Fremantle star Nat Fyfe is one of the most exciting midfielders in the competition and played a key role in the Dockers’ rise to their first Grand Final appearance in 2013.
The AFL’s expansion and improving the balance of the competition were among the key strategic areas that were addressed in 2013.

Key strategic issues fundamental to the game’s long-term future dominated the AFL Commission’s agenda in 2013 despite the headlines being consumed by off field events which challenged the integrity of the AFL competition.

The key areas of focus included:

1. Competition expansion through the continued growth of the Gold Coast Suns and Greater Western Sydney Giants.
2. Reviewing the factors which influence competitive balance between AFL clubs and identifying potential initiatives to improve that balance.
3. The second year of AFL Media providing content for the AFL Telstra network, which includes all AFL club websites and applications for mobile devices.
4. The redevelopment of Adelaide Oval, which was on track for completion for the first game between Port Adelaide and Adelaide on March 29, 2014. This $535 million project funded by the South Australian Government will be followed by a new $700 million stadium in Perth at Burswood for the 2018 season, completing world-class national stadium facilities for club members, supporters, players, media and corporate partners. The next stage of the SCG redevelopment will be completed for Sydney Swans matches in 2014.
5. The renewal of our executive team led by Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou following several changes in 2012 and a new structure to meet the current and future needs of our organisation.

On field, the Hawthorn Football Club completed a wonderful season by winning the Toyota AFL Grand Final and the club’s 11th premiership since 1960, more than any other club in that time.

While Hawthorn was appearing in its 17th Grand Final since 1960, the Fremantle Football Club played in its first Grand Final and has laid the foundation for a period of sustained success.

Based on our key measures of attendances, club memberships, television audiences and traffic generated by the AFL Telstra digital media network, the football public continued to support the 18 AFL clubs and maintained their extraordinary enthusiasm for the game despite being annoyed and frustrated by the off field events of 2013 and the time it took to resolve them.

This level of public support and passion for Australia’s game is something we will never take for granted.
COMPETITION INTEGRITY

The AFL Commission came into existence in 1984 by virtue of a vote by the then Presidents of the 12 clubs of the mainly Victorian-based competition.

The 2014 season will see us entering the 30th year of the management of our sport by an independent and centralised administration.

The story of the past 30 years is one of achievement. Our game has grown from being state-based to a national competition whose membership, attendances and broadcasting footprint is the envy of all other codes.

But 2013 held challenges for our sport, and for all Australian sports that would have been unthinkable 30 years ago.

The principle of maintaining the integrity of the AFL competition drove our consideration of three major but quite different breaches of our rules involving the Adelaide, Melbourne and Essendon Football Clubs, which were dealt with by the AFL Commission between late 2012 and August 2013.

On February 7, 2013, the Australian Crime Commission released a report which revealed the trade in performance-enhancing drugs, peptides and illicit drugs was linking established sports to organised crime.

The key findings of the Australian Crime Commission are outlined in the Integrity section of this report.

The AFL Commission responded immediately to the release of the Australian Crime Commission by meeting that afternoon and ordering an immediate audit of all AFL club supplements programs. We also restored each club’s medical doctor to having the final say on every substance or treatment provided to each player in the AFL competition.

Various rule changes were approved by the AFL Commission, including amendments to our Anti-Doping Code and Illicit Drugs Policy in response to the ACC report which are detailed on page 113 of this report.

Essendon’s decision to self-report and request an investigation by the AFL and the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority into its supplements program in late 2011 and 2012 was helpful in establishing the facts of what had happened at the club, as was its cooperation during the investigation.
When considering the interim report by ASADA into the supplements program at Essendon, the AFL Commission’s strong preference was for all parties to abide by the rules of the competition and for the matters to be resolved within football.

Clearly, that was not the view of some of the parties, but as a result of our experience in 2013, the AFL Commission will not hesitate in future to go to court to protect the health and safety of players and the integrity of the game.

Our intention when considering subsequent charges laid by AFL General Counsel Andrew Dillon based on the ASADA report was guided by two factors:

1. To ensure the health and safety of AFL players.
   While it is the role of ASADA and WADA to establish the status of performance-enhancing substances, it is the role of the AFL to ensure our players are not subject to experimental or unprofessional standards of care relating to performance, injury management or training.

2. To safeguard the integrity of the 2013 finals.
   Despite the challenges, as we go into the 30th year of its existence, the AFL Commission and AFL clubs finished 2013 united and firm on the issues which faced us this year. We will continue to be on the side of the people fighting to keep drug cheats and ‘pseudo scientists’ out of sport.
   The events of the past year reinforced the importance of the AFL Commission decision to establish an integrity unit in 2008 to monitor betting on AFL matches and to ensure full compliance with AFL rules and regulations including the Anti-Doping Code.

Details of the Essendon investigation and subsequent sanctions determined by the AFL Commission are detailed in the Integrity section of this report.

We must never allow the pursuit of on-field success to obscure a commitment to the principle that no individual or club comes ahead of the duty of care owed to players, or above the integrity of our competition or our game.

