Shaun Burgoyne and Norm Smith medallist Cyril Rioli celebrate with fans after Hawthorn’s third consecutive premiership in 2015.
The Seven Network audience for the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, the second-highest audience for a program on metropolitan television in 2015.

The metropolitan and regional audience which watched the Seven Network’s broadcast of the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Total aggregate audience for the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series on the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel.

98,632

THE ATTENDANCE AT THE 2015 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL

2,645,099

3,534,220

16,588,991

Hawthorn and West Coast met in the hottest premiership decider on record, with the temperature hitting 31.3 degrees.
TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR THE 2015 TOYOTA AFL PREMIERSHIP SEASON

6,351,578

67

HIGHLIGHTS

32,242

The average attendance per game for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the fourth-highest average attendance per game in world professional sports competitions.

836,136

The total number of AFL club members in 2015 – a record established by the clubs for the 15th successive season. One in 28 Australians is a member of an AFL club.
MAJOR AWARDS

BROWNLOW MEDAL

Nat Fyfe
Fremantle

NORR SMITH MEDAL

Cyril Rioli
Hawthorn

COLEMAN MEDAL

Josh Kennedy
West Coast Eagles

NAB AFL RISING STAR

Jesse Hogan
Melbourne

$245.2 MILLION

The AFL makes various payments and distributions to AFL clubs which in 2015 totalled $245.2 million compared with $218.3 million in 2014.

$220.5 MILLION

The total gross payments to players in 2015, made up of $200.2 million in gross player payments, $18.6 million in additional services agreements and $1.7 million in employment and marketing agreements with associates of clubs. The 2015 total was a 6.6% increase on the 2014 total of $206.8 million.

BEST FROM THE WEST

Nat Fyfe became the first Docker to win the Brownlow Medal, polling 31 votes.
1,247,575
TOTAL DOMESTIC PARTICIPATION IN THE GAME IN 2015, AN 8% INCREASE ON THE 2014 TOTAL

318,880
TOTAL FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE GAME IN 2015, COMPARED WITH 2014 LEVEL OF 194,966

336,113
The number of participants in community club football throughout Australia in:
13,873 TEAMS
2672 COMMUNITY CLUBS
253 COMMUNITY LEAGUES

182,927
The number of NAB AFL Auskick participants in 2015 in 2936 community centres around Australia, up 2.5% on the 2014 total of 178,522 participants.
The Melbourne Football Club proudly hosted its former coach on Queen’s Birthday Monday when the whole football community rallied to support Neale Daniher and the Big Freeze at the ‘G, raising an incredible $2.4 million for the Cure for MND Foundation. Then Prime Minister Tony Abbott joined Daniher as he walked to the MCG among a sea of supporters to see some of the biggest names in the media slide into a freezing ice pool before the game in front of a crowd of more than 65,000. Daniher’s campaign included the sale of more than 11,000 blue beanies.
The Melbourne Football Club brought to life the campaign ‘Mums Make The Game’ when they hosted Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) on Mother’s Day weekend in round six. More than 300 mums ran through a specially created pink banner. Five hundred pink lady silhouettes were planted in Yarra Park, paying tribute to those diagnosed with breast cancer.

The MCG turned pink for the first time using the newly installed exterior lighting. More than $80,000 was raised on the night to support the important work BCNA do with women and men who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Melbourne has partnered with BCNA since 2006 when the first ‘Field of Women’ was held at the MCG.
The AFL maintains its position as the pre-eminent sporting code in Australia, delivering positive outcomes for key stakeholders and dealing with fresh challenges.
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Mike Fitzpatrick
Chairman

The 2015 season will be remembered for both historic successes and also the deep sadness at the death of Adelaide Crows senior coach Phil Walsh.

Hawthorn enhanced its reputation as the powerhouse of the AFL era by adding the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership to the premierships it had won in 2008, 2013 and 2014.

We congratulate the Hawks who have played in six Grand Finals in the AFL era and also coach Alastair Clarkson, who joined the list of all-time coaching greats to have coached four premierships. I also want to congratulate Fremantle’s Nat Fyfe whose on-field brilliance in winning the 2015 Brownlow Medal was matched only by his humility and humour.

In 2015, we saw significant achievements through attendances, club membership and participation in our game and the continued growth in the number of women playing our game. The introduction of a national AFL women’s competition in 2017 will ensure even greater opportunities for women taking up our game.

I want to thank our AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan for a series of changes brought in during 2015 that ensured the fixture, the match-day environment and even the price of food was more focused on providing benefits for all our fans.

We continued to make changes to enhance the look of the game and the on-field safety and wellbeing of players with the AFL Commission approving a further reduction in the number of interchanges for the 2016 season while maintaining a strong focus on the prevention and treatment of injury, particularly concussion.
DEATH OF PHIL WALSH

In many ways the 2015 AFL season was framed by the death in unimaginable circumstances on July 3 of Adelaide Crows senior coach Phil Walsh. Phil was enjoying his first season in the role after 32 years as an assistant coach with the Eagles before his appointment by Adelaide colleagues.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the exceptional management and leadership of Adelaide FC Chairman Rob Chapman, CEO Andrew Fagan, Head of Football David Noble and General Manager, Media and Communications, Ian Shuttleworth for how they dealt with a tragedy which was unprecedented in the history of our game.

They had wonderful support from their board, staff and players. At a time of crisis, our game has a rare capacity to come together to support one of our own and I would like to thank and acknowledge the role of every AFL club, their players, coaches and staff for their support of the Adelaide Football Club in particular and others impacted by the tragedy.

After consulting with all AFL clubs, the AFL decided the scheduled game between Adelaide and Geelong on July 5 at Adelaide Oval would not proceed as a mark of respect to Phil and his family. All felt it would not be fair to ask the Crows and Cats players to play under those circumstances.

The premiership points were split between Adelaide and Geelong, as per the AFL rules. The remaining seven games proceeded as scheduled but with changed pre and post-match activities, including the observation of a minute’s silence at all games, as a mark of respect to Phil and his family.

I would also like to acknowledge the West Coast Eagles for how they supported the staff, players and families of Adelaide when the club played the Eagles at Domain Stadium in Perth the following week.

The Eagles were also deeply impacted by the death of Phil, given his five years as an assistant coach with the club, but they and their supporters could not have done more to support their Adelaide colleagues.

The initiative of Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson and his Collingwood counterpart Nathan Buckley in bringing their players together with arms linked at the end of their game at the MCG on July 3 for a minute’s silence was a fitting tribute repeated not only at other AFL matches during the weekend but also by community clubs around Australia.

A tribute to Phil by leading Adelaide Advertiser journalist Michelangelo Rucci is in this report on page 29.

The AFL competition, in particular the Carlton and Hawthorn Football Clubs, also rallied around Hawks assistant coach and former Blues senior coach and premiership player Brett Ratten after his eldest son Cooper died in a car accident in August.

HISTORIC BROADCAST AGREEMENT

The AFL Commission was delighted to finalise broadcast rights agreements with the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra for a six-year period starting in 2017 which are a benchmark for Australian sport.

The agreements followed an enormous amount of work over several years by the Executive team with the support from AFL Commissioners Paul Bassat and Kim Williams who joined me on the AFL Commission’s Broadcasting sub-committee.

It was important any agreement ensure the fundamentals for the AFL, including that the AFL continue to have full control of the production of the fixture, including the scheduling of the Toyota AFL Grand Final, and that the Toyota AFL Premiership Season continue to be a 22-match season for each of our clubs, with a standard round of nine matches.

The agreement covers six seasons from 2017-22, and will deliver the AFL a financial return of $2.508 billion.
THE BROADCAST DEAL IN DETAIL

Under the agreement with our broadcast partners, the following arrangements will be in place for the 2017 AFL Premiership season.

The agreements ensure that other than Thursday night matches, public holiday schedules and bye/split rounds, the competition will have:

- 1 Friday night game
- 2 Saturday afternoon games
- 1 Saturday twilight game
- 2 Saturday night games
- 2 Sunday afternoon games
- 1 Sunday twilight game

The AFL agreement with our partners will cover:

- The Seven Network for free-to-air television
- News Limited for subscription television across Foxtel and the Fox Footy Channel
- Telstra for the Live AFL app, AFL.com.au, club digital network and IP TV.

Other key components include:

- Seven Network holds the free-to-air rights, and includes:
  - The Toyota AFL Grand Final exclusively live in every state and territory.
  - The Brownlow Medal count exclusively live in every state and territory.
  - All matches in the Toyota AFL Finals Series live in every state and territory.
  - During the Toyota AFL premiership season, the Seven Network will broadcast:
    - Each Friday night match live in every state and territory.
    - One Saturday night match live in every state and territory.

- One Sunday afternoon match in the 3.20pm Eastern Time Zone slot live in every state and territory.
- In addition, the Seven Network will telecast a further 11 matches live across the season that are played on public holidays, the eve of public holidays such as Anzac Day/Easter Thursday and between 5-6 Thursday night games.
- In effect, across an average two normal rounds of 18 matches in our regular season, the Seven Network will broadcast seven games, equating to 3.5 matches a round across the season.
- All matches for the NSW/Queensland teams – the Gold Coast Suns, the Brisbane Lions, the Sydney Swans and the GWS Giants – will continue to be shown live on free-to-air television.
- As our game develops across the country, this support from the Seven Network is pivotal for us.

In Western Australia and South Australia, Foxtel and the Fox Footy Channel will exclusively broadcast live three premiership season matches for each of the teams based in those states – the West Coast Eagles, Fremantle, the Adelaide Crows and Port Adelaide – with those matches to be replayed on delay on free-to-air television.

DIGITAL RIGHTS

Telstra will again hold the AFL rights for all hand-held mobile devices, the AFL website AFL.com.au – which is the most-visited sporting website in Australia – the club digital network and IP television.

Telstra will deliver every game, every week, live, in the palm of your hand, no matter where you are in this country.

The broadcasting of our game on the Seven Network, News Corp via Foxtel and the Fox Footy Channel, and Telstra is world class and we look forward to continuing to work with our broadcast partners in 2017 and beyond.

WHAT THE BROADCASTING AGREEMENT MEANS

In 2015, we started the important work on deciding how to invest the revenue that will be generated by the broadcasting agreement for 2017 and beyond.

The AFL Commission regards this as a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We won’t be spending for the moment; we’ll be investing for generational evolution, generational change and generational needs.

The legacy is not in the agreement itself but in how the broadcast revenue can be put to use in the best-long-term interests of the AFL industry. Over the past 10 years, we invested in expansion of our game – a move that has made us stronger and given us a larger national footprint and appeal that is reflected in the price generated for our broadcast rights.

Our focus for the future is clear. Our investment strategy is based on upholding the key pillars that make up our game – our clubs, our fans, our players and the community.

We have considerable challenges ahead for our sport in a rapidly changing and increasingly globalised environment.

We don’t take our success for granted and now is the time to make hard decisions for the long-term future of our game.

The Australian community is changing and our job is to continue to attract the young men and women who have been moving to cities.

We must continue to be relevant and to do so our game must reflect our community. And it’s clear girls and women want to play our game and we need to make it easier for them to do so and have a pathway from community competition to elite level.

We have more than 300,000 registered girls and women playing and the trends suggest this number will double in the next decade.

The past 10 years have been about expansion and investment in the AFL competition. Over that period, we added two new teams and invested in stadiums and infrastructure at the elite and community level around Australia.

Senior AFL football is now played in every state and territory.

Our challenge over the next decade is to make the right investments to grow our reach into every state, region, town and community. We want all people to know that we want to welcome them into our television.

We need to continue to be the first choice for our elite and talented athletes, we need to strengthen our clubs at all levels and we need to invest in the community level of our game.

CORPORATE PARTNERS

The commercial operations section of this report highlights the extensive contribution by our corporate partners to the AFL competition and the broader game.

We are indeed fortunate to enjoy the support of many of the world’s leading companies, starting with Toyota, our Premier Partner for the past 12 seasons, which includes the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Toyota AFL Finals Series, Toyota Each Grand Final, Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota supports its partnership with the AFL in a variety of ways, including its Legendary Moments campaign and the Toyota Good for Footy Program, which supports the game at a community level, while a new initiative in 2015, the Toyota Good for Footy raffle helped almost 250 community clubs around Australia raise more than $380,000. This is in addition to the $2.6 million raised by the Good for Footy Program.

On behalf of the AFL Commission, I would also like to thank our major partners for their commitment to our game, including the National Australia Bank, Coca-Cola, CrownBet, Carlton and United Breweries and Gatorade along with our official partners.

FINANCIAL RESULT

In 2015, AFL revenue increased by $33.6 million to $556 million, while our operating surplus before grants and distributions was $337.8 million.

Other key financial highlights included:

- Revenue increased by $33.3 million to $556 million.
- Expenditure increased by $12.7 million to $168 million due to revenue-related increases.
- The operating surplus before grants and distributions increased by six per cent to $337.8 million.
- The AFL provided $246.2 million to AFL clubs compared with $283.3 million in 2014.
- The AFL allocated $39.4 million of game development grants in 2015.
- After grants and distributions, the AFL’s net profit decreased by $10 million in 2015 to $2.5 million which was in line with the 2014 budget.

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015
AFL CLUBS

The 18 clubs that make up the AFL competition drive the popularity of our game and I would like to thank everyone involved with our clubs – board members, staff, players, coaches and volunteers for their fundamental role at the highest level of our game. We congratulate and thank each of you for what you do for Australia’s only indigenous game.

I would like to make particular mention of Gold Coast Suns chairman John Witheriff who announced his retirement from the role in December 2015.

John was not a lifelong fan of our club but, as a successful local businessman, understood the benefits an AFL club could bring to the community.

He chaired the GC 17 bid group which, after almost two years’ work and the passionate support of the local community, presented a proposal to the AFL Commission that an AFL club be established on the Gold Coast.

After the AFL Commission decided in March 2009 to establish the Gold Coast Suns, John became the inaugural chairman of the club.

Establishing a new club is a great challenge which John embraced and his contribution to the Suns in particular and the broader growth of our game at an AFL and community level in Queensland has been invaluable with the club driving 62 per cent growth in participation in the region.

John will stand down as chairman on March 26 when the Suns host Essendon at Metricon Stadium in their opening game of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. He will remain on the board until the end of the 2016 season.

His successor as chairman will be Tony Cochrane who joined the Suns’ board in March 2014. Like John, Tony has forged a successful business career as a Gold Coast resident, establishing VB Supercars and producing and promoting major sporting and entertainment events.

This year, the game also farewelled Paul Little, who served the Essendon Football Club as a board member, and for two-and-a-half years as chairman. Paul worked tirelessly to lead the club through a very difficult period in its history, and despite the great challenges, the club has grown its membership and kept strong relationships with its key stakeholders.

Paul led the club during the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority investigation, charging of the players and the World Anti-Doping Authority appeal, and while we did not always agree with his position, we recognise the hard work and commitment he displayed to the club during his tenure.

The AFL Commission welcomed the club’s appointment of Lindsay Tanner, a former Federal Finance Minister and long-serving member of the Federal Parliament to replace Paul as chairman.

He brings a wealth of experience from government and the private sector and we look forward to working closely with him and his board to lead Essendon back to its place as a strong, competitive powerhouse of the AFL.

JOHN KENNEDY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On Toyota AFL Grand Final Day, we were delighted to announce that Dr Allen Aylett had been selected as the second winner of the John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award.

The John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award is presented periodically to an individual who has made an extraordinary and positive contribution to the AFL competition and/or the game of Australian Football as an administrator, media representative, player, coach or field umpire or any combination thereof.

The inaugural winner in 2014 was Lou Richards, given his contribution to the game as a player and premiership captain with Collingwood combined by his career as a newspaper columnist, radio and television broadcaster.

Dr Aylett played 220 games and kicked 311 goals for North Melbourne, captained the club and was a three-time club best and fairest winner. He was one of the initial inductees into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 1996.

After his retirement as a player, Dr Aylett maintained his involvement in football as a writer with the Sporting Globe and panellist on HSV7’s Football Inquest on Saturday nights with media personalities such as Ron Casey and Mike Williamson. He served as a board member for North Melbourne from 1965 but, when he became chairman of North Melbourne, the club transformed under his leadership to win its first VFL premiership in 1975. At age 36, he was the youngest person to be appointed as chairman of an AFL club.

Dr Aylett served two terms as chairman of North Melbourne – from 1977-79 and 2001-06. When he became VFL president in 1977, he was a strong advocate for:

- A national competition
- An independent commission to run the game.

He was VFL president from 1977-84 – he stood down when the first VFL Commission was appointed.
At our meeting in February 2016, the AFL Commission accepted the recommendations of the Nominations Sub-Committee to nominate Andrew Newbold and Gabrielle Trainor to the AFL Commission to replace the retiring Chris Langford and Sam Mostyn.

The nominations will be considered by the AFL club presidents/chairs at the Annual General Meeting on March 17, 2016. I chaired the Nominations Committee which also included AFL Commissioner Richard Goyder, along with the president of the Richmond Football Club, Peggy O’Neal, and the chairman of the Port Adelaide Football Club, David Koch.

Andrew Newbold stepped down from serving as president of the Hawthorn Football Club in January 2016, and has had a very successful career as a lawyer, manager and entrepreneur. Andrew has a deep understanding of the AFL and its role in the Australian social and corporate arenas and extensive experience in the corporate sector.

He is a Director of Bryson Funds Management Pty Ltd, RealUs and Sports Education Development Australia and was a director of Hawthorn for 13 years and was appointed president in 2002. During his term as president, the club won three premierships and played in four successive Toyota AFL Grand Finals, had four years of collective club profit and signed off on plans for a new home and development at Dingley.

Gabrielle Trainor is a former lawyer, journalist, public sector executive and consultant in public policy, government relations and issues management. She has more than 20 years’ experience as a non-executive director in entities such as urban development, major projects, transport and infrastructure.

She is a director of two ANZ Banking Group subsidiary boards, of Infrastructure Australia, the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and Clarius Group. She chairs Barnardos Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive and has a number of other appointments, including on the board of trustees of the Western Sydney University and Business Events Sydney. She sits on the board of agenda-setting Indigenous organisation Cape York Partnership and chairs the Aurora Education Foundation for Indigenous students.

Gabrielle was appointed as an inaugural director of the Greater Western Sydney Giants FC in 2011 and chaired the Giants’ Integrity Committee. She has lifelong experience in football, ranging from volunteering for the Willoughby Wildcats in the Sydney AFL juniors competition to sitting on the AFL Commission NSW/ACT, where she championed the movement to better integrate the Sydney Women’s AFL with the Commission.

Her grandfather, Frank, and father, Tony, were presidents of North Melbourne for a total of 22 years. Gabrielle and Andrew both bring recent club board experience and a depth of corporate, government and not-for-profit leadership over many years. I would also like to acknowledge the very long and exemplary service of Sam Mostyn and Chris Langford as AFL Commissioners.

Sam Mostyn was the AFL’s first female Commissioner, joining the AFL Commission in 2005. Sam has been a strong advocate for the AFL’s Respect and Responsibility policies and Indigenous programs. She has been a driving force in the development of a national women’s league and participation for women and girls playing at all levels of the game, as well as bringing high-level business and corporate knowledge to the role.

She has been a trailblazer in her role. Her 10 years of commitment to the AFL Commission has made the AFL a better, stronger and more community-minded organisation and she will leave an indelible stamp on our game.

Chris Langford, decorated premiership player and captain of the Hawthorn Football Club, twice All-Australian, AFL Life Member and member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame, and successful businessman, retires after serving more than 16 years with the AFL Commission. Chris has been a great servant of the game and he brought a player’s sensibility as well as great intelligence to the AFL Commission.

In addition, his real estate knowledge has been of great value as we worked through stadium and training and administration deals. He will be greatly missed and our game is much better for his long service at the top of the code.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the continued commitment to our game of AFL Commissioners Jason Ball, Paul Bassat, Richard Goyder, Major General Simone Wikle, Kim Williams and Adam Goodes, and for racism to blight his final season is a great shame for our game. While we have much to be proud of in fighting racism and working with the Indigenous community, the Commission also acknowledges the journey we are all still on.

In finishing, I want to extend a special thank you to our CEO Gillon McLachlan and all AFL staff for their continued efforts on behalf of our game – we greatly value your time, effort and expertise.

Mike Fitzpatrick
Chairman
At the time of finalising this report, 34 current and former Essendon players were appealing against the Court of Arbitration for Sport which announced on January 12, 2016, that sanctions had been imposed on the players for breaches of the AFL’s Anti-Doping Policy. The ruling of the Court of Arbitration for Sport is included in the legal and integrity section of this report. The 34 players were sanctioned with a period of ineligibility of two years, starting on March 31, 2015, with credit given for any individual period of ineligibility already served. The sanctions effectively excluded the players who remain on an AFL list or are working in a support or coaching capacity with an AFL club from participating in the 2016 season.

This decision arose after the World Anti-Doping Agency lodged an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the decision of the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal which handed down a period of ineligibility of two years, starting on March 31, 2015, to senior coaching at Essendon Football Club.

This has been a very dark period, but we are the most important things for our club. We want us to stand up and fight against performance-enhancing drugs in sport. We are committed to anti-doping and that they fight to protect the health and safety of the players, the club and the game – the integrity of the competition and the health and safety of the players – which are two pillars that we at the AFL and all in football must protect for the game to remain strong. We immediately conducted a review of the supplementation practices at all AFL clubs.

We also conducted detailed background checks on all sports-science and medical staff in the industry. We significantly increased the size and powers of the AFL Integrity Department. We enhanced the AFL Anti-Doping Code to include Treatment Rules that govern supplementation and medical treatments that go beyond the WADA Code.

And, finally, we introduced new rules that prohibit anyone other than the appropriate medical doctor giving injections. This Essendon process has taken too long and the Court of Arbitration for Sport judgment invites a discussion about the way the code applies to team sports in future.

We look forward to working with ASADA and WADA and with the Federal Government to keep sport clean and to protect the health and safety of players.

We enhanced the AFL Anti-Doping Restraint and the Western Bulldogs also have players suspended. This has been a very dark period, but the past four years will not define the Essendon Football Club.

It will not define Australian Football. The club has two very respected people in new chairman Lindsay Tanner and new coach John Worsfold and the AFL is committed to doing what we can to assist the club in moving forward.

Our competition is stronger when Essendon is strong and all of our clubs want to see Essendon recover and rebuild and be the fierce and passionate competitor it is.

I would like to stress that the integrity of the competition, and the health of players are the most important things for our game – and we must fight to protect both. And we will.

Every decision we have made has been driven by these two pillars.

At every stage of this process, we acted within our rules and our powers and we have assisted and co-operated with the anti-doping authorities – as we should. Every sport in the world faces the threat of doping, and new forms of doping. Fighting performance-enhancing drugs in sport is more important than ever.

