

GAME AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

SIMON LETHLEAN
GENERAL MANAGER

The AFL's Game and Market Development Team is responsible for growing and developing Australian Football and striving to ensure our sport is a way of life for every community.

In 2015, the AFL initiated a comprehensive review of Australian Football in the community to identify key areas of need for future investment and a future vision for success.

The 'Future Directions of Australian Football' project consulted a broad range of volunteers, administrators and leaders across AFL clubs, state and territory bodies, community leagues and clubs, schools and other subject matter experts.

The report outlines recommendations for the short, medium and long term,

with the objective of ensuring Australian Football is representative and inclusive, well supported and sustainable, has strong links between community and elite competitions and is a national code responsive to local needs with first-class competitions at every level.

Along with the review, 2015 also saw a restructure of the Game and Market Development Department with Simon Lethlean transitioning from the General Manager of Broadcasting, Scheduling and Major Projects portfolio to lead this area of the business. →

TRUE GRIT

Geelong captain Joel Selwood again led from the front in a challenging season for the Cats, who missed the finals for the first time since 2006.



TOTAL PARTICIPATION

Total participation grew to 1,247,575 nationally, representing an eight per cent rise on 2014 figures.

An additional 2,013,172 people were engaged through school or community-based clinics and promotions, which is a growth of 33 per cent from 1.5 million in 2014.

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

The eight per cent increase in participation included the following highlights:

- 597,538 played in structured competitions (up 3.5 per cent).
- 650,072 participated in introductory programs (up 13 per cent).

Community club participation grew by 1.4 per cent to 336,113.

- Strong growth in junior (four per cent) and youth girls (33 per cent) football.
- There are 253 leagues, 2672 clubs and 13,873 community club teams nationally – with 226 new teams taking the field in 2015.

A total of 239,180 students played in school competitions, with another 467,105 involved in introductory programs, representing an increase of 13 per cent.

- 8.3 per cent growth in primary-aged inter-school football competitions.
- 1.3 per cent growth in secondary inter-school football.
- 17.7 per cent growth in school program participation.

NAB AFL Auskick participation grew by 2.5 per cent to 182,927.

A total of 22,286 people played in a McDonald's AFL 9s competition on the back of 23.5 per cent growth.

Female participation has reached 318,880.

- Female participation makes up 25 per cent of all participants (up from 19 per cent in 2014).
- 163 new female teams were established in 2015.

NAB AFL AUSKICK

The NAB AFL Auskick program continues to provide an introduction to Australian Football for our youngest participants and their families. A total of 182,927 children participated in the program in 2015 at 2936 centres around the country.

In addition, more than 23,500 NAB AFL Auskick participants had the experience of a lifetime by playing at an official AFL venue on game-day as part of the grid game program.

The value of NAB AFL Auskick is in the sequentially developed coaching and match program that allows boys and girls to learn about the game in a fun and safe family environment. The AFL is thankful to our many volunteers and community members who coordinate their local centres each week throughout the season. It is through their passion and commitment that NAB AFL Auskick continues to thrive.

Each year, the AFL, our program partner NAB and state football bodies recognise the outstanding accomplishments and contribution of coordinators who have excelled in their role through special recognition awards.

During the first weekend of the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series, seven NAB AFL Auskick volunteers – Stephen Ryan (NSW/ACT), Brett Fragiaco (NT), Jon Breeden (Qld), Mark Dahlitz (SA), Glenn

Johnstone (Tas), David Wolf (Vic) and Marcus McArthur (WA) – were rewarded by NAB with a trip to Melbourne and a money-can't-buy AFL experience. Each winner (and a guest) was treated to an exclusive workshop at AFL House and was a VIP guest at the AFL official function for the first elimination final between the Western Bulldogs and Adelaide. Each of these seven deserving winners was selected for their outstanding contribution to their local NAB AFL Auskick centre.

Twenty-two NAB AFL Auskick of the Year nominees also took centre stage during Grand Final week. The nominees attended a dinner at the MCG, walked in the parade, played on the MCG at half-time of the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final and presented the premiership medallions. Will Le Deux from the Nagambie NAB AFL Auskick centre was named the 2015 NAB AFL Auskick of the Year.

The AFL would like to thank all the volunteers, participants and families who make the program what it is and also acknowledges our program



PARTY TIME
Gold Coast's Henry Schade joins in the 20-year celebrations for NAB AFL Auskick.
PHOTO News Corp Australia



2015 PARTICIPATION

TOTAL PARTICIPATION

1,247,575

+8%
GROWTH

We also conducted promotional activities to more than 2M people

PARTICIPATED IN PROGRAMS

650k

PARTICIPATED IN COMPETITIONS

597k

NAB AFL AUSKICK

182,927

PARTICIPANTS

CLUB FOOTBALL

336,113

PLAYERS

SCHOOL FOOTBALL

239,180

PLAYERS IN SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

SOCIAL FOOTBALL

22,250

PLAYERS IN AFL 9S COMPETITIONS

2936
AUSKICK CENTRES

+2.5%
GROWTH

13,873
TEAMS

2672
CLUBS

253
COMMUNITY LEAGUES

+1.4%
GROWTH

467,105
PARTICIPANTS IN SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS

+13%
GROWTH

110
VENUES NATIONALLY

+23.5%
GROWTH

FEMALE FOOTBALL

318,880

FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

25%
OF ALL PARTICIPATION

629
DEDICATED FEMALE FOOTBALL TEAMS

+27%
GROWTH

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

58,888

INDIGENOUS PARTICIPANTS

98,058

MULTICULTURAL PARTICIPANTS

COACHES & UMPIRES

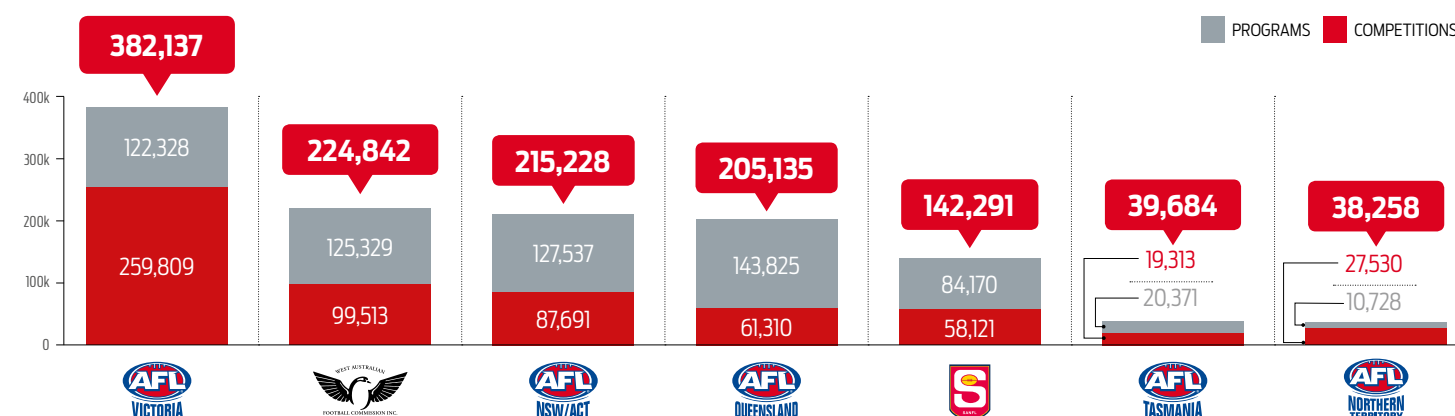
26,917

ACCREDITED COACHES

9232

ACCREDITED UMPIRES

PARTICIPATION BY STATE & TERRITORY





EAGLE-EYED FANS
Young West Coast supporters proudly wear their colours at the round 14 clash with Melbourne at TIO Stadium in Darwin.

partner the National Australia Bank for the tremendous support it provides. Through support of the NAB AFL Auskick program, NAB continues to 'Footify' Australia; genuinely growing the game at a grassroots level and supporting tomorrow's stars.

