding volunteers, 63% of clubs stated they do not require assistance or support from the competition.
- 36% of clubs pay volunteers at their club for variance roles.
- All clubs are happy with the support of their parent groups.
- 82% of clubs believe they have a good mix of age across their club volunteers.
- 50% of clubs have role descriptions for volunteers. 25% said no but were interested in planning and developing such a system.
- 82% of clubs have a Coaching Coordinator.
- 90% of clubs provide coach support for their teams.
- 60% of clubs have a level 2 coach at their club.
- 60% of clubs conduct interviews, assessment processes and transition strategies for coaches.
- 65% of parents said that they volunteer on a match day.
- 46% said that they don't volunteer due to having children to look after.
- 66% of parents said that they're comfortable with all that their club does for its volunteers.

Financial

- 73% of clubs were concerned about costs.
- All clubs stated they make a profit each year. 55% are in a strong financial position.
- 72% will record a small profit, the remaining 28% will break even.
- Clubs believe affiliation fees are their greatest financial concern.
- Sponsorship is the most difficult revenue source for clubs to maintain and establish.
- 65% clubs wish to retain the current \$5 gate levy for adult entry.
- 87% of parents said that they find their clubs fees reasonable.
- 62% of people said they'd support an increase in membership to scrap H&A entry fees.
- 56% said that they'd rather \$5 per adult for finals entry fees.
- 64% of parents that the costs of junior football are reasonable.

Female Football

- 91% have a key focus on female football.
- 91% of clubs invest in female football.
- 89% clubs believe female football provides benefits to clubs.
- 73% of clubs have female teams. Only one club indicated they do not wish to have a female team in 2019.
- 91% of clubs are focused on increasing female participation.
- 81% of clubs do not believe their facilities are suitable for female football.
- 81% of clubs believe their club is inclusive for women.
- 91% have a balance of both women and men on their committees.
- 72% of parents believes that their club has equal focus on female football just as much as the males.
- 57% of parents said their club's facilities aren't appropriate for females.
- 85% of parents believe their clubs is an inclusive environment for females.

Umpiring

- 55% of clubs believe the standard of umpiring is at the required level. 9% felt it was poor, whilst 36% believe it needs some attention and development.
- All clubs identified the quality of umpiring as their major concern when it comes to umpiring.
- Clubs were supportive of the introduction of a Director of Umpiring for the region.
- Over 50% of parents believe that the standard of umpiring in the AFL Yarra Ranges needs attention.
- Of the parents with concerns, 21% believe the age of umpires is a concern whilst 19% believe that the quality of umpires is a concern.

Facilities

- Clubs were split on the standard of junior facilities, with 50% satisfied and 50% unhappy with their current facility.
- 64% of clubs have a major facility project planned in the next 5 years.
- Developing female friendly facilities is the key facility focus for junior clubs.
- Most clubs did not believe facilities affected recruitment and retention of players.
- 34% of parents said the facilities were good whilst 27% rate their facilities as moderate.



RECOMMENDATIONS- JUNIOR FOOTBALL

KEY OUTCOMES

- Transition: Auskick to junior and junior to senior.
- Develop a fixture that maintains a sense community, whilst promoting participation growth.
- Improved communication between the commission and key stakeholders.
- Review and assess competition structures to ensure they are conducive to growth, service the needs of all stakeholders and allow for maximum equality.
- Increased participation in female and male football.
- Increase Outer East representation across all levels of the talent pathway.
- Improved promotion of junior football across the region.

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a fixturing system that facilitates future growth of competition numbers.

Junior player numbers have increased significantly in the past three years (Appendix 2.1), with the most significant increase in female football. This increase has placed significant pressure on junior fixturing and facility availability (grounds), with 26 sides added across all competitions (Appendix 2.2) The traditional fixture model cannot facilitate current numbers and requires urgent modification, across all age groups in both girls' and boys' football.

Any implemented fixturing system must consider the following key aspects:

- Keeping the local community feel (core fixtures).
- Provide opportunity to grade age groups.
- Integrate female teams.
- Provide the ability to release extended fixtures (rounds one-four and rounds five-fourteen).
- Provide flexibility for regrading and modification, as required.

Fixturing Solutions for 2019 and beyond will include:

- Decrease total match length: Quarter time breaks to shorten and not permitting any persons to enter the ground during breaks (quarter and/or three-quarter time).
- Implement fixture announcement strategies that provide greater flexibility for change. Key fixture Dates in November and Core Fixtures to be released in March.
- Modify Core fixtures implementation. Clubs to be together at home games where possible.
- Identify alternative time slots for Non-competitive and older age groups (girls and boys).
- Trial regional non-competitive competitions, including night competitions for under nine competitions.
- Introduce new afternoon timeslots (example 4.40 pm) where grounds comply with AFL Vic lighting minimum standard.
- Introduce cut-off date for team entries. Increased affiliation costs for late entry or clubs charged for late entry and/or withdrawal of any teams, inclusive of girls and boys teams.
- Set start times for early morning fixtures (8.30 am starts), unless under agreement with umpires and each club of commencing later than this time.

Recommendation 2: Improve promotion of junior competitions and participants.

This will be achieved through a concerted focus in two areas, events and media.