We strongly believe our players are committed to anti-doping and that they want us to stand up and fight against performance-enhancing drugs.

Since 2012, the AFL has introduced several measures in response to the matters raised in the investigation:

> We immediately conducted a review of the supplementation practices at all AFL clubs.
> We also conducted detailed background checks on all sports-science and medical staff in the industry.
> We significantly increased the size and powers of the AFL Integrity Department.
> We enhanced the AFL Anti-Doping Code to include Treatment Rules that govern supplementation and medical treatments that go beyond the WADA Code.
> And, finally, we introduced new rules that prohibit anyone other than the appropriate medical doctor giving injections.

This Essendon process has taken too long and the Court of Arbitration for Sport judgment invites a discussion about the way the code applies to team sports in future.

We look forward to working with ASADA and WADA and with the Federal Government to keep sport clean and to protect the health and safety of players.

Everyone will have a lasting memory of Phil Walsh. Such a long and wide journey in football – with seven VFL-AFL clubs directly touched by Walsh – involves so many people who today are in shock and disbelief.

And there is the last time, the last memory with Phil Walsh.

For a man who went through a lengthy and the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the confrontational football media, Walsh was reaffirming his dislike of the Fourth Estate was a myth.

He had started the job “uneasy” about being in the media, arguing he simply did not feel it was his strength. He was quick to learn how to survive under the bright lights. Last week – as he threw a few-in-jokes and Vincent van Gogh into his weekly press conference at West Lakes – Walsh revealed he was starting to enjoy being before the cameras and microphones. The myth was shattering.

But at the Gabba on Saturday night there was more about Phil Walsh the man than the coach – as he walked from a small, nondescript room under the grandstands.

His media team had wanted him out of the press conference quickly, so that he could start a much-needed team review and get organised for an early morning flight to Adelaide where he wanted to scout new selection options in the SANFL game at Alberton Oval on Sunday afternoon.

But Walsh was prepared to take on the meaningful questions about his team and his coaching. He was shattering the myth again.

And on the way out he asked a personal question – and stopped, despite his pressing agenda, for a meaningful chat. It was not a throwaway question; it was an expression of concern and interest. He was caring of a matter beyond a football game.

It was not the toe-to-toe coach-versus-journalist moment many had feared would unfold this year to fulfill the mythical image of an intense Phil Walsh finally taking over the media. It was not the Phil Walsh the Adelaide Football Club came to know as a man of care as he made a bedevilledvig with Brett Reily at Royal Adelaide Hospital in late February after the defender had been seriously injured with a knock to the head in training at Thebarton Oval.

It was the Phil Walsh the Bailey family knew when Dean Bailey died of cancer last year and he stood by his widow Caron and her two sons – and at Adelaide Oval delivered the eulogy that made the Adelaide Football Club recognise Walsh was more than an accomplished football coach.

Walsh’s care – and appreciation for more meaningful points in life, particularly after his near-death experience in Peru in October 2012 – highlighted the character and strength of the man.

The last memory of Phil Walsh is beyond football.
CEO’S REPORT

Securing a new broadcast rights agreement was not only one of the highlights of 2015, it will help to strengthen Australian Football at all levels.

The 2015 year was one of great challenge, and great achievement. We faced the death of one of our senior coaches, Phil Walsh, and a number of off-field issues that required the competition to come together to make decisions to protect the game and to show care for the football family. Other sections of the Annual Report celebrate Phil and his contribution to our game and deal with the other issues that challenged us this year.

Despite the challenges, I am very proud of our 18 AFL clubs, our 2600 community clubs and, indeed, of all those involved in our game, about the decisions we made that will strengthen our game into the future.

As CEO, I am also extremely proud of the AFL Executive team which assisted in the negotiations for a new broadcast rights agreement. The agreement, which starts in 2017 with our partners, Foxtel, News Ltd and Telstra, will deliver $2.508 billion to the game over six years. This new agreement will allow us to make decisions that strengthen our foundations and plan for our future.

THE FUTURE OF THE GAME

Our game is one of the oldest football codes in the world, with its beginnings in the 1850s, and several of our clubs are older than many of Europe’s leading soccer clubs. However, our history does not give us the right to claim the future.
In August 2015, Waleed Aly, the academic, TV host, sports commentator and passionate Richmond fan, spoke at a conference with our AFL club Chief Executive Officers.

Two things in particular Waleed said have stayed with me and sum up perfectly our challenge, in fact the challenge of all sports in Australia.

First, Australian sport needs to understand our children are growing up in a truly globalised world providing what he called ‘radical choice’. We can no longer assume each generation will grow up as AFL supporters – kids these days can have a global conversation about LeBron James.

And second, for the AFL to continue to be a central part in Australian life, we must understand our role in culture and the changes in Australia.

A few salient facts:

- 50 per cent of Australians have at least one parent born overseas.
- 27 per cent of Australians are born overseas.
- 30 per cent speak a language other than English at home.
- 55 per cent of migrants are settling in New South Wales and Victoria.

Australia is changing and the challenge for our game is to change with it, so that we continue to be the No. 1 football code in the country.

We are very proud of the programs we have been running to celebrate and embrace diversity.

Established in 2005, the AFL Multicultural Program introduces multicultural communities to Australian Football through a number of programs focusing on community engagement, leadership opportunities, personal development, community strengthening, and talent identification.

Our programs received national recognition at the 2015 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards in Canberra, winning the Virgin Australia Sports Leadership Award.

Greater Western Sydney Giants Head of Community Ali Fanai also received Case Worker of the Year at the gala dinner held in the Great Hall of Parliament House in Canberra, recognising his extensive work with the multicultural communities in Western Sydney.

The academies are part of the AFL’s broader commitment to invest in the community foundations of the game and to build strong links between local communities, grassroots football and the elite level, to ensure our game is representative, inclusive and embraces gender and cultural diversity.

For Australian Football to prosper in the future, we must invest in new and emerging communities and reinforce the pathways for Indigenous Australians.

The academies will deliver talent concessions to the clubs as an incentive to reach into new communities, enabling AFL clubs to be actively involved in introducing children of all backgrounds to the game and provide aspirational pathways for coaches, umpires and administrators.

DELIVERING ON OUR FAN AGENDA

In 2015, we put accessibility and affordability at the heart of our decisions about the game.

We worked closely with stadiums to decrease food prices in Melbourne and we kept our general admission prices at both major venues to $25 for an adult.

We also kept ticket prices for the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series at 2013 levels. We encouraged all our venues to allow kick-to-kick at the ground after the game and we had Sunday Funday in Melbourne where kids under 15 had free admission.

AFL clubs embraced all of these initiatives and we will maintain our emphasis on keeping the game affordable at all venues which host AFL matches into the future.
HAWTHORN HAT-TRICK

Only four clubs in the history of the AFL/VFL competition since 1897 have been able to do what Hawthorn did in 2015 – complete a hat-trick of premierships.

The club’s decisive victory over the West Coast Eagles was their fourth successive Toyota AFL Grand Final and completed successive premierships from 2013-15.

Other clubs to have achieved the feat are:

Æ Brisbane Lions 2001-03
Æ Melbourne 1955-57
Æ Melbourne 1939-41
Æ Carlton 1906-08

Collingwood is the only club to have won four successive premierships (1927-30), an achievement Hawthorn could equal in 2016.

Getting to the Grand Final is a difficult challenge and, despite the loss of key defenders Eric Mackenzie and Mitch Brown early in the year to season-ending knee injuries, the Eagles had their best season since their premiership of 2006.

From a West Australian perspective, the season was also a milestone for the Fremantle Football Club in winning the Dr Wm. C. McClelland Trophy for finishing on top of the ladder at the end of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, with the West Coast Eagles in second place. It was the first time the two WA-based clubs had finished in those positions in the same season.

Fremantle had another first when midfielder Nat Fyfe won the club’s inaugural Brownlow Medal.

I would also like to congratulate West Coast Eagles chairman Alan Cransberg, Chief Executive Officer Trevor Nisbett, General Manager – Football Craig Vozzo and senior coach Adam Simpson, the club’s board, players and staff for the achievement of reaching the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Congratulations to Hawthorn president Andrew Newbold, Chief Executive Officer Stuart Fox, General Manager – Football Operations Chris Fagan and senior coach Alastair Clarkson along with the board, players and staff for their continued excellence which has set a benchmark for the AFL competition.

EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Four men who have made extraordinary contributions to our game – Michael Malthouse, Dustin Fletcher, Chris Judd and Adam Goodes – were among those whose AFL careers came to an end in 2015.

On May 1, 2015, Michael Malthouse broke the record of 714 games as a senior coach previously held by Collingwood legend Jock McHale when he led Carlton against Collingwood at the MCG.

Michael’s coaching career finished on 718 games while his association with the game began as a player with St Kilda in 1972 before he joined Richmond in 1976. He played 314 games for the two clubs and was a member of Richmond’s last premiership team in 1980.

He coached the West Coast Eagles to their first two AFL premierships in 1992 and 1994 and then coached Collingwood to the 2010 premiership.

In 2015, Dustin Fletcher became only the third player in the competition’s history to reach the milestone of 400 senior games, the others being Hawthorn’s Michael Tuck and Richmond’s Kevin Bartlett.
He made his debut for Essendon in 1993, was a member of two premierships, won the best and fairest in 2000 – a premiership year – and was named an All-Australian twice. He also played eight International Rules games for Australia, including the 2015 tour of Ireland.

Later in the season, he was joined in the 400 club by North Melbourne’s Brent Harvey, who finished 2015 on 409 games and could break the record of 426, held by Michael Turk, in round 19, 2016.

The career of Chris Judd, one of our game’s most highly decorated players, was unfortunately cut short in round 10 against Adelaide at the MCG by a season-ending knee injury.

Chris played 279 games for the West Coast Eagles and Carlton, won the Brownlow Medal with both clubs, captained the Eagles to the 2006 premiership, won the Norm Smith Medal as best aflied in the 2005 Grand Final, won five club best and fairests – two with the Eagles and three with the Blues – and was named an All-Australian six times, including 2008 as captain.

He was also a two-time winner of the AFL Players’ Association Most Valuable Player award.

Adam Goodes is also one of our most decorated players and the games record-holder for the Sydney Swans/South Melbourne.

After making his debut in 1999, Adam played in 372 games for the Swans and kicked 464 goals.

He retired as a two-time premiership player, two-time winner of the Brownlow Medal, three-time best and fairest, four-time All-Australian, club captain from 2009-12, won the Rising Star Award in 1999 and was named in the Indigenous Team of the Century.

He also has the distinction of being the only Australian footballer to have been named as Australian of the Year, an honour he received in 2014.

Unfortunately, we only got the chance to formally farewell three of these great contributors to our game.

Adam did not attend the MCG on Grand Final day in the parade of champions and we respected his decision to take time away.

By the time Adam retired, he had been subject to a level of crowd booing and behaviour that none of our players should ever face.

The debate that occurred about whether or not the booing was due to racism put further pressure on this great Indigenous leader and one of our game’s greatest champions.

Adam stood up to represent Indigenous people and he took a stand on racism, and for this I believe he was subject to hostility from some in our crowds.

As a game, we should have acted sooner and I am sorry we acted too slowly.

I am proud of the way the community, players from every club and supporters of the Sydney Swans made their support for Adam so public during his time away from the game, and on his return to play against Geelong.

The national conversation about racism taught me how important our role is to partner with all players to fight racism.

Adam has led with courage and humility and I look forward to the day our game can properly celebrate the retirement of this great champion.

**INDIGENOUS ADVISORY GROUP**

In February 2015, we announced the establishment of our first AFL Indigenous Advisory Council to provide advice to the AFL Commission and Executive on the development and implementation of the AFL Indigenous strategy and policies.

Yorta Yorta man Paul Briggs, chair of the Kaiela Institute and president of the Rumbalara Football/Netball Club, was named as the advisory group’s inaugural chair.

Indigenous players and communities are a critical part of Australian Football and the Indigenous Advisory Council will assist the game to continue to be part of social and cultural change in Australia.

The establishment of the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council was part of the AFL’s Reconciliation Action Plan, which was released in 2014.

At the end of 2015, members of the Indigenous Advisory Council included:

- Paul Briggs, Chair – Chair of the Kaiela Institute and president Rumbalara Football/Netball Club
- Peter Yu (Deputy Chair) – Chair of North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NALIMA)
- Sam Mostyn – AFL Commissioner
- Kim Williams – AFL Commissioner
- Adam Goodes – 2014 Australian of the Year, two-time Sydney Swans premiership player and Brownlow medallist
- Jason Milford, Head of Diversity, AFL
- Professor Helen Milroy – Winthrop Professor and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, University of Western Australia
- Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- Xavier Clarke – former St Kilda and Brisbane Lions player, senior coach
- Northern Territory Thunder
- Tanya Denning Orman – Channel Manager, NITV
- Jason Glanville – Chief Executive Officer, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence
- Tony Peek, Assistant to the CEO, AFL

**THE SOCIAL VALUE OF COMMUNITY CLUBS**

Our game has long been built on the foundations of community football, but its importance was highlighted by research released in 2015 into the influence and impact of local football clubs.

The research by La Trobe University, conducted in partnership with the AFL and AFL Victoria, found that local community football clubs generated a range of positive effects for local communities, including heightened levels of physical and mental wellbeing, social interaction and economic activity.

The research, based on interviews and a survey of club members from across Victoria, highlights that regardless of where you live or how often you are involved in a football club each week, you are likely to experience greater social connectedness, wellbeing and physical and mental health than you were not involved.

These benefits apply to all club participants, including players, coaches, volunteers and supporters.

The Centre for Sport and Social Impact at La Trobe University conducted the 12-month research project, involving in-depth case studies of nine clubs, 110 extensive interviews with club and community members and analysis of 4077 survey responses from individual club members.

Highlights of the study included:

- For every dollar spent on a community football club, at least $4.40 is returned in social value in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing, mental health status, employment outcomes, personal development and physical health.
- A football club’s reach is significant and extends beyond the players, coaches, administrators and volunteers within the club for every one player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community.
- Football clubs provide individuals, particularly those aged 15-24, with significantly increased chances of securing employment via the social networks provided by the club.
- The self-reported mental health of people aged 18-24 associated with a football club is substantially higher than the general population.
- Football clubs are three times more useful for developing social networks than work, education or other community group networks.
ECONOMIC IMPACT

Australian Football is one of the major sports in Australia and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry. The 2015 economic impact study by Street Ryan found that our game is:
- Australia’s premier spectator sport, attracting 15.22 million spectator attendances in 2015.
- Australia’s major football code in terms of regular participation with 1,247,575 participants.
- An industry sector which supports 7075 full-time equivalent jobs (excluding players and umpires).
- An industry sector which generated $5.72 billion in financial contribution to the Australian economy in 2015.
- Australian Football is the most national football code; evidenced by growth in participation in the non-traditional states of NSW and Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, which now accommodate 34 per cent of all participation (compared with 17 per cent in 2000).
- There were 15,223,460 spectator attendances at Australian Football matches in 2015. Of the total attendances, 46.4 per cent were at AFL matches.

EMPLOYMENT

- An estimated 174,811 Australian Football volunteers contributed 13.98 million working hours in 2015, worth the equivalent of $289 million in labour effort.
- Australian Football peak bodies, leagues, associations and clubs employed 16,174 people in 2015 (excluding players and umpires):
  - 29 per cent full-time
  - 26.5 per cent part-time
  - 44.4 per cent casual
- This represented 7075 full-time equivalent jobs.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The total financial contribution of Australian Football to the Australian economy in 2015 is estimated to be $5.72 billion. This was $467 million more than the $5.26 billion financial contribution calculated in 2014, representing an increase of 8.9 per cent (and an average annual increase of 6.7 per cent since 2007).
TRAVELLING TO THE TOP
Matt Priddis celebrates as the West Coast Eagles win through to the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final. Thousands of Eagles fans flocked to Melbourne the following week.

As part of the economic impact, AFL matches generated more than $544 million in domestic tourism tied to AFL matches in metropolitan and regional centres around Australia. This included more than 288,000 air travellers and 712,000 room nights in various cities.

THE AFL TEAM
In May 2015, our Chief Financial Officer of 15 years, Ian Anderson, announced his retirement from the AFL. The highlights of his career with the AFL included:
- Revenue growth from $110 million in 2000 to $458 million in 2014.
- The establishment of AFL Finance shared services which provides full financial services to five state bodies and payroll services to 11 AFL clubs.
- The introduction of a national insurance program that provides cover to the majority of community leagues and clubs throughout Australia.
- The signing of a technology-sharing agreement with Major League Baseball that has enabled the AFL to work with this leading US sport on a number of key IT projects.
- The signing of two major AFL partners – Virgin Australia and the Accor Hotel Group.

In June, we announced the appointment of Ray Gunston as General Manager Finance, Corporate & Major Projects.

As a senior executive and a company director in a variety of industries, including as interim Chief Executive Officer of the Essendon Football Club and before that as Chief Financial Officer of the Tatts Group.

In addition to the Tatts Group, Ray has had executive roles with Westpac, Price Waterhouse, Aluminium Smelters of Victoria, Southern Cross Austereo, and the Victorian Government. He is a non-executive director of Sigma Pharmaceuticals and Hotel Property Investments. Ray has also previously held non-executive director roles with AFL Victoria and the Melbourne Renegades.

Ray played a leading role in the transformation of the privately owned Tattersall’s into the publicly listed Tatts Group as an ASX 100 listed national and global company followed by initiating and implementing the $4 billion merger of Tatts and UNTAB. He also played a lead executive role in acquisitions for the Tatts Group.

In August 2015, our General Manager, People, Customer and Community, Dorothy Hisgrove, announced her resignation after more than two years in the role. Dorothy made a significant contribution to the AFL, leading change that saw a stronger and more diverse organisation. She played a key role in driving major organisational and industry-wide change that will leave an indelible mark and she was a highly valued member of the Executive team.

As of her resignation, we announced a number of changes to our organisational structure. Former General Manager of Broadcasting Simon Lethlean has been appointed as General Manager of Game and Market Development and will oversee community football, including female football and international.

Our Head of Corporate Affairs, Elizabeth Lokin, was appointed to the AFL Executive as General Manager Corporate Affairs & Communications.

Our Head of HR, Sarah Fair, reports to General Manager Clubs & AFL Operations Travis Auld and also regularly attends AFL Executive meetings. Travis Auld will also take responsibility for Broadcast Operations and Scheduling.

Simon Clarke was promoted to Deputy General Counsel, taking on broader legal responsibility, including broadcast contract management.

The Brand and Market Insights team, led by Julian Dunne, now operates under Darren Birch, our General Manager, Commercial Operations, to promote greater alignment between commercial activities and marketing.

In closing, I would like to thank all AFL staff throughout Australia for their contribution to the game in 2015 – I am very fortunate to work with such a talented and committed group of people.

Gillon McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer
Enhancing the experience for fans at the ground and in front of their television sets was a major focus in 2015.

A clear focus of the industry in 2015 was enhancing the match-day experience and ensuring our game remains accessible and affordable for all fans. This culminated in delivering a range of initiatives, including reduced food and beverage prices at the MCG and Etihad Stadium, free entry for children on Sundays at matches in Melbourne and the opportunity to have a kick on the arena after the final siren – all of which were wholeheartedly embraced by our fans.

A more family-friendly fixture was also a highlight with attendances at games during the home and away season increasing slightly on 2014 figures, despite the ladder position of several Victorian clubs with large supporter bases.

A record-breaking TV rights deal, signed in August and set to run from 2017-22 with partners the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra, allows for an increased investment in our game at all levels.

Our broadcast partners continue to lead the way in how they present the game to supporters around the country and internationally. We are grateful for their ongoing support and professionalism.

SHINING LIGHT

After a disrupted 2015 season because of injury, skipper Gary Ablett will lead the Suns’ push for a maiden finals appearance in 2016.
The 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season continued to attract viewers from across Australia with the Seven Network’s free-to-air television broadcast and Foxtel/Fox Footy’s subscription television platform drawing large numbers each week.

The average gross national audience per round of the premiership season across free-to-air and subscription television remained strong at 4.466 million. The cumulative gross national audience during the home and away season reached close to 103 million (102,722,355), down from 109 million in 2014. The reduction was attributable in part to the fixture containing fewer standalone matches than in 2014.

Seven Network metropolitan audiences were down slightly year-on-year (1 per cent), a marginal decline compared to the decline in Australian free-to-air television ratings generally. Overall, there was a 2.6 per cent decline across FTA (metro and regional) and pay TV ratings in 2015.

**THE TOYOTA AFL FINALS SERIES**

The Toyota AFL Finals Series saw a total cumulative audience of 16.588 million across the four weeks, including the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

The finals series began with the highest ratings for an opening week and continued to attract strong numbers throughout, culminating in a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 3.534 million for the Grand Final on the Seven Network and Fox Footy.

This represented a 5.3 per cent decrease on the 3.73 million viewers who tuned into the 2014 Grand Final between the Sydney Swans and Hawthorn. The metropolitan audience of 2.645 million viewers made it the second most-watched program on metropolitan free-to-air television in 2015. The 2015 Brownlow Medal count on the Seven Network and Fox Footy attracted a record national average audience of 1.78 million across FTA and STV platforms, representing a 3.6 per cent increase on last year’s 1.722 million.

The 10 most-watched matches of the 2015 season (national average audiences across free-to-air and subscription television) were:

1. **Round 4** – Essendon v Collingwood – 1.399 million (Anzac Day)
2. **Round 10** – Fremantle v Richmond – 1.298 million
3. **Round 20** – Sydney Swans v Collingwood – 1.243 million
4. **Round 18** – Hawthorn v Richmond – 1.203 million
5. **Round 12** – Richmond v West Coast Eagles – 1.198 million
6. **Round 13** – Fremantle v Collingwood – 1.192 million
7. **Round 11** – Port Adelaide v Geelong – 1.164 million
8. **Round 23** – Richmond v North Melbourne – 1.164 million
9. **Round 6** – Collingwood v Geelong – 1.137 million

**FOXTEL/FOX FOOTY**

Fans from all around the country were again able to enjoy every game live in HD on Fox Footy/Fox Sports on Foxtel every week.

This was in addition to the proven weekly magazine programs such as On The Couch, AFL 360, League Teams, Open Mike, Bounce and The Winners Rebooted.

Fox Footy/Fox Footy again produced and delivered first-class broadcasts for the AFL’s key events, including the Toyota AFL Premiership Season launch, Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner, NAB AFL Rising Star Award, Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian Awards, Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade and NAB AFL Draft.

Significant highlights and changes included broadcasting the second half of the Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner live (including the induction of Tony Lockett as an Australian Football Legend), as well as showcasing the NAB AFL Draft across two of its main sports channels – Fox Footy and Fox Sports 503.