SCHOOLS

A critical component of our participant engagement strategy is to enhance our presence in primary and secondary schools across Australia to provide opportunities for all students wishing to participate in Australian Football.

The continued growth in Australian Football participation has been due to a number of initiatives, programs and resources designed specifically to improve our presence in the classroom and the school physical education/sport program. A total of 706,285 students participated in either inter-school competitions or school-based programs greater than six weeks in duration – an overall increase of 13 per cent.

INTER-SCHOOL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS (MALE & FEMALE)

In 2015, there were 10,799 inter-school teams in AFL competitions that involved some 231,180 students. The table right shows a selection of winners of various school competitions in 2015.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Intra-school AFL programs continued to grow with 467,105 students participating.
- Promotional clinics and visits reached just over two million children (1.54 million at schools and more than 468,000 at community venues).
- The Woolworths AFL School Ambassador program provided training and offered the necessary support for teachers who strongly promote Australian Football. Fifteen teachers, among the 5500 who were involved in the program, were named 2015 Woolworths AFL School Ambassadors of the Year for their outstanding service to the game.
- The AFL Learning Management System (LMS) provided educators with innovative resources to enhance education outcomes and help engage students in unique and meaningful ways.

- More than 2000 teachers attended specific **AFL Professional Development** or information sessions and seminars, with the AFL assisting in covering the teacher relief costs for those who attended.
- The **Woolworths AFL Schools Grants Scheme** provided schools with the opportunity to apply for subsidies to buy major capital items such as permanent goalposts, goalpost padding, playing guernseys and sports kits. In 2015, financial assistance saw:
 - > 44 schools buy permanent goalposts.
 - > 37 schools buy sets of goalpost padding.
 - > 72 schools buy playing guernseys.
 - > 78 schools buy AFL 9s kits.
 - > 6000 AFL footballs distributed to schools.
 - > The **AFL Schools Fantasy Classic and AFL Schools Tipping Competition** involved more than 35,000 participants.
 - > More than 1200 students were involved in a national online **AFL-themed quiz** which focused on numeracy and literacy.

INTER-SCHOOL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

COMPETITION	SCHOOL	STATE
AFLVIC Herald Sun Shield Boys Div 1	St Patrick's – Ballarat	VIC
AFLVIC Herald Sun Shield Boys Div 2	St Joseph's College	VIC
AFLVIC Herald Sun Girls Competition Div 1	Methodist Ladies College	VIC
AFLVIC Herald Sun Girls Competition Div 2	Aquinas College	VIC
AFLVIC Herald Sun Country Cup	Central Vic/AFL Goldfields – Braemar College AFL Gippsland – Bairnsdale Secondary College AFL Goulburn Murray & North East Border – St Mary's of the Angels, Nathalia Northern Victoria – St Joseph's College, Echuca Western District – Monivae College	VIC
AFLVIC Herald Sun Country Shield	Ballarat Clarendon College	VIC
School Sport Victoria Premier League	Essendon Keilor College	VIC
All Abilities State Final	Southern Special Schools Sports Association	VIC
QUIT 100 Cup	Tiwi College	NT
Pink Power Challenge	Wulagi Primary School	NT
Defence Force Cup	St John's Catholic College	NT
Schoolboys REDIMED Cup – Cable Division	Darling Range Sports College	WA
Eagles Schoolboys Cup	Comet Bay College	WA
Freo Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – Moore Division	Kolbe Catholic College	WA
Freo Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – White Division	Emmanuel Catholic College	WA
PSA – Alcock Cup	Guildford Grammar School	WA
SASFA Premiers Cup	Highgate Primary School	SA
SAAS Messenger Shield	Prince Alfred College	SA
Statewide Open Boys A Schools Knockout Cup	Sacred Heart College	SA
Open Girls Knockout Competition	Sacred Heart College	SA
Queensland Independent Schools Cup – Open Boys Division	Padua College	QLD
Queensland Independent Schools Cup – Year 9/10 Boys Division	St Laurence's College	QLD
Schools of Excellence Cup Senior Male	Palm Beach-Currumbin State High School	QLD
Schools of Excellence Cup Junior Male	Helensvale State High School	QLD
Brisbane Lions Cup Senior Girls Female	Mountain Creek State High School	QLD
Paul Kelly Cup – Boys	Henschke Primary School	NSW/ACT
Paul Kelly Cup – Girls	Holy Family Primary School, Kelso	NSW/ACT
U/16 Boys Independent Schools Competition	Shore Grammar	NSW/ACT
Open Independent Schools Competition	Knox Grammar	NSW/ACT
Southern High Schools and Tassie Hawks Cup	New Town High School	TAS
NWJFU North West Tasmania	Latrobe High School	TAS
NHSSA Northern Tasmania competition	Kings Meadow High School	TAS



HAWKS' SCHOOL OF COACHING
New Carlton coach Brendon Bolton became the fifth Hawthorn assistant under Alastair Clarkson to take up a senior role at another club.

- > In partnership with Victorian DEECD, the AFL ran the **One Team, One Goal – Celebrating Diversity** school competition for primary and secondary school students to promote positive discussion and awareness in schools regarding diversity, intercultural understanding and respect. More than 200 entries were received from 50 schools around Victoria. St Peter's & Paul Primary School won the primary school section and Point Cook Senior High School was named the secondary school section winner.

More than 25,000 children were introduced to Australian Football through the AFL Sporting Schools Program, an initiative established and funded by the Australian Sports Commission to help engage primary school-aged children in sporting activities.

COACHING DEVELOPMENT

The 2015 AFL Census shows that about 27,000 coaches delivered football programs to participants in all segments of the game in 2015.

ACCREDITATION COURSES

Attendance at AFL coach accreditation courses continues to ensure there is an adequate supply of accredited coaches to meet needs and support growth of the game. In 2015, more than 7000 coaches participated in courses – 6984 at Level 1, 304 at Level 2 and 26 at Level 3.

Since 2001, the AFL, in partnership with the AFL Players' Association, has been conducting a specific Level 2 Coaching Course for experienced and recently retired players who are interested in coaching. Many of these players complete their accreditation and go on to development or assistant coaching roles in AFL and state league clubs and a few, after also completing their AFL High Performance Coach Accreditation, have filtered through to become AFL senior coaches in recent years. The 2015 course was conducted in Melbourne in January for 28 current players and coaches.

The AFL High Performance Coaching Course was reviewed during the year with industry partners, including the state coaching managers, the AFL Coaches' Association and AFL clubs. Changes to the structure, content and delivery were made in accordance with industry

recommendations. The course is now delivered through two separate face-to-face segments of four and two days, online content, workplace learning and coach mentoring. The first segment of the 2015-16 course was conducted for 25 invited coaches at Etihad Stadium in October, with the second segment planned for January 2016.

AFL ONLINE COACHING COURSES

There has been outstanding usage of the AFL Online Junior and the newly developed AFL Online Youth and Senior Coaching Courses in 2015, with 5000 coaches completing the courses through the year. These courses are integral parts of the AFL Level 1 coach accreditation programs.