It has been a difficult and testing year, and one which has seen many AFL Commission decisions and processes questioned.

However, as Chairman of the AFL Commission, I am proud that when history is written about doping in sport in Australia, our competition can say we stood up and reported voluntarily, and we opened ourselves to investigation. We did not put our head in the sand, we did not blame others, and we did not attack the credibility of the officers of the Australian Crime Commission or the anti-doping authorities.

Our approach was to work with the authorities to uncover what had happened.

As an aside, AFL Medical Director Dr Peter Harcourt was invited to present two papers at an Anti-Doping in Sports Consensus Conference in Zurich in late 2013, attended by representatives of the International Olympic Committee and major Olympic international sports federations.

Dr Harcourt outlined the AFL’s Illicit Drugs Policy and the investigation into peptide use in the AFL as the conference considered key themes of the WADA code for 2015, which include:

1. Enhancement of investigations that lead to doping violations.
2. Improved targeting by anti-doping organisations using intelligence and shared information.
3. Greater accountability of coaches and athlete support staff.

Dr Harcourt’s presentation highlighted the growing risk of organised crime, the emergence of ‘peptides’ as a Performance Enhancing Drug risk, the significant resources required for investigations and integrity units, the issue of poor governance practices in team sports and the need for timely sanction responses in professional team sports.

Conference delegates complimented Dr Harcourt on the robust nature of the AFL’s response and the joint investigation with ASADA.

Key changes to the AFL’s Anti-Doping Code are aligned with the WADA 2015 Code which includes enhancements to doping violation investigations and greater accountability of athlete/team support staff.
Excited Brisbane Lions teammates embrace after Ashley McGrath kicked a goal after the siren to defeat Geelong in round 13 at the Gabba.
COMPETITIVE BALANCE

Maintaining competitive balance in the AFL competition was a topic which dominated the thinking of the AFL Commission and AFL clubs in 2013.

We unashamedly want supporters to attend a game or watch or listen to the broadcasting of a game with a genuine belief their club has a good chance of winning on any given day or night regardless of the club’s financial strength.

Pleasingly, all AFL clubs support this philosophy.

Since 1999, 11 different AFL clubs have won premierships and every club except our expansion clubs – the Gold Coast Suns and Greater Western Sydney Giants – have reached a preliminary final.

Before the VFL competition expanded nationally in 1987, five clubs won premierships in 20 seasons.

To support competitive balance, the AFL Commission has three key components:

1. The NAB AFL Draft, which gives the worst-performing clubs first access to young talent entering the competition.
2. Salary cap which is designed to give clubs the same amount of money to spend on players.
3. Revenue sharing – how the AFL distributes competition revenue to clubs.

Major professional sports competitions in the United States, particularly the NFL and NBA, have similar strategies and it is no secret we have historically based these major strategies on the NFL, which is the world’s most successful sports competition.

All the major sports in the US review their competitive balance strategies from time to time as circumstances change and the work we have undertaken in the past year has been based on the same principle.

The revenue gap between AFL clubs is growing, which in turn means some clubs have far greater resources to allocate to their football departments than others.

We do not want to stifle innovation and I am confident we will reach a collective outcome with our 18 AFL clubs in 2014 which will ultimately create an environment in which all clubs can compete more effectively.

This will not reduce the onus on each club to continue to attract high-quality people and make consistently good decisions which allows all clubs to compete.

Further information on this topic is included in this report by our Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou, who led a delegation of AFL club Presidents and Chief Executive Officers to the US in August, 2013, to meet with the major sporting codes to better understand how they approach competitive balance and how we might be able to apply their experiences to the AFL.
COMPOSITION EXPANSION

Led by another extraordinary season from their captain Gary Ablett jnr, the Gold Coast Suns made significant progress on-field during 2013.

The Suns won eight games and finished with a percentage of 92 per cent, which was better than expected. The club’s membership increased by 11.5 per cent to 12,502 compared to 11,204 in 2012 while the average home game attendance at Metricon Stadium was 13,907 a game, up two per cent on 2012.

Suns players were also prominent in our major competition awards:

- Gary Ablett won his second Brownlow Medal.
- Jaeger O’Meara won the NAB AFL Rising Star Award.
- Zac Smith won the Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award in recognition of his outstanding work in the Gold Coast community.

Clearly, the Greater Western Sydney Giants struggled on-field, winning one game, but given the age of their list and the time it takes for young players to be able to compete at AFL level, the result was not really surprising.

Like the Suns, off-field the Giants have laid some important foundations on which to build the future of the club.

The Giants’ membership base increased by 23 per cent on 2012, from 10,241 to 12,704 members, which is a base similar to many clubs in other codes in Sydney.

Average attendances per game decreased from 10,808 in 2012 to 9701.

In terms of corporate support, the Giants were ranked ninth in the AFL in 2013 which was an encouraging outcome. Pleasingly, the club secured a five-year agreement with Virgin Australia as its co-major partner, replacing Skoda.

The Giants are due to move into a new permanent training and administration facility at Sydney Olympic Park in early 2014.