A major achievement for the network was the integration of popular AFL programs such as AFL 360 and Bounce into the Foxfooty/Footy Festival precinct which drew large and excited crowds to the MCG in the week of the Grand Final.

The most-watched Foxfooty-produced match timeslots across the season was Saturday twilight with an average of 213,334 viewers nationally per round. The most-watched regular Foxfooty broadcast timeslot overall was Friday night with an average of 254,857 viewers nationally per round.

The highest-rating Foxtel broadcast match for the home and away season was the round 20 clash between the Sydney Swans and Collingwood, which attracted 318,941 average national viewers.

**INTERNATIONAL TV RIGHTS**

International AFL fans were brought closer to the game with increased broadcast coverage of home and away matches, finals series matches, the Toyota AFL Grand Final, the Virgin Australia International Rules Series and AFL events.

These matches and events were broadcast throughout the year into more than 250 countries and territories worldwide by rights holders Australia Plus, ESPN, Fox Sports/Fox Soccer Plus, Eurosport, Ozbet Showtime Network, Over the Line Sports Media, Sky New Zealand, Super Sport, TSN and Claro Sports.

The AFL was also fortunate to secure agreements during the year with new rights holders ISC (Quebec) and TVNZ (New Zealand), meaning international coverage of the game continues to grow.

The AFL’s digital streaming service on watchafl.afl.com.au broadcast every match of every round live and on demand internationally (excluding Australia) on desktop, mobile and tablet. It also broadcast all AFL events live or on demand, including the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, and provided a 24/7 video service showcasing replays of past seasons’ matches and a host of 2015 news programs, features and vignettes from each club and AFL Media.

This coverage ensured fans outside Australia received the greatest possible access to the game across all media platforms.

**RADIO**

Radio again played a significant role in taking the game to all corners of the country in 2015.

The AFL’s radio partners in metropolitan areas are 3AW, Triple M, ABC Radio, SEN, FiVeas and 6PR. Regional areas received AFL broadcasts via ABC Radio, K-Rock (Geelong), Gold FM (Gold Coast), CrocoMedia, Southern Cross Austereo and the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS).

In Melbourne, all nine matches each round during the 2015 Toyota AFL...
Premiership Season and all matches in the Toyota AFL Finals Series were broadcast on radio, while every match featuring an AFL club from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales was broadcast into their respective home states.

All Toyota AFL Finals Series matches (including the Toyota AFL Grand Final) were broadcast nationally on radio. A gross audience of 1.352 million people per week listened to AFL matches during the radio survey periods 4-6 in 2015 (these being the three survey periods that fall during the six months of the season).

This was slightly down on the gross audience of 1.392 million people per week in 2014, due largely to the reduced number of standalone matches. Through the popular AFL app, the radio broadcast rights holders averaged a unique audience of 46,000 per match-day during the premiership season and 39,000 per match-day during the Finals series.

This represented an annual growth rate of 25 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.

**CLUBS**

The Club Services team implemented a new Club Action Plans process with recipient clubs in the first year of a new Competitive Balance Policy. Recipient clubs are those which received increased distributions from the AFL as a form of revenue sharing under the AFL Competitive Balance Policy.

**Competitive Balance Action Plans:**
- Development of Club Action Plans for recipient clubs and the two expansion clubs.
- Action Plans identify the key initiatives or high-priority issues a club must focus on in the coming 12 months as well as describe a set of funding conditions and reporting requirements these clubs must adhere to.
- The AFL provides support to these clubs in the development of these plans and through ongoing assistance in the achievement of the key initiatives identified. This assistance can include:
  - Advice in the development of club strategic and operational plans.
  - Analytical and strategic consultation for key transactions or arrangements, (ie new training and administration facilities, stadium agreements).
  - Advice in the development of commercial strategies and financial performance of the club and identify and address any risks.
  - The AFL also works closely with club management to understand the financial performance of the club and identify and address any risks.
  - A number of key initiatives have been achieved across all recipient clubs, including a significant improvement in financial performance:
    - All recipient clubs achieved an improvement in their underlying profitability.
    - Aggregate debt across the eight clubs reduced.
  - Having reviewed the first year of this process, we expect to make further improvements for 2016, working closer with clubs to support them in the achievement of their goals. There was significant work undertaken in relation to stadia:
    - Facilitated the review of the Adelaide Oval commercial model, which secured the two South Australian clubs a higher share of stadium income and greater financial security.
    - Ongoing support for the two West Australian clubs in their planning for a potential move to the new Perth Stadium, including assistance in their discussions with the State Government over an acceptable user agreement.
    - Worked with the Western Bulldogs, the Victorian Government and the City of Ballarat on the redevelopment of Eureka Stadium to host home and away matches in the future.

**2016 Fixture**

The 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season fixture remains focused on fairness for all clubs and providing fans with the ability to easily attend our game.

The season will continue to operate under a 23-round format, with all clubs to play 11 home and 11 away games.

The season structure will have 20 rounds of nine matches and three rounds (3-15) where six matches will be played each week, enabling six clubs to have a bye each round.

The 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final will be played on Saturday, October 1. A standard round in 2016, as part of the AFL’s broadcast agreement with the Seven Network and Foxtel/Fox Footy, will continue to feature:
- One Friday night match
- Two Saturday afternoon matches
- One Saturday night match
- One Sunday twilight match

There will also be five matches played on Thursday nights – one to open the season in round one at the MCG and four in consecutive weeks from rounds 14-17 around the byes for all clubs.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

A total of 288 home and away matches will be played in venues throughout every state and territory, with matches outside the regular capital cities to be played in Cairns (one), Darwin (one), Alice Springs (one), Hobart (three), Canberra (three) and Launceston (four).

Key features of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season include:
- Opening Round to start with a Thursday night match between Richmond and Carlton
- Round one to continue over Easter with the Sydney Swans to face off against Collingwood at ANZ Stadium on Saturday night and reigning three-time premiers the West Coast Eagles to kick off the action at the MCG on Sunday afternoon.
- The 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series (including the Toyota AFL Grand Final) will be broadcast on radio, with every match to broadcast nationally on radio.
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- The season structure will have 20 rounds of nine matches and three rounds (3-15) where six matches will be played each week, enabling six clubs to have a bye each round.
- The fixture will feature a significant improvement in financial performance for 2016, working closer with clubs to support them in the achievement of their goals. There was significant work undertaken in relation to stadia:
  - Facilitated the review of the Adelaide Oval commercial model, which secured the two South Australian clubs a higher share of stadium income and greater financial security.
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  - Worked with the Western Bulldogs, the Victorian Government and the City of Ballarat on the redevelopment of Eureka Stadium to host home and away matches in the future.

The production of the fixture was overseen by Simon Lethlean in his role as General Manager of Broadcasting, Scheduling and Major Projects before an organisation restructure in August 2015.

The 2016 fixture, which again kicks off over Easter with a series of blockbuster matches, contains for the first time a bye between the final round of the home and away season and the first week of the Toyota AFL Finals Series. The season will continue to operate under a 23-round format, with all clubs to play 11 home and 11 away games.

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Two Saturday night matches
One early Sunday match
One Sunday afternoon match
One Sunday twilight match

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There will also be five matches played on Thursday nights – one to open the season in round one at the MCG and four in consecutive weeks from rounds 14-17 around the byes for all clubs.
Round two to be highlighted by the Showdown between the Adelaide Crows and Port Adelaide and the Grand Final rematch at the MCG between Hawthorn and West Coast.

A first Friday night match in Tasmania when North Melbourne hosts Richmond at Blundstone Arena in round 11. The match between the Western Bulldogs and Gold Coast Suns at Cazalys Stadium in Cairns will take place on Saturday night in round 17.

Sir Doug Nicholls Round, to celebrate the contribution of Indigenous players to the game, to be celebrated in round 10, highlighted by the showpiece Essendon vs Richmond Dreamtime at the ‘G match on the Saturday night.

The match between the Western Bulldogs and Gold Coast Suns at Cazalys Stadium in Cairns will take place on Saturday night in round 17.

The AFL has again utilised the ‘weighted rule’ in constructing the 2016 fixture to address the issue of on-field equity for all clubs. The final ladder from the previous season has been grouped into the top six teams, middle six teams and bottom six teams in order to manage the equality of double match-ups while also ensuring our venue and broadcast obligations are met.

The fixture aims to enable fans to access the game in strong numbers and provide all clubs with the opportunity to contest the finals, while continuing to reaffirm our sport as the No. 1 code in the country.

It is our objective to deliver a great outcome for all key stakeholders in the AFL competition – including players, clubs, officials, broadcast partners, corporate sponsors, venues, state-affiliates, local communities and federal and state governments – while also ensuring our fans enjoy and embrace the game week in, week out.

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Our vibe employee survey conducted in September provided a great insight into how we are tracking as an organisation – what we are doing well and what we need to continue to build on and improve.

Our people told us we have made great progress over the past 12 months, with results showing they are optimistic about the future and feel we are investing more in their development and career than ever before.

The survey indicated we have become better at celebrating our wins along the way and keeping our people informed about the ever-changing landscape of our industry.

Our People Plan for 2016 will focus on the areas our people told us are more important to them.

A WORKPLACE WHERE DIFFERENCE IS VALUED

In 2015, the AFL made a strong commitment to improve the diversity of our workforce and promote a more inclusive culture where we fully embrace difference in our people’s backgrounds, experiences, views and ideas to achieve better outcomes for our game.

A key focus on and off the field has been improving our gender diversity and in 2015 AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan was appointed as a Victorian Male Champion of Change. The program aims to have our leaders step up beside women to achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership and non-traditional careers.

As a Champion of Change, McLachlan has led several initiatives including ‘listen and learn’ sessions to understand our challenges and opportunities. We also delivered our inaugural AFL Industry Female Talent Programs. The two programs targeted our talented middle and senior female leaders to support their development and build a stronger pipeline to executive level roles.

EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM

‘V for 2’, the AFL’s Employee Volunteering Program, began in 2015 with the program providing a great opportunity for our people to spend two days each year connecting with the community by volunteering their support and expertise to our associated partners that make such a significant, positive impact on the lives of our fans and the broader community.

EMBEDDING OUR VALUES

It has been 12 months since the AFL launched its new values as part of our commitment to creating a values-based culture.

At the AFL, we value:

- Play to Win: We rise to every challenge and do what we say we will do – we own failure and learn from it.
- Play as One Team: We work as one and bring out the best in each other by embracing our diverse range of ideas, skills and backgrounds to achieve individual and shared success. We celebrate our wins and always have each other’s back.
- Play with Passion: We love what we do. Passion, energy, fun and perseverance is at the heart of our sport and drives how we work.

Play as One Team: We work as one team because together we achieve better outcomes. We bring out the best in each other by embracing our diverse range of ideas, skills and backgrounds to achieve individual and shared success. We celebrate our wins and always have each other’s back.

Our people have embraced our values and they are now embedded in everything we do. This includes how we recruit new people, manage performance, identify talent and reward success. Importantly, our values have also created a common language that sets expectations for what it means to be a member of the AFL team.

BUILDING WORLD-CLASS LEADERS

This year we have invested significantly in developing our leaders. More than 100 of our ‘People Leaders’ participated in our Leadership Essentials Program. The program focused on building personal and organisational leadership, including understanding their style and impact on team members, the mindset of a leader, strategy, culture and leading change.

GRAEME SAMUEL SCHOLARSHIP

Rose King from the Geelong Football Club and Ameet Bains from the St Kilda Football Club were announced as joint recipients of the Graeme Samuel Scholarship in 2015.

JILL LINDSAY SCHOLARSHIP

AFL Queensland Statewide Auskick coordinator Emily Wastle was awarded the 2015 Jill Lindsay Scholarship at the seventh Women’s Industry Lunch in May.

Lindsay was the AFL’s longest-serving employee, having completed 41 years in various roles including VFL Park match-day manager and VFL membership manager before being appointed grounds operations manager in 1991. On February 7, 2011, Lindsay passed away after losing her battle with cancer.

In recognition of her outstanding service, the AFL Commission created the annual Jill Lindsay Scholarship to be awarded to the female graduate with the most potential to come through the AFL SportsReady program.

Before being appointed statewide Auskick coordinator, Wastle was the Queensland AFL SportsReady Trainee of the Year in 2012 and has completed Certificates III and IV in Community Recreation and a Certificate IV in Business.

Wastle, 22, spent two years working as the development coordinator in the Brisbane South region and was responsible for the diversity portfolio that engaged more than 2000 participants with an Islamic background in her regional area.

Wastle also coached the women’s under-17 regional program and was assistant coach at the state under-16 championships. She is completing a Bachelor of Business Management and Human Resources at Griffith University.

SAINTS ALIVE

Josh Bruce finished with 50 goals as St Kilda continued to make strides on and off the field, including signing a new contract at Moorabbin.
The scholarship is awarded by the Victorian State Government ($75 million), with the balance being supplied by the City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Football Club and the AFL. Kane Constructions has been appointed as the managing contractor on site.

**Eureka Stadium**

The planning for the development of Eureka Stadium in Ballarat is underway. This development, which is funded by the Victorian State Government, will allow the stadium to host Western Bulldogs home matches from 2017.

The project will increase the capacity of the venue to around 11,000, including about 5000 seats. The development will include the resurfacing of the playing field, new playing field lighting and new LED videoboard.

**AFL club training and administration facilities**

A number of AFL clubs are in the process of developing new training and administrative facilities, which will be long-term homes for their players and staff.

In Western Australia, Fremantle is developing a new home base in the City of Cockburn, which is due for completion in 2016, while the West Coast Eagles are planning to move their headquarters to Lathlain Park in the town of Victoria Park, sharing facilities with the Perth Football Club and broader community.

**Blundstone Arena**

The redevelopment of Blundstone Arena in Hobart was completed in time for the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup. The first AFL match played with the new stand operational was the sold-out North Melbourne v Richmond match in round six. The match attracted a crowd of 11,544, which was a record for the venue.

The $33 million project, co-funded by the Tasmanian and Federal governments ($25 million each) and Cricket Tasmania ($3 million), increased the capacity of Blundstone Arena from around 15,000 to 20,000 patrons.

A large part of the redevelopment was the construction of the new Ricky Ponting Stand, which comprised new facilities for players and coaching staff of cricket and AFL, state-of-the-art media and officials’ facilities, new function rooms and suites and undercroft seating for the general public.

The redevelopment also included a new gate entry at the southern end and other improvements to catering and toilet facilities for the general public.

**Etihad Stadium**

In 2015, Etihad Stadium opened its new boxes. The club also developed new suites for coaches built in 2000. The boxes were greatly appreciated by all AFL clubs who used them and featured more space for coaches and staff, better view lines and best-practice information and communication technology.

Etihad Stadium has unveiled its new IPTV system and public Wi-Fi system. This $2 million investment featured more than 1200 new TV screens and free venue-wide publicly available Wi-Fi for patrons, helping improve the fan experience at the venue.

**Simon’s Stadium**

The Stage Four development of Simonds Stadium is underway, with the $89 million project due for completion in the first half of 2017. The development includes the demolition of the existing Brownlow and Jennings stands and the construction of new grandstands which will hold around 6500 patrons and incorporate match-day corporate and media facilities. The development will also include new football department training and administration facilities for the Geelong Football Club and Sunrise Centre incorporating rehabilitation facilities for the Geelong community.

**Perth Stadium**

Having high quality and state-of-the-art facilities that cater for our fantastic supporters is a priority of the AFL. The AFL continues to work with all levels of government to progress major stadium projects across Australia.

The West Australian Government is in the process of building a new multi-purpose stadium on the Burswood Peninsula, due for completion by the start of the 2018 AFL season.

The new Perth stadium will hold around 60,000 people. The West Stadium consortium (led by Brookfield-Multiplex) is undertaking the financing, design and construction of the stadium and will also maintain many of the elements of the stadium for a period of 25 years.

The AFL and the two WA AFL clubs have been working with the WA Government and the West Stadium consortium to ensure all elements of the new stadium are best practice for AFL matches.

A joint football working group comprising the AFL and WA AFL clubs is working closely with WA Government officials to develop an acceptable user agreement which will govern access to the new stadium for AFL matches and events.

**Planning and support functions**

- Managed annual strategic planning processes with the AFL Commission, Executive and senior managers.
- Facilitated discussion of key strategic and other industry issues at AFL Commission, AFL Executive, club CEOs/presidents and state CEO meetings.
- General business planning support for the AFL Commission, CEO and Executive.
It was a challenging but successful year for the AFL’s Football Operations Department which implemented changes to key processes and policies.

The AFL’s Football Operations Department successfully introduced major changes to the game’s disciplinary system around the Match Review Panel and the Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. These changes were introduced primarily to simplify the understanding of the game’s judiciary process for all members of the football community. Over the past 12 months, the Level Four Coaching Program for leading coaching candidates was significantly expanded and department staff had central roles in major changes around the competition rules relating to Father-Son and Academy Player bidding at the National Draft, the trading of future draft selections and key Laws changes.

In close consultation with the AFL Players Association, the game’s world-leading Illicit Drug Policy was significantly revamped, with major changes announced after the end of the 2015 premiership season. The Football Department is primarily responsible for the operation of the elite AFL competition and staff responded strongly in difficult circumstances to the unprecedented cancellation of a game in 2015, following the tragic death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh. The death of a serving senior coach shocked all parts of the Australian sporting community and the football department was required to ensure the AFL competition could appropriately grieve for the loss of Walsh while displaying the professionalism required for the season’s remaining matches to continue.

Dockers dynamo Livewire small forward Michael Walters led the goalkicking as Fremantle finished the home and away season on top of the ladder for the first time.
TRIBUNAL/ MRP CHANGES

The AFL Commission approved changes to the operation of the Match Review Panel and AFL Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, designed largely to simplify the understanding of the game’s judiciary process for all members of the football community.

The key changes included:
- All offences categorised as fines or matches of suspension, no longer using any reference to base demerit points.
- The elimination of carryover points on any offence.
- Conduct graded in two categories only—intentional or careless.
- The MRP to issue fines, two-match and three-match suspensions, with more serious offences referred to the Tribunal.
- Simplification of the Bad Record provisions, with a maximum addition of one extra match of suspension on a penalty.
- Retention of discounts for early pleas (lowering of fines or one-match suspension on a penalty), but removal of automatic good record provision.
- Brownlow Medal eligibility based around whether a player was suspended/not suspended for a match in any particular home and away season.

In 2016, the guidelines for dangerous tackles will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact and the following changes will also be made:

**Appeal Grounds**—A manifestly inadequate sanction or classification will be available as appeal grounds. This has been introduced after the AFL considered it could not appeal a suspension that was deemed too low, whereas a player or club retained the right to appeal a suspension that was deemed too high.

**Impact Guidelines**—The wording around the potential to cause serious injury will be expanded to include intentional high-strike and high bump with significant head contact and/or player momentum.

**Contact With An Injured Player**—This will be deemed as a fixed financial sanction on the table of offences.

**MRP CHANGES**

Football community.

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Introduction of fines for low-level offences, but with suspensions imposed for repeat third offenders within a season.

Four new MRP members were named to the weekly operation of the review of all games—Luke Ball, Nathan Burke, Michael Christian and Brad Sewell, who could call on four premierships and nearly 900 games of AFL experience between them. The operation of the panel was that three of the four members would rule on incidents each week, with the make-up of the panel regularly altering through the season. A chairman was not appointed, with a majority 2-1 or 3-0 ruling on each incident to determine whether a charge was laid.

Daniel Harford, Shane Wakelin and Paul Williams also joined the Tribunal jury as new members, as part of the rotation of members to sit on any cases taken to hearings through the season.

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**ILLICIT DRUG POLICY**

A revised Illicit Drugs Policy was announced after the end of the 2015 season, after wide-ranging discussions through the year between the AFL and AFLPA, medical officers and AFL clubs.

- Enhanced player education and counselling programs—to help players with meaningful and lasting behavioural changes.
- Appropriate systems of medical interventions as required—delivered by the AFL Medical Officer, AFL doctors and medical experts.
- Opportunity for players to modify behaviour at first detection—interventions at this stage do not involve a playing or financial sanction but trigger education and counselling programs, along with target testing.

- Stricter set of consequences for players who failed to modify behaviour—public suspension and fine after second detection.
- Increased club involvement—clubs informed earlier and greater involvement in education and counselling programs.
- Urine testing and year-round hair testing—urine testing to determine consequences; hair testing to monitor behaviour and direct target testing and education programs.
- No public release of results—the AFL will no longer release the results of illicit drug testing.
- Self-notification—players will be permitted to self-notification, allowed only if they have not previously been identified under the Illicit Drugs Policy.
- Players in the AFL’s Talent Pathway programs will also undergo testing with detections of an illicit substance to be communicated to the respective club doctor or head coach.

**Interventions and consequences** are as follows:

- First detection: $5000 financial sanction (and suspended) and compulsory counselling and education programs.
- Second detection: Four-match suspension and $50,000 sanction imposed. Club notified and the suspension confirmed publicly.
- Third detection: 12-match suspension. Where a player is deemed acting outside the spirit of the policy by failing to comply with the prescribed program or demonstrating risky behaviour, clubs may also be notified.

These changes were agreed between all parties to reflect the continued evolution of the IDP, acknowledging the complex nature of illicit drug use while striking a balance between protecting the health and wellbeing of players and providing appropriate determents and controls to shift player behaviour.

The AFL wishes to restate for the record that AFL-listed players agree to a regime of testing and sanctions for illicit drug taking above and beyond the testing for performance-enhancing drugs, as part of their responsibility as a professional athlete.

The game continues to enact this policy, when many sports have no version of a policy in operation, because the AFL industry understands the threat of illicit drugs to players’ health and wellbeing, and we also believe the privilege of playing AFL comes with a responsibility to the club and to the game.

**TRANSITION TO NEW SYSTEM**

- Players with one detection more than two years old (with no further positive tests) will enter the new system with no detections.
- If a player is on two detections, his next detection will result in four-week suspension and the $5000 fine.
- If a player is on one detection, the next detection will be a $5000 fine, plus the club informed but no suspension.

**NAB AFL ACADEMY HEAD COACH**

Brenton Sanderson was appointed from a high-quality field of applicants to guide the overall development of the elite teenage players in the country as they prepared for possible AFL careers.

Sanderson played 209 games for the Adelaide Crows, Collingwood and Geelong between 1990-2005, before taking on assistant coaching roles at Port Adelaide (2006) and the Cats (2007-11) and the senior coaching job at the Crows for the 2012-14 seasons.

As the NAB AFL Academy head coach, Sanderson’s primary role was to oversee the development and training path of the elite junior players selected from the NAB AFL Under-18 and NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, with two major priorities around match-specific coaching to assist the on-field development of young talent and off-field education to ensure they can thrive in an AFL club environment.

**LEVEL FOUR SENIOR COACH PROGRAM**

The AFL introduced its Level Four Program in 2015 to prepare highly rated assistant coaches for a potential head coach position at an AFL club with concentrated mentoring and development work, beyond the existing Level Three Program.