INTERNATIONAL COURSES

AFL International affiliates continued to be active in coach development in 2015, with a number of courses conducted in other countries, including Fiji, Europe and the USA. The Fiji course, part of regular AFL development activity in the South Pacific, produced 30 accredited coaches. USAFL president and coaching director Dennis Ryan conducted the first US Level 2

course through a series of Google webinars over six weekly sessions. Ten coaches completed their Level 2 accreditation in this course. AFL Europe is also in the process of conducting a Level 1 course, which started with a seminar provided by visiting members of the AFLCA in London in October – these coaches will continue their learning through the AFL online courses and will complete their practical components during the AFL UK pre-season period.

CLUB COACHING COORDINATOR PROGRAM

The role of the club coaching coordinator is growing in regard to ensuring football at all levels is delivered with improved quality, in inclusive environments. Following the implementation of the Club Coaching Coordinator Program in late 2014 and distribution of the associated resources, a number of courses were conducted in 2015 in different states. This program has been established to enhance the development of coaches at community league and club level and provide them with elements of on-going support.

TALENT IDENTIFICATION COURSES

The AFL Level 1 course in Identifying Talent for AFL was reviewed in 2015 and will be delivered in all states in 2016. The continuing development of female football in culturally diverse communities is providing a rich pool for attracting players and identifying talent in the game.

AFL NATIONAL COACHING CONFERENCE

The 2015 AFL National Coaching Conference (13th edition) was conducted at Etihad Stadium from January 31 to February 2 and featured a keynote address from Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson. Other presenters at the conference, which attracted more than 400 coaches, were Leigh Russell, Brendon Bolton, Louise Burke, Shane Pill, Matt Jones, Mark Yettica-Paulson and David Parkin. Thirty-two breakout sessions on a wide range of football and coaching topics were delivered across the weekend. The 2016 edition of the conference will be conducted in Perth in February 2016.

COACHING SUPPORT, RESOURCES & AFL COMMUNITY WEBSITE

Ongoing post-accreditation support for accredited coaches is provided through the coaching section of the AFL Community Website.

MESSAGE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION

(ASC-funded, non-Winning Edge sports)

The past year has seen considerable success and progress for Australian sport, as the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and national sporting organisations (NSOs) continue to build on our nation's proud sporting tradition.

The Government's 2014-15 investment of nearly \$120 million into Australian sport continues to be refined to ensure funding is aligned to sports with the greatest potential to contribute to Australia's Winning Edge 2012-22 targets and drive greater participation outcomes for sport.

The sporting landscape has changed rapidly in recent years, as have the options for people's scarce leisure time. More than ever before, sport faces tough competition for our attention from electronic media and other sedentary pursuits.

In March, the Commission launched Play.Sport.Australia. — our plan to help NSOs build participation in sport and make sure all Australians enjoy its benefits. Sports have the opportunity to attract more than 4.5 million Australians into their



communities. It's important that we work together to ensure that more Australians, particularly young Australians, participate in sport more often and that we have strong sporting organisations that deliver the products and opportunities Australians want.

Other highlights in 2014-15 included:

- **The transition to Sporting Schools and the development of its website** — the main portal for sporting organisations, schools, coaches and parents to access this \$100 million program which aims to reach more than 850,000 children.
- **The development of the AusPlay survey** — the ASC has committed to introducing a new national survey to better understand how Australians engage with and play sport. Good decisions require good data and this initiative by the ASC is critical.

And through Australia's Winning Edge, we will continue to give our athletes the best chances at international success.

So now, more than ever, we have a clear plan to make sure all Australians enjoy sport and maximise our chances of success. On behalf of the ASC, I thank you for your hard work in helping us achieve these goals and I look forward to working with you into the future.

John Wylie AM
Chair — Australian Sports Commission



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



New articles and practice activities are regularly published and promoted through the fortnightly AFL community newsletters sent to more than 60,000 recipients. This continues to be a relevant source of coaching information for coaches at all levels.

INJURY PREVENTION RESOURCES

An important set of injury prevention and management resources were produced in 2015, including incorporation of the key guidelines for the management of concussion in community football into the AFL coaching manuals and regularly promoted to community football organisations and clubs.

Following the completion of a research project through the AFL Research Board (the FootyFirst Training Program to Prevent Leg Injuries), that project will now be promoted throughout 2016.

These prevention programs and related resources will be prominently promoted in AFL coaching courses in future seasons. As well as being incorporated into the AFL coaching manuals, these resources are available for download from the AFL Community website or in hard copy from AFL and state affiliate offices.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

AFL COACHING AMBASSADORS

AFL Coaching Ambassadors and course mentors Stan Alves and David Parkin continued in their valuable long-term roles in AFL coaching and development projects throughout the year, including presenting and facilitating at courses and seminars, mentoring coaches, reviewing programs and advocating for coaches and coach development.

They acted as facilitators and mentors at the AFL High Performance Course and, along with coaching consultants Neil Barras, Brendan Mason and David Wheadon, regularly presented at Level 2 coaching courses around Australia.

COACH RECOGNITION AWARDS

Coach award functions were conducted by AFL state affiliates to recognise coaches and their passion and commitment to their players, clubs and the game at all levels.

These events, which are usually conducted by the state and regional branches of the Australian Football Coaches' Association (AFCa), are a great celebration of the game and its people.

AFL COACHES' ASSOCIATION – APPEARANCES PROGRAM

The partnership between the AFL and the AFL Coaches' Association continued in 2015, particularly through the coach appearance program. Overall, AFL senior and assistant coaches participated in development activities and appearances in all states and territories, including most regions around the country. Association members made about 1000 appearances to help grow the game.

The AFL greatly appreciates the efforts of the AFCa and its individual coach members. Association staff, including CEO Mark Brayshaw and operational staff Greg Hutchison, Ron Watt and Melissa Murphy, also assisted in various elements of the AFL coaching development program during the year.

SOCIAL FOOTBALL PROGRAMS

McDONALD'S AFL 9s

It was the fourth season of the McDonald's AFL 9s format, a social, non-contact, modified version of the game which is an ideal way to introduce new participants and re-engage lapsed participants.

With the support of state affiliates, 2015 again saw strong growth at a rate of 23.5 per cent, with 22,250 people now participating in competitions.

Partnering with McDonald's as the official sponsor provided great support for AFL 9s and helped raise awareness for the format.

The game was showcased to more than 800,000 people at half-time of one match each round throughout the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Ex-Swans player Jude Bolton and his wife Lynette continued to fulfill roles as national program ambassadors to help raise greater awareness and exposure of the game.

Events in 2015 included the annual Byron Bay Carnival, the Domain



Stadium Tournament in Perth and other corporate and community carnival events across the country.

AFL ACTIVE

AFL Active is a group training program that is broken into four quarters of physical activity where participants train for some of the physical attributes required to play Australian Football. However, the activities do not require any kicking, marking or handballing.

In 2015, the AFL and AFL Victoria partnered with VicHealth's *Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport* initiative to use the AFL Active program to create new opportunities for female participation in physical activity across Victoria. This was launched in August at the 2015 AFL women's exhibition match and television presenter Rebecca Maddern was named an AFL Active ambassador.

AFL Active also partnered with the Victorian Fitness Academy to recruit and run training sessions for accredited AFL Active trainers, with 42 now accredited and courses planned for 2016.

Pilot programs were held during term four in 2015 and all trainers will start running AFL Active sessions in line with the school terms in 2016.

COMMUNITY FOOTBALL

AFL NATIONAL INCLUSION CARNIVAL



The AFL's National Inclusion Carnival brought together representative teams of footballers with intellectual disabilities from across the country to participate in a week-long round robin carnival in June.