Events

- Increase exposure through major events such as Grand Finals and representative programs.
- Introduce Stand Alone Grand Finals, avoiding clashes with senior football finals.
- Junior Grand Final to be played the week before the senior finals begin, with fixturing to reflect this.
- Yarra Ranges Girls Grand Finals to be integrated into the junior program. If this isn't possible, utilise standalone Grand Final time to ensure clubs can support their participating female teams.
- Modify Premiership flags, aligning closer with senior football.

Media

Junior coverage needs to engage all clubs and participants in the forums they use most in today's environment. Future media and promotional planning must consider social media platforms that will be most effective.

- Improved coverage of Finals, including live stream and commentary for the Grand Finals.
- Weekly previews, reviews and feature stories.
- Introduce Junior and Auskick Footballer of the week.
- Promote junior events through competition social media outlets.
- Junior results to be published via various competition news outlets.

Recommendation 3 and 4: Increase Participation

Recommendation 3: Investigate measures that encourage player retention, including equalisation strategies designed to create competitive football.

Recommendation 4: Trial participation strategies in non-competitive age groups.



Implementation of both recommendations will be phased in over the next two years (2019/2020). Coaches, committees, and parents will be consulted through this process, with feedback and improvements sought from all involved. All changes will be supported by evidence-based information and collected data. Club support and willingness to trial various strategies will be required for this to be effective. Implementation will focus on and reinforce the development of skills, fun and enjoyment for participants over winning:

- Introduce grading and divisional structures in all core age groups. Appendix 2.4 highlights the effectiveness of this measure and the benefits in assisting player retention.
- Begin to phase in and adopt the Junior Match policy from 2019 and beyond.

- Undertake an equalisation trial in 2019. Using the strategy of no percentage, create a detailed report on the effectiveness of the measure.
- Begin the adoption of the Junior Match Guide from 2019 and beyond. Over an eight-week period, trial different aspects of the junior match policy, including position zones, smaller fields, smaller team numbers and multiple games at one venue at the same time.
- Develop and implement non-competitive age group lightning premierships.
- Trial alternative fixture dates and times (Friday nights).

Recommendation 5 and 6- Player Retention

Recommendation 5: Develop transition strategies from Junior Football to Senior Clubs

Recommendation 6: Develop and implement Auskick transition strategies to increase retention and transition to junior football.

Player retention statistics highlight that players leave our game during two key phases, Auskick to Junior football and between 13 and 18 years old. Following a significant drop off, Auskick numbers have been steadily improving, but remains a key focus (Appendix 2.3). Particular focus should be made on:

- Transition from Auskick to junior football and at under sixteen level.
- Auskick participants leaving the program each year (50%).
- Improving transition strategies at both levels is crucial to the long-term sustainability of football in the region and will lead to an increase of participation numbers across all levels.

Auskick

- Schedule Auskick Grid Games (male & female) in senior fixtures.
- Introduce an Auskick seven's carnival to promote transition from Auskick to Junior Football.
- Develop stronger alliances between junior clubs and Auskick centres.
- Invest in coaching and development programs for non-competitive and Auskick age groups.
- Ensure all Auskick centres have a junior club alignment.
- Implement the AFL Auskick Curriculum in all centres in the region.
- Develop and support strong pathways from Auskick right through to open age football that will encourage and support maximum participation.

Junior- Senior

- Develop and support strong pathways from Auskick through to juniors and then to open age football that encourage and maximise participation.
- Undertake a detailed study designed to make formal recommendations for the appropriate structure of football through the sixteen-twenty-year-old age bracket within our region. This will continue to strengthen junior and senior club relationships and the player pathway.
- Constantly review initiatives, utilising analysis and data to build retention through the transition age group.
- Permits provided to over age kids to ensure team representation and participation at all age group levels.

- Develop and introduce one club governance models. Facilitate stronger relationships and integration between junior and senior clubs. Encourage a “one club” mentality in all facets of club operations and development programs.

Recommendation 7: Develop financial modelling that ensures long term sustainability and viability of clubs.

Clubs identified fees and affiliations as their major concern operationally. Appendix 2.5 highlights that current costs for clubs are at a competitive level, however developing systems that ease the financial burden on clubs remains a priority.

Specific focus should be made in the following areas, and implemented by 2019:

- AFL Outer East to fund interleague through a revised funding model/s.
- Introduce on-line store for all club purchases.
- Review \$5 Gate Entry charge and identify long term solutions to remove this by 2020.
- The player levy to be paid online by families, rather than a lump sum by clubs.

Recommendation 8: Increase connections between our clubs and local community groups, schools to grow participation.

Strengthening connections between senior clubs, school ambassadors and junior clubs will ensure long term sustainability and viability of clubs. A focus on engaging female, multicultural and indigenous participants is a priority.



The Football Development Manager (FDM) plays a key role in supporting clubs with the implementation the following strategies:

- Develop strong relationships between local clubs and schools.
- Support and promote AFL Victoria’s Multicultural Programs and continue to support and develop multicultural and indigenous focused rounds within local competitions
- Establish ambassadors within multicultural communities.
- Identify and engage talented indigenous and multicultural players to the Hawthorn Next Generation Academies.

TALANTED PLAYER PATHWAY

KEY OUTCOMES

- Increase AFL Outer East representation at TAC Cup, VFL and AFL Level.
- Create more senior level players for local clubs.
- Improve links with Eastern Ranges and Hawthorn Next Gen Academy.
- Build coaching capacity in the region.
- Develop industry leading standards and practices in all AFL Outer East programs.
- Ensure program remains accessible to all players in the region, regardless of social or financial limitations.
- Cost effective and professionally run programs that both assist in player retention and recruitment for clubs in the region.
- Develop a clear representative pathway from entry level (under twelve) to senior football.