While the AFL competition has a major focus on weekly results, we need to keep reminding ourselves establishing the Gold Coast Suns and Greater Western Sydney Giants were generational decisions taken by the AFL Commission with the unanimous support of all other clubs.

More than four million people are expected to live in south-east Queensland within the next 10-15 years, a population being only metropolitan Sydney and Melbourne.

We must continue to build the presence of our game in both regions and appreciate the time it will take to build both clubs on and off the field.

BROADCAST AND CORPORATE PARTNERS

The AFL Commission greatly appreciates the investment in Australia’s game by our broadcast and corporate partners.

Our television broadcasters, the Seven Network, Foxtel and Fox Sports, digital media partner Telstra and our radio broadcasters provide club members and supporters with an exceptional level of coverage via match broadcasts and other related programming.

No matter where any supporter is located, they can watch or listen to the broadcast of an AFL game live in south-east Queensland within the next 10-15 years, a population being only metropolitan Sydney and Melbourne.

We must continue to build the presence of our game in both regions and appreciate the time it will take to build both clubs on and off the field.

In 2013, we extended our agreement with Virgin Australia as the AFL’s official airline for a further five years. Virgin Australia has provided a very high level of service to each of the AFL clubs and their supporters and members.
FINANCIAL RESULT

The AFL’s financial result for 2013 included an increase in revenue of $18 million with major components including commercial operations revenue increasing by $10 million and broadcasting and media increasing by $7 million in the second year of our broadcast rights agreements with the Seven Network, Foxtel, Fox Sports, Telstra and various radio broadcasters.

Financial highlights included:
- Revenue increased by $18 million or four per cent to $446 million.
- Expenditure increased by three per cent to $137 million due to revenue-related increases and legal fees.
- The operating surplus before grants and distributions increased by five per cent to $310 million.
- The AFL provided $209 million to AFL clubs compared to $200 million in 2012.
- The AFL allocated $20.2 million to the Gold Coast Suns and Greater Western Sydney Giants consistent with our competition expansion arrangements.
- Following these grants and distributions, the AFL’s net profit increased by $10 million in 2013 to $16.6 million. This profit will be reinvested in the AFL’s Future Fund.

AFL CLUBS

As I have indicated, 2013 was a very challenging year for the AFL Commission but we received very strong support from the AFL clubs when dealing with the issues we faced. This level of support was greatly appreciated.

I wish to thank each club board, staff member, player and coach for their contribution to the AFL competition in 2013 which drives the overall success and popularity of the game.

Six AFL club Presidents or Chairmen retired in 2013:
- Brisbane Lions – Angus Johnson, after three years as Chairman of the club (he was appointed to the board in 1999).
- Essendon – David Evans resigned after four years as Chairman (he was appointed to the board in 2006).
- Melbourne – Don McLardy resigned after two years as Chairman (he was appointed to the board in 2008).
- Richmond – Gary March resigned after eight years as President (he was appointed to the board in 2002).
- St Kilda – Greg Westaway resigned after six years as President.
- Sydney Swans – Richard Colless resigned after 20 years as Chairman (he was appointed to the board in 1993).

Being the President or Chairman of an AFL club is a very demanding and time-consuming role and I would like to sincerely thank Angus, David, Don, Gary, Greg and Richard for their service to their respective clubs in particular and the game in general.

AFL MEDIA

AFL club members and supporters continued to be attracted in record numbers to AFL Media, our in-house digital media business which launched in 2012.

AFL Media was established to supply the AFL and each club website with content while also consolidating the operations of AFL Films, AFL Publishing and AFL Photographs into one business unit.

Our digital audience grew again in 2013 and maintained our position as the leading sports website in Australia.

For the period January 1 to November 30, 2013, the aggregate weekly unique visitors to afl.com.au, the club websites, the AFL live application and the 18 official AFL club applications totalled more than 105 million, an increase of more than 21 per cent on 2012.
I wish to make particular reference to Richard Colless, who was our longest-serving club Chairman and has led the transformation of the Swans from a club with 3000 members and average crowds of less than 10,000 to the largest single professional sporting club in Sydney in terms of membership, attendances per game, national television audiences and revenue.

The Swans have been at the forefront of our growth in New South Wales and have appeared in four AFL Grand Finals and won two premierships during Richard’s tenure – a period of remarkable consistency with the club having played in 15 finals series in 20 seasons.

On and off the field, the Swans are first-class ambassadors for our game in Australia’s most competitive market.

I also wish to welcome to the AFL the new appointees – Bob Sharpless, Brisbane Lions; Paul Little, Essendon; Glen Bartlett, Melbourne; Peggy O’Neal, Richmond; Peter Summers, St Kilda and Andrew Pridham, Sydney Swans.

We look forward to working with each of them as the President or Chairman of their respective clubs and I wish to acknowledge Peggy O’Neal for her achievement in being the first woman to be appointed as president of an AFL club.