The event was hosted by AFL Victoria and supported by the Victorian Government.

This was the second time the national carnival had been staged and Victoria Metro took out the Peter Ryan Cup in the grand final at Punt Rd Oval against NSW/ACT.

Games were played in great spirit with each team showing wonderful support to each other throughout the carnival. At the end of the carnival, an All-Australian side was selected.

ENGAGING WITH FANS

Premiership star Jack Gunston chats to a young Hawk supporter at the club's community camp in Launceston.



The carnival won the Victorian Government's Community Sporting Event of the Year Award.

SWISSE AFL COMMUNITY CLUB IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Swisse AFL Club Improvement Program was introduced to assist community clubs examine their off-field operations and identify areas for improvement, including strategic planning, culture, volunteer management, connection to community, communication, finance, governance, policy, risk management, commercial fundraising/sponsorship, facilities and event delivery.

The program is based on the Australian Sports Commission's Club Health Check and assists clubs in the formulation of an action plan to improve key areas by linking to support resources.

In 2015:

- 273 clubs used the online assessment (183 complete).
- Four clubs demonstrated outstanding club administration and achieved gold quality club accreditation.
- 38 clubs demonstrated good club administration and received quality club accreditation.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the support of Swisse in assisting community clubs improve their off-field operations.

AFL COMMUNITY CLUB WEBSITE

With more than 1.3 million page views in 2015, the AFL Community website (aflcommunity.com.au) continues to provide up-to-date information, training and advice for 70,000 coaches, umpires, players, club administrators and schools.

The AFL Community website provides:

- Distribution of fortnightly editions of the AFL Community Development Newsletter.
- Online learning courses for coaches, umpires and club administrators.
- Teachers with access to an array of innovative resources via the AFL Learning Management System (LMS) which they can use to enhance education outcomes and help engage students in unique and meaningful ways.
- A locator system for new players, umpires and volunteers to find a club or umpiring group.

AUSTRALIA POST AFL COMMUNITY CAMPS

The Australia Post AFL Community Camps saw more than 800 AFL players take the game to regional and rural communities across Australia, as well as overseas when St Kilda visited New Zealand in December.

Players carried out training sessions and visited schools, local football clubs, nursing homes and hospitals, as well as supporting fundraising events to connect individuals and communities and, importantly, ensure Australia's game and its players are accessible to fans around the nation.

Key outcomes from the 2015 Australia Post AFL Community Camps included:

- 562 primary and secondary schools visited.
- 95,858 school students visited.
- 6855 students visited at junior clubs.
- 8052 superclinic participants.
- 3760 people visited in aged care/hospitals.
- 3067 attended official functions.
- \$66,700 monies raised during local community functions.

VOLUNTEERS

The Governor of Victoria, The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, and Judge Tony Howard hosted a morning reception at Government House on October 2 to recognise the contribution of Australian Football volunteers.

The reception, attended by 500 people, honoured state and territory Volunteers of the Year award recipients as well as the Victorian Multicultural Ambassador of the Year.

Guests acknowledged and celebrated the significant impact the volunteers had on their respective clubs, leagues and communities.

The function provided a unique and exclusive opportunity to thank all for their contributions and the day's recognition illustrated our sincere gratitude.

The Governor presented the following awards:

- **New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Volunteer of the Year:** Trevor Byrne
- **Queensland Volunteer of the Year:** Rob Purves
- **Northern Territory Volunteer of the Year:** Peter Shepard and Alesha Shepard
- **West Australian Volunteer of the Year:** Rod Atherton
- **South Australian Volunteer of the Year:** Jarrod Starkey
- **Tasmanian Volunteer of the Year:** Bill Trethewie
- **Victorian Volunteer of the Year:** Christine Swinburne
- **Victorian Multicultural Ambassador of the Year:** Rob Munro

In addition, the AFL Merit Awards continue to recognise two people from each state/territory who have made outstanding contributions to the game in their local league or club.

The AFL Community website also offers leagues and clubs the opportunity to personalise and download AFL volunteer-branded certificates which they can use to present to volunteers as recognition for their contribution to our game.

FOOTYWEB

The AFL's Footyweb system continues to provide a high-quality service for competition management, data repository and a network of community league and club websites.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The grounds of Government House were turned into a football field during a reception to recognise volunteers.



A National Registration System was introduced for players and umpires in 2014 and the past 12 months saw continued uptake and growth. In 2015, 384,000 players and umpires self-registered online via the National Registration System, an increase from the 211,000 in 2014.

Key stats in 2015:

- 597,000 registered participants (384,000 self-registered online)
- 14,000 online transfers and permits processed
- \$20.5 million processed through the payment gateway

NORTH EAST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The North East Australian Football League (NEAFL) continued to grow as an elite second-tier competition across the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland in 2015. The fifth season of the competition was contested between 11 teams, comprising seven state league clubs and four AFL clubs. For the first time in the league's short history, all teams played each other at least once throughout the regular home and away competition.

Key features/highlights in 2015:

- 18 players drafted, including eight mature-age players.
- Six umpires promoted to the AFL senior or rookie list.
- Introduction of NEAFL App (featuring live Champion Data stats) with more than 5500 downloads.

- Significant increase in social media presence.
- Roughly half (50) of total matches live-streamed with an average 1000 views per game.
- First representative team win against Tasmania by 20 points.
- 99 home and away matches, plus five finals, including 22 matches as curtain-raisers to AFL games.
- Four matches in regional areas.

The season culminated in another exciting finals series. The NEAFL Grand Final was contested between NT Thunder and Aspley in front of a league record of almost 6000 fans at TIO Stadium in Darwin.

NT Thunder led by 31 points at the start of the last quarter, however, Aspley came storming home to level the scores at the 28-minute mark.

The Hornets had a chance to win the game with a shot on the siren but it missed and NT Thunder won by a point.

FEMALE FOOTBALL

The rapid growth of women and girls participating in Australian Football continued in 2015 with 318,880 now playing in competitions or involved in programs. A highlight was the 163 new female club teams established throughout the year. There are 629 female club teams throughout the country.

Female participation accounts for 25 per cent of overall participation and is already meeting the AFL's 2020 target.

Participation breakdown:

- AFL 9s – 4585
- NAB AFL Auskick – 44,192
- Club – 17,063
- School competitions – 70,562
- School programs – 181,579

AFL WOMEN'S EXHIBITION SERIES

Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs played two exhibition matches, both as curtain-raisers to AFL games in round eight and round 20.

Both matches were played at a high standard, were well attended and enjoyed strong media coverage.

Melbourne won the first match by eight points and West Australian Kara Donnellan was named best on ground. The Demons also prevailed in the second match by just four points and Melbourne captain Daisy Pearce was named best player.

In a first for women's football, Channel Seven broadcast the second match live throughout Australia, which was watched by 345,000 people – a fantastic result.

It is the third year of the women's exhibition matches. Extensive consultation and planning has begun to fast-track the development of the National Women's League model for the 2017 season.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

Interstate matches replaced the traditional women's national championships with the following results:

- NT Thunder hosted and lost to South Australia by four goals in a NEAFL double-header.
- Tasmania was soundly beaten by Queensland as a double-header to the male state teams.
- Western Australia overran Victoria to win by four points for the first time before Fremantle v Richmond at Domain Stadium.
- NSW/ACT lost to Queensland in a competitive match following a NEAFL match in Sydney.

YOUTH GIRLS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Western Australian Football Commission hosted the Youth Girls Nationals in Mandurah in May.