John Baker (Carlton), Brendan Bolton (then Hawthorn), Blake Carelacci (Geelong), Stuart Dew (Sydney Swans), Simon Goodwin (Melbourne), Robert Harvey (Collingwood), Adam Kingsley (St Kilda), Simon Lloyd (then Fremantle) and Matthew Nicks (Port Adelaide) were the leading contenders in a high-quality field of applicants who sought to be part of the program.

The selection process involved an extensive application, peer and senior coach review and an interview conducted by a combination of highly regarded coaches and CEOs. Former AFL coach Peter Schaub and 2006 West Coast premiership coach John Worsfold were joined by Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou, leading hockey coach Ric Charlesworth and club CEOs Trevor Nibett (West Coast), Greg Swann (Brisbane Lions), Peter Jackson (Melbourne) and Brian Cook (Geelong).

The course centres around four key components—core coaching modules, an individual learning plan, a program for high-impact leadership and individual coach mentoring. The core modules address areas including rules, regulations, governance, integrity, government relations and the economy of the game. Other modules address quality coaching practice, strategic communications, media training and ethical leadership.

Four mentor coaches are involved with the program—Neale Daniher (football), Ric Charlesworth (hockey), Clif Mallett (athletics) and John Buchanan (cricket). Worsfold was also involved as a mentor to help in the selection process.

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AFL UMPIRING DEPARTMENT

The 2015 season was a success for the umpiring department. A 4 per cent decrease in error rate, as judged by the umpires’ coaches, was a great result. The introduction of a redefining and tighter interpretation of holding the ball was universally applauded by the football world.

A mid-season change in interpretation of the driving with the head rule was challenging, but the result for player safety was a highlight of the year.

A new structure in goal and boundary coaching led to a more national approach, which saw all but one state represented in finals. A greater emphasis on boundary throw-ins led to a marked improvement while goal umpiring across Australia continued to be of a very high standard.

An extensive four-umpire trial saw eight games in the NAB Challenge and seven premiership season games with an extra umpire on the ground. The trial was a success with the system putting umpires in better positions in a less-fatigued state.

GPS figures showed a dramatic reduction in high-end running, meaning umpires should not be forced out of the game due to physical limitations were the system introduced.

The need for a far greater number of umpires to be listed has meant the system will not be introduced in 2016. A fast-tracking development program has been introduced for umpires just below AFL level, with a view to them being ready to fill the required spots were the system to be introduced in 2017.

The Score Review System saw 35 decisions overturned that would have been errors, of which eight were initiated by the score review official. The time taken for each review was reduced from an average of 30 seconds in 2014 to 15 in 2015. There were four errors made out of 143 reviews. While the goal is to have no errors, the number of corrected decisions was rated as a success in 2015.

2015 GRAND FINAL UMPIRES

FIELD
Matt Stevic, Jeff Dalgleish, Brett Rosebury
Emergency: Ray Chamberlain

BOUNDARY
Nathan Doig, Matthew Tomkins, Ian Burrows, Chris Gordon
Emergency: Michael Marantelli

GOAL
Chris Appleton, Adam Wojcik
Emergency: Luke Walker

MILESTONES
300 GAMES
Sam Hay (F), Jeff Dalgleish (F), Brett Dalgleish (B), Cameron Ward (B), Michael Marantelli (B), Tim Morrison (B), Drew Kowalski (B), Dale Edwick (G), Stephen Williams (G), Tristan Symes (G)

200 GAMES
Ian Burrows (B), Nathan Doig (B), Luke Walker (G), Jason Venkayaya (G), Chris Appleton (G)

300 GAMES
Justin Schmitt (F), John Morris (G)

INTERNATIONAL RULES

Australia played Ireland in a one-off Test for the 2015 International Rules Series at Croke Park in Dublin on November 21, with Ireland proving successful by four points in a closely fought contest.

The 2015 season came on the back of last year’s successful meeting between the two countries in Perth, which Australia won, before Ireland regained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy on home soil.

Selection for the Australian team was only open to players who had earned All-Australian selection through their AFL career, with the coaching staff led by Alastair Clarkson, Chris Scott and Ross Lyon.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules squad was: Hayden Ballantyne (Freemantle), Eddie Betts (Adelaide Crows), Grant Birchall (Hawthorn), Luke Breust (Hawthorn), Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide Crows, now Geelong Cats), Dustin Fletcher (Essendon), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Brendan Goddard (Essendon), Robbie Fox (Port Adelaide), Adam Treloar (Essendon), Luke Hodge (Hawthorn), Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Leigh Montagna (St Kilda), David Mundy (Freemantle), Robert Murphy (Western Bulldogs), Nick Rewoldt (St Kilda), Tom Rockliff (Brisbane Lions), Jarrod Roughead (Hawthorn), Nick Smith (Sydney Swans), Jake Stringer (Western Bulldogs), Harry Taylor (Geelong Cats), Eastwood (Western Bulldogs).

Harry Taylor won the Jim Stynes Medal as Australia’s best player in the 58-54 loss.

LAWs OF THE GAME

The AFL Commission has approved a reduction in the cap on interchange rotations for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, after a recommendation from the Laws of the Game Committee at the end of the 2015 season.

The use of the substitute player will be removed, returning to four interchange players, while the cap will be lowered to 90 rotations a match. Clubs will also be allowed any changes made at quarter breaks (up to 12 across the three breaks), while forced blood rule, head injury assessment and stretcher changes will not count as part of the rotations.

The interchange cap had been introduced for the 2014 season for an initial two-year trial, set at 120 rotations a match across three interchange players, with one player being used as a substitute in case of injury.

In 2016, the cap will continue to not have any quarter-by-quarter restrictions, with the use of the 90 interchange rotations a match to be managed as each club sees fit across the entirety of a game.

It was the AFL’s view the interchange cap over the past two years had allowed clubs to transition back to 2010 levels of interchange numbers.

The AFL Commission approved a minor change to the Laws for 2015 whereby the umpires would be able to call for a score review if a goal umpire interfered with a scoring play.

Under the Law as previously written, play-on was the correct call for any instance where the ball hits a goal umpire. This was altered to provide a common sense way of dealing with these rare situations by the umpires halting play and determining whether a goal umpire had prevented a certain score, with the wording allowing the goal and field umpire to determine what score they believe would have resulted had the ball not hit the goal umpire.

The Commission also approved several changes to interpretations around the Laws of the Game for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season:

Dangerous Tackles – Umpires will be giving a stricter adjudication of tackles with a lifting, slicing or rotating technique, while the MRP guidelines will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact.

Protected Area – Size of the protected area around the mark to be increased.

Boundary Line Play – A stricter interpretation of deliberate out of bounds will be enforced.

Because of the historical deficiencies of the established concussion data, due to the definition requiring missed games, the AFL also has a separate ongoing concussion incidence project that, while the MRP guidelines will give us a clearer picture of this injury, will not replace the ongoing concussion incidence project that, while the MRP guidelines will give us a clearer picture of this injury, will not replace the established concussion data.

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The AFL Injury Survey continues to measure and define concussion as an instance whereby a player is required to miss a match. In 2011 and 2013, the AFL revised its Concussion Management Guidelines in a more conservative approach to concussion management and the injury data appears to indicate the more conservative approach.

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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

AIS Academy youngster for a spectacular mark Blues at the MCG. The Callum Ah Chee soars against the Northern West Australian was drafted No. 8 by the Gold Coast Suns.

TAKING FLIGHT

Contact is the main cause of fractures. There were ongoing lower rates of hamstring, quadriceps and groin injuries whereas calf injuries reduced in 2014 compared with the previous three seasons but were still higher than previous seasons.

The injury incidence (number of new injuries per club per season) for 2014 was 36.1, a 13 per cent decrease from 2013. Injury prevalence was 14.0 missed games per season, an eight per cent decrease from 2013 and more in keeping with rates of the mid-late 2000s.

In 2014, the ‘average’ status of a club list of 45 players in any given week was: 35 players playing with 22 of them in the AFL; 7-8 missing through injury; and 2-3 missing due to other reasons (such as suspension, being used as a travelling emergency, team bye or a lower grade). The AFL audited all its stadiums for player safety and conducted a full perimeter check of all venues after an issue involving Hawthorn’s Jarryd Roughead in the match at ANZ Stadium against the Sydney Swans. Roughead came into contact with bolts in the concrete in the drainage area next to the fence after sliding through the goal area during play. The AFL acknowledged this was not acceptable for the players in the match and its inspections of surrounds adjoining the playing surface were immediately upgraded at all venues across the competition.

STADIUM SAFETY REVIEW

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PHIL WALSH

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Regarding the Match Review Panel, a stricter adjudication of what constitutes a dangerous tackle is to be implemented. This includes an expansion of the current guidelines to consider forceful rotating tackles or situations where the player being tackled is in a vulnerable position (ie. arms pinned) with little opportunity to protect himself.

DANGEROUS TACKLES

Through the 2015 season, the Football Operations Department formed a view that a stronger position needed to be taken on single/dangerous tackles after two high-profile incidents in the season involving a Jay Schulz tackle on Ted Richards and a Bryce Gibbs tackle on Robbie Gray.

The tackles were adjudged differently by the game’s judiciary with only Gibbs being suspended and the MRP was then instructed to give greater consideration to the player being placed in a vulnerable position, particularly involving the pinning of the arms. A player retained the opportunity to defend his position at the Tribunal if he did not agree with the assessment of his action.

Dangerous tackling techniques will be further discouraged in 2016 by paying free kicks for lifting, sinning, driving or rotating tackles with excessive force, and further penalising these actions via the Match Review Panel when they result in forcible high contact.

The tragic loss of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh required sensitivity and strong leadership from the Football Operations staff during a time of shock and grief for the entire competition.

After immediate consultation with the Adelaide Crows and Geelong Cats football clubs (who were due to play that weekend), the players association and the wider industry, the round 14 match scheduled for the Adelaide Oval was abandoned.

This was a decision of the competition, as the AFL held the view that it was not fair to ask the teams to play in these circumstances. It was decided the premiership points would be split between the two clubs, as per the AFL rules, while the remaining seven games of the round that had not yet been played went ahead.

A move initiated by Hawthorn’s Alastair Clarkson, and supported by Collingwood’s Nathan Buckley, for the rival teams to come together in the centre circle after the Friday night match at the MCG was then adopted by all other teams who played that weekend, and the following weekend’s match in Perth when the Crow returned to the field to play West Coast.

ESSENDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Pre-season Player Concessions

EsSENDON FOOTBALL CLUB

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Pre-season Player Concessions
FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

CLUB ACADEMIES – PLAYER DRAFT NOMINATIONS

A total of 25 players were nominated under the provisions of the Club Academies Rule as draft-eligible players for the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, held in Adelaide.

For a player to be included as a draft-eligible Club Academy Player for any of the Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants or Sydney Swans, the player must have represented either New South Wales or Queensland at any underage national football championships in that year or any other competition as determined by the AFL.

Brisbane Lions – Malbior Chol (Brisbane Lions Academy), Eric Hipwood (Aspley AFC), Ben Keays (Redlands), Corey Wagner (Aspley AFC), Nick Weller (University of Queensland AFC), Reuben William (Willson/Grange).

Gold Coast Suns – Dylamus Blanket, Ryan Hebron (North Shore), Lachlan Behagg (Manly Giants), Ryan Hebron (North Shore), Jack Irvine (Temora), Matthew Kennedy (Mangoplah-CUE), Nick Coughlan (Albury–Jock Cornell).

GWS Giants – Jock Cornell (Mangoplah-CUE), Nick Coughlan (Albury Tigers), Matthew Flynn (Nanadale), Harrison Himmelberg (Mangoplah-CUE), Jacob Hopper (North Ballarat Rebels), Jack Irvine (Temora), Matthew Kennedy (Collingullie), Lachlan Tisani (Albury).

Sydney Swans – Darcy Baron-Hay (North Shore), Lachlan Behagg (Marky Giants), Ryan Hebron (North-Shore), Callum Mills (Mosman Swans), Matthew Wilson (Marden).

A total of 13 players were subsequently taken at either the NAB AFL Draft or on NAB AFL Rookie Draft – Mabior Chol, Wilson (Maroubra). Giants), Ryan Hebron (North Shore), Lachlan Behagg (Manly Giants), Jack Irvine (Temora), Matthew Kennedy (Mangoplah-CUE), Nick Coughlan (Albury–Jock Cornell).

NAB AFL Rising Stars Program

The NAB AFL Rising Stars program identifies and recognises young players, providing a pathway. It comprises the following elements:

- NAB AFL Rising Star
- NAB AFL Draft
- NAB AFL Draft Combine
- NAB AFL Trade-Period
- NAB AFL Under-18 Championships
- NAB AFL Academy
- NAB AFL Under-16 Championships

NAB AFL Rising Star Award

Melbourne’s Jesse Hogan was the 2015 NAB AFL Rising Star award winner. The key forward polled 49 votes to win from Carlton’s Patrick Cripps (41) and West Coast’s Dom Sheed (27).

Talent Programs

Talent Pathway umpires had the opportunity to part of the Youth Girls National Championships in Mandurah (WA), the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships on the Gold Coast and the NAB AFL Under-12 Championships in Melbourne.

Former AFL umpire Stuart Wenn was appointed as the head coach at these championships to assist the fast-tracking of young talent, while umpires from the
NAB AFL ACADEMY

The AFL welcomed Brenton Sanderson as NAB AFL Academy head coach in February, joining AFL Talent Football Manager Michael Ablett and assistant coaches Brad Johnson, Matthew Lloyd, Brad Otten and Lenny Hayes with the delivery of the program. Sanderson coaches both Level 1 and Level 2 of the program. Both levels include a number of camps and an international tour over a 12-month period.

The Level 2 squad played two matches against VFL teams in April. The Academy team was soundly beaten by 75 points against Werribee, but won by nine points against the Northern Blues in a curtain-raiser to the round two match between Richmond and the Western Bulldogs at the MCG.

The 18th intake travelled to IMG Academy in Florida. It was the first time the Academy has toured the United States. The Level 1 squad toured New Zealand in April and played a match against the New Zealand Hawks at Westpac Stadium in Wellington. Jacob Weltring was awarded the Ben Mitchell Medal in Level 2 while Sam Powell-Pepper was awarded the Cameron Ling Medal in Level 1.

NAB AFL UNDER-16 CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2015 NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held on the GoldCoast from July 4 to July 11. Vic Country won Division 1 and Queensland won Division 2.

2015 NAB AFL DRAFTS

Where players came from

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Listed</th>
<th>Drafted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Players on All Lists in 2015

PICKLIST

Brisbane
- Pearce Hanley
- Zach Tushy
- Mike Pyke

Carlton
- Glen Hanley
- Glen Sheahan
- Luke Tate
- Mason Cox

Clayton
- Tom Doedee
- Jack Eggins
- Joe Daniher
- Shannon McManus

Gold Coast
- Tom Appling
- Tom Langdon
- Sam McDougall

North Melbourne
- Kamdyn McIntosh
- Lenny Hayes

St Kilda
- Chad Warner
- Jack Newnes
- Koby Stevens
- Lachie Hunter

Brayden Fiorini was awarded the Medallion (Division 2 best and fairest). Queensland’s Ben Keays won the Harrison Medal (Division 1 best and fairest).
Club and AFL members received free entry to NAB Challenge matches and ticket prices for the Toyota AFL Finals Series were held at 2013 levels.

Season 2015 was all about the fans, with the AFL striving to improve the affordability of attending matches and enhancing the fan experience at games.

For the first time in more than 10 years, AFL and club members received free general admission entry into NAB Challenge matches in which their team was competing, while the price of base general admission tickets during the Toyota Premiership Season remained the same level as 2014.

Fans attending the Toyota AFL Finals Series and Grand Final were also greeted to ticket prices at the same level as 2013, after a price freeze for the second consecutive year.

NAB AFL Auskick celebrated 20 years, highlighting the important partnership with NAB and its continued support of the AFL's talent pathway.

The AFL welcomed four new corporate partners in CrownBet, Woolworths, McDonald's and 2XU to further strengthen the AFL's ongoing development of commercial operations. AFL club membership continued to break records by reaching a total of 836,136 members nationally, a growth of 3.93 per cent on 2014.

In season 2015, the Marketing and Research Insights team moved within the Commercial Operations team, ensuring greater integration across membership, ticketing and corporate partners. The Research Insights team undertook more than 60 projects, allowing fans, via the 'Fan Focus' panel, to influence future strategic directions of the AFL.
The AFL continued to enjoy partnerships with several domestic and international companies in 2015, including prominent new relationships with CrownBet, Woolworths, McDonald’s and 2XU. The AFL would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following corporate partners in 2015:

**TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION AUSTRALIA**

The 2015 season marked Toyota Australia’s 11th year as the Premier Partner of the AFL. This enduring relationship is one of the most successful in Australian sport and includes naming rights to the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Toyota AFL Finals Series, Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade and Toyota AFL Grand Final. Toyota’s passion for football inspires it to continue supporting grassroots clubs through the Toyota Good for Footy Program, celebrate the greats with the Legendary Moments campaign and deliver the excitement of “Big September” to regional fans through the Retiring Legends Lap of Honour, which culminated with retired Port Adelaide star Kane Cornes escorting the premiership cup on to the MCG at the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota continued to bring its AFL partnership to life across a wide array of activations and initiatives, including:

- Toyota Legendary Moments is one of the longest-running and most-loved advertising campaigns in Australian sport. This year Toyota took legends to new heights, recreating Michael Long’s unforgettable dash down the wing in the ‘93 Grand Final in style with the help of Steve Curly and Dave Lawson and a vintage bi-plane.

- Toyota launched the Good for Footy Raffle to make it easy for clubs to raise money to grow the future of the game. Toyota donated three new cars to the prize pool and clubs got to keep 100 per cent of the proceeds from every ticket sold. A total of 249 clubs across Australia registered, raising more than $387,000. This builds on the

These generous partners support Australia’s Game

---

**PREMIER PARTNER**

**TOYOTA**

**MAJOR PARTNERS**

- Carlton Draught
- **nab**
- Gatorade
- Coca-Cola
- **CrownBet**
- THE GAME JUST CHANGED

**OFFICIAL PARTNERS**

- Woolworths
- Rinnings Wines
- Mars
- GIO
- OBELO
- **Esplanade**
- **Swisse**
- ACCOR HOTELS
- Coates
- Sherrin
- **GWS**

---

**IN GOOD HANDS**

Retired Port Adelaide star Kane Cornes was given the honour of escorting the premiership cup on to the MCG at the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final.
The Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade, the Retiring Legends Lap of Honour were conducted across Victoria to identify for themselves, as well as a trip to the US night game. Two pre-qualified kickers activation run at every Victorian Friday Carlton Draught Barrel Time throughout the season, with more than 1.5 million impressions delivered across Facebook. Carlton Draught Friday Front Bar was a major highlight in brand-funded digital content for AFL Media and CUB in 2015. Filmed at the All Nations Hotel in Richmond, episodes were released each Friday during the home and away season and averaged more than 7,000 views across AFL's digital platforms. The series culminated with a Grand Final episode filmed at the General Assembly at South Wharf, with more than 140 people attending. The popular Carlton Draught Grand Front Bar returned in 2015 and was relocated within the newly developed Foxtel Footy Festival precinct in Yarra Park outside the MCG. Carlton Draught ran the event in partnership with the AFL this year and more than 2,500 guests were given the opportunity to enjoy private hospitality environment. The Foxtel Footy Festival also welcomed the Strongbow Cider Garden, formed as part of the newly created Taste of Football experience within the precinct. The Strongbow Cider Garden was open from Wednesday, September 30, to Saturday, October 3, with more than 200,000 AFL fans visiting the Foxtel Footy Festival precinct over four days and nights.

COCA-COLA
As the official soft drink partner of the AFL, Coca-Cola worked closely with the AFL, to utilise and maximise available assets throughout the season. This included digital media opportunities, ticketing and hospitality, promotions and money-can’t-buy experiences with a particular focus on the Toyota AFL Finals Series. To celebrate the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season launch, Coca-Cola and the AFL worked on a successful promotion across CityStops stores nationally that saw dinners being treated to the Ultimate MC0 AFL Experience with their chosen team. The AFL and its clubs supported the promotion via their Facebook posts which greatly contributed to the success of the campaign. On Grand Final Day, Coke Rewards members and a select group of lucky customers were also provided with the opportunity to walk on to the MCG to watch the teams warm up. The AFL community is grateful for the ongoing support of Coca-Cola South Pacific and Coca-Cola Amatil as highly valued corporate partners.

NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK
The NAB Challenge heralded the return of AFL in 2015 and saw the game taken to iconic regional and suburban football grounds across Australia, with 27 games in 16 days. Matches were played at historic AFL venues including Whitten Oval, the home of football in western metropolitan Melbourne, as well as non-traditional venues and communities not usually exposed to elite AFL matches such as Moreton Bay in Queensland, Mundurah in Western Australia and Port Lincoln in South Australia. In total, 207,489 AFL fans attended NAB Challenge games, with the average attendance at regional games up 34 per cent year-on-year. AFL fans were also watching games on television and online, with 1,768,424 people tuning into games on Fox Footy and 112,152 fans watching via the AFL Live App online. The cumulative viewership total was 1,880,776, up one per cent year-on-year. There were 32 NAB Supergaals kicked with NAB's support, worth more than $55,500. The Strongbow Cider Garden was relocated within the newly developed Foxtel Footy Festival precinct in Yarra Park outside the MCG, Carlton Draught ran the event in partnership with the AFL this year and more than 2,500 guests were given the opportunity to enjoy private hospitality environment. The Foxtel Footy Festival also welcomed the Strongbow Cider Garden, formed as part of the newly created Taste of Football experience within the precinct. The Strongbow Cider Garden was open from Wednesday, September 30, to Saturday, October 3, with more than 200,000 AFL fans visiting the Foxtel Footy Festival precinct over four days and nights. The NAB Challenge heralded the return of AFL in 2015 and saw the game taken to iconic regional and suburban football grounds across Australia, with 27 games in 16 days. Matches were played at historic AFL venues including Whitten Oval, the home of football in western metropolitan Melbourne, as well as non-traditional venues and communities not usually exposed to elite AFL matches such as Moreton Bay in Queensland, Mundurah in Western Australia and Port Lincoln in South Australia. In total, 207,489 AFL fans attended NAB Challenge games, with the average attendance at regional games up 34 per cent year-on-year. AFL fans were also watching games on television and online, with 1,768,424 people tuning into games on Fox Footy and 112,152 fans watching via the AFL Live App online. The cumulative viewership total was 1,880,776, up one per cent year-on-year. There were 32 NAB Supergaals kicked with NAB’s support, worth more than $55,500. The Strongbow Cider Garden was relocated within the newly developed Foxtel Footy Festival precinct in Yarra Park outside the MCG, Carlton Draught ran the event in partnership with the AFL this year and more than 2,500 guests were given the opportunity to enjoy private hospitality environment. The Foxtel Footy Festival also welcomed the Strongbow Cider Garden, formed as part of the newly created Taste of Football experience within the precinct. The Strongbow Cider Garden was open from Wednesday, September 30, to Saturday, October 3, with more than 200,000 AFL fans visiting the Foxtel Footy Festival precinct over four days and nights.