**AFL COMMISSION, EXECUTIVE**

I would like to sincerely thank each member of the AFL Commission for their continued support and counsel during 2013 as we dealt with a wide variety of issues involving every level of the game.

Given the integrity issues we faced, the demands on the time of the AFL Commission were far greater than normal and, as Chairman, I could not have asked for anything further from my fellow Commissioners Linda Dessau, Sam Mostyn, Paul Bassat, Richard Goyder, Bill Kelty, Chris Langford, Chris Lynch, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou and their respective partners during 2013.

Our executive team led by Andrew Demetriou oversaw a year in which attendances, membership, television audiences and participation maintained the game’s position at the forefront of Australian sport.

Finally, I would like to thank all AFL staff for their continued positive contribution to Australia’s Game.

Mike Fitzpatrick
Chairman
AFL Commission
Western Bulldogs star Adam Cooney gives the crowd the thumbs-up while being chaired off Etihad Stadium by teammates Daniel Giancarlosa and Ryan Griffen after his 200th AFL game in round 21 against Adelaide.
CEO’S REPORT

ANDREW DEMETRIOU
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Hawthorn confirmed it is one of the strongest clubs on and off the field, winning its 11th premiership in the 2013 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

It is fitting the cover of our 2013 Annual Report features John Kennedy snr and Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson after John presented Alastair with the 2013 Premiership Cup following Hawthorn’s victory over Fremantle in the 2013 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Both now have their own places in the history of the Hawthorn Football Club.

No individual has had more influence than John Kennedy on the success of the Hawthorn Football Club.

He played 164 games for Hawthorn from 1950-59, won four best and fairest awards and was club captain from 1955-59 before being appointed club coach for the 1960 season.

Since 1960, no club has played in more Grand Finals and won more AFL/VFL premierships than Hawthorn, which has appeared in 17 Grand Finals for 11 premierships, including the club’s first flag in 1961 with John Kennedy as coach.

With John (299 games) and the late Allan Jeans (229 games), Alastair Clarkson is one of only three people to coach Hawthorn in more than 200 games.

John coached Hawthorn to three premierships while Alastair joins Allan Jeans and Alan Joyce as a two-time premiership coach at Hawthorn.

The connection between John and Alastair started when John was senior coach of North Melbourne and Alastair was embarking on his playing career with the club in 1987.

I would like to congratulate Hawthorn President Andrew Newbold, Chief Executive Officer Stuart Fox, the club board, staff and players for not only winning the 2013 Toyota AFL Grand Final but for maintaining a consistently high level of performance by reaching successive Grand Finals and being preliminary finalists for the third consecutive year.

With a membership of more than 60,000 and a broad supporter base, the club is now one of our strongest on and off the field.

For the Fremantle Football Club, the 2013 Grand Final was its first since it made its debut in the AFL competition in 1995.

Club President Steve Harris, Chief Executive Officer Steve Rosich, senior coach Ross Lyon and the club’s board, staff and players are to be commended for the continued growth of Fremantle as an AFL club and, like Hawthorn, we expect the Dockers will remain highly competitive during the coming seasons.

The 2013 Toyota AFL Grand Final attracted an average national audience on the Seven Network of 3,663,423, maintaining the Grand Final as the most watched annual sports event in Australia.

With a crowd of 100,007 people, the Grand Final was the most attended professional sports team event in Australia in 2013 and one of the largest in the world.

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The AFL greatly appreciates the level of public support for each of the 18 clubs in particular and the game in general as indicated by our key measures in 2013.

Total attendance for the 2013 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was 6,368,346, an increase of 2.1 per cent or 129,000 on 2012.

The average attendance per game during the premiership season was 32,163, the fourth highest average attendance per game in professional sport throughout the world behind America’s NFL (67,358 per game), Bundesliga soccer in Germany (42,609) and Premier League soccer in the United Kingdom (35,931).

For the 13th successive season, AFL clubs established a record for membership with the total of club members reaching 756,717, up 6.94 per cent on the 2012 total of 707,621.

Collingwood remains the largest-supported club in the competition, taking its total membership to 78,427 – the highest ever for an AFL club – while Hawthorn (63,353), Richmond (60,321), West Coast Eagles (58,501), Essendon (56,173) and Carlton (50,564) exceeded 50,000 members.

The Greater Western Sydney Giants recorded the highest percentage increase in membership of any AFL club in 2013, with a total of 12,681 representing a 23.83 per cent increase on last year’s total of 10,241.

The Sydney Swans were next with a 21.71 per cent increase in 2013 to 36,358 members, a record for the club. The Swans membership in 2012 was 29,873.

Each week of the 2013 Toyota AFL Premiership Season drew an average national television audience on the Seven Network, Foxtel and Fox Sports of 4,729,423, the largest weekly online audience for any sports competition in Australia.

On average, more than one million people listened to radio broadcasts of AFL matches.

Total domestic participation in the game at a community level throughout Australia reached 938,069 while a further 129,775 people participated in the game in various countries around the world.