In Division 1, a strong Vic Metro side defeated Queensland by seven points. Vic Metro captain Britt Bonnici was adjudged best on ground with Queensland's Tayla Harris named Player of the Championships.

South Australia won its first Division 2 grand final with a thumping win over

NSW/ACT. South Australia's ruck Sarah Allan was named best on ground as well as Player of the Championships.

NATIONAL SCHOOLGIRLS

The School Sport Australia National Schoolgirls titles were held in Geelong in July. Six teams participated and Victoria won the title ahead of a three-way tie between a much-improved New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

100 YEARS OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

The year also marked 100 years since females first played Australian Football. It was established through independent research that teams in Perth first played matches as charity fundraisers during World War I. The first recorded women's league was established soon after in Kalgoorlie in 1921.

To mark this historic occasion, memorabilia was collected by a dedicated group of volunteers and was displayed in the Battye Library of Western Australia for three months. Titled 'Bouncedown', it proved to be very popular. In addition, the National Sports Museum at the MCG provided two 'pop up' displays to celebrate the centenary.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INDIGENOUS

INDIGENOUS ROUND & DREAMTIME AT THE 'G

Indigenous culture and the contribution of Indigenous players are celebrated annually during the AFL's Indigenous Round.

The round was launched in Sydney and featured all 18 AFL clubs wearing jumpers with special Indigenous designs. The AFL and the 18 clubs continued their partnership with Recognise to promote the campaign to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.

The focal point of the round was again the Dreamtime at the 'G game between Essendon and Richmond.



NATIONAL KICKSTART CHAMPIONSHIPS

The National KickStart Championships were held in Cairns in April with more than 150 under-15 Indigenous players representing their state or territory in a five-day football carnival.

Each team selected the best 25 Indigenous players from their state or territory camps based on football ability, leadership qualities, school attendance and community involvement.

Players also participated in off-field engagement and educational sessions focused on topics such as identity, pathway to excellence and reaching individual and team goals.

The KickStart Championships are also the pathway to the Flying Boomerangs.

FLYING BOOMERANGS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

At the end of the annual AFL KickStart Championships, 25 Indigenous players were selected to participate in the Flying Boomerangs Leadership Program.



FROM THE HEART
The Flying Boomerangs perform their war cry before a match against the Victorian Multicultural All Stars at Punt Rd Oval.

The Boomerangs program is focused on four key pillars – communication, resilience, decision-making and identity.

The program also provides exposure to an elite training environment and leadership skills. The Boomerangs participated in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, competing against the World Team in a two-game series.

The squad came together in November for a high-performance training and leadership camp in Victoria where they visited the St Kilda and Collingwood football clubs, HMAS Cerberus and played a game against the Victorian Multicultural All Stars.

RIO TINTO FOOTY MEANS BUSINESS

In partnership with Rio Tinto, the AFL recruits 50 young Indigenous men aged 18 to 24 from all over Australia each year to participate in an employment and talent program. The squad came together in Perth in February and Melbourne in May, to coincide with Indigenous Round.

During the program, participants were exposed to the routine of a professional AFL player, including high-performance testing, training and conditioning. The young men are also introduced to potential career opportunities with Rio Tinto and other AFL corporate partners.

NATIONAL FEMALE KICKSTART

In 2015, the National Female KickStart Championships engaged more than 100 Indigenous females aged 14 to 16 from across the country.

The championships held in Darwin included education sessions on topics such as pathway to excellence and identity. Twenty-five of the best-performing participants will represent the Woomeras team in the Youth Girls National Championships in May 2016.

WOOMERAS

The AFL Woomeras Program is a national female Indigenous development program. The program symbolises strength and power – launching the girls into their futures using football to engage and empower. The Woomeras competed for the second time in the 2015 Youth Girls National Championships and toured New Zealand in December. The program enables the participants to be in an environment where they can work on their football skills, personal development and leadership skills.

INDIGENOUS COACHING ACADEMY

The AFL, in conjunction with the AFL Coaches Association, developed an Indigenous Coaching Academy in 2014 to fast-track and further develop Indigenous coaches in the AFL system. In 2015, the academy featured 15 Indigenous coaches who were engaged in education sessions delivered by the AFLCA at the KickStart Championships and the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships respectively. Participants completed Level 2 coaching accreditation and spent a week at an AFL club.



PICTURE THIS
The 2016 Multicultural Ambassadors pose for a selfie at the Flemington Community Centre.

MULTICULTURAL

MULTICULTURAL ROUND

AFL Multicultural Round was held during round 19 of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season to acknowledge and celebrate our game's cultural diversity.

The theme 'Many Cultures, One Game' highlighted the community engagement initiatives being undertaken by the Australian Football industry and acknowledged the increasing number of players from culturally diverse backgrounds who make up AFL player lists. The feature of the round included the first Multicultural Festival, bi-lingual ground markings, in-language broadcasting and translated Sherrin match footballs.



AUSTRALIA POST MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program continued to grow in 2015 with 221 schools and more than 25,000 students engaged nationally.

More than 12,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse community backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time – and more than 1000 multicultural children participated in a NAB AFL Auskick half-time game.

AUSTRALIA POST AFL MULTICULTURAL PLAYER AMBASSADORS

The AFL and Australia Post Multicultural Ambassadors are part of the Australia Post Community Inclusion Partnership. The 2015 Ambassadors included Nic Naitanui, Bachar Houli, Nick Malceski, David Zaharakis, Paul

Puopolo, Alipate Carlile, Stephen Coniglio, Lin Jong, Jobe Watson, Jimmy Toupas, Patrick Karnezis and James Aish.

The ambassadors work with multicultural communities, schools, community football clubs, government and multicultural organisations on specific multicultural projects and deliver culture awareness sessions to community clubs and develop the AFL's multicultural strategy.

AUSTRALIA POST AFL MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

The Australia Post AFL Community Ambassadors program reached a record high in 2015, with more than 250 community leaders from a range of cultural backgrounds joining the program.

The program aims to connect AFL representatives with their particular communities and promote AFL as a vehicle for engagement and inclusion. The program also provides community leaders with an official platform to become involved in the introduction and coordination of AFL-related activities in their communities, as well as opportunities for professional development.

AUSTRALIA POST ALL NATIONS CUP

In 2015, six multicultural teams representing all states and territories competed in the All Nations Cup held in Cairns from April 10-15. To be eligible for the All Nations Cup squad, players must have been born overseas and come from a non-English-speaking background. The best-performing multicultural players from across all teams were selected for the World Team which competed in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships and was coached by David Rodan.

BACHAR HOULI PROGRAM

Developed by the Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program and Richmond player Bachar Houli, the program provides Islamic-based schools and students with an opportunity to play AFL. The program is supported by the Federal Government and comprises the following:

BACHAR HOULI CUP

The Bachar Houli Cup gives Islamic Schools the opportunity to play Australian Football against other schools in a friendly, fun and safe environment.

In 2015, the Bachar Houli Cup was held in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, with the aim of encouraging Islamic students to make the transition from school football into community clubs, and provides an opportunity to be selected into the Bachar Houli Leadership Academy.

BACHAR HOULI LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Bachar Houli Leadership Academy is a high-performance football talent camp for emerging junior players aged 14-17 who are from an Islamic background. The academy aims to fast-track the participants' football development and provides genuine pathways for them to pursue football at an elite level.