Recommendation 9: Restructure the funding model for all junior representative programs.

Clubs were operating under a user pay system, which saw some clubs pay up to \$4000 per year for their interleague programs. This system placed significant financial pressure on a select group of clubs. Modification of fee structures allows this program to be funded directly by AFL Outer East and encourages clubs to promote all talented players. Keeping in mind this will be reviewed on a year by year's basis to ensure financial sustainability of this program can be retained. The aim is to keep representative programs free for players and will underpin all financial decisions moving forward.

Implementation:

- Fiscal management and fiscal control of the program to be managed by AFL Outer East.
- Removal of the interleague camp from the junior development program.
- Identify a cost-effective alternative to the camp.
- Increase corporate support and sponsorship of all Junior Representative Programs.
- Review uniform costs, allocation and suppliers. Implement strategies to ensure the program is cost effective in the long term.
- Implement a payment structure that is equitable for all clubs and funds the full program.
- Consolidate and integrate talent programs in the region with competitions and clubs.
- Assist in the promotion and management of inter league at all levels, both senior and junior football.
- Junior clubs to support competition sponsors and purchase minimum amounts of suppliers as set by Outer East commission.
- Increase skill development opportunities for players through clinics and holiday programs.

Recommendation 10: Align representative teams to the Victorian Metro Talent Pathway.

Though the current programs, the V-Line championships and the South East interleague program offer excellent competition for our players, they have no link to the talent pathway undertaken by our players. AFL Outer East players are in the Vic Metro talent pathway, meaning that both programs, which are AFL Vic Country aligned, limit opportunity for player identification and support. Both programs also offer no opportunities for interleague games to be played in the region which makes the promotion of the program to key stakeholders both limited and difficult.

- Move the under fifteen programs from the V-Line Cup to the Victorian Metropolitan Championships.
- Identify and pick the best players for each squad.
- Remove club quotas and provide opportunity for all players in the region.
- Develop a female academy to provide a clear pathway to Eastern Region Girls programs.
- Implementation of a new Interleague jumper that represents both senior and junior football.
- Utilise the South East competition for most of our core Interleague age groups (thirteen - sixteen).
- Improve talent identification. Ensure the development of player databases and player development plans is incorporated into all programs.

Recommendation 11: Align the Commission talent Pathway to Elite Development Programs (Hawthorn Next Generation Academy and Eastern Ranges).

Closer alignments to Eastern Ranges and Hawthorn Next Generation, with support in coaching and resources, will build capacity in the region through:

- Appointed Talent Coordinator with direct communication with Eastern Ranges/Hawthorn.
- Incorporate Eastern Ranges Curriculum, teaching points and terminology into all programs.
- Align all under eleven – thirteen programs (male and female) with Hawthorn NGA, utilising coaching, curriculums and training resources.
- Introduce school Holiday Development Program at Hawthorn/Eastern Ranges, utilising their staff.
- Reporting to the Football Development Manager, the AFL Outer East Junior Competition Coordinator will manage all administration of the program.



Recommendation 12: AFL Outer East staff and appointed volunteers to manage of all Development programs.

The appointment of the Junior Competitions coordinator enables the program to be facilitated and managed internally. The volunteers who have assisted with the management of this program have provided fantastic support, however external management of the program made communication with external and internal stakeholders, program management and financial control near impossible.

Implementation:

- Appoint a Talent Co-Ordinator/Program Manager.
- Reporting to the Region General Manager, the AFL Outer East Football Development Manager will manage all coach, curriculum development and programs.
- Development of Position Descriptions for all key roles, including coaching and Talent Identification positions.
- Clear role aims, responsibilities, agreed outcomes and deliverables for all positions.
- AFL Outer East will appoint volunteer positions, including team managers, trainers and strength and conditioning staff. Appointments to be managed via application, interview and all ratified by the Region General Manager and Commission.
- Develop a clear coaching pathway for coaches in the AFL Outer East Region, with progression to TAC Cup and VFL levels achievable for talented coaches.
- Coach Education programs to be integrated with AFL Outer East development programs.

Recommendation 13: Develop and implement a Regional Coaching Program

Coaching standards of AFL Outer East programs should exceed club level. In the long term the standard of coaching with these programs should raise the level of coaching in the region). It is vital that a culture of representative coaches, grow and develop our coach's capacity in our region.

This will look like:

- Linking Coaching Seminars and programs to interleague programs and coach development.
- Delivery of coaching seminars and conferences as requested by Football Development Manager.
- Mentoring of coaches and coach assessment, including level 2.
- Compliance to AFL Victoria's coaching behavioural standards.

Key outcomes will include: -

- Identification and development of talented coaches in our region.
- Development of a transition into coaching and create opportunities for exiting senior players in our region.
- A coach education and development program implemented for all coaching staff.
- Appointment of a Level 2 accredited (minimum) Region Coaching Ambassador, to support our coaches.

Recommendation 14: Develop a coaching curriculum for all programs

There is a clear pathway in our interleague program. Formalisation of program goals, key learning focuses, and curriculum is required to ensure the program fast tracks the development of our players. Significant focus is to be placed on the development of coaching fundamentals, football IQ, preparation, and elite standards.