This community football base would not exist without the involvement of more than 150,000 volunteers in Australia and internationally who perform a variety of roles at local clubs and in Auskick centres.
NEW ZEALAND
The first Toyota AFL Premiership Season match played outside Australia was staged in Wellington, New Zealand, on Anzac Day in 2013 between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans. St Kilda has entered into a five-year agreement with the City of Wellington to play a premiership season game each year from 2014.

We were delighted with the response to the first game which attracted a crowd of 22,546 with an estimated:

- 4833 international attendees from Australia.
- 2850 inter-regional attendees (i.e. people from outside the Wellington metropolitan area).
- 14,863 Wellington region attendees.

The estimated total economic contribution of the match in Wellington was NZ$7.984 million (or A$6.598 million).

COMPETITIVE BALANCE
As our Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick points out in his report, the AFL wants supporters to attend a game or watch or listen to the broadcast of a game with a genuine belief their club has a good chance of winning on any given day or night regardless of the club’s financial strength.

A number of mechanisms have been employed since the 1980s, including the National Draft, salary cap and revenue sharing to achieve this objective.

After Sydney Swans Chairman Richard Colless raised the issue of the growing financial gap between clubs, the various mechanisms for competitive balance were reviewed during 2013.

A key component of that review was a study tour which I was fortunate to lead to the United States of America where we met with senior executives of the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball and individual clubs to understand how they approach competitive balance.

Our group included AFL club Presidents Peter Gordon (Western Bulldogs), Eddie McGuire (Collingwood) and Andrew Newbold (Hawthorn), along with club Chief Executive Officers Brendon Gale (Richmond), Trevor Nisbett (West Coast Eagles) and Keith Thomas (Port Adelaide). AFL Players’ Association Chief Executive Officer Matt Finnis also accompanied the group.

The AFL was also represented by Deputy Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan and General Manager, Strategy and Club Services, Sam Graham.

- NFL – Joe Siclare, Chief Financial Officer.
- New England Patriots – Robert Kraft, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.
- Major League Baseball – Jonathon Mariner, Executive Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer; Dan Halem, Senior Vice-President and General Counsel – Labor; and Kathleen Torres, Senior Vice-President, Finance.
- The Fenway Group – Sam Kennedy, Executive Vice-President. Fred Olsen, Director of Special Projects, the Boston Red Sox. The Fenway Group owns the Boston Red Sox, Liverpool in Premier League soccer, a NASCAR racing team and has extensive media interests.
We also met with representatives of MLB Advanced Media, the US’s leading cable TV network, ESPN and News Corporation.

Our key findings from the study tour included:

- Compared to the AFL, US major leagues are more highly equalised, in particular in terms of local revenue sharing.
- Each US sport has had a ‘fork in the road’ moment that led to revenue sharing – smaller teams’ loss making, uncompetitive on-field.
- Broad consensus among US sports that more revenue sharing has been a critical part of strengthening competitive balance on and off-field.
- Revenue sharing regarded as a key driver of success and competitive balance in NFL competition – No. 1 code in the US/globally. NBA and MLB have strengthened policies.
- Revenue-sharing models are designed to address structural off-field factors (market size, fan base, stadia) as well as on-field competitiveness.
- “A rising tide lifts all boats” was oft quoted – when smaller teams are competitive and are not a drag on the league (financially, competitively), the overall competition, including larger clubs, are better off.
- Revenue sharing reflects the contribution visiting teams make to the on-field contest.
- Strong sense of collaboration across the US leagues and clubs to improve economic models for the benefit of all.
- Decision-making plays a role in performance, however, structural issues are endemic (market size, fan base, stadia) and are the major drivers of club revenue.
- All sports have central league resources to assist clubs in driving business performance – NBA Team Services are a prime example.
- In all leagues there is an objective and transparent formula for the flow of money between clubs.
- A fair competition is critical to selling “hope and faith” to fans (MLB), and “Any given Sunday” (NFL).

Key revenue sharing and competitive balance levers in US sports include:

- Sharing of central revenues.
- Sharing of local revenues.
- Supplemental/discretionary funds.

Implementation considerations

- Large economic reforms require a deep commitment from all parties – league, clubs, players.
- Major structural changes generally take between one and two years to implement – to enable business models to adjust.
- Reforms are generally phased in over time with temporary arrangements in the intervening period.
- Revenue-sharing models and player CBAs are generally completed at the same time.
- Leagues utilise a single external auditor to ensure compliance with revenue sharing policies and guidelines.
- Revenue-sharing models in all leagues have changed as they evolve.
  - No model is perfect.
  - Require capacity to monitor and adjust as market forces and team dynamics change.

All AFL clubs support the principle of competitive balance and we are confident we will adopt a new approach in conjunction with the clubs in 2014 which will give all clubs a better opportunity to compete.
Carlton ruckman Robert Warnock wins the hit-out in front of his Richmond opponent Ivan Maric during their round 21 match at the MCG.
ILLICIT DRUGS POLICY

The AFL has had an Illicit Drugs Policy for out-of-competition testing of AFL players since 2005.