In 2015, the five-day camp was held in Melbourne during the Toyota AFL Grand Final Week and involved mentoring from Bachar Houli, as well as education and leadership sessions encouraging participants to engage in their local communities and promote cultural and social inclusion. The Bachar Houli Academy was expanded into New South Wales in conjunction with the GWS Giants and engaged 20 participants from Western Sydney.

Mohammed Mohammed and Musa Amin were joint winners of the Bachar Houli Medal, presented to the best and fairest player within the academy who displayed leadership on and off the field.

AROUND THE REGIONS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Overall football participation in WA increased by nine per cent to 224,842.
- Female football participation increased by 23.5 per cent to 49,087.
- WA Auskick participation increased by 23 per cent to 39,659 – the largest in any state or territory.
- Subiaco won back-to-back WAFL premierships.
- Perth's Aidan Tropiano won the Sandover Medal.
- WA players finished top three in the NAB AFL Rising Star Award.
- WA's state women's team became the first side to defeat Victoria in senior women's football.
- Eight WAFL players were selected in the NAB AFL Draft.



- WA's Emma King was selected No. 1 in the AFL Women's Draft, one of three WA players chosen in the top five.
- Perth Stadium Management won the Australian Institute of Management WA's 2015 Pinnacle Award for Customer Service Excellence.
- Four AFL finals were hosted at Domain Stadium.
- WA Football Commission in partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation delivered on a Multicultural School Program which reached more than 10,000 participants and 100 schools.
- WA Football Commission in partnership with the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the WA Police Department delivered on the Nightfields program that used football as a vehicle to reconnect more than 500 disengaged and at-risk youth.

NSW/ACT

- 2015 started with an unprecedented six NAB Challenge games in NSW/ACT, including a sold-out Richmond and Port Adelaide clash in Albury and the first AFL 'Pride Game' between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle at Drummoyne Oval.
- The GWS Giants sold out a game for the first time, drawing more than 12,000 to their clash with Geelong in Canberra.
- The Giants hosted their biggest Sydney crowd when almost 20,000 streamed into Spotless Stadium to watch the round 21 clash against the Sydney Swans.



FINALS TENSION

Leongatha coach Beau Vernon and his coaching panel watch the Gippsland League Grand Final against Traralgon at the Traralgon Recreation Reserve.

- The Giants had their best season on the field by some stretch, winning 11 games to finish just outside the top eight. The Swans continued to be one of the most consistent clubs in the AFL, sitting fourth at the end of the home and away season and progressing to the second week of the finals.
- Female football went from strength to strength with a successful National Youth Girls campaign, a significant number of new female teams in community competitions and a landmark women's state game between NSW and Queensland at Blacktown, which will be remembered for Lael Kassem's amazing running goal, which lit up the internet.
- NSW's Maddy Collier was drafted by the Western Bulldogs, along with Canberra's Heather Anderson.
- A number of Australian Football grounds received upgrades, including Phillip Oval in Canberra, Waratah Park in Sutherland and Gore Hill Oval on Sydney's North Shore.
- Overall participation grew to more than 215,000 – a spike of around five per cent. This included growth of six per cent in key segments: club football, club Auskick, AFL 9s and female football.
- NSW/ACT enjoyed unprecedented success at the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, with eight players primary-listed, including four in the top 20 picks.

VICTORIA

- Total participation numbers reached 382,137, with female club participation growing by 27 per cent with 63 new female teams established.
- Youth Girls participation increased to 36 per cent, the largest influx of players achieved, with 842 new participants and new competitions in AFL North East Border, Mornington Peninsula JFL, Eastern FL and Woorineen.
- The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was another successful outing for TAC Cup and VFL players with 54 picked up through the Victorian talent pathway. The TAC Cup produced 46 draftees (36 National Draft and 10 Rookie Draft) and the VFL produced eight (four National Draft and four Rookie Draft). This represents 52 per cent of new talent on to the primary list of AFL clubs.
- AFL Victoria's Equalisation Working party released the Community Club Sustainability Program, which included a state-wide Players Points System and Policy.
- The TAC extended its partnership as a major sponsor of AFL Victoria, which will take its naming rights partnership of the TAC Cup into its 27th consecutive year.
- Peter Jackson extended its partnership as the naming rights sponsor of the VFL until the end of the 2018 season, which will see it continue to be the naming rights sponsor of the state competition for eight consecutive years.



- A Sporting Schools Program was implemented in Terms 3 and 4 after a pilot program ran in Terms 1 and 2. More than 11,000 participants were reached.
- Eight Female Level 0 Coaching courses were held which were attended by a total of 240 females. The program led to an all-female Level 1 Coaching Course, attended by 25 females at Arden St.
- Access All Abilities (AAA) Auskick Strategy implemented with 12 AAA Auskick centres up and running.
- Hosted the AFL National Inclusion Carnival that won the Victorian Governments Community Sporting Event of the Year award.
- New region development structure implemented in western and north-west Melbourne with support from the Essendon District FL, Riddell District FNL and the Western Region FL.
- Conducted five Regional Diversity TAC Cup squads with 128 multicultural and indigenous youth participating.
- The V/Line Cup was taken outside Melbourne for the first time, travelling to the Gippsland region. The tournament, which included a youth girls component, had a total economic benefit to the region of more than \$2.3 million.
- Launch of two Diversity Umpiring Academies at the Australian International Academy in Coburg linked to Essendon District Football League and schools in Shepparton linked to the Goulburn Valley Umpire's Association, with a total of 33 students participating and umpiring on weekends.
- All-female umpiring panel appointed to a TAC Cup game – an innovation that is being mirrored at community league level.
- Completed a Regional Facilities Strategy in partnership with AFL Barwon and the five councils in the Geelong region. Similar regional strategies were started in the west of Melbourne and in the AFL Goldfields region.
- A range of mutually beneficial government partnerships have been developed with agencies such as Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth, VicSport as well as with local government authorities. An example of these is the \$650,000 investment secured from VicHealth to fully launch, implement and evaluate AFL Active across Victoria.

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Richmond star Bachar Houli addresses participants at the Bachar Houli Cup at Punt Rd Oval.



NORTHERN TERRITORY

- Total participation grew by seven per cent to reach 38,258.
- AFL 9s participation increased by 16 per cent with the social game helping introduce the sport to Territorians.
- There were 10,374 footballers playing in community competitions, with growth in accredited coaches and umpires.
- The NT Thunder captured their second North East Australian Football League premiership since 2009 after defeating Aspley by one point in front of 6000 fans at Darwin's TIO Stadium.
- The Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre opened in March, with the education program helping children from remote communities across the Northern Territory.
- Two more Territorians found AFL homes with Daniel Rioli being selected with pick No. 15 by Richmond in the NAB AFL Draft and Ryan Nyhuis taken with pick No. 34 in the Rookie Draft by Fremantle.
- Darwin's TIO Stadium hosted a successful Toyota AFL Premiership Season match between Melbourne and the West Coast Eagles. Earlier in the season, the Demons played Port Adelaide at TIO Traeger Park in Alice Springs.

QUEENSLAND

- Total participation reached 205,135 – a 20.12 per cent increase on 2014.
- Queensland continues to have the highest school participation, with 150,614 primary and secondary students engaged in programs and competitions during 2015.
- More than 5100 fans attended a NAB Challenge match between the Gold Coast Suns and Geelong in Townsville.
- A 55-member Youth Girls Academy and 40-member Women's Talent Academy were established.
- Four Queenslanders were selected in the 2015 NAB AFL Draft and a further seven picked up in the Rookie Draft.
- The Queensland All Nations team won the National Diversity Championship.
- History was made with Queensland winning Division 2 titles in the NAB AFL Under-16 and Under-18 Championships for the first time.