Implementation:

- Develop and introduce Core Values, purpose and key learning focuses for all development programs.
- Develop a program with clear progression and pathways from Under elevens to senior football.
- By 2019, develop a curriculum framework for each age group, offering clear progression.
- By 2019, a detailed curriculum for each level of the interleague program developed and implemented across the program.
- Liaising with both Hawthorn Next Gen Academy and Eastern Ranges, develop and introduce Key teaching points, terminology, minimum coaching requirements and training guidelines.



RECOMMENDATIONS- REGION

FEMALE FOOTBALL

KEY OUTCOMES

- Successful integration of all female competitions into match day fixtures.
- Increased participation and team growth.
- Female friendly and accessible club facilities.
- Clear talent pathways for all females in our region.
- Implementation of clear pathways for female football participants (Auskick-Senior).
- Outer East Development League Senior Female competition.
- Development of improved and available timeslots for female football.
- Female representation in key roles in our region (Commission, committees, coaching and staff).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 and 2- Female Pathways

Recommendation 1: Continue to develop and grow the female talent pathway.

Recommendation 2. Create clear pathways for female participants at all levels of the game.



The female talent pathway, through the development of Eastern Ranges and Box Hill in the VFL Women's has provided a clear pathway for female participants in the region. Regionally, this needs to be increased to ensure that talented female players in the region are fast tracked.

Talent: -

- Introduce a female Hawthorn Next Gen Academy.
- Support clubs in creating pathways into football for alternative talent from other sports.
- Support the Introduction of Eastern Ranges Futures squad, for best talent.
- Maintain strong relationship and representative numbers in the Eastern Ranges under eighteen TAC Cup Squad.
- Develop a standalone Outer East Female Development program.
- Introduce a senior representative side in 2019.

Community: -

- Working with the EFL, build the Eastern Region Girls and Women's competitions.
- Create clear pathways from Under eighteen to Women's football.
- Introduce development level competitions for AFL Outer East clubs in Junior and Senior Age groups.
- Introduce Female Only Auskick groups across the region.
- Develop a new Non-Competitive model to increase female participation.
- Support Clubs to develop female growth strategies.
- Develop best practice for integrating strong female teams in the ERGFL model.

Recommendation 3. Increase engagement, promotion and of female football.

Female Football coverage has not matched that of male competitions. All future media and promotional planning must consider Female Football, including:

- Improve the implementation of female fixtures into current, traditional timeslots, offering more exposure for female competitions.
- Improved coverage of Female Football, including live stream and commentary for grand Finals.
- Introduction of weekly previews, reviews, and feature stories.
- Improved Social media presence across all platforms.
- Introduction of player of the week and month awards.



Recommendation 4: Develop inclusive, female friendly club environment and cultures across the region.

As rapid growth continues in female football, building the capacity of females is vital in ensuring that all competitions continue to grow. Factoring in that over 50% of teams competing in competitions in the region are female, females are underrepresented in key roles such as coaching, executive committee positions and umpiring.

- Ensure that AFL Outer East staffing reflects and represents the participants in the region.
- Increase Female Volunteer and Coach Numbers across all levels of the game.
- Offer Female only coach and volunteer development programs to increase the number of women is a key.
- Working with local council and government, ensure clubs with female teams have Female Friendly facilities.
- Develop a “Women of the Outer East” group that represents women across the region.
- Working with Local and State Government develop Female Friendly facilities at venues.
- Identify alternate venues in our region that can facilitate growth in female football.

UMPIRING

KEY INITIATIVES

- Provide a regional approach to the recruitment, development, and retention of umpires.
- Develop additional and innovative programs with youth development centres, such as Lilydale Secondary College.
- Develop a permanent base for umpiring in our region for both senior and junior umpires.
- Introduce a league-based Head of Umpiring, managing all facets of umpiring within our region.
- Increase resourcing, promotion, and investment in umpire development
- Ensure all games have a competition provided umpire.
- Build greater depth in umpiring talents across all levels of umpiring.
- Align Senior and Junior umpiring programs.
- Development of Umpiring academies and mentor programs.
- Clear pathways for talented umpires to senior football and the elite level (TAC Cup, VFL, AFL).
- Increased investment in Umpire coaching and coach development structures.
- Clear development plans and pathways for all disciplines (Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires).



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Management of umpiring and umpiring operations to be centralised, moving under the sole control of the AFL Outer East Commission.

This will include:

- Appoint a Director of Umpiring, who manages and oversees Umpiring in our region.
- Director of Umpiring to be based at Kilsyth Head office, this role reports directly to Region General Manager.
- Umpire uniforms to be approved, supplied and directly sold by AFL Outer East and to comply with sponsorship requirements of the competition.
- Dissolve the Umpire Board of management, allocating all responsibilities of coaching to the Director of Umpiring.
- Umpiring appointments, including the management of Schedules managed at commission level

Recommendation 2: Build capacity of umpiring in the region through coaching and umpire development.

Investment in coaching and development is vital to ensure a high level of umpire retention and quality in the region.

Key to this will be:

- Identifying and appointing development focused coaches for all three disciplines (field, boundary, and goals).
- Appointing a junior umpire coaching panel, managed by a junior umpire head coach.
- Development of a strategic plan for umpiring in our region, approved by commission.
- Develop a coaching and development framework, including curriculum for umpiring in our region.
- Introduce modern coaching techniques, including video analysis within all umpire development programs.
- Promote AFL Victoria Country academy programs and umpiring pathways.
- Support and develop umpire coach education programs via (AFL Vic).
- Increase the number of Level 2 accredited umpires in our region, by a minimum of 10% per annum.