The 2015 season marked the 20th anniversary of the All Nations Hotel Sanderson now oversees Level 1 and 2 Academy squads around Australia. Under-16 and Under-18 NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) was launched to eligible NAB AFL Under-18 players to win $5000 with the AFL’s Rising Star program. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) saw $30,889 was provided to Auskick centres and the program is set to be a big focus in 2016. NAB’s Local Activity Fund (LAF) was launched to eligible NAB AFL Under-18 players to win $5000 with the AFL’s Rising Star program.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS
The Gatorade Match Day Moments program ran throughout the year and encouraged and rewarded clubs for correct utilisation of Gatorade equipment and products in both match-day and training environments. In addition to the strong branding via the use of equipment on the field of play, Gatorade also secured signage rights for interchange benches at Elisaid Stadium, Adelaide Oval, Gabba, Metricon Stadium, SG, Spotless Stadium, Simonds Stadium, Domain Stadium and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.


All ambassadors were engaged to drive the promotion of the partnership and provide links to teams within the three key states of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

Hannebery and Parker were hosted during the pre-season at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute in Florida along with Joel Selwood and Tom Hawkins from Geelong, where the players gained access to the facilities and best spirit science testing in the world.

Gatorade also utilised footage and imagery of its ambassadors for use on pack, in promotions and in television commercials.

Gatorade ran several promotions via its key customer channels to drive volume and promote awareness of the official partnership with the AFL. The main marketing campaign focused on ‘fueling the future’, which included a television commercial featuring upcoming AFL players from the NAB AFL Academy program and current AFL stars Ablett and Pendlebury.

In addition to the promotional activity, Gatorade brought global ambassador and Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton to Australia for a week of immersion with Richmond.

Gatorade accompanied the International Rules team to New York at the end of the season where six players underwent GSSI testing before the International Rules training camp as part of a launch of customised hydration.

All 18 AFL clubs provided Gatorade with a number of player appearances and written testimonials regarding their experience with Gatorade.

Virgin Australia

The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia – the AFL’s official airline since 2011 – flourished in 2015. Virgin Australia successfully leveraged this integrated partnership through a number of activities. The 2015 Virgin Australia Grand Final entertainment saw two of the world’s biggest recording artists – Bryan Adams and Ellie Goulding – provide pre- and post-match entertainment for fans. The acts received extensive media coverage in the lead-up to and post the Grand Final, through social and traditional channels. Post-match, 20,000 fans attended the Virgin Australia Premiership Party which received a national audience of 187,373 across metro and regional markets.

The fly-over which saw a Virgin Australia aircraft fly across the MCG was also amplified in 2015 with the aircraft continuing a flight path that resembled the outline of the Premiership Cup. The flight path was shared on Virgin Australia and AFL social channels and quickly became a viral sensation with a reach of more than 13 million.

As the most sought-after party during Grand Final week, the Virgin Australia Grand Final Party was back again. More than 800 guests came together at Melbourne’s newly renovated venue Alumaba.

Stars of the AFL, along with a number of celebrities and influences from around the world, were among the guests who enjoyed this year’s theme of ‘beyond your imagination’, with guests treated to world-class cuisine and entertainment inspired by the Middle East.

Power in Gatorade

Brisbane Lions star Brian Lake drove off into the sunset after cementing his third consecutive premiership medallion.

The Virgin Australia All-Australian Awards were attended by 250 VIP guests and provided Virgin Australia with a great platform for brand integration with a dedicated hub on AFL.com.au and the ‘Pick Your Best 22 Competition’, attracting more than 10,000 registrants. The awards also received strong broadcast, PR and social media coverage in the lead-up to and during the event itself. The 45-minute pre-event program on Fox Fosty attracted a national average audience of 122,297. Fox Fosty’s daily program, AFL 360, broadcast live from the All-Australian event, attracted a national audience of 99,712, while On The Couch, also broadcast live, attracted a national average audience of 73,480. The gross cumulative national audience for all three programs broadcast from the event was 295,489.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules Test was played at Croke Park in Dublin. The Australian team made up exclusively of past and present All-Australian players also attended a pre-match training camp in New York.

The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia, the AFL’s official airline since 2011, was successful in launching category-first initiatives such as a life-changing Round One Tipping Competition, Pick a Winner, The Crownlow and Game of Drones.

The AFL Golden Passport campaign was launched alongside the launch of AFL Travel to celebrate AFL’s biggest fan day. Across the year there was a strong focus on building awareness of the new branding and improved product of flying.

As well as building on the AFL Travel database of 600,000-plus subscribers, there was also a big focus on club-specific creative utilising geo-targeted and audience-targeted display activity across the AFL assets and to provide tailored messages. The 2015 campaigns utilised club and AFL databases, reaching more than 600,000 AFL supporters and fans.

CrownBet

CrownBet was announced the official wagering partner of the AFL after launching in March 2015.

The partnership has helped CrownBet successfully carve out a top-tier market space within a competitive market.

CrownBet brings professionalism, world-class customer experience, a category-leading native app interface and true differentiation through an unparalleled loyalty program, which has been utilised by a significant number of AFL fans.

In partnership with the AFL, CrownBet was successful in launching category-first initiatives such as a life-changing Round One Tipping Competition, Pick a Winner, The Crownlow and Game of Drones.

CrownBet also revolutionised the AFL Match Centre by integrating live odds on the mobile platform for the first time.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS
EVENTS AND HOSPITALITY

MATCH-DAY FUNCTIONS
Throughout the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series and 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, more than 17,000 corporate guests were entertained at AFL events at venues such as the MCG and its surrounds, Domain Stadium, Etihad Stadium, Crown Palladium as the MCG and its surrounds, Domain Stadium, ANZ Stadium, Crown Palladium and the Royal Exhibition Building.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull MP, Her Excellency The Hon Linda Dessau – Governor of Victoria, Federal Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten MP, AFL Legends Bob Skilton, Ron Barassi, Kevin Bartlett, Kevin Murray, John Nicholls, Peter Hudson and Leigh Matthews, actors Chris and Liam Hemsworth and former Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting were among the guests who attended the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final Day Official Function.

MAJOR EVENTS
Major events during 2015 included the Toyota AFL Premiership Season Launch, the Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner and the AFL Women’s Industry Lunch. In a time when focus on the women’s game continues to grow, the AFL Women’s Industry Lunch continued to go from strength to strength and featured inspiring strength to strength and featured inspiring women within the AFL industry. Other key events included the NAB AFL Rising Star Award function, the Virgin Australia All-Australian Awards, the Charles Brownlow Medal, the Virgin Australia International Rules tour to New York and Ireland and the NAB AFL Draft in Adelaide.

TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL WEEK EVENTS
The Foxtel Footy Festival and Toyota AFL Grand Final Live Site moved to a new location outside the MCG in Yarra Park in 2015, attracting more than 350,000 fans to the site over four days.

The event was a celebration of all things football with children’s activities, player and celebrity appearances, music and food. It also included the LifeStyle Taste of Football curated by Vue de monde chef Shannon Bennett, Presto Movies at the MCG, the Music Hub featuring the Antipodean Rock ‘n’ Roll Collective, the Carlton Draught Grand Final Front Bar and the Interchange.

In changing the traditional route to heating the Toyota AFL Grand Final, fans enjoyed the electric atmosphere in perfect weather on a newly installed public holiday in Melbourne.

The September Club provided first-class service and atmosphere to guests, with the hospitality precinct again featuring an electric atmosphere delivered for attendees.

More than 3700 guests attended Centre Square precinct at Birrarung Marr. Those who attended the Final Siren post-game party were treated to a high-quality hospitality experience, with guests who attended the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final Post-Game Show saw Bryan Adams and Ellie Goulding perform, along with Chris Isaak and Mike Brady, who sang Up There Cass. Australian songstress Kate Ceberano performed the national anthem. Following the biggest match of the year, the Virgin Australia Premiership Party saw Adams and Goulding again perform to a crowd of more than 20,000 as part of a free concert held on the MCG, which included the presentation of Hawthorn’s 2015 premiership team.

AFL PREMIERSHIP CLUB
The AFL Premiership Club continued to grow, with more than 780 members. This year saw an increased level of engagement with the membership base, with a number of non-AFL and non-game-day networking events hosted to drive greater opportunities for the businesses within the Premiership Club network. The Premiership Club continues to offer members access to the best seating, dining rooms and bar facilities at the MCG and Etihad Stadium throughout the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

AFL EVENT OFFICE
The AFL Event Office is the AFL’s official destination for Toyota AFL Grand Final Day ticket and event experiences. In 2015, the AFL Event Office offered a range of new and refreshed package options, with the new Foxtel Footy Festival hugely popular with fans as part of their overall experience. There was an unprecedented demand for packages, with all sold out in early September for the first time.
ATTENDANCES

A total of 6,351,778 spectators attended the 197 matches of the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, with average attendance per match of 32,242.

With a focus on scheduling blockbuster matches in the traditional Saturday afternoon timeslot, all three Victorian venues saw an increase in 2015, with the MCG recording a growth of three per cent year-on-year.

The new-look Adelaide Oval, the third largest stadium venues, with user-friendly maps and configurations at the MCG and Etihad Stadium. The AFL removed the use of multiple configurations at the MCG and Etihad Stadium venues, with user-friendly maps and configurations implemented.

The ticket-pricing strategy across the League delivered the best experience at the best value for members and fans, while elevating revenue and attendance for clubs.

For the second consecutive year, ticket prices for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, including the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final, were frozen, remaining unchanged from the previous year's prices. This was only the second time in nearly two decades that prices did not increase to attend the Grand Final.

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

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<th>TITLE</th>
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<th>2014</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>% Variance</th>
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<tr>
<td>NAB Challenge</td>
<td>320,410</td>
<td>298,414</td>
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<td>Premiership Season</td>
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</table>

GWS Giants recorded the biggest increase in home game attendances, averaging 10,786 fans in 2015, compared with 9,206 in the previous season — representing a year-on-year increase of 16.9 per cent.

Richmond recorded the second highest rate of growth in 2015 with an increase of 15.5 per cent in home game attendances compared with 2014. The top five clubs in terms of average attendance per home game were:

- Richmond: 49,877
- Collingwood: 47,259
- Adelaide Crows: 46,487
- Port Adelaide: 42,929
- Essendon: 42,505

The average attendance per round was 270,556 (32,242 per game).

HOMESTADIUM ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUB</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>% Variance</th>
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<td>Adelaide Crows</td>
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<td>Brisbane Lions</td>
<td>206,591</td>
<td>180,578</td>
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<td>389,963</td>
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<td>478,259</td>
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<td>Gold Coast Suns</td>
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<td>12,361</td>
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<td>GWS Giants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
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<td>276,802</td>
<td>255,314</td>
<td>21,488</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>282,617</td>
<td>254,611</td>
<td>28,006</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Adelaide</td>
<td>471,210</td>
<td>429,205</td>
<td>42,005</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>548,624</td>
<td>49,877</td>
<td>497,747</td>
<td>9,999%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>283,232</td>
<td>258,308</td>
<td>24,924</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Swans</td>
<td>346,735</td>
<td>358,541</td>
<td>-11,806</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast Eagles</td>
<td>305,860</td>
<td>315,987</td>
<td>-10,127</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Bulldogs</td>
<td>258,264</td>
<td>244,923</td>
<td>13,341</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>6,351,578</td>
<td>6,384,742</td>
<td>-33,164</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

ATTENDANCE BY VENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>% Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Oval</td>
<td>913,090</td>
<td>46,623</td>
<td>857,467</td>
<td>1,819%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZ Stadium</td>
<td>81,706</td>
<td>29,669</td>
<td>52,037</td>
<td>179%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Stadium</td>
<td>55,452</td>
<td>13,851</td>
<td>41,601</td>
<td>301%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blundstone Arena</td>
<td>6,402</td>
<td>14,834</td>
<td>-8,432</td>
<td>-56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra Stadium</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Stadium</td>
<td>270,476</td>
<td>14,059</td>
<td>256,417</td>
<td>1,819%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etihad Stadium</td>
<td>1,302,648</td>
<td>28,318</td>
<td>1,274,329</td>
<td>3,655%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabba</td>
<td>206,611</td>
<td>18,110</td>
<td>188,501</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCG</td>
<td>2,274,807</td>
<td>48,329</td>
<td>2,226,478</td>
<td>9,556%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metricon Stadium</td>
<td>175,066</td>
<td>18,100</td>
<td>156,966</td>
<td>866%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simonds Stadium</td>
<td>59,825</td>
<td>24,623</td>
<td>35,202</td>
<td>121%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotless Stadium</td>
<td>88,706</td>
<td>29,569</td>
<td>59,137</td>
<td>153%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StarTrack Oval</td>
<td>30,795</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>20,663</td>
<td>203%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIO Stadium</td>
<td>3,873</td>
<td>18,731</td>
<td>-14,858</td>
<td>-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIO Traeger Park</td>
<td>4,956</td>
<td>18,810</td>
<td>-13,854</td>
<td>-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westpac Stadium</td>
<td>13,218</td>
<td>12,125</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>6,351,578</td>
<td>6,384,742</td>
<td>-33,164</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TICKETING

In 2015, the AFL ensured ticket prices remained affordable while simplifying the ticket-buying process with the base general admission ticket prices remaining the same as 2014.

2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season — Base General Admission Ticket Prices

- ADELT | $13
- CONCESSION | $3
- FAMILY | $4

The AFL ensured ticket prices remained affordable while simplifying the ticket-buying process with the base general admission ticket prices remaining the same as 2014.

SAVING BIGHT

A record average of 44,623 fans attended matches at the new-look Adelaide Oval.

The AFL ensured ticket prices remained affordable.

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2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season — Base General Admission Ticket Prices

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With the introduction of the Foxtel Footy Festival, the Consumer Products division ran three major activations at the event, including the Women’s AFL Style Lounge, with the key objective to increase the awareness of women’s club merchandise.

The second was a ShopAFL pop-up retail outlet selling a wide range of the 18 clubs’ merchandise through a collaboration with retail partner Infinite Retail. There was a Penguin reading corner placed within the Kids Zone.

The third was the return of the Select trading card app, with a major expansion of the Select trading card app to incorporate digital card trading and the ability to buy packs online.

Playcorp, the AFL’s major supporter apparel partner, launched a new program focused on traditional 100 per cent wool knit guernseys, produced in conjunction with Australian Wool Innovations. The marketing and promotion surrounding the program was high, including television, radio, print and billboards and player ambassadorships and achieved media coverage valued at just under $2 million across all platforms.

Since its launch in May 2014, ShopAFL has continued to grow. Comparing year-on-year statistics for the six-month period between June and October, online sales increased by 80 per cent. The number of orders and the quantity of units sold has seen a 52 per cent uplift. Unique site visits have grown by 20 per cent and conversion rates are up by 30 per cent.

The merchandise operations model at Etihad Stadium changed for the 2015 season, with the rights awarded to the tenant clubs. The AFL Consumer Products department, together with Infinite Retail, worked alongside the clubs to ensure the merchandise offer was maximised and the fan experience improved from previous years.

AFL Stores also continued to deliver solid results across its 12-store footprint as well as its ecommerce site.

**BEST OF BUDDIES**

The Swans attracted a record average crowd of 48,836 a match in 2015.

**ON THE WAY**

West Coast midfielder Luke Shuey celebrates a goal during the Eagles’ victory over North Melbourne in the second preliminary final at Domain Stadium.
MARKETING & RESEARCH INSIGHTS

MARKETING

The 2015 marketing strategy followed a business-wide focus on the fans and recognised their contribution to the game across all campaigns and activations. Key objectives were set to ensure marketing campaigns influenced the industry’s positive results in brand health, reputation and attendances.

From NAB AFL Auskick to community footy, to the growing number of women playing the game and the passionate supporters who create the unique atmosphere at an AFL game, the AFL’s 2015 marketing campaign focused on the fans. This ensured connection with the heartland and showed appreciation for the people who make the game.

The You Make The Game campaign was well received by fans and non-fans alike with strong likability and increases in consideration to attend.

The Sunday Funday campaign was launched to provide a targeted family product with fans excited by the return of kick-to-kick and strong feedback on ‘kids in free’ which saw a doubling of kids general admission attendances in Melbourne.

The reduction in food and beverage prices at selected stadiums as well as a bigger Woolworths AFL Playground ensured Sundays at the footy became an affordable day’s entertainment for the whole family.

Australian media personality Mick Molloy was chosen to bring the campaign to life.

The season culminated with the All for the Finals campaign – a way for the AFL to acknowledge and celebrate the sacrifices and commitment our players (and fans) go to in order to get to the last month of the season and communicating that the AFL Finals is the premium sporting event of the year.

Key highlights of the campaign included an increased focus on unique digital content, with club finals vignettes receiving more than three million views through the partnership with Facebook.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The AFL’s in-house research team undertook more than 60 projects in 2015. The ‘Fan Focus’ panel includes more than 11,000 fans, which ensures supporters have a voice in providing direct insights into the AFL’s strategic direction.

Results from this research helped inform a number of fan-centric initiatives such as a focus on increased affordability at matches, a fan-friendly fixture to encourage strong attendance and a number of other fan initiatives, including Sunday Funday where children were admitted for free to games in Melbourne.
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.
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).
- Strong growth in junior (four per cent) and youth girls (3 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 239,980 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.

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.

NAB AFL Auskick volunteers – Stephen Ryan (NSW/ACT), Brett Fragiacomo (NT), Jon Breedon (Qld), Mark Dafritz (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 Auskicker 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 Auskicker 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 partners.

PARTICIPATION BY STATE & TERRITORY

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.
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 10,396 inter-school teams in AFL competitions that involved some 231,080 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 467,005 students participating.
- **Promotional clinics and visits** reached just over two million children (1.54 million at schools and more than 646,000 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 2000 students** were involved in a national online AFL-themed quiz which focused on numeracy and literacy.
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 develop as 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 5500 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 importance in ensuring football at all levels is delivered with improved quality, 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, Brendan Bolton, Louise Burke, Shane Pilk, Matt Jones, Mark Yetica-Paulson and David Parkinson. 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

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 PlaySport 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
New articles and practice activities are regularly published and promoted through the initiatives of AFL Coaching to promote coaching education and resources to coaches and their affiliated clubs.

INJURY PREVENTION RESOURCES
An important part of injury prevention and management resources were produced in 2015, including a new resource that covers the key guidelines for the management of concussion in community football. This resource is available in hard copy from AFL and on the website.

AFCOACHES’ ASSOCIATION – APPEARANCES PROGRAM
The partnership with the AFL and the AFCA continued in 2015, particularly through the AFL Coaching program. Overall, AFL seniors 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 coaches. Association staff, including CEO Mark Brayshaw and operational staff Greg Lynch, Ron Watt and Melissa Murphy, also assisted in various elements of the AFL coaching development program during the year.

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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 Wheeldon, 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.

McDonald’s A9s
It was the fourth season of the McDonald’s A9s 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 saw strong growth at a rate of 23.5 per cent, with 22,250 people now participating in competitions.

Partnering with McDonald’s, the official sponsor provided great support for A9s 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.

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.

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 (96% 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 13 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.

AFL Community Camps
The Australia Post AFL Community Camps saw more than 800 A9 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.
- 95,088 school students visited.
- 6855 students visited at junior clubs.
- 8052 superclinic participants.
- 3760 people visited in aged care/hospitals.
- 3087 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: Rod Atherton
- Northern Territory Volunteer of the Year: Peter Shepard and Alesha Shepard
- Western Australian Volunteer of the Year: Bill Trethewie
- Victoria Volunteer of the Year: Christine Swinburne
- Victorian Multicultural Ambassador of the Year: Rod 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.

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 210,000 in 2014.

Key stats in 2015:

- 59,000 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 lists.
- 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 two 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 stern but it missed and NT Thunder won by a point.

Female Football

The rapid growth of women’s and girls participating in Australian Football continued in 2015 with 318,880 now playing in competitions or involved in programs. A highlight was the 93 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.
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.

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.

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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, MMAS Cerebros 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.

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.

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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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.

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 fairest player within the academy who displayed leadership on and off the field.

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’s 2015 Pinnacl Award for Customer Service Excellence.

Four AFI 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 Nightfights program that used football as a vehicle to reconnect more than 500 disengaged and at-risk youth.

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 teams and a landmark women’s state game between NSW and Queensland 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.

NSW/ACT

2015 started with an unprecedented six NAB Challenge games in NSW/ACT, including a sold-out Richmond and Port Adelaide clash in Albany and the first AFI ‘Pride Game’ between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle at Drummoyne Oval.

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A range of mutually beneficial government partnerships have been developed with agencies such as Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth, VicSport as well as 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.

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 alumnus 12 AAA Auskick centres run by the Victoria Police Force.

Hosted the AFL National Inclusion Carnival that won the Victorian Government’s 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 FLNL 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 Geelong region. The tournament, which included a youth girls component, had a total economic benefit to the region of more than $1.3 million.

Launch of two Diversity Umpiring Academies at the Australian International Academy in Coburg linked to Essendon Football League and schools in Sherrington linked to the Goulburn Valley umpires’ 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 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 Football Victoria grant will be used to support the Auskick and Auskick in Schools programs, which will be used to introduce the game to young players from disadvantaged and at-risk backgrounds.

NSW’s Maddy Collier was drafted by the Western Bulldogs, along with Canberra’s Heath 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, 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.

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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 across all teams in the Academy.

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.

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NSW’s 2015 Pinnacle Award for Customer Service Excellence.

The TAC extended its partnership as a rights sponsor of the state competition into its 27th consecutive year.

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The Queensland All Nations team won 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 Risling 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 Premierships 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.

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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 (Goreng), 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 a 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.
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 $270,000 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.

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 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 medalist, 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.

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.
Major projects ranged from assisting the negotiation and drafting of the new Broadcast Rights agreement to dealing with all matters relating to the competition’s integrity.

In 2015, the AFL Legal and Integrity Department continued its provision of legal services, commercial advice and support to all departments across the AFL, as well as working with AFL clubs, AFL Players Association, AFL Umpires Association and the AFL’s state-affiliated bodies on various matters and projects.

Key issues dealt with by the Legal and Integrity Department during 2015 were:

**BROADCAST AGREEMENT**

During August, a significant portion of the department’s resources were allocated towards the negotiation and drafting of the new Broadcast Rights agreements with Seven Network, News Limited and Telstra. As outlined in this Annual Report, the work on this matter laid the groundwork for the future of the AFL.