- The Queensland Female Football Strategy (2016-18) was published.
- The state's first Access All Abilities Auskick centre was established at Aspley FC.
- Brisbane Lions star Dayne Beams was named Queensland Disability Inclusion Ambassador.
- 47 new female community teams were formed.
- AFL Queensland became the first state affiliate to map all its facilities and participation using a GIS computer interface to improve strategic planning.
- More than \$40 million worth of infrastructure projects were completed.
- Australia's first AFL Diversity Academy was announced, based at Inala in Brisbane's multicultural western suburbs.
- AFL Queensland, the Gold Coast Suns and the Brisbane Lions delivered community camps in Mackay, the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay.
- Female participation rose 37.96 per cent to 67,238.
- The AFL Queensland Junior Football Department was established to administer the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast junior leagues and provide support to junior affiliate leagues in the Darling Downs, Northern Rivers, Wide Bay, Mackay, Capricornia, Townsville and Cairns.

- Queensland boundary umpire Gareth Hughes and goal umpire Alastair Meldrum were added to the AFL umpires list and field umpire Alex Whetton was rookie-listed.
- Dean Warren started as AFL Queensland Chief Executive Officer.
- Six Queensland players were drafted and played in the AFL women's exhibition matches.
- A NEAFL representative team defeated the Tasmania State League at Brisbane's Moreton Bay Central Sports Complex.
- Labrador won its first QAFL premiership, defeating 2014 champion Morningside.
- The Coorparoo women's team won its third consecutive QWAFL Grand Final.
- The first under-14 Female State Championships were held at Maroochydore.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- Australian Football participants in South Australia increased by eight per cent to a total of 142,291. This included a three per cent rise in Auskick participants to ensure SA reached a total of more than 8000 Auskickers for the first time.
- More than 200 young females were introduced to Australian Football through the introduction of the inaugural SANFL Girls Competition.
- All eight SANFL clubs fielded a team at under-14 and under-16 level, the first time a female competition has had every team represented at state league level.
- West Adelaide won its first SANFL premiership in 32 years, defeating Woodville-West Torrens at Adelaide Oval in front of the largest state league crowd in 2015.
- Eleven South Australians were selected in the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, two more than in 2014. Sixteen South Australians were chosen in the NAB AFL Draft and Rookie Draft, including seven from regional areas.
- SANFL field umpire Craig Fleer was elevated to the AFL's senior umpiring list. It is the first time the SANFL has had four field umpires on the AFL senior umpiring list, with Fleer joining Justin Schmitt, Sam Hay and Curtis Deboy.



TASMANIA

- Celebrated 150 years of Australian Football in Tasmania.
- First AFL Commission meeting held in Hobart in August with Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick and Premier of Tasmania Will Hodgman announcing a joint commitment to assess Tasmania's game and market development investment requirements – from AFL Auskick through to Tasmania's future role in the AFL national competition.
- AFL Tasmania headquarters moved from North Hobart Oval to Blundstone Arena, Bellerive (Cricket Tasmania and AFL Tasmania sharing the same reception area and new administration building).
- Australian Amateur Football Council National Carnival held in Hobart during July.
- AFL Masters national carnival held in Launceston and Hobart.
- 2015 was the first full year operating under a new community football governance structure, the Tasmanian Football Council.
- Overall football participation in Tasmania increased by 6.5 per cent to 39,684.
- Four Tasmanians drafted to the AFL (best in the nation on a per capita basis).
- AFL Tasmania included 'Create a Gender Equity & Inclusive Culture' as a core strategic plan priority.

- North Launceston Bombers won back-to-back Tasmanian State League premierships.
- Paddy Martin and Matthew Richardson elevated to Icon status in the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame (and Tasmania's Sporting Hall of Fame).
- Former Tasmanian football product Brendon Bolton appointed as coach of Carlton.
- Strengthened ties with AFL Victoria and continued to explore partnership opportunities.

INTERNATIONAL

- Participation totalled more than 140,000 people in programs and competitions, with another 60,000 attending promotional activities.
- The 18th USAFL National Championships were held in Austin, Texas, in October with 45 teams competing across six divisions.
- In Europe, the annual Fitzpatrick Cup, named after the AFL Commission Chairman, bringing together men and women from universities, was held at the University of Birmingham.
- The first of two inaugural AFL Europe events took place in March, kicking off with a Champions League (nine-a-side tournament) inviting the league premiers from 22 countries.
- The seventh annual Anzac Cup saw Australia taking on France in

- Villers-Bretonneux, followed by the dawn service, over the Anzac weekend.
- Croatia hosted the Euro Cup, the only fully indigenous tournament, where Europeans compete for the title of Euro Cup champion. Eighteen teams took part, including The Peace Team, consisting of Israelis and Palestinians, who are the newest associate members of AFL Europe.
- The third match played outside Australia for premiership points was held when St Kilda took on Carlton in Wellington, New Zealand, on Anzac Day.
- The NAB AFL Academy Level 1 squad toured New Zealand for the fourth time in April and played a match against the New Zealand Hawks at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
- Giovanni Mountain-Silbery, Barclay Miller and Joe Baker-Thomas were awarded international scholarships with St Kilda. New Zealander Kurt Heatherley was added to Hawthorn's primary list and Shem-Kalvin Tatupu became an international rookie.
- The AFL Indigenous under-18 women's team, the Woomearas, conducted an inaugural 10-day New Zealand tour in December. The squad played two matches against the New Zealand Kahus.
- TVNZ announced a new AFL broadcast deal for New Zealand. The inaugural youth competitions started in Wellington and Auckland, incorporating female competition.
- St Kilda held a community camp in three New Zealand cities – Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.
- The South Pacific regions had 63,000 participants. There were 63 Level 0 and 30 Level 1 coaches accredited in the region. South Pacific conducted a talent camp in Brisbane and competed in the Queensland Under-16 State Championships in May. The Nauru Stars were champions in the Oceania Cup held in December for under-15 boys.
- The NAB AFL Academy Level 2 conducted a high-performance training camp at the IMG Academy in the United States in January.
- International Combines were held in Dublin, Los Angeles and Wellington.
- There are 16 internationals on AFL lists. The additions were Matt Korcheck (USA/Carlton), Colin O'Riordan (Ireland/Sydney) and Conor Glass (Ireland/Hawthorn).

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

The AFL can make a significant positive change to the lives of individuals and to the strength of our communities.

As Australia's No. 1 sport, we care about our connection with people and communities, and we have a responsibility to deliver positive social outcomes back to the communities in which we operate.

RECOGNISE

The 2015 Toyota AFL premiership Season marked 20 years since the AFL declared there was no place for racism in football and the League adopted its own racial vilification code.

Two decades later, the League is now part of the movement of Australians who say there is no place for race discrimination in the nation's rule book either and who know it's time to recognise the first Australians.

The AFL is proud to have an ongoing partnership with the Recognise campaign, which supports and focuses on the push to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's constitution and to ensure there's no place for racial discrimination in it.

In Indigenous Round, held during National Reconciliation Week, the AFL celebrated the contributions and sheer excellence of our country's Indigenous players and Australia's Indigenous heritage.

We recalled the outstanding Indigenous players of the past who were trailblazers and recognised the brilliance, talent and skill of the current generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.

The campaign's R symbol was painted in the middle of each AFL venue during Indigenous Round. Sydney Swans star and former Australian of the Year Adam Goodes, Shane Edwards (Richmond), Mathew Stokes (Geelong), Brett Goodes (Western Bulldogs), Peter Burgoyne (Port Adelaide) and Jobe Watson (Essendon) featured in a television commercial which was played at all nine matches during

Indigenous Round. It was also provided to AFL broadcast partners Fox Footy and Channel Seven who played it in the lead-up to and during Indigenous Round.