Recommendation 3: Develop a regional strategy for Umpiring within our region, inclusive of junior, senior, and umpiring bodies.

This creates clear direction for umpiring in the region and ensures that as coaches and umpire managers change, the direction, growth and development can continue to occur.



Key to this will be:

- Work with senior and junior clubs to form strong and productive relationships, inclusive of one club visitation per club per annum.
- Provide resources and initiatives and support to the umpire's association to ensure ongoing in both financial and structural viability.
- Work with regional umpiring associations to promote umpiring through the community including junior and senior clubs, schools, and multicultural communities.
- Develop a promotion and recruitment strategy for umpires in the region.
- Build a strong media presence for umpiring in the region, including social media.
- Build stronger relationships with clubs. Particular focus on increasing umpire presence at training and club sessions.
- Develop a regional code of conduct for coaches, media policy, spectators, and players, to ensure a safe environment for umpires in the region.

Recommendation 4 and 5- Umpire Pathways

Recommendation 4: Develop clear umpire pathways for all disciplines.

Recommendation 5: Develop next generation of umpires in the region.

Increasing the number of umpires moving from junior to senior umpiring will build the depth required to support future competition growth. Decreasing the average age of our senior umpiring group is important for long term sustainability.

Senior

- Integrate junior and senior training, creating transition from Junior to senior football.
- Improve talent identification, ensuring all talented umpires in the region are provided opportunity in elite programs such as the V-Line academy and VFL.
- Build strong relationships with local athletic clubs, identifying athletes capable of transitioning into field and boundary and school-based academies.
- Support and promote a more defined “player to umpire” program within the region. Engage recently retired senior players into umpiring as they finish their playing or coaching careers
- Develop and fast track talented female umpires in the region.

Junior

- Introduce improved recruitment strategies for junior football participants.
- Introduce umpire development programs in our local school network throughout our region.
- Develop Junior Umpire Academies in the South East, Murrindindi, and Yarra Ranges areas.
- Introduction of a female umpiring academy.
- Introduce AFL Victoria’s trainee umpire initiative.



FACILITIES

KEY OUTCOMES

- Develop region wide plans to advocate for and collaborate on facility development for competitions, their clubs, umpires, and schools.
- Transition of all operations to the Kilsyth Centre of Excellence.
- Develop a permanent home for umpiring in the region.
- Develop a training base for representative programs.
- All venues in the region to have match and training capable lighting.
- Playing Surfaces, both football and Netball, which have adequate lighting to all facilities.
- Netball courts and facilities that can facilitate both Junior and Senior Netball, expansion where possible to two courts.
- Female Friendly facilities that promote and facilitate increased participation in our region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Drive facility development and infrastructure planning with local governments, through a Regional Facility Development Plan and Female Facility Plan.

Regional Facility Plans, similar to AFL Barwon's G21 (City of Greater Geelong), highlight the importance of a detailed, independent plan for facility development in our region.

This will be supported through the following measures:

- Maintain facility audits of all club facilities to comply to the AFL National Facility Standards, in conjunction with local councils.
- Working with all leagues within the Eastern Region, facilitate a report that provides a detailed and independent document highlighting current and prospective facility developments within our region.
- Consult with clubs, competitions and local government to ensure all facilities are being maximised and multi-use facility focus on all facilities that require upgrading.
- Assist with facility design and expansion to current AFL Victoria recommended standards, refer AFL Victoria website for guidance.
- Successfully transfer RAC operations to Kilsyth Centre of Excellence by the end of 2019.



Recommendation 2: Increase capacity of clubs and volunteers to develop local facilities.

To achieve the facility development targets, we require over the next five years, club's ability to raise revenue to support projects is paramount. With a focus on government grants, fundraising and the ability to save for key projects, whilst maintaining core yearly operations.

- Create a local government reference group with representatives from all municipalities within our region to formulate and discuss facility and club/competition facility related issues.
- Arrange at a minimum a half yearly meeting with all related local council sport and recreation departments.
- Support clubs in Facility development and planning, (via club master planning) including the promotion and education of clubs in utilising available Grants and the Country Football Netball Grant.

Recommendation 3: Identify a site/sites for league programs, including representative football, netball, and umpiring.

Due to the rapid increase of female participation numbers, there are limited facilities available for representative programs such as Interleague. Programs are nomadic and finding suitable venues is becoming increasingly difficult. The use of athletics tracks for umpiring is problematic, this due to the junior and senior groups being split, limited social facilities, cost, and practicality for coaching and development. A regional facility which can be utilised year-round, whilst supporting competition growth is ideal.

In particular:

- Develop a home base for all facets and levels of umpiring. Two key areas required: social and training.
- Working with Yarra Ranges Council, AFL Victoria and Lilydale Heights Secondary College, to develop an all-weather training base.



COMMUNITY, PEOPLE & CULTURE

KEY OUTCOMES

- Develop stakeholder and community engagement initiatives that support the vision, values, and mission statement of AFL Outer East whilst enhancing social values and equal opportunity for all.
- Improved promotion and development of our game within our local communities.
- Improved engagement with key stake holders, local, state and federal government and corporate partners.
- Build strong working relationships between the Commission and Clubs.
- Improve communication between Commission Administration and all stakeholders, particularly clubs, parents, volunteers and participants.