**FUTURE LEADER**

The Swans missed the midfield drive generated by Luke Parker, who broke his leg against Collingwood and did not play in the finals.
On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, the Court decision made in relation to the Essendon Anti-Doping Agency notified the AFL it was satisfied that any player violated clause 11.2 of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

The AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal hearing into AFL ANTI-DOPING TRIBUNAL HEARINGS

The Tribunal found that the former Essendon support person concluded and a former support person concluded that 34 players faced infraction notices arising in connection with these arbitration proceedings. The Tribunal determined it would not allow any extra players from outside the current player lists to be signed.

Other anti-Doping Violations

Ryan Crowley

On March 15, 2016, the AFL announced it had issued an infraction notice under the Anti-Doping Code against Freo player Ryan Crowley. Crowley had been issued the notice on October 1, 2014, arising from a failed match-day test after the club’s round 17 match on July 13, 2014. On June 11, 2015, the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal found Crowley breached the AFL Anti-Doping Code and imposed a sanction of two seasons.

Lachlan Keeffe and Josh Thomas

On July 29, 2015, the AFL issued infraction notices to Lachlan Keeffe and Josh Thomas on February 10, 2015, which had been determined the following list concessions for the 2016 season.

Essendon Football Club — signing of players

Essendon was permitted to sign up to 10 players as Temporary Primary List Players on a short-term contract for the 2016 season.

Unless otherwise approved by the General Counsel, the players must have been:

- On an AFL list within the last two seasons.
- On the Essendon AFL VFL List.
- Will not retain list access rights to any of these players who go on to the primary list for the 2016 Toyota Premiership Season beyond October 31, 2016.
- Payments made to these temporary players in 2016 will be included in the Essendon Total Player Payments. If payments to the additional players cause Essendon to go above the TPP Limit, the club will be provided with an allowance for an amount equivalent to the amount it is over the TPP Limit.

Unless otherwise approved by the General Counsel, Essendon may not sign more than one player from the same club (with the exception of Essendon VFL players).

The deadline for the signing of players was July 15, 2016. As the additional temporary players will play the entire season with Essendon, they will be signed to similar contracts to the AFL Standard Playing Contract and will play with the Essendon VFL team if not selected by the AFL side.

The Tribunal handed down its decision regarding the infraction notices against the 34 players on March 31, 2015, and published reasons for the decision.

The Tribunal was not comfortably satisfied that any player violated clause 11.2 of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

On April 17, 2015, the AFL received the decision of the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal in the matter of the former Essendon support person.

The Tribunal found that the former Essendon support person was guilty of 10 breaches of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

The breaches include trafficking, attempting to traffic and complicity in matters related to a range of prohibited substances.

On July 26, 2015, the AFL notified by AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal Chairman David Jones that the Tribunal had imposed a lifetime ban on the former Essendon support person for the breaches of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

NEW BOMBERS

On Tuesday, August 25, 2015, the World Anti-Doping Agency notified the AFL that it was going to appeal the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal decision made in relation to the Essendon Football Club players to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport hearing was held in Sydney from Monday, November 16, to Friday, November 20. On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled:

1. The appeal filed by the by the World Anti-Doping Agency on 8 May 2015 is upheld.

2. The decision rendered by the Australian Football League Anti-Doping Tribunal, 31 March 2015, is set aside.

3. Messrs Thomas Bellchambers, Alex Browne, Jake Carlisle, Travis Colyer, Alayn Davey, Luke Davis, Corey Dell’Olio, Ricky Dyson, Dustin Fletcher, Scott Gumbleton, Kyle Hardingham, Dyson Hoppell, Michael Hibbard, David Hill, Heath Hocking, Carl Hooker, Ben Howlett, Michael Hurley, Lenny Jetter, Brendan Lee, Sam Loneragan, Nathan Lovett-Murray, Mark McVeigh, Jake Melksham, Angus Monfries, David Myers, Tayte Pears, Patrick Ryder, Henry Stappery, Brent Stanton, Ariel Steinberg, Jake Watson, Stewart Claremont, and Brent Pinnall (‘The Players’) are sanctioned with a period of ineligibility of two years commencing as of 31 March 2015. Any period of ineligibility, whether imposed on or voluntarily accepted by the Players before entry into force of this award, shall be credited against the total period of ineligibility to be served.

4. The costs of arbitration, to be determined and served to the parties by the CAS-Court of Arbitration shall be borne 75% by the players and 25% by the Australian Football League.

5. The Players and the AFL shall jointly contribute CHF 30,000 to the World Anti-Doping Agency for its legal fees and other expenses incurred in connection with these arbitration proceedings. The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority shall bear its own legal costs and expenses incurred in connection with the present proceedings.

6. All other motions or prayers for relief are dismissed.

On November 4, 2015, Keeffe and Thomas were formally advised in writing they would each receive a two-year ban after pleading guilty to a breach of the AFL Anti-Doping Code.

ANTI-GAMBLING RULE VIOLATIONS

On March 30, 2015, the AFL announced it had discovered a number of infractions relating to its Anti-Gambling Regulations, following an annual audit of all players, coaching and club staff across the Tribunal.

Under the AFL’s regulations, all registered persons with AFL clubs (players, coaches, board members, staff etc.) are prohibited from betting on AFL matches or events. The following decisions were reached:

Jack Crisp, Collingwood listed player

Crisp was found to have bet on four contingencies totalling $319 while a listed player at the Brisbane Lions. A financial sanction of $5000 was imposed, given the player’s full co-operation and contrition in dealing with the matter which was taken into account and it was determined he would not face a playing suspension.

AFL Score Review Official

The Australian Football League Anti-Doping Policy to reflect changes in the WADA Code effective from January 1, 2015.

2015 NAB AFL Draft

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was significantly different to previous years after the introduction of a new Father-Son and Academy bidding draft. Previously, the Father-Son and Academy bidding draft was held during the Exchange Period.

The AFL introduced this new process as part of its equalisation philosophies. In altering the rules, the AFL sought to instill new values into the AFL, Belichychambers and NSW to continue to develop players through their club academies and also...
preserve the historical significance of Father-Son selections, while ensuring the ‘market value’ is paid for drafters.

A Draft Value Index was introduced which allocates a points value to each draft selection.

In order to match a bid, the nominating club must pay the points value of the selection number of the bid by the other club. If during the draft another club bids for a nominated Father-Son or Academy player, the bid can be matched by the nominating club.

The pure Draft Value Index is discounted by 20 per cent for all subsequent selections.

This may mean the use of several draft selections by the nominating club to acquire a nominated Father-Son or Academy player.

The nominating club does not have to match the bid and, if this occurs, the player is selected by the club which made the original bid.

Having used all selections with points value in any one year, a club may use

selections for the following year’s draft to match a player, which will eventuate in a deficit being carried forward.

The deficit is limited by a guaranteed number of points and a club cannot match a bid if it exceeds the guaranteed points.

See table next page for the Father-Son and Academy players selected by matching during the National Draft.

A further two Academy players were not matched by their clubs and were selected by the bidding club:

Josh Dunkley (Sydney Academy) selected by the Western Bulldogs with selection 25.

Corey Wagner (Brisbane Academy) selected by North Melbourne with selection 43.

FREE AGENCY

Under the rules agreed to by the AFL and the AFLPA in February 2010, a total of 11 restricted free agents and 56 unrestricted free agents were eligible to consider their choice:

Allowing them to move to the club of their choice:

Giving advantage of the Free Agency Rules to players coming in and out during the relevant Exchange Period.

For example, a club cannot trade a future first round and future third round selection from the same year, but can trade a future second and third round selection.

If a club has traded in a future third round selection, it can then trade a future first and third round selection out as the third round selections will net off.

For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of first-round selection in addition to a future selection from the same National Draft (provided this limitation is based on the net result of selections traded in and out in each round during the relevant Exchange Period).

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The trading of future years’ draft selections was introduced in the 2015 Exchange Period under the following conditions:

During the Exchange Period, clubs are now permitted to exchange National Draft selections in both the coming National Draft and the following year’s National Draft (one year in advance).

Clubs may only trade away future first-round selections with the approval of the club’s board.

Where in the preceding four National Drafts a club has taken less than two first-round selections, a club may not, without the permission of the AFL, trade away a first-round draft selection (provided that this limitation is based on the net of first-round selections coming in and out during the relevant Exchange Period).

FREE AGENTS EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS

A total of four players elected to exercise their free agent rights and change clubs for the 2016 season:

Matthew Laeuberger (Brisbane Lions to Essendon)

Scott Selwood (West Coast to Geelong)

Matthew Suckling (Kawartha to Western Bulldogs)

Dawson Simpson (Geelong to GWS Giants)

A further four delisted players took advantage of the Free Agency Rules allowing them to move to the club of their choice:

Jarrad Grant (Western Bulldogs to Gold Coast)

Daniel Gorringe (Gold Coast to Carlton)

Andrew Moore (Port Adelaide to Richmond)

Matthew Wright (Adelaide to Carlton)

EXCHANGE PERIOD

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AFL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

1.10 Legal and Integrity

A total of 40 players and 103 draft selections (of which 14 were future selections and 32 were on-traded) were traded during the AFL Exchange Period.

The following players were traded:

Dean Gore (Geelong), Curtis Hampton (GWS Giants), Troy Menzel (Carlton), Paul Seedsman (Collingwood) to Adelaide.

Ryan Bastinac (North Melbourne), Tom Bell (Carlton), Jarrod Jansen (Geelong), Josh Walker (Geelong) to the Brisbane Lions.

Sam Kerridge (Adelaide), Jed Lamb, Andrew Phillips, Lachie Plowman, Liam Sumner (all GWS Giants) to Carlton.

James Ash (Brisbane Lions), Jeremy Howe (Melbourne), Adam Treloar (GWS Giants) to Collingwood.

Craig Bird (Sydney) to Essendon.

Harley Bennell (Gold Coast) to Fremantle.

Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide), Lachie Henderson (Carlton), Zac Smith (Gold Coast) to Geelong.

Daniel Currie (North Melbourne), Matt Rosa (West Coast) to Gold Coast.

Steve Johnson (Geelong) to GWS Giants.

Jack Fitzpatrick (Melbourne) to Hawthorn.

Tomugs Buft (GWS Giants), Ben Kennedy (Collingwood), Jake Melksham (Essendon) to Melbourne.

Jed Anderson (Hawthorn) to North Melbourne.

Charlie Dixon (Gold Coast), Jimmy Toumpas (Melbourne) to Port Adelaide.

Chris Yarran (Carlton), Jacob Townsend (GWS Giants) to Richmond.

Jake Carlisle (Essendon), Nathan Freeman (Collingwood) to St Kilda.

Michael Tala (Western Bulldogs), Calum Sinclair (West Coast) to Sydney.

Jonathan Giles (Essendon), Lewis Jetta (Gold Coast), Jack Redden (Brisbane Lions) to West Coast.

Rookies

In addition to 68 first-time drafted players being selected at the Nab AFL Draft, 14 rooklies were selected to clubs to their Primary List.

As well as 64 players being selected at the Rookie Draft (of which 43 were first-time drafted), 42 rooklies were retained on the Rookie List by clubs.

2015 TPP SUMMARY

The Total Player Payment limit per club increased 4.6 per cent in 2015, from $173.4 million in 2014 to $188.9 million, while gross player payments increased by 14.7 per cent, from $162.5 million in 2014 to $200.2 million.

The average payment by clubs to a listed player in 2015 was $302,104, an increase of 6.7 per cent over 2014.

One club was sanctioned during 2015 for breaching the AFL Player List rules: Collingwood was sanctioned $5000 for breaching the List Lodgement Rules by failing to lodge forms relating to list changes. Collingwood fully co-operated in the matter and this and other mitigating factors, including that the breach was an administrative error, not intentional and the club’s good record were taken into account regarding the sanction.

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2015-2015 AFL TOTAL PLAYER PAYMENTS

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AFL Media continues to provide relevant and timely information all year round and is exploring a range of options to improve its service to supporters.

AFL Media used the strong operational and performance outcomes garnered in previous seasons to attain solid growth in 2015 across all our key deliverables and aspirations.

With the AFL season stretching from the NAB Challenge in February through until the NAB AFL Draft at the end of November, our aspiration has been, and continues to be, to serve our supporters with relevant and timely information that a supporter requires all season long. The integration of news, video, live streaming, transactional, ticketing, fixtures, participation, AFL Fantasy and AFL Tipping, coupled with and supporting our 18 clubs, has afforded the entire AFL and Club Digital Network with a platform to ensure we continue to put the supporter at the centre of all we do.

As a result, the AFL and Club Digital Network, comprising the 18 club mobile and desktop sites, the 18 club apps, AFL.com.au and the AFL Live app saw traffic grow by 8.5 per cent from November 1, 2014, to October 31, 2015, to 104 million monthly unique visitors.

The ever-changing disruption that a multitude of different digital options for consumers provides ensures that AFL Media must continue to explore a range of options to capitalise on whatever device or technology platform a supporter uses to access the AFL and clubs.

To meet these changes, the AFL, in partnership with our digital rights partner Telstra, continues to explore and develop a range of new offerings. The use of social media is a great example of extending the reach afforded by personalised digital offerings. In 2015, the AFL saw growth of 36 per cent in our social media accounts. Importantly, we have also launched our official Weibo social media service – a native Chinese language social media tool that allows us to offer up tailored content to the Chinese language community.

The opportunity that new delivery platforms offer is to continue to reach existing and new supporters to our game. The evolution of platforms such as Snapchat, which saw us reach more than 77 million worldwide users on Grand Final day, to the development of Telstra TV and the content that will be provisioned for it in 2016 enables us to ensure our product and offerings is available to as wide an audience as possible.
The continuing success of the AFL, with exhibition matches also provided a new opportunity to engage fans. AFL Media produced and streamed the first match in 2015 and simultaneously streamed the second match with our broadcast partner, the Seven Network. Both matches were a resounding success. Coupled with our coverage of the AFL Women’s Draft, the emergence of the strong and growing interest at participation and viewing engagement levels augurs well for continued development and opportunity of women’s football in the digital consumption landscape. AFL Media also produced and live-streamed six NAB Challenge matches which Fox Footy was unable to schedule for logistical purposes, and we produced and live-streamed the Grand Final Day NAB All Stars game.

The strength of the AFL Digital Network revolves around the contribution and engagement that, together with the AFL, our clubs also bring with their own personality, content, supporter and member engagement tools, social media activation and connectedness. The coming together of our respective teams provides a total AFL Network approach which maximises opportunities for corporate partners and provides a direct link to a fan’s club of support. The great diversity of club content and products is a tangible link to the market-leading results of 18 clubs and the AFL combining to make the AFL Digital Network.

**TELSTRA PARTNERSHIP**

Telstra has been the valued and long-term digital partner of the AFL. In 2015, that relationship was strengthened even further with the completion of the Digital Rights Partnership which will see the AFL cement greater digital opportunities through until the end of the 2022 AFL season. The continued rise of the mobile platform and extensions into connected televisions provides more opportunities for our clubs, the AFL and Telstra.

In 2015, the AFL Live App Pass for domestic live streaming on mobile devices saw total subscriptions increase by 49 per cent year on year. Total live minutes streamed to mobile devices was up 51 per cent on the 2014 total (of 186 million hours) to more than 273 million hours. Each match generated nearly 30 minutes of viewing time per user per match.

Telstra also continues to be an enormous supporter of our other programming initiatives – be it establishing Wi-Fi at Telstra Air at the Foxtel Grand Final Live Site Precinct, supporting our Live broadcasts of the NAB AFL Pre-Draft Show, supporting NAB in the broadcast of AFL matches via radio into indigenous communities throughout Australia, or supporting our pre-season two-hour daily live program First Bounce.

The support the AFL receives from Telstra Corporation CEO Andy Penn and Chief Marketing Officer and Group Executive Media Joe Pollard and their teams ensures we are able to deliver the best possible experience for our supporters with the knowledge we have the full technical and operational support which Telstra provides. Continued development of new product offerings, such as the AFL Live App for the Apple Watch (which won a 2015 Melbourne Design Award for Best Digital Experience – Mobile) is one example of our forays into new and expanded product offerings.

The extension of our partnership until at least 2022 and the role AFL Media plays with Telstra in that relationship will ensure our supporters will be provided with the best possible digital presence and communications in any Australian sport.

### 2015 KEY METRICS

1. Aggregate video streams (excluding Live Pass domestic streaming) of 123 million, up 21 per cent (2014; 84 million, up 23 per cent).
2. Aggregate monthly unique visitors of 104 million, up 8.5 per cent.
3. Nielsen online monthly unique audience measurement for the AFL Network (clubs and AFL) ranked the AFL as the No. 1 digital sporting network throughout the entire season. Additionally, when Smartphone and Tablet analytics through the Nielsen measurement system were provided for the first time in August, September, October and November, the AFL Network ranked as the No. 1 digital sporting network for those devices.
4. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Weibo) grew by 36 per cent to have more than 1.53 million followers.
5. The total number of downloads of the AFL Live App, AFL Fantasy App and club apps totals more than 4.7 million (3.8 million same time last year). Importantly, and aside from just downloads, the engagement metrics for our apps have also grown.
6. International Digital Rights revenue associated with our WatchAFL service grew by more than 20 per cent, with subscriptions up by a similar percentage.

In addition to the key performance metrics, AFL Media introduced a range of new non-match video content and other initiatives to ensure the voracious consumption of this type of consumer-led content continues at pace.

In 2015, AFL Media introduced:

1. **Friday Front Bar** – featuring Mick Molloy, Andy Maher and Sam Pang,
2. **Pick a Winner** – featuring Wayne Carey, Ben Dixon and Campbell Brown,
3. **Whistleblowers** – a weekly program explaining umpiring decisions,
4. **First Bounce** – a daily live two-hour program during the NAB Challenge period featuring Matt Thompson, Nat Edwards, Cameron Ling, Mark Bickley and Campbell Brown,
5. **NAB AFL Pre-Draft Show** – a two-hour pre-draft live show featuring Garry Lyon, Matt Thompson and Callum Twomey as part of our Road to the Draft series,
6. Multi-Language audio commentary on all nine games in the Multicultural Round.

These programs were in addition to our daily Footy Feed news program, weekly Access All Areas program, weekly Charged program, our vignettes as part of the AFL Football Operations’ Respect &
In the centenary year of the landing of our troops at Gallipoli, AFL Media tried to shine a light on. Our on-going editorial and production efforts to discuss and raise awareness of mental health is one we will continue to pursue. Sometimes it is a simple image that can say more than words ever will, and we were extremely pleased to see Michael Willson’s black and white photograph of Geelong player Mitch Clark recognised by the Australian Football Media Association as its Photograph of the Year.

AFL Media has, with the strong commitment to quality content, innovative product and digital extensions and placing the supporter at the centre of what we do, positioned ourselves as a leading destination for our corporate partners and advertisers. Our design team has a strong reputation in the AFL community for providing creative and results-oriented work and, increasingly, our video production team is also adding to the editorial video content it delivers with client-activated native video production. This is supported by our commercial team which has consistently found outcomes and solutions across AFL Media assets for our partners and advertisers.

The new broadcast rights cycle and our ongoing digital partnership with Telstra provides AFL Media with an opportune moment to continue to invest in our digital engagement with supporters at all levels of football. We will continue to solidify the gains we have made in 2015 to ensure we are primed for the new rights cycle with innovative fan and club-led digital content and products which connect with supporters through the shifting sands of the technology landscape.

In a year that was marked by the devastating events surrounding the death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh, there were also other significant social issues that AFL Media tried to shine a light on. Our on-going editorial and production efforts to discuss and raise awareness of mental health is one we will continue to pursue. Sometimes it is a simple image that can say more than words ever will, and we were extremely pleased to see Michael Willson’s black and white photograph of Geelong player Mitch Clark recognised by the Australian Football Media Association as its Photograph of the Year.

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AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

The Hawks make it three flags in a row as the AFL bids farewell to some of the game’s greats, including Goodes, Judd and Fletcher.

In this era of drafts and salary cap, the three-peat was thought to be unattainable. But the powerful Hawthorn unit under the tutelage of coach Alastair Clarkson continues to astound. In 2015, the Hawks made it three in a row with their demolition of West Coast. Cyril Rioli won the Norm Smith Medal, following in the footsteps of his famous uncles, the late Maurice Rioli and Michael Long, as past winners of the medal. In winning its 13th flag, Hawthorn sits behind only Carlton, Essendon and Collingwood for AFL/VFL premierships.

Despite not making it to the Grand Final, it was a big year for Fremantle. It produced its first Brownlow medallist, midfielder Nat Fyfe, and took out the McClelland Trophy for the first time.

The Western Bulldogs improved dramatically and the All-Australian selectors recognised the performances of Robert Murphy, Easton Wood and Jake Stringer, with Murphy awarded the accolade of captaining the team. Footy mourned the tragic death of Adelaide coach Phil Walsh mid-season, causing the abandonment of the Crows’ round 14 fixture against Geelong. After breaking the long-standing record of Collingwood legend Jock McHale for most games coached, Mick Malthouse lasted only three more matches before losing his job at Carlton and a similar fate befell Essendon’s James Hird later in the season.

The game farewelled several big names, notably dual Brownlow medallists Adam Goodes and Chris Judd and Bombers games record-holder Dustin Fletcher.
Cyril Rioli sparked Hawthorn in the first quarter, booting two of its first three goals and setting up an easy one for Bradley Hill.

Despite conceding the opening goal of the game to Luke Shuey, the Hawks were rarely challenged, with the Eagles letting themselves down by a lack of composure and poor finishing in front of goal.

Cyril Rioli was unlucky not to score the medal in another sublime display, and, in his first Grand Final, James Frawley did an excellent job with the Blues.

As usual it was handled with a minimum of fuss and proved the difference in the final.

After finishing third with a 16-6 record, the Hawks had to reach the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final by defeating Fremantle.

Following the Grand Final, Rioli dedicated it to his cousin ‘Brocky’ Brock, who was killed halfway through the season.

The triumph on Grand Final day capped a superb season for Rioli, who was named All-Australian for the second time.

He was presented with his award by dual Norm Smith medallist and former Adelaide star Andrew McLeod.

Clearly the crowd favourite for the medal, Rioli dedicated it to his cousin ‘Brocky’ Brock, who was killed halfway through the season.

Rioli kick-started the Hawks’ third consecutive Grand Final win with a brilliant first quarter, booting his team’s first goal with a left-foot snap after four minutes and following it up with his second eight minutes later. He then set up Bradley Hill for an easy goal late in the term.

Rioli finished with 18 disposals, 12 marks (five inside 50), four goal assists, three inside 50s, two tackles and two goals.


Clarkson then lost the services of Bolton, who won the senior job with the Blues.