In January 2013, we held an AFL club CEOs conference to discuss the issue of illicit drug use by AFL players after the topic was raised by Collingwood Football Club’s Chief Executive Officer Gary Pert in late 2012.

The January conference was attended by a number of experts in various fields relating to Illicit Drugs including:

- Dr Michael Carr Gregg, psychologist.
- Professor Jon Currie, neurologist and addiction medicine specialist.
- Associate Professor John Fitzgerald, who has conducted extensive research into the use of illicit drugs and alcohol.
- John Rogerson, Chief Executive, Australian Drug Foundation.
- Dr Peter Harcourt and Dr Harry Unglik, AFL Medical Directors.
- Dr Hugh Seward, President, AFL Medical Officers Association.
- Deputy Commissioner Graham Ashton, Specialist Operations, Victoria Police.
- Assistant Commissioner Emmett Dunne, Professional Standards Command, Victoria Police.
- AFL Players’ Association – Matt Finnis (Chief Executive Officer), Luke Ball (President), Dan Jackson and Robert Murphy (board members).
- AFL Players’ Association Agents’ Accreditation Board – Dan Richardson.

A Working Group was established during the meeting to review the various recommendations and other issues which were raised.

The Working Group which I chaired included:

- AFL club Chief Executive Officers – Travis Auld (Gold Coast Suns), Stuart Fox (Hawthorn), Gary Pert (Collingwood).
- AFLPA – Matt Finnis, Chief Executive Officer.
- AFL Medical Officers Association – Dr Hugh Seward (President), Dr Ben Baressi (Carlton FC doctor).
- AFL – Andrew Dillon (General Counsel), Dr Peter Harcourt (AFL Medical Director), Tony Peek (Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer).
Maintaining the three strikes policy was unanimously supported

The various recommendations agreed to by the Working Group and approved by the AFL Commission and AFLPA were as follows:

1. Maintaining the three strikes policy was unanimously supported.
2. AFL Medical Directors to provide clubs with more statistical information which was club specific so clubs could better understand issues relating to their club and the broader competition.
3. Club doctor should be at forefront of medical/welfare response.
4. It was agreed the amount of hair testing would be increased at the end of the season.
5. Players to have one opportunity to self-report during their AFL career. AFL Medical Directors to retain discretion in certain circumstances such as a player dealing with a mental health issue.
6. Issue of excessive use of alcohol including binge drinking to be addressed more strongly. Excessive use of alcohol involved in more than 90 per cent of cases involving illicit drug use.
7. Education programs to be upgraded to include abusive use of prescription drugs.
8. Clubs to be permitted to fund additional target testing, subject to there being reasonable grounds for such a measure. To be done in conjunction with AFL Medical Directors.

One of the key points raised by AFL clubs was how to best manage a player who engages in conduct or displays an attitude contrary to the objectives, spirit and implementation of the Illicit Drugs Policy.

The following approach was put forward by the AFL Players’ Association and supported by the Working Group and subsequently the AFL Commission.

If the AFL Medical Directors reasonably conclude a player has behaved as outlined, the Medical Directors may inform the Chief Executive Officer of the player’s club of this conclusion subject to:

1. Before informing the club CEO, the AFL Medical Directors:
   a. Inform the player of the basis on which the AFL Medical Directors conclude he has engaged in conduct and/or demonstrated an attitude contrary to the objectives, spirit and implementation of the policy.
   b. Direct the player to undergo a more onerous education and counselling program.
   c. Warn the player the CEO of his club will be notified if he does not:
      i. Reform the relevant conduct and/or attitude and/or;
      ii. Comply with the more onerous program.
   d. Discuss the above conclusion with the player and
      i. Changed his conduct and/or attitude and/or;
      ii. Complied with the more onerous program.
   e. Notify the player the CEO of his club will be notified and the targeted date of the notification.

2. The CEO maintains the confidentiality of this information.
3. The AFL Medical Directors do not provide the CEO information regarding:
   a. The basis on which they have concluded the player has engaged in conduct and/or demonstrated an attitude contrary to the objectives, spirit and implementation of the policy, or;
   b. The testing of the player, including without limitation, the number of tests and the result of any test, regardless if positive or negative.

Club and AFL officials, other than medical officers exercising their functions under the Illicit Drugs Policy are not to directly or indirectly seek information from any person, including the player to whom the information pertains, regarding the testing of a player including without limitation the number of tests administered to the player and the result of any test, regardless if positive or negative.

It is important to stress the entire AFL playing group via the AFL Players’ Association continues to volunteer to participate in the Illicit Drugs Policy which includes out-of-competition testing for illicit drugs.

The policy has been based on the best available advice from experts in the field and is a medical and player welfare model designed to assist players and change behaviour should they be found to be using illicit drugs.

The majority of other sports do not have a policy for out of competition testing for illicit drugs.

Racial Vilification

Sydney Swans champion Adam Goodes was racially vilified by a young spectator during the game on May 24, 2013, between the Sydney Swans and Collingwood at the MCG.