Recommendation 4: Promotion and development of coaching in the region.

The quality of coaching in the region underpins participation, player retention and development. This is a key focus area for our region. Specific attention should be paid to coach behaviour, training, education and development:

- Ensure 100% coaches in the region are Level 1 accredited, including assistant coaches.
- All junior coaches, officials, volunteers, committee and umpires have Working with Children accreditation.
- Provide a greater emphasis on coach education particularly at junior level, strengthening links to AFL clubs and providing more targeted seminars and development/education opportunities. Focus will be on establishing coaching coordinators and up-skilling junior coaches.
- Increase the number of level 2 coaches in our region.
- Develop and implement a Coaching Strategy Framework.
- Implement the Eastern Region Coaches Philosophy.



Recommendation 5: Ensure that community engagement and social responsibility create inclusive clubs for all participants.

Significant Investment is to be placed in projects that have social benefit the community and ensure clubs and communities are inclusive, safe, and supportive environments for all participants. This will be achieved through the following measures:

- Implement a “social responsibility” program across all clubs within the region, with targeted curriculum for junior and senior clubs.
- Provide refresher training on a yearly basis to all clubs, officials, volunteers and coaches.
- Provide regular information and briefings to clubs on shifting trends with regards to demographics, ethnicity, community issues and female team development.
- Utilise the resources and expertise of partner organisations such as Sport and Life Training (SALT) in the delivery of social responsibility programs.
- Develop a Local Government Reference Group to identify key community engagement activities and support programs.
- Utilise media outlets and social media for the promotion of community engagement initiatives from clubs and competitions.
- Through the support of interest groups, develop a Cultural Awareness Program for clubs within the region, particularly those within areas of high diversity.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to align with AFL Victoria’s RAP initiative.



Recommendation 6: Provide development opportunities club and volunteer programs.

Building capacity in our volunteer network and supporting them in having the necessary skills to undertake their daily roles requires some improvement to assist with volunteer retention and grow all competitions. The stronger our clubs perform off field, the better they will perform on field.

Measures should include:

- Develop recognition initiatives for volunteers.
- Ensure all clubs are helped with sustainable financial modelling, i.e. budgeting, cash flow management and overall financial management structures.
- Provide all clubs with templates for strategic planning, club policies, position descriptions and financial management, inclusive of online training modules.
- Provide training and educational seminars based on development needs identifies by clubs.
- Provide yearly development seminars for volunteers and officials covering topics including (but not limited too) financial management, marketing and sponsorship, sports medicine, operational planning, stakeholder engagement and club culture/environment.
- Build on existing volunteer recognition programs in consultation with AFL Victoria, competitions, and clubs. Provide for additional recognition programs at a local level as or when required.
- Assist clubs with volunteer recruitment, retention, and management.
- Encourage online development programs for all volunteers.
- Use media to elevate volunteer activity in community thereby promoting attractiveness of volunteer engagement.
- Trainer accreditation programs to support new and existing trainers.





Recommendation 7: Create inclusive, safe club environments for all participants

The introduction of more stringent Working with Children policies requires strong policy and enforcement reform within the region. The accreditation of all key officials remains paramount and ensuring all clubs and officials meet the standards is a priority.

To achieve this, the following is recommended:

- Ensure all clubs are compliant with Outer East’s Working with Children (WWC) Policy.
- Implement an online system for monitoring Working with Children’s and key accreditations.
- Create a region-specific Working with Children Policy.
- Introduce by-laws that ensure accreditation compliance.
- Ensure all club officials have 100% accreditation compliance (executives, officials, trainers, and coaches).
- Ensure all umpiring groups are compliant with the Working with Children (WWC) Policy.



APPENDIX

Appendix 1.1 Travel

	Belgrave	Upwey Tecoma	Monbulk	Olinda	Healesville	Emerald	Woori Yallock	Warburton
Narre Warren	17m	23m	28m	28m	58m	22m	45m	1h 1m
Beaconsfield	22m	28m	34m	33m	55m	22m	43m	58m
Officer	24m	30m	33m	36m	56m	23m	43m	59m
Pakenham	31m	38m	35m	43m	51m	26m	38m	54m
Berwick	17m	23m	28m	28m	55m	17m	43m	58m
Doveton	19m	23m	31m	31m	54m	22m	48m	1h 3m

	Mt Evelyn	Wandin	Gembrook	Seville	Yarra Junction	Powelltown	Yarra Glen
Narre Warren	40m	42m	34m	43m	50m	1h 8m	52m
Beaconsfield	45m	47m	29m	44m	48m	1h 7m	56m
Officer	45m	48m	25m	44m	48m	1h 3m	58m
Pakenham	47m	43m	21m	40m	43m	59m	1h 1m
Berwick	40m	42m	29m	42m	47m	1h 4m	54m
Doveton	36m	40m	37m	46m	53m	1h 10m	47m