After finishing third with a 16-6 record, the Hawks had to make the AFL’s toughest road trip to Domain Stadium twice during the finals, losing the first final to West Coast before becoming the first Victorian team to win an interstate preliminary final by defeating Fremantle.

In the lead-up to the Grand Final, Clarkson was forced to make another big call, Jack Gunston returned from injury and was included at the expense of speedy youngster Billy Hartung.

As usual it was handled with a minimum of fuss and proved the right decision as Gunston booted four goals.

The final siren sounded on Grand Final day, Clarkson moved into an elite group. Now the challenge is to join McHale as one of the elite group.
COLEMAN MEDAL

Josh Kennedy became only the second West Coast Eagle to win the Coleman Medal.

Despite injuring his right elbow in round five against the Giants, Kennedy played through the pain barrier and did not miss a game. He kicked goals in every game during the home and away season – the only match in which he was goalless was the Grand Final.

Kennedy started the season strongly with a 10-goal haul against Carlton in round two, his best performance for the year. He booted seven against the Western Bulldogs in round 21 and had six-goal hauls against the Giants in round five and Geelong in round nine.

He kicked five goals in the first two finals to finish the season with 80.55.

The key forward was selected in the All-Australian team for the first time and was named vice-captain.

Scott Cummings is the Eagles’ only previous Coleman medallist, booting 88 goals in 1999.

BROWNLOW MEDAL

Nat Fyfe was a popular winner of the Brownlow Medal, becoming the first Docker to win the award.

The Fremantle midfielder reversed the result from the previous season when he was runner-up to West Coast’s Matt Priddis.

Polling 31 votes to win in 2015 was a remarkable effort by the Docker, given he missed four of the last six home and away games because of groin and leg injuries.

Fyfe polled 26 of a possible 30 votes between rounds four and 14. In Fremantle’s first 13 games of the season, he averaged 31.5 disposals and kicked 15 goals.

Fyfe set one record and equalled another on the way to his historic win. He polled 17 votes in the first eight rounds to surpass Chris Judd’s performance in 2010 when he collected 16 votes over the same period.

With nine best-on-grounds, Fyfe equalled the record of 1994 winner Greg Williams for the most three-vote matches in a season.

Fyfe hobbled to the stage to receive his medal from dual winner Gary Ablett, having fractured his left fibula early in the first preliminary final against Hawthorn.

In his acceptance speech, Fyfe captivated the audience at the Palladium at Melbourne’s Crown and on TV with his humility and humour. The midfielder returned to a hero’s welcome at his hometown of Lake Grace, Western Australia.

Nat Fyfe (Frem) 31
Patrick Dangerfield (Adel) 22
Matt Priddis (WCE) 28
Dustin Martin (Rich) 21
Sam Mitchell (Haw) 26
David Mundy (Frem) 19
Josh Kennedy (Syd) 25
Callan Ward (GWS) 19
Dan Hannebery (Syd) 24
Todd Goldstein (NM) 18

MARK & GOAL OF THE YEAR

The 2015 AFL Mark and Goal of the Year occurred on the same weekend in May.

West Coast Eagles ruckman Nic Naitanui won the Weet-Bix Mark of the Year award and Adelaide Crows small forward Eddie Betts took out the Coates Hire Goal of the Year award.

The players were presented with their prizes – $10,000 thanks to Weet-Bix and Coates Hire – during the Brownlow Medal ceremony.

Betts, who previously won the Goal of the Year award in 2006, earned four weekly nominations in 2015, but it was his effort against Fremantle in round nine in wet conditions under lights at Adelaide Oval that stood out.

Pressed hard against the boundary on the 50m arc, the veteran launched a left-foot torpedo that bounced twice before going through.

The day after Betts’ memorable goal, Naitanui took his spectacular mark against Geelong at Domain Stadium.

The Eagles star launched himself on to the shoulders of 200cm ruck partner Callum Sinclair to take the mark in the last quarter. Naitanui then goaled from an acute angle.

The winners were chosen by public voting after the All-Australian selection committee picked the three finalists for marks and goals from the 23 weekly selections.
Wood and Stringer were among 11 players picked in the All-Australian team for the first time, including 2014 Brownlow medalist Matt Priddis and Eagles teammate Andrew Gaff and defenders Michael Hurley (Essendon), Heath Shaw (Greater Western Sydney) and Josh Gibson (Hawthorn).

Another newcomer was West Coast’s Coleman medalist Josh Kennedy, who was selected at full-forward and named as vice-captain.

At the other end of the ground, Richmond full-back Alex Rance was one of only three players to win back-to-back honours. He was joined by teammates Jack Riewoldt and Brett Deledio.

Port Adelaide’s Robbie Gray was named for the second consecutive season, with teammate Chad Wingard on a half-forward flank.

Selectors decided to go for only one ruckman, with Kangaroos Todd Goldstein gaining the nod ahead of Eagle Nic Naitanui. Adelaide’s Patrick Dangerfield was named All-Australian for the third time and teammate Eddie Betts for the first time, while Crowes skipper Taylor Walker was unlucky to miss out after being included in the original squad of 40.

Sydney Swan Josh Kennedy was another omission from the initial squad, while teammate Dan Hannebery was selected on a wing.

Hawthorn, Richmond, West Coast and the Bulldogs had the most representatives with three each. Despite finishing on top of the ladder, Fremantle had only two players in the team – Brownlow medalist Nat Fyfe and David Mundy.

South Australian clubs Port Adelaide and Adelaide also had two representatives. Essendon, GWS, North Melbourne and Sydney had one apiece.

The All-Australian selection panel was Gillon McLachlan (chairman), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Mark Evans, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson and Warren Tredrea.

Wood and Stringer were among 11 players picked in the All-Australian team for the first time.
McCLELLAND TROPHY

Fremantle created history in 2015, winning the McClelland Trophy for the first time.

Before last year’s triumph, the closest the Dockers had come to winning the trophy in 20 previous seasons was in 2006 and 2013, finishing third in both years.

Fremantle lost only five games in 2015. Two of those were on its home ground at Domain Stadium – to Richmond by 27 points in round 10 and cross-town rivals West Coast Eagles by 24 points in round 20.

The Dockers made a flying start, winning their first nine matches. Five of these were at Domain Stadium, with the biggest by 73 points over North Melbourne in round eight. Other big wins in this streak were against Geelong at Simonds Stadium in round two (44 points) and Melbourne at the MCG in round five (66 points).

After its opening loss of the season to the Tigers, Fremantle won its next three matches before capitulating to eventual premiers Hawthorn in round 10 and crosstown rivals West Coast Eagles by 24 points in its home ground at Domain Stadium – to Richmond by 27 points.

Other big wins in this streak were against Geelong at Simonds Stadium in round two (73 points), Port Adelaide by 69 points against Port Adelaide in round eight. Other big wins in this streak were against Geelong at Simonds Stadium in round two (73 points) and Melbourne at the MCG in round five (66 points).

The Dockers won their next four games before losing three of their final four matches, including by 69 points against Port Adelaide in the last away and round 31.

This gave them a 17-5 record with a percentage of 118.73, finishing two points ahead of the Eagles.

Hawthorn was third with a 16-6 record and a huge percentage of 158.4. The Sydney Swans finished with the same win-loss ratio as the Hawks, but had a substantially inferior percentage of 121.72.

Richmond finished a game behind Hawthorn and the Swans in third with a 16-8 record and a percentage of 147.65.

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As a footballer, Akermanis possessed rare ability. He was quick and superbly skilled on both sides of his body. The extroverted Akermanis wasn’t afraid to show his emotions on the field and off it. He was outspoken and controversial. He had a tough upbringing, raised by a single mother in the Victorian town of Mildura.

Born: February 24, 1977
Playing career: 1995-2010 (Brisbane)
Games: 325 (B: 217, W: 108)
Goals: 421 (B: 307, W: 114)

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Born: March 1, 1976
Playing career: 1994-2009 (South Fremantle, Sydney Swans)
Games: 335 games (SF: 49, Frem: 163, NM: 123)
Goals: 308 (SF: 58, Frem: 130, NM: 120)

Bell defied the odds to make it to the AFL.

Born: February 20, 1977
Playing career: 1995-2009 (Sydney Swans)
Games: 169 games
Goals: 61

Nicknamed ‘Magic’, O’Loughlin was a gifted forward who became an important cog in the Swans’ success during the late 1980s and 2000s, leading up to the club’s drought-breaking premiership in 2005. He played his junior football with South Australian club Central District and supported Carlton growing up as a youngster. O’Loughlin could have gone to the Blues in the 1994 National Draft, but Sydney swooped with pick 60. In the early 2000s, he was forced to reinvent himself from a half-forward/midfielder to a permanent forward because of the problem of forwards. In both cases, he went on to play 303 games and lead the Swans to their second best and fairest. (he won previously in 1995). He was St Kilda captain between 1996-97 and represented Victoria 11 times. O’Loughlin is proud of his indigenous background and was named at full-forward in the Indigenous Team of the Century in 2005.

Born: June 15, 1933
Playing career: 1952-62 (St Kilda)
Games: 169 games
Goals: 40

Robertson was a star full-forward who achieved notoriety after his football career as a manager of several of Australia’s leading sports stars, playing a key role in the formation of World Series Cricket. Encouraged by his father Austin sr, a star utility for South Melbourne in the 1920s and ‘30s, to become a full-forward, he was quick off the mark and an excellent set shot for goal. In 1966, he joined South Melbourne on a three-year deal and was runner-up in the League goal kicking with 60. However, after just one season, he returned to WA where he topped the goal kicking for five consecutive years, including a remarkable 157 goals in the home and away season of 1968. In 253 games with Subiaco, he kicked a WAFL record of 121 goals. Robertson is a member of the St Kilda’s Team of the Century and Hall of Fame. Once his football career was over, he was a regular panellist on the popular TV program World of Sport on Channel Seven. A wonderful public speaker, he was a star of the sportswomen’s night circuit. He was a leading physical education teacher and journalist and spent 18 months living in Antarctica.

Born: March 9, 1966
Games: 281 (St: K: 183, Syd: 98)
Goals: 1800 (St: K: 986; Syd: 452)

Lockett was a powerhouse full-forward who intimidated rival defenders with his physical presence. He holds the League’s goal kicking record with 3635 breaking Collingwood legend Gordon Coventry’s long-standing mark of 1299 in 1999. Hailing from North Ballarat in Victoria, Lockett was a fierce competitor, remarkably agile for his size and a deadly shot for goal. A member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame since being inducted in 2006, he is a member of the St Kilda and Sydney Swans teams of the century. He became a member of St Kilda’s Hall of Fame in 2003 and was elevated to Legend status in 2010. Lockett received the Brownlow Medal with Hawthorn’s John Platten in 1987, also winning the AFL Players Association Most Valuable Player award that season. A six-time All-Australian, he won the Coleman Medal on four occasions. He was St Kilda’s leading goal kicker between 1984-87 and 1989-94 and led the Swans’ goal kicking between 1995-99. He represented Victoria on five occasions and booted 19 goals, winning the E.J. Whitten Medal in 1995.

Born: April 29, 1943
Games: 248 (26: 24: 18)
Goals: 1271 (Sub: 1211, SM: 60)

Roberts was a star full-forward who achieved notoriety after his football career as a manager of several of Australia’s leading sports stars, playing a key role in the formation of World Series Cricket. Encouraged by his father Austin sr, a star utility for South Melbourne in the 1920s and ‘30s, to become a full-forward, he was quick off the mark and an excellent set shot for goal. In 1966, he joined South Melbourne on a three-year deal and was runner-up in the League goal kicking with 60. However, after just one season, he returned to WA where he topped the goal kicking for five consecutive years, including a remarkable 157 goals in the home and away season of 1968. In 253 games with Subiaco, he kicked a WAFL record of 121 goals. Robertson is a member of the St Kilda’s Team of the Century and Hall of Fame. Once his football career was over, he was a regular panellist on the popular TV program World of Sport on Channel Seven. A wonderful public speaker, he was a star of the sportswomen’s night circuit. He was a leading physical education teacher and journalist and spent 18 months living in Antarctica.

Born: February 16, 1942
Games: 248 (26: 24: 18)
Goals: 68 (NA: 68; Nor: 0)

Hammond has given more than 50 years of distinctive service to football in South Australia, where he is an iconic figure at three clubs – North Adelaide, Norwood and Adelaide. Hammond played in three North Adelaide premierships and eight Norwood premierships, having captained Norwood to two flags and captained both clubs. He played seven games for South Australia and coached SA to a big victory over Victoria in State of Origin football in 1983. The following season he took over as the Sydney Swans’ caretaker coach after the resignation of Ricci Quade and coached them for eight games. He was the Crow’s first player after they were admitted to the AFL at the end of 1990 and was at the helm for their successive premierships in 1997-98. Hammond is a life member of the SANFL and AFL, and a member of the SA Football Hall of Fame and Adelaide Hall of Fame. He was a member of the SANFL and AFL and a member of the SA Football Hall of Fame and Adelaide Hall of Fame. He was a member of the AFL Commission in 2001 and was on the League’s controlling body until 2011.
**Watson unavailable, Goddard will lead**

free agent to Essendon and had an impact at the end of 2012, he transferred as a restricted All-Australian in 2009 and 2010. At the Geelong, he was traded to Essendon at the end of 2009, he has become a key component of the Cats’ premiership team in 2007, 2009 and 2011, won All-Australian honours in 2011-12. He represented Australia in the International Rules Series in four games, was a Rising Star nominee in 2001 and member of the pre-season premiership team in 2010.

**Jack Titus Award**

Keith Burns

Burns served the Collingwood, Sandringham and Northern Knights football clubs with distinction. He has been passionate about preparing younger players for senior football, coaching the Collingwood under-19s between 1978-81 before going on to coach the North Melbourne in the TAC Cup between 1992-2002. He played 28 games for the Magpies between 1957-61 and was awarded life membership in 1990. Burns won the VFL’s Lisbon Trophy with Sandringham in 1962, and was named in the club’s Team of the Century. Since retiring as a coach he has been an administrator with AFL Victoria.

**James Kelly**

Kelly was one of Geelong’s most reliable players over 14 seasons, being a key member of the Cats’ premiership successes in 2007, 2009 and 2011. He was an All-Australian in 2011 and third in the best and fairest in 2010. Kelly represented Australia in two International Rules Series matches in 2011, winning the Jim Stynes Medal. He was given a farewell game in front of the Geelong faithful in the final round of 2015, but was ruled out of retirement by Essendon in 2016 and signed as a top-up player.

**Bill Kelly**

Kelly was an AFL Commissioner for 17 years until he retired in March 2015 – only Graeme Samuel (18 years) served longer on the Commission. Kelly’s commitment to community football, indigenous players and recognition of women’s roles are among his greatest achievements. He was instrumental in the establishment of AFL SportsReady, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015, and has provided education and job training opportunities. He has continued his involvement in football by overseeing national reviews into the game’s development at all levels outside the AFL competition.

**Justin Leppitsch**

Leppitsch was a key member of the Brisbane Lions’ triple premiership teams of 2001-03. Originally recruited as a key forward, he was the Lions’ leading goalkicker in 1997 and 1998 before switching to defence. He tied with Jason Akermanis in the best and fairest in 1999 and won All-Australian honours in 1999, 2002 and 2003. After retiring in 2006 because of a chronic back injury, he moved quickly into coaching. He served as an assistant at Brisbane and Richmond and has been the Lions’ senior coach since 2014.

**Stephen Milne**

In 13 seasons with St Kilda, Milne was a dangerous goal sneak who was the perfect foil for his captain Nick Riewoldt and other key forwards. He played with Essendon and Richmond reserves and was on St Kilda’s rookie list before being elevated to the seniors in 2001. Milne held the record for the most goals kicked at Etihad Stadium (202) until that was broken by Riewoldt in 2014. He was St Kilda’s leading goalkicker on four occasions (2002, 2010-12) and won All-Australian honours in 2011-12. He represented Australia in four International Rules Series games.

**Sam Mitchell**

The solid but bulk Hawk has been one of the AFL’s elite midfielders for many years, renowned for his dual-sided skills and sharp football brain. He captained Hawthorn to the 2008 premiership and has played a major role in the club’s flags in 2013-15. He is a three-time All-Australian (2011, 2013, 2015) and has won the club’s best and fairest four times. He won the NAB AFL Rising Star award in 2003 and the VFL’s Lisbon Trophy in 2002. He represented Australia in the International Rules Series in 2014-15.

**Hugh Seward**

Dr Seward has been involved in football research and analysis for more than 25 years, being responsible for introducing modern sports medicine practices and instituting the many initiatives to improve the health and welfare of players. He is a team doctor for the Flying Boomerangs and Indigenous All-Stars (2006-10), and the International Rules Series team in 1999 and 2000.

**Matt Stievc**

Stievc capped off a memorable 2015 season when he was one of the three field umpires in the Grand Final and was named All-Australian umpire of the year after achieving 2 in 2014. The 2015 premiership decider was his third Grand Final, having officiated in 2012 and 2014. Recruited from the West Gippsland Football Association, the teacher was promoted to the AFL list in 2004. He umpired the 2003 under-18 championships and the 2002 VFL Grand Final. He was the All-Australian umpire for the under-17 International Rules Series in 2004. He has officiated in two International Rules Series games.

**Scott Thompson**

Thompson wins the contested ball consistently and has developed into one of the AFL’s best midfielders, averaging close to 27 possessions, a game last season. The prolific ball-winner started his AFL career at Melbourne, playing four seasons with the Demons before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year. In eight seasons with the Demons between 1998-2005, he was a premiership team in 2004. He returned to his home state of Victoria, before shifting to Victoria the following year. In eight seasons with the Blues, he was recruiting a similar role the following year.
KEN WHIFFEN

Whiffen, a long-time trainer, mentor, confidante and friend to generations of St Kilda players, died on January 10, 2015, aged 87. He was a well-respected confidante and friend to generations of Melbourne players, and a former Editor of the AFL’s Jack Titus Recognition of Service award (2007).

HARRY GORDON

Gordon, CMG, AM, was one of Australia’s most distinguished newspaper executives, sports writers and sports historians. He died on the Gold Coast on January 21, 2015, aged 79. Gordon was a corrrespondent during the Vietnam War in the 1950s, had a passion for sport, particularly the Olympics and Australian Football. His No.1 football lover was Hawthorn and he wrote the club’s history, The Hard Way. Several of his 15 books were on the Olympics and he was recognised by the international body with many awards. He was an inaugural member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee from 1996 to his retirement in 2008.

LANCE MANN

Mann was an Essendon speedster who won Australia’s premier professional sprint event, the Stawell Gift, while he was away in the losing Grand Final team against Geelong. His VFL career was interrupted when he injured his knee and went home to Albany from 1955-57, but was involved back with the Bombers and played in the 1958-59 seasons before bowing out with 80 games. Later he coached Essendon’s reserves side. During his playing days, Mann won the Downs and Murray League’s best and fairest award in 1956.

ALAN RICHARDSON

Richardson, who died aged 74 on March 17, 2015, was an integral part of Richmond’s drought-breaking premiership team in 1967. The barrel-chested ruck-rouser is best remembered on the field for his sweeping handball out of packs that repeatedly opened up scoring avenues for his attacking teammates. Richardson, father of Richmond’s 282-game player Matthew, played 103 games for the Tigers from 1959-69 and seven with South Melbourne from 1969-70. He was recruited from the Victorian western district town of Casterton and after his VFL career moved to Tasmania where he was captain-coach (and later president) of Devonport. Richardson, who returned to Victoria, was always known as ‘Bull’ because of his robust, bull-like physique.

GEOFF TUNBRIDGE

Tunbridge, one of Melbourne’s greatest half-forward flankers, died at Ballarat in country Victoria on March 23, 2015, aged 82. Tunbridge was 25 when he made his debut with Melbourne in 1957 and quickly made his presence felt, playing in a premiership team under coach Norm Smith that year, and again in 1959 and 1960. He was a wizard in the position often referred to as ‘starvation corner’ and while he wasn’t as physically powerful as most of his opponents, he had the uncanny skills to disrupt backlines. Tunbridge also played in the losing 1958 Grand Final team against Collingwood and when he bowed out in 1963 had played 117 games from a possible 119. Tunbridge was a long-time teacher at Ballarat Grammar where he coached the football team. The main oval at the school was named in his honour in 1996.

PHIL THOMPSON

Thompson, a former football player, died on March 23, 2015, aged 86. He was a member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame since 1986. Thompson was interviewed the stars at the Sport and Media Hall of Fame, now the AFL Media Hall of Fame, and in recent years ran his own sports video production company. His first love was football and some of his best work was interviewing the stars at the Sport Australia Hall of Fame’s annual induction lunch on June 24, 2015, aged 82. Gilchrist, educated at Coburg High School, captained the Carlton under-19s to the premiership in 1957, played in the reserves premiership in 1953 and went on to play 3½ senior games from 1952-61.

BRIAN HANSEN

Hansen, who died on May 14, 2015, aged 81, was a media authority on Australian Football for more than 60 years. He started his journalistic career with the defunct Melbourne morning daily, The Argus and later worked on the well-known Truth newspaper in Melbourne. He was the author and publisher of more than 30 books and best remembered for his strong association at a good friend of premiership coach, the late Allan Jeans, and helped with the running duties when St Kilda won its only flag in 1966. Season 2014 marked his 50th year at the club and during that time was made a life member (1987). He also won the AFL’s Jack Titus Recognition of Service award (2007).

TONY HAENEN

Haenen, a ruckman/defender for South Melbourne, died on July 9, 2015, aged 69. Haenen was a product of Midura Imperials in Victoria’s north-west and had to choose between South Melbourne and Footscray before settling for the Swans. He played 93 games from 1966-71 and was a member of South’s drought-breaking finals team in 1970 – the club’s first finals appearance since 1945 which resulted in a loss to St Kilda. After South, Haenen became North Launceston’s captain-coach and then spent six years at VFA club Port Melbourne, playing in the 1976 premiership side.

COLIN YOUNEN

Youren, who died on July 20, 2015, aged 70, was a member of the Hawthorn team which finally brought a premiership to the club in 1961. Youren, an outstanding athlete from Scotch College in Melbourne, was on the wing beside cricketer Brendan Brind. He was in the 43-point win over Footscray. Two years later, Youren was also on the wing in the Grand Final when the Hawks lost to Geelong. Youren, a member of the Victorian Football Association. Youren was known as an MC at sports functions before returning to the Tigers. He then went into television with Channel Seven and Channel Nine. At Seven, he was involved in the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games. Phillips was well known as an MC at sports functions and in recent years ran his own sports video production company. His first love was football and some of his best work was interviewing the stars at the Sport Australia Hall of Fame’s annual induction lunch on June 24, 2015, aged 82. Gilchrist, educated at Coburg High School, captained the Carlton under-19s to the premiership in 1957, played in the reserves premiership in 1953 and went on to play 3½ senior games from 1952-61.
The AFL’s net surplus of $2.5 million was on budget and all revenue streams have increased on last year’s results.