The comment was thoughtless and incredibly hurtful to Adam but the way he dealt with the issue by standing up for what was right and for the concern he had for the spectator involved, further reinforced his position in the game as an outstanding ambassador and leader of our game and the community.

During the week following the game, Collingwood FC President Eddie McGuire made a completely unacceptable comment concerning Adam on Melbourne radio.

Mr McGuire’s comments were addressed under AFL Rule 30, which deals with racial and religious vilification. Importantly, Adam Goodes accepted an apology from Eddie McGuire, who subsequently participated in a cultural education program managed by the AFL.
Jason Blake celebrates a goal to the delight of St Kilda teammates in his final AFL game against Fremantle in round 23 at Etihad Stadium.
EXECLUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Following the resignation of executive members Christina Ogg, Adrian Anderson and Andrew Catterall during late 2012, we made several appointments and changed the structure of our operations to meet the needs of the AFL competition and the game in general.

Mark Evans was appointed General Manager, Football Operations after serving the Hawthorn Football Club in the same capacity from 2004.

During his period with Hawthorn, the club went from winning four games in 2004 to winning the 2008 AFL Premiership, preliminary finalists in 2011, finishing runners-up to the Sydney Swans in the 2012 Grand Final and winning the 2013 Grand Final.

Before joining Hawthorn, Mark was Communications Manager for Melbourne FC from 1999-2003 and Player Development Manager for the club from 2003-04.

He holds a Bachelor of Education from Ballarat University and in 2012 completed key executive programs in strategy, strategic leadership, negotiation and innovation at the Harvard Business School.

Given the focus on competition integrity in 2013 and as part of our revised structure, we reorganised football operations by making our integrity unit a stand-alone department with responsibility for managing the Total Player Payments and AFL club list administration rules, transferring those functions from football operations.

In addition, our various education programs for players and clubs became a function of our human resources department.

Our talented player pathway transferred to football operations from game development as did national umpiring development given the importance of both to the AFL competition, meaning the primary focus of football operations relates to on-field.

Mark’s other major responsibilities will include:
1. Staging of all NAB Challenge, Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Toyota AFL Finals Series matches.
2. AFL Rules and Regulations.
3. NAB AFL Draft.
4. Various AFL policies including Racial and Religious Vilification, Respect and Responsibility.
5. Laws of the Game.
7. Umpiring.
8. Working relationship with AFL clubs.

AFL MEDIA

Peter Campbell was appointed to the new position of General Manager, AFL Media, to bring senior media company experience to the media business we established in 2011 to provide content to the AFL Telstra network, which includes all AFL club websites and mobile applications.

Peter worked in the radio, television, subscription television and digital media industries for 20 years and joined us from our broadcast partner Foxtel where he was General Manager of Victoria and Executive in Charge of Sport. He took up his position with us in July 2013.

Peter was part of the Foxtel team which negotiated subscription television rights for the 2002-06 Toyota AFL Premiership Seasons and subsequent subscription television rights for the 2007-11 seasons and the current agreement for the period 2012-16, which included the re-establishment of the FOX Footy Channel and live coverage of every premiership season game for the first time.

His experience also includes negotiation for and heading the coverage of major international sporting events such as the Commonwealth and Olympic Games, for which Foxtel was awarded a Logie in 2013 for the Most Outstanding Sporting Broadcast for its coverage of the London Games.

PEOPLE, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY

Dorothy Hisgrove was appointed to head up a new department as General Manager, People, Customer and Community.

From 2010-2013, Dorothy was General Manager Culture and Communications at Australia Post before joining the AFL in July 2013.

Her career also includes senior roles with the National Australia Bank, AXA Asia Pacific and BHP Billiton.

Her responsibilities with the AFL include:
1. The people, culture and human resources roles within the AFL, as well as broader club and community education programs.
2. Managing the AFL’s community club and development networks and the marketing function to get people to play our game, attend AFL matches and watch our game through all forms of media.

She holds a Bachelor of Business with Distinction from RMIT University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing from RMIT University.
Steve McBurney is the only other field umpire to officiate in 400 games or more.
Rowan officiated in 33 finals, including four Grand Finals, and for his contribution to umpiring was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2004.
He was appointed AFL Umpires Coach in 1998.
Jeff Gieschen
Jeff played 24 games with Footscray from 1974-78 and had a long coaching and playing career with Maffra in the Latrobe Valley Football League and Wodonga in the Ovens and Murray Football League.
He coached West Perth in the WAFL, was an assistant coach at Geelong from 1995-96 and was then appointed coach of Richmond Reserves in 1997.
He became Senior Coach of Richmond in late 1997, a position he held until 1999.
In 2000, he was appointed AFL Director of Umpiring.
I wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to Sandra, Ros, Rowan and Jeff for their service to the game and the wonderful contribution they made to the AFL as long-serving employees.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
In 2013, National and International Talent Manager Kevin Sheehan completed 30 years of service to the AFL.
His contribution to the game was recognised on Australia Day 2013 when he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.
Kevin has worked in game development and talent since 1983 and played a key role in the development of VicKick (now Auskick), the Under-18 and Under-16 National Championships, the development of the TAC Cup which replaced the VFL under-19 competition, the AIS-AFL Academy and the Draft Camp (now the NAB AFL Draft Combine).
He played 102 games for Geelong between 1974–82, meaning he has been continuously involved in the game for 39 years. He was also one of the first Promotions Officers employed by a VFL club to promote the development of the game at a community level, a position he held with Geelong for four years before being appointed Development Manager.
We greatly value Kevin’s contribution to the game and were delighted for him and his family when he was awarded the Order of Australia.