Table 2.1 Travel Distance

Appendix 1.1 Population average per club

Casey 332,981 22,199 per club	Berwick Casey Demons Cranbourne Devon Meadows Doveton Doveton Eagles Endeavour Hills Hallam Hampton Park Lyndhurst Narre Warren Pearcedale Tooradin Dalmore St Johns Berwick Springs	Cardinia Shire 102,516 7,322 per club	Beaconsfield Bunyip Catani Cora Lynn Emerald Garfield Gembrook Cockatoo Koo Wee Rup Lang Lang Nar Nar Goon Officer Pakenham Nyora St Francis Xavier	Yarra Ranges 156,982 8721.22 per club	Belgrave Healesville Monbulk Mount Evelyn Olinda-Ferny Creek Upwey Tecoma Wandin Warburton Milgrove Powelltown Seville Yarra Glen Yarra Junction Kilsyth Lilydale Coldstream Chirnside Park Montrose Mooroolbark
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Table 2.2 Population Averages per club

Appendix 1.3 Population Demographics

Local Govt. Area	Estimated Resident Population 2017	Under 5 years	Over 65 years	Median age	Speaks another language	Indigenous	Changed address in last 5 years	Public transport to work	Attending university	University qualification	Median household income	Average household size	Households renting	Medium and high density
Casey	327,380	7.9	10.3	34	35.8	0.5	39.9	7.9	3.8	16.6	1,552	3.06	20.5	10.3
Cardinia	102,516	8.3	11.9	34	11.2	0.8	44.1	5.6	3	13.8	1,494	2.82	21.8	8.3
Yarra Ranges	156,982	6.1	15.6	40	7.1	0.9	31.6	6.4	3.1	17.1	1,497	2.67	14.1	6.1

Table 2.3 Population Demographics

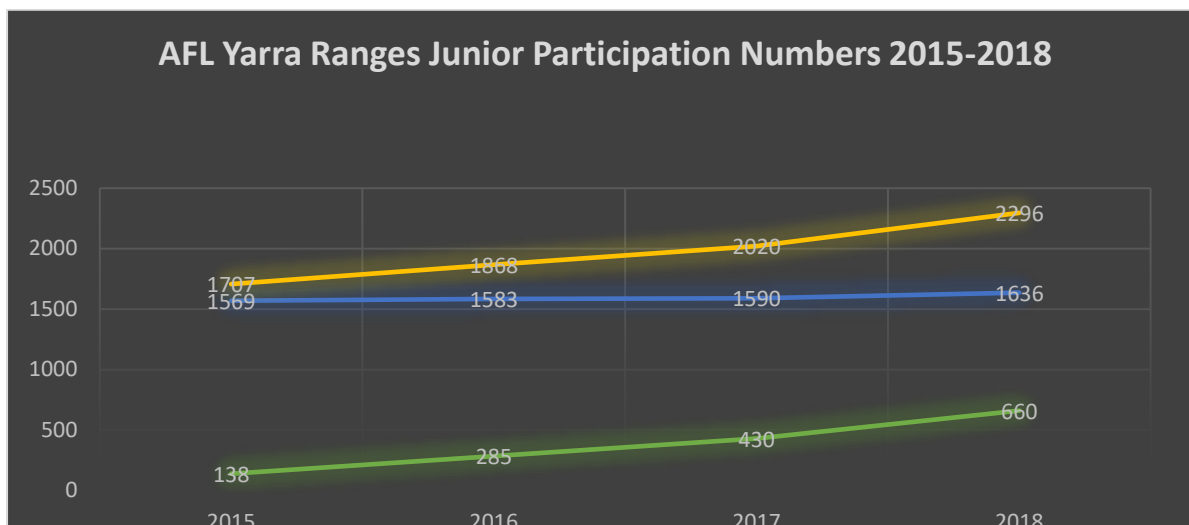
Appendix 1.4 Population Growth Casey

	2018	2041
Narre Warren	28735	33458
Beaconsfield	4341	6326
Berwick Beaconsfield	51194	66211
Endeavour Hills	25767	25702
Hallam	11919	13811
Narre South	31588	31161
Casey Foothills	9262	10321
Doveton - Eumemmerring	11916	13,739

Table 2.2 Population Growth Casey

APPENDIX 2- JUNIOR

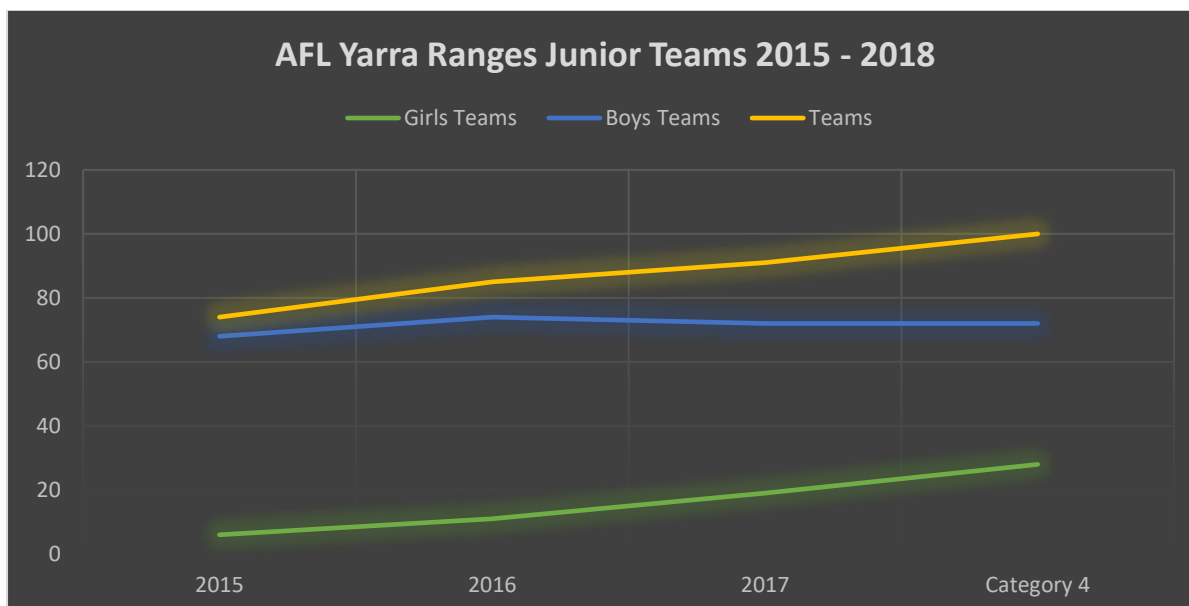
Appendix 2.1 Participation Numbers AFL Yarra Ranges Juniors