The AFL's support led to a significant boost in awareness of the campaign, with more than 14,400 Australians signing up as supporters.

AFL SPORTSREADY

Now in its 21st year of operation, AFL SportsReady continues to support the development needs of AFL players and the industry's entry level employment requirements. The organisation continues to expand its footprint across the country with record numbers of trainees and students.

In 2014-15, AFL SportsReady worked with the AFL industry to provide 245 traineeships to young Australian, whether they be full-time, part-time or school-based. This includes the provision of trainees to state leagues and AFL clubs.

Eight current and former AFL SportsReady trainees were selected for the 2015 National Women's Exhibition Clash and five trainees were selected in the 2015 NAB AFL Draft.

AFL SportsReady continues to provide player education with players such as Patrick Dangerfield, Scott Pendlebury and Marcus Bontempelli studying a diploma of management. In total, more than 250 players from all AFL clubs have studied with SportsReady Education, with many participating in the Football Induction Program and Next Goal programs.

AFL SportsReady has developed and delivered an entire suite of new services to meet the needs of the AFL industry – including players, coaches, umpires and football administrators at the elite level through to coaches, volunteers and players at the state league and junior levels.

Programs are developed and provided via partnerships between AFL SportsReady and the AFL or the AFL Players Association to ensure tailored, relevant programs that will benefit players and the industry and grow the game.

Aside from the AFL industry, AFL SportsReady continues to assist with education and employment outside of football, with almost 700 young people supported into traineeships in 2015. More than one third of these trainees

are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

AFL SportsReady works closely with employers to deliver traineeships, with partners including NAB, ANZ, Westpac, CBA, Australia Post, Telstra, the AFL, AFL clubs and associations and schools. Through ArtsReady, and supported by the Australian Government, traineeships are now being provided through arts and creative organisations such as the Australian Ballet, Regional Arts NSW and the National Gallery of Victoria.

Now, as a provider of education, AFL SportsReady offers trainees certificate and diploma courses which have a focus on sport and recreation, fitness, business and management. In 2015, more than 1000 students started with SportsReady Education.

AFL SportsReady has partnerships with universities in every state (La Trobe University, Griffith University, the University of Technology Sydney, University of Canberra, Curtin University, Flinders University and the University of Tasmania). These partnerships give SportsReady Education students who complete a Certificate IV or diploma qualification an opportunity to gain direct entry and in some cases a credit towards a degree.

In 2015, AFL SportsReady released its first Reconciliation Action Plan creating leaders for cultural change, awareness and respect, along with a number of initiatives to help Close the Gap. AFL SportsReady provides opportunities and support to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to overcome barriers through the delivery of tailored educational programs, employment opportunities, mentoring, gatherings and cultural awareness training.

LADDER

The AFL continued to support Ladder, which was established in conjunction with the AFL Players' Association in 2007 to tackle youth homelessness.

Ladder believes a young person's experience with homelessness should not define their life, a belief that is also supported by the AFL.

Ladder works with young people who have experienced homelessness to help them break the cycle of homelessness and reach their potential.

STANDING PROUD

Sydney Swans stars Adam Goodes and Lance Franklin featured in a television commercial for the Recognise campaign.





ON SONG
Greater Western Sydney made giant strides in 2015, winning 11 games and finishing just outside the final eight.

Every player participating in an AFL home and away match donates \$25 of his match fee to Ladder. This year these donations raised more than \$217,000 and the AFL made a matching donation, resulting in a total contribution of more than \$382,000.

In the past financial year, Ladder provided around 6800 hours of direct service to young people, including health, wellbeing and fitness sessions, skills training, mentoring and one-on-one support.

Past and present AFL footballers are involved as volunteers, ambassadors and mentors, which provides young people with guidance, support and encouragement to find a way out of the debilitating cycle of homelessness.

Ladder is also the official charity partner of the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

OUR WATCH

Our Watch was established to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children.

Through the Our Watch Sports Engagement Program, the AFL will strive to increase awareness of issues

related to violence against women within our organisation and across our affiliated members, partners and the broader community.

The \$250,000 three-year partnership will see the AFL ensure violence against women policies are up to date and supported by all staff, and allow the AFL's Respectful Relationships program to be delivered face-to-face with a focus on community leagues.

It will also support the development of resources that promote the prevention of violence against women to be distributed through the AFL's media platforms and club networks at the community and elite level.

Football clubs at all levels bring together large numbers of people and play a significant role in promoting safe, inclusive and welcoming environments for all, while continuing to increase the participation opportunities for females that will help eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence-supportive attitudes.

The AFL is committed to supporting Our Watch and using football as a vehicle to address gender inequality, sexism and cultures that trivialise and perpetuate violence against women and their children.

REACH – JIM STYNES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The AFL and the Reach Foundation together established the Jim Stynes Scholarship Fund in 2011 in honour of former Melbourne president and Brownlow medallist, the late Jim Stynes.

As part of a partnership with the AFL, the Federal Government has provided \$3 million to establish the scholarship fund to help disadvantaged people pursue their sporting dreams and reach their potential.

The scholarships recognise Stynes' contribution as an outstanding footballer, administrator, philanthropist, charity worker and writer.

In 2015, the AFL and Reach awarded 37 scholarships with a value of up to \$20,000. Number 37 was Stynes' original number when he joined Melbourne.

Recipients received funding towards football, travel and education expenses.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The AFL's aim is to be truly national and truly representative, and part of this commitment is to be a workplace and code that is a welcoming environment

regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or culture.

To this end, the AFL has committed to a range of initiatives to develop a welcoming environment for LGBTI athletes, administrators, coaches and spectators.

In 2015, the AFL was involved in the following initiatives:

- The AFL joined three other national football codes on a float in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade.
- Hosted a Pride match during the NAB Challenge between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle at Drummoyne Oval.
- Supported the launch of Essendon's Purple Bombers supporter group.

- Supported the AFLPA in the IDAHOT campaign.
- Supported and helped publicise a Pride match in the Yarra Valley Mountain District Football League between Yarra Glenn and Warburton.
- Announced the first AFL Pride match during the 2016 home and away season will be played between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans.

The AFL is also a member of the Pride in Sport Advisory Group, with representatives from basketball, golf, swimming, water polo, the NRL, Cricket Australia, the Australian Rugby Union and the FFA.



WORTHY CAUSE
The AFL supported the Million Dollar Lunch which raised more than \$2 million for children's cancer research.

The role of the Advisory Group is to assist with the development and implementation of the Pride in Sport Index.

The Index is a joint initiative of Pride in Diversity, a not-for-profit workplace diversity support organisation, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and the Bingham Cup.

It will be used as a benchmarking tool to measure LGBTI diversity and inclusion within national sporting organisations.

SUPPORT FOR CLUBS AND PARTNERS

The AFL also offers support to the programs and commitments of our clubs and partners.

Highlights in 2015 included the Big Freeze at the 'G, supported by the AFL and broadcasters, to help increase awareness about Motor Neurone Disease, and raise more than \$2.2 million for research.

The AFL also supported the Breast Cancer Network of Australia game, and the White Ribbon Cup, hosted by our clubs.

For the first time, the AFL also supported the Children's Cancer Foundation Million Dollar Lunch at Crown, which delivered an incredible \$2 million in funding for research into children's cancer.