Andrew Demetriou
Chief Executive Officer

We greatly value Kevin’s contribution to the game

INTEGRITY
Andrew Dillon was appointed as General Counsel and General Manager Legal, Integrity and Compliance with responsibility for our new stand-alone integrity unit.
Andrew joined the AFL in August 2000 as Legal Counsel and was appointed General Manager, Legal and Business Affairs in July 2004. He became General Manager, National and International Development in 2011 before being appointed to his new role in 2013.
Integrity Services Manager Brett Clothier heads up the Competition Integrity Department reporting to Andrew Dillon. Brett joined the AFL from Racing Victoria in 2008.
The Total Player Payments and AFL club list administration functions now form part of the role of the Competition Integrity Department.

STRATEGY AND CLUB SERVICES
Sam Graham was promoted to the position of General Manager, Strategy and Club Services in May 2013.
He joined the AFL in 2005 as a strategic planner and in January 2009 was appointed Manager, Strategy and then was given additional responsibility as Manager, Club Services in 2011.
Sam has a Bachelor of Commerce from Deakin University and is a chartered accountant.

LONG-SERVING EMPLOYEES
While we welcomed new executive members, several long-term employees retired or resigned from the AFL.

Sandra Thomas
Sandra Thomas, our Ground Operations Manager, retired after the 2013 Toyota AFL Grand Final, her 33rd Grand Final since joining the VFL in 1981.
Her first role was as an administrator in finance and membership and her career of more than 30 years with the AFL included as AFL Membership Manager, in the payroll and media departments, commercial operations as National Ticketing Manager and in football operations.

Ros Taylor
Ros Taylor joined the VFL in a part-time capacity in 1975 before becoming a full-time employee in 1980.
She left the VFL in 1986-87 to work in a family business but returned to the AFL in 1992 in AFL Membership before being appointed to the position of National Ticketing Administrator, a position she held until her retirement in December 2013.

Rowan Sawers
Rowan resigned as AFL Umpires Coach in November 2013 after continuous service at the highest level of the game since 1977.
He officiated in 410 games as a field umpire from 1977 to 1997 in the AFL/VFL, a record until it was subsequently broken by Hayden Kennedy, the current games record-holder for a field umpire with 495 games.
Steve McBurney is the only other field umpire to officiate in 400 games or more.
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We greatly value Kevin’s contribution to the game and were delighted for him and his family when he was awarded the Order of Australia.

Andrew Demetriou
Chief Executive Officer
It is something of an understatement to say Adam Goodes has a very impressive football CV.

- 331 games for the Sydney Swans, a club record.
- 409 career goals and one of 86 players in history to have kicked 400 goals or more from the 12,000 players who have participated in the competition since 1897.
- Three-time winner of the Bob Skilton Medal as the Swans best and fairest player.
- Four-time All-Australian.
- Named in the Indigenous Team of the Century.
- Winner of the 1999 NAB AFL Rising Star Award and Ron Evans Medal.

He added a further chapter to his career when on January 25, 2014, the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, announced Adam had been selected by the Australia Day Council as the 2014 Australian of the Year.

Adam is the first Australian footballer to be selected as Australian of the Year since the award was established in 1960.

His selection acknowledges Adam’s stance against racism and his support for RECOGNISE, the people’s movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution.

Adam and former Swans teammate Michael O’Loughlin established the GO Foundation to promote education, employment and healthy lifestyles among young Indigenous people.

He also chairs the AFL Players’ Association Indigenous Players’ Advisory Board and is an ambassador for White Ribbon, the international campaign to eliminate violence against women.

Adam’s journey in life is a remarkable one.

His mother, Lisa, a member of the stolen generation, raised Adam and his two younger brothers.

An Andyamathanha man, Adam grew up in Wallaroo, a small town in South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula.

The family moved to Adelaide, then Merbein near Mildura, and then to Horsham in the Wimmera, where his mother’s younger sister lived.

Adam preferred soccer as a boy but in Horsham he started playing Australian Football.

He was selected by the North Ballarat Rebels in the TAC Cup as a 16-year-old, winning a premiership and, at age 18, he was drafted by the Sydney Swans with selection No. 43 in the 1997 National Draft.

Adam has made an outstanding contribution to the Sydney Swans in particular and the game in general and we were delighted for him and his family when he was named as the 2014 Australian of the Year. We are very proud of his achievements.
Simon Black retired at the end of 2013 after a distinguished career and will maintain his involvement with the Lions in 2014 as an assistant to senior coach Justin Leppitsch.