	2015	2016	2017	2018	INCREASE
BOYS	1569	1583	1590	1636	+67
GIRLS	138	285	430	660	+522
TOTAL	1707	868	2020	2296	+589

Table 3.2 Participation Numbers- Player

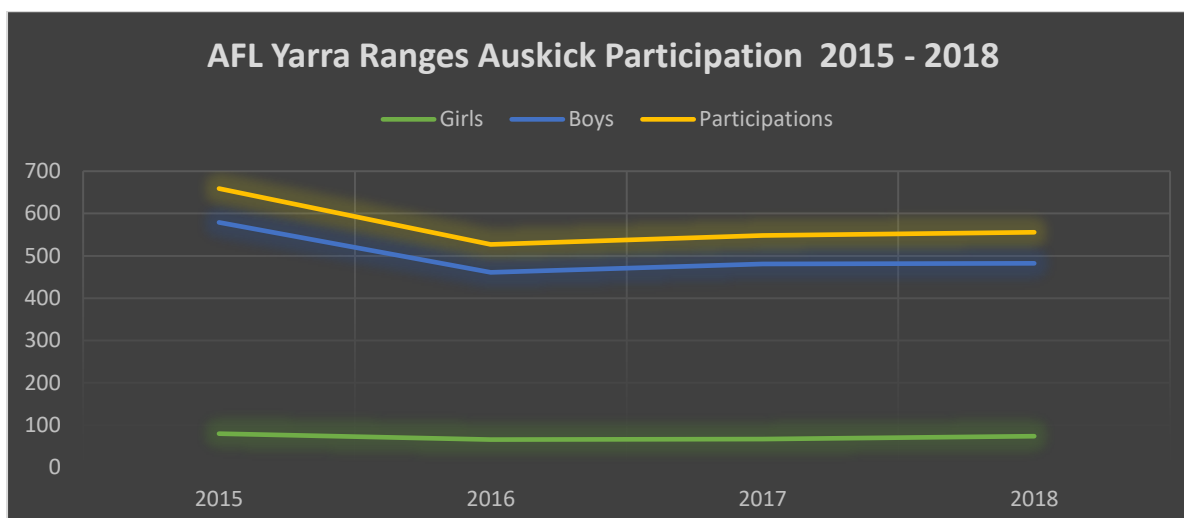
Appendix 2.2 Participating Team Numbers



	2015	2016	2017	2018	INCREASE
BOYS	68	74	72	72	+4
GIRLS	6	11	19	28	+522
TOTAL	74	85	91	100	+589

Table 3.3 Participating Team Numbers

Appendix 2.3 Auskick Numbers



	2015	2016	2017	2018	INCREASE
BOYS	579	461	481	482	-97
GIRLS	80	66	67	74	-13
TOTAL	659	527	548	556	-110

Table 3.3 Auskick Numbers

Appendix 2.4. Margins of Under 14 Graded Sides 2017-18

CLUB	YEAR	AGE GROUP	GAMES	WINS	LOSSES	DRAW	PF	PA	%
Upwey Tecoma	2018	14	12	12	0	0	816	281	290.39
	2017	14	14	3	10	1	406	857	47.37
	2017	12	13	3	10	0	345	596	57.89
Yarra Glen	2018	14	12	8	3	1	806	424	190.09
	2017	14	14	3	11	0	340	978	34.76
	2017	12	13	5	8	0	414	343	120.7
Wandin	2018	14	12	8	4	0	746	431	173.09
	2017	14	14	4	9	1	662	742	89.22
	2017	12	13	0	13	0	49	1463	3.35
Seville	2018	14	12	6	6	0	571	434	131.57
	2017	14	14	2	12	0	210	878	23.92
	2017	12	13	1	12	0	91	808	11.26
Belgrave	2018	14	11	3	8	0	352	649	54.24
	2017	12	12	4	8	0	327	489	66.87

Table 3.4 Margins

Appendix 2.5. Fees and Charges

	LEAGUE 1	LEAGUE 2	LEAGUE 3	LEAGUE 4	AFL YR
COMPETITIVE	\$ 770.00	9000 for 8 teams	\$ 850.00	\$ 1,035.00	\$ 440.00
NON COMP/GIRLS			\$ 750.00	Various	
PLAYER	\$ 12.50	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 11.00
INTERLEAGUE	\$ 110.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 270.00	\$ -
OTHER		*850 Per additional team	Under 13 Inter \$180	Under 8 - \$695.75 Under 9 - \$874 Under 10 - \$1006	

Table 3.5 Fees and Charges