The AFL recorded a net surplus of $2.5 million for the 2015 financial year. The result, while down on 2014, was on budget. Pleasingly, all revenue streams were up on last year. Increases in distributions to clubs and the AFL Players’ Association were the main factors to the overall result being down on 2014.

The consolidated result, which includes all of the AFL’s controlled state subsidiaries, produced a net surplus of $3.6 million. All state subsidiaries, except for AFL Northern Territory, recorded operating surpluses. AFLNT utilised its retained earnings to assist with the funding of the Michael Long Life Learning Centre.
The profitability of the 18 clubs continues to be a strong focus for the AFL with aggregated 18-club profitability increasing in 2015, albeit with eight clubs reporting operating profits and the remainder reporting operating losses. This compares unfavourably with 10 clubs reporting operating profits in 2014.

The financial impact of declining on-field performance and off-field issues were significant challenges for some clubs which, through reduced revenue generation and increased costs, reduced profitability accordingly. However, the AFL was pleased to see clubs such as Melbourne, North Melbourne, Port Adelaide and the Western Bulldogs continue to capitalise on their improved on-field performance and financial management to report operating profits in 2015.

The profitability of clubs is impacted at the structural level by commercial arrangements at stadia and the financial impact of the fixture, in addition to investment in non-core revenue generating businesses. Other drivers, such as the size of the active fan base of the club and on-field performance also affect revenue generation and can vary by season. Accordingly, these contributing factors necessitate the need for the AFL to intervene and introduce policy to manage these inequities.

Two equalisation measures were implemented at the start of 2015 to begin to address the financial inequality between clubs. The first equalisation measure was a revenue-based lever to transfer revenues from the top 10 clubs to the remainder of the competition. The second equalisation measure was a cost-based lever that prescribed a “soft cap” on non-player football department expenditure with a tax paid by clubs should they exceed this amount.

These competitive balance levers were announced to clubs in 2014 and apply for the 2015 and 2016 seasons only, with a more comprehensive and dynamic competitive balance policy to be developed over this period for introduction in 2017.

The AFL is dedicated to a competition with 18 financially strong clubs, who all make comparable investments in football department expenditure to ensure an exciting and equal on-field contest.

The profitability of clubs is impacted by declining on-field performance and off-field issues through reduced revenue generation and increased costs, reduced profitability accordingly.

The first equalisation measure was a revenue-based lever to transfer revenues from the top 10 clubs to the remainder of the competition. The second equalisation measure was a cost-based lever that prescribed a “soft cap” on non-player football department expenditure with a tax paid by clubs should they exceed this amount.

The centralised services and solutions provided by the AFL to the industry also include accounting, information technology and procurement. State football bodies and the club have access to these services and have benefited through the adoption of these services and technologies. These include payroll services, sponsorship and events systems and travel and accommodation arrangements. The annual Club Financial Review was completed, providing valuable benchmarking data and trend analysis for the AFL and the clubs. In addition to the collection of annual data, the AFL in recent years has focused on the collection of longer-term forecast information to assist with strategy and planning for the industry.

The AFL makes a number of distributions and payments to AFL clubs. These payments included the following in 2015:

- A base distribution to all clubs which totalled $42.0 million, an increase of $6.6 million.
- A bonus distribution of $1.2 million to all clubs from the broadcast rights proceeds.
- Other payments to clubs included equal and disequal financial assistance, prize money, distribution of the AFL’s signage rights at Etihad Stadium and promotional funding to help clubs develop the game around Australia.

With the media rights arrangements for 2017-22 having been finalised in August 2015, work is progressing on the AFL industry’s future funding model. A long-term investment-based funding model that looks beyond the six-year media rights payment arrangements will be worked through with industry participants throughout 2016. This model will be designed to put in place a sustainable industry funding framework based on a rightsized cost base for the industry while providing the capacity to also have available funding for long-term investment requirements.

### 2015 Payments to Clubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Bonus</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Crows</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,942,553</td>
<td>10,033,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Lions</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>7,549,869</td>
<td>16,049,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,406,284</td>
<td>11,506,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,904,132</td>
<td>10,999,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essendon</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>2,737,272</td>
<td>11,828,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>2,570,136</td>
<td>11,661,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong Cats</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,770,932</td>
<td>10,273,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>8,854,526</td>
<td>17,945,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Western Sydney Giants</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>11,190,462</td>
<td>12,361,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>3,263,695</td>
<td>13,459,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>4,900,631</td>
<td>14,09,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>5,492,480</td>
<td>14,883,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Adelaide</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>3,738,438</td>
<td>12,868,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>3,466,520</td>
<td>12,527,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>8,107,446</td>
<td>18,238,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Swans</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>3,444,805</td>
<td>15,721,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast Eagles</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>2,386,781</td>
<td>11,707,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Bulldogs</td>
<td>7,890,840</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>6,640,343</td>
<td>16,171,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>142,035,120</td>
<td>21,600,000</td>
<td>81,515,394</td>
<td>245,150,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Financial Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue ($ million)</th>
<th>Expenditure ($ million)</th>
<th>Operating Surplus ($ million)</th>
<th>Distributions ($ million)</th>
<th>Net Profit ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$137.8 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
<td>$0.0 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Revenue increased by $33.6 million with the major movements comprising:
  - Commercial Operations: Revenues up $20.8 million
  - Broadcasting and Media Revenues up $10.9 million
- Expenditure increased by $13.9 million with major movements predominately due to revenue-related expenditure increases.
- The AFL’s Operating Surplus increased by $17.9 million. This increase enabled greater distributions to all stakeholders.
- Distributions increased by $297 million in the following areas:
  - Payments to clubs up $26.8 million
  - AFLPA distribution up $7.9 million
  - Reduction in new markets investment of $3.2 million
  - Reduction in facility-development expenditure of $2.0 million
- The AFL’s Net Profit decreased by $10.0 million in 2015 as a result of the increased distributions detailed above.

### The AFL 2006-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Premiership Season Attendance (mill)</th>
<th>Home &amp; Away Season Attendance (mill)</th>
<th>Finals Series Attendance (mill)</th>
<th>Total Premiership Season Attendance (mill)</th>
<th>Total Attendance (mill)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6.736</td>
<td>6.204</td>
<td>0.532</td>
<td>7.294</td>
<td>7.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7.050</td>
<td>6.476</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7.083</td>
<td>6.496</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td>6.525</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.019</td>
<td>6.239</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.294</td>
<td>7.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7.083</td>
<td>6.368</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>7.066</td>
<td>6.385</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td>6.406</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td>6.406</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td>6.406</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>7.323</td>
<td>7.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Based on AFL Management Accounts.
Australian Football League and its controlled entities.

YEAR ENDING 31 OCTOBER 2015

DIRECTORS’ REPORT

The Directors present their report together with the concise financial report of the Australian Football League ("the Company") and Consolidated Entity, being the Company and its controlled entities, for the year ended 31 October 2015 and the auditor’s report thereon.

DIRECTORS

The Directors of the Company at any time during or since the end of the financial year are:

Mr M C Fitzpatrick – Chairman
Appointed 2008 – Resigned 25th March 2015
Chairman of Audit Committee
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Engineering (University of Western Australia)

Experience:
→ Player, Subiaco Football Club 1970-1974
→ Founder and Managing Director, Hastings Fund Management Ltd, 1994-2005

Mr G A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer
Appointed 5th June 2014
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Commerce (University of Adelaide)

Experience:
→ AFL General Manager Commercial Operations 2003-2006
→ AFL General Manager Broadcasting & Major Projects 2006-2008
→ AFL Chief Operating Officer 2008-2012
→ AFL Deputy CEO 2012-2014
→ Patron, Children’s Cancer Foundation

Mr W J Kelty – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 1999
Chairman of Audit Committee
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Architecture (University of Melbourne)

Experience:
→ Director, Newmark Capital Pty Ltd
→ Director, Panorama Capital Pty Ltd
→ Former CEO Retail Projects, Mirvac Group
→ Member, AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission 1998-2004

Ms S J Mostyn – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 2005
Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Arts (Australian University)
→ Bachelor of Law (Australian University)

Experience:
→ Chair, Citigroup Pty Limited
→ Chair, Carriage Works Australia
→ President, Australian Council for International Development
→ Non Executive Director, Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd
→ Non Executive Director, Transurban Holdings Ltd
→ Non Executive Director, Cover-More Insurance
→ Non Executive Director, Mirvac
→ Non Executive Director, GO Foundation
→ Non Executive Director, ClimateWorks Australia

The Honourable L Dessau, AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 2008 – Resigned 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Law (Hons.) (University of Melbourne)

Experience:
→ Former Justice of the Family Court of Australia
→ Children’s Court Magistrate, Coroner and Magistrate 1978-1995
→ Director, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
→ Former Director, AFL Sports Ready Pty Ltd
→ Chair, Melbourne Festival
→ Trustee, National Gallery of Victoria
→ Director, Unicom Foundation
→ Director, Bangeria Pty Ltd

Mr R Goyder, AO – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed November 2001
Member of Audit Committee
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Commerce (University of Western Australia)

Experience:
→ Director, Wesfarmers Limited
→ Director, Gresham Partners Holdings Limited
→ Director, Business Council of Australia
→ Director, UWA Business School Advisory Board
→ Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

Mr P Bassat – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed February 2014
Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Commerce (University of Melbourne)

Experience:
→ Director, Square Peg Capital Pty Ltd
→ Director, Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation
→ Member, Mount Scopus College Foundation
→ Director, Wesfarmers Ltd
→ Director, Wega Pte Ltd
→ Director, The Prince’s Charities Australia
→ Director, AFL Sports Ready Pty Ltd
→ Director, Property Guru Pte Ltd

Mr K Williams, AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed February 2014
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Music (The University of Sydney)

Experience:
→ Board Member, University of Western Sydney Foundation
→ Board Member, Myer Foundation
→ Board Member, NSW State Library Foundation
→ Board Member, Australian Music Foundation
→ Board Member, Australian Grape and Wine Authority
→ Director, Executive Channel International
→ Chair, Copyright Agency

Major General S Wilkie AM – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Human Resource Management (University of New England)

Experience:
→ Head of ADF Joint Enablers & Commander, Australian Defence College
→ Chief of Staff to the Chief of Army
→ National Commander ADF commitment in Afghanistan
→ Director General Training
→ Member of the Order of Australia
→ Awarded a Bronze Star (United States) for service in Iraq
→ Awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in Afghanistan
→ Patron, ADF Women’s Australian Rules Association
→ Patron, ADF Hockey Association
→ Chair, ADF Sports Council

Mr J Ball – Non-Executive Commissioner
Appointed 25th March 2015
Qualifications:
→ Bachelor of Arts (University of Melbourne)

Experience:
→ Senior Relationship Manager, Macquarie Equities (Macquarie Group)
→ Director, Sydney Swans Football Club 2007-2015
→ Player, Sydney Swans Football Club 2000-2005
→ Player, West Coast Eagles Football Club 1992-1999
The major objectives of the Company include the following:

1. To manage the AFL competition to ensure that it remains the most exciting in Australian sport.
2. To build a stronger relationship with the supporters at all levels of the game.
3. To help ensure that AFL clubs are financially secure and competitive.
4. To provide the best possible benefits for AFL players and to drive the next generation of elite athletes to choose our game.

**OBJECTIVES**

The principal activities of the Consolidated Entity during the course of the financial year have been: To promote the AFL brand throughout Australia and to a limited extent outside Australia. Key Performance indicators such as attendances at AFL games, television ratings, digital consumption and participant numbers are used to measure the Company’s performance against this strategy.

**STATE OF AFFAIRS**

In the opinion of the Directors there were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Consolidated Entity that occurred during the financial year under review other than as disclosed in this report or the consolidated financial statements.

**EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE**

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

**LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS**

The Directors do not anticipate any major changes in the basis of operations of the Consolidated Entity and the future results of those operations in subsequent financial years. However, a new Broadcasting Rights deal has been negotiated and agreed for the 2017-22 financial years. The new Broadcasting Rights deals have increased by a material amount and forms a major part of the investment-based industry funding model to be implemented from 2017 onwards.

**INSURANCE PREMIUMS**

Since the end of the previous financial year the Company has paid Premiums in respect of Directors’ and Officers’ liability and legal expenses, insurance contracts, which include cover for current officers, including executive officers of the Company. The insurance premiums in respect of the officers of the Company relate to:

- Costs and expenses that may be incurred by the relevant officers in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal and whatever their outcome; and
- Other liabilities that may arise from their position, with the exception of conduct involving a wilful breach of duty or improper use of information or position to gain a personal advantage.

**DIRECTORS’ BENEFITS**

Since the end of the previous financial year no Director of the Company has received or became entitled to receive any benefit (other than the fixed salary of a full-time employee of the Company or of a related body corporate) by reason of a contract made by the Company, its controlled entities, or a related body corporate with a Director or with a firm of which a Director is a member, or with an entity in which a Director has a substantial interest other than as disclosed in notes 20 and 21 of the annual financial report.

**LEAD AUDITOR’S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001**

The Lead Auditor’s Independence Declaration is set out on this page and forms part of the Directors’ report for the year ended 31 October 2015.

**PARENT ENTITY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

A concise set of Parent Entity Financial Statements has been included alongside the Concise Consolidated Financial Statements in accordance with the option available to the Company under the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Class Order 10/654 issued on 26 July 2010.

**ROUNDING OFF**

The Company is of a kind referred to in ASIC Class Order 98/100 dated 10 July 1998 and in accordance with that Class Order, amounts in the financial report and Directors’ report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Dated at Melbourne this 15th day of February 2016.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:

---

**DIRECTORS’ MEETINGS**

The number of Directors’ meetings (including meetings of committees of Directors) and number of meetings attended by each of the Directors of the Company during the financial year were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Meetings Held</th>
<th>Meetings Attended</th>
<th>No. of Meetings Held *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr M C Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr G McLachlan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr W J Kelty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr C D Langford</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms S J Mostyn</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon L Dessau, AM</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr P Bassat</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr K Williams, AM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr J Ball</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reflects the number of meetings held during the time the director held office during the year.

The role of the Audit Committee is to give the Board of Directors additional assurance regarding the quality and reliability of financial information prepared for use by the Board in determining policies or determining items for inclusion in the Financial Statements.

The role of the Remuneration Committee is to review the remuneration packages and policies applicable to senior executives of the Company.

As well as the above meetings, the Directors also attended numerous other meetings including meetings with the presidents of all AFL clubs.

**PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**

The principal activities of the Consolidated Entity during the course of the financial year have been to promote, control, manage and encourage Australian Rules Football. There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Consolidated Entity during the year.

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**RESULTS OF OPERATIONS**

The operating profit of the AFL and its controlled entities was $3.6 million, compared with an operating profit of $13.3 million in 2014.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

The number of Directors’ meetings (including meetings of committees of Directors) and number of meetings attended by each of the Directors of the Company during the financial year were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Meetings Held</th>
<th>Meetings Attended</th>
<th>No. of Meetings Held *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr M C Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr G McLachlan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr W J Kelty</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr C D Langford</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms S J Mostyn</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon L Dessau, AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr P Bassat</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr K Williams, AM</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr J Ball</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Reflects the number of meetings held during the time the director held office during the year.

The role of the Audit Committee is to give the Board of Directors additional assurance regarding the quality and reliability of financial information prepared for use by the Board in determining policies or determining items for inclusion in the Financial Statements.

The role of the Remuneration Committee is to review the remuneration packages and policies applicable to senior executives of the Company.

As well as the above meetings, the Directors also attended numerous other meetings including meetings with the presidents of all AFL clubs.

**PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**

The principal activities of the Consolidated Entity during the course of the financial year have been to promote, control, manage and encourage Australian Rules Football. There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Consolidated Entity during the year.

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**OBJECTIVES**

The major objectives of the Company include the following:

1. To manage the AFL competition to ensure that it remains the most exciting in Australian sport.
2. To build a stronger relationship with the supporters at all levels of the game.
3. To help ensure that AFL clubs are financially secure and competitive.
4. To provide the best possible benefits for AFL players and to drive the next generation of elite athletes to choose our game.
A decrease in subsidiaries’ consolidated expenditure totalling 
$2.0 million
A decrease in facility development expenditure 
$3.2 million
An increase in new markets expenditure 
$3.5 million
An increase in finance & administration and other 
sundry expenses
A decrease in shared services expenditure 
$0.6 million
An increase in AFL company football operations 
expenditure
An increase in distributions to the AFL Players Association 
totalling
$0.6 million
An increase in distributions to clubs totalling 
$26.8 million
An increase in various other sundry revenues 
totalling $0.1 million
An increase in football operations revenue 
totalling $2.8 million
An increase in commercial operations revenue 
totalling $17.9 million
Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Profit & Loss and other 
comprehensive income
The consolidated operating profit in 2015 was $3.6 million which 
compared with an operating profit of $13.3 million in 2014.
Consolidated revenue increased by $30.4 million to $558.7 million.
There were five main areas of revenue which contributed to this 
movement:
An increase in commercial revenue totalling $3.5 million
An increase in media revenue totalling $9.3 million
An increase in football operations revenue 
totalling $2.8 million
An increase in game development revenue 
totalling $13.3 million
An increase in various other sundry revenues 
totalling $10.1 million
Consolidated expenditure increased by $40.1 million to $555.7 million.
The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:
An increase in distributions to clubs totalling $26.8 million
An increase in AFL company commercial operations expenditure 
totalling $6.7 million
An increase in distributions to the AFL Players Association totalling 
$7.9 million
An increase in AFL company football operations expenditure 
totalling $3.3 million
An increase in AFL company game development expenditure 
totalling $2.4 million
An increase in shared services expenditure 
totalling $16.6 million
An increase in donations expenditure 
totalling $0.6 million
A decrease in finance & administration and other sundry expenses 
totalling $3.5 million
A decrease in new markets expenditure 
totalling $3.2 million
A decrease in facility development expenditure 
totalling $2.0 million
A decrease in subsidiaries’ consolidated expenditure 
totalling $1.3 million
Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Financial Position
The consolidated entity’s total assets increased by $20.1 million to 
$306.3 million in 2015.
The movement in total assets principally comprised:
An increase in cash and cash equivalents of $13.2 million
An increase in non-current deferred expenses totalling $4.5 million
An increase in non-current trade and other receivables 
totalling $2.1 million
A decrease in current trade and other receivables 
totalling $2.2 million
A decrease in property, plant and equipment 
totalling $1.5 million
The consolidated entity’s total liabilities increased by $16.6 million to 
$66.1 million.
The movement in total liabilities principally comprised:
An increase in current trade and other payables 
totalling $9.5 million
An increase in non-current trade and other payables 
totalling $5.1 million
An increase in deferred income 
totalling $3.4 million
An increase in provisions 
totalling $0.4 million
Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Cash Flows
There was a net increase in cash holdings of the consolidated 
entity during the year totalling $12.2 million.
The major movements in cash during the year included the 
following:
Funds provided by the operating activities for the year 
totalling $32.0 million
Purchases of property, plant and equipment 
totalling $6.3 million
Net interest received, totalling $0.6 million

NOTES TO THE CONCISE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 October 2015


The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports. The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 have been derived from the consolidated entity’s full financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the concise financial report is consistent with the consolidated entity’s full financial report. The concise financial report does not, and cannot be expected to, provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and investing activities of the consolidated entity as the full financial report, which is available upon request.

It has been prepared on the basis of historical costs and except where stated, does not take into account changing money values or fair values of non-current assets.

The accounting policies have been consistently applied by each entity in the consolidated entity and, except where there is a change in accounting policy, are consistent with those of the previous year.

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to achieve consistency in disclosure with current financial year amounts and other disclosures. The impact of these reclassifications is not material, and has not resulted in any change to profit or net assets.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by the consolidated entity may be found in the consolidated entity’s full financial report.

The concise financial report is presented in Australian dollars.

2. Segment Reporting

The Company’s activities are entirely the administration and promotion of Australian Rules Football and are confined to overseas from time to time, in support of television rights in overseas countries and conduct of exhibition matches overseas from time to time, in support of television rights in overseas countries.

3. Revenue

4. Contingent Liabilities

I. The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players’ Association Inc. for a period of five years commencing on 1 November 2011 whereby the Company has an obligation to assume liability for all amounts due to players of a club where the club has lost its licence to compete in the AFL competition and is suspended from or losess its right to representation in the League. The amounts payable in these circumstances will be offset by any amounts payable to the players in respect of future employment as a player.

II. The Company has entered into an agreement with Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (“ANZ Bank”) where the Company guarantees the obligations of Sports Facilities Management Limited (“Sports”) to the ANZ Bank with respect to Sports’ borrowings of $5.0 million in relation to the reconfiguration of Stadium Australia.

III. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Carlton Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

IV. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.4 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

V. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $3.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VI. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the St Kilda Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $6.75 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VII. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

VIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Brisbane Bears’ Fitzroy Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $8.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

IX. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 October 2017.

X. The Company has entered into an agreement with Beyond Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Port Adelaide Football Club Limited to Beyond Bank to a maximum of $5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 March 2017.

XI. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFC Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $1.41 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFC Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $1.59 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2017.

XIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Western Sydney Football Club Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $5.66 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XIV. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.35 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XV. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Queensland Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.10 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVI. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL (New South Wales & ACT) Commission Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.35 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Northern Territory Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.15 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

XVIII. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Australian Football League Tasmania Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of $0.03 million. This guarantee expires on 30 June 2016.

5. Events Subsequent to Balance Date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

Dated at Melbourne this 15th day of February 2016.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors:

Mr G A McLachlan
Director

Mr M C Fitzpatrick
Chairman
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Report on the concise financial report
We have audited the accompanying concise financial report of the Consolidated Entity comprising the Australian Football League (the Company) and the entities it controlled at the year’s end or from time to time during the financial year which comprises the statements of financial position as at 31 October 2015, the statements of profit and loss and other comprehensive income, statements of changes in equity and statements of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes 1 to 5 derived from the audited financial report of the Consolidated Entity for the year ended 31 October 2015 and the discussion and analysis. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards and accordingly, reading the concise financial report is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report.

Directors’ responsibility for the concise financial report
The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the concise financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and the Corporations Act 2001 and for such internal control as the directors determine are necessary to enable the preparation of the concise financial report.

Auditor’s responsibility
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standards ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Standards. We have conducted an independent audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of the Australian Football League for the year ended 31 October 2015. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial report in our report dated 15 February 2016. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the concise financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgement, including the risk of material misstatement of the concise financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation of the concise financial report in order to design procedures, that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control. Our procedures included testing that the information in the concise financial report is derived from, and is consistent with, the financial report for the year, and examination on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and analysis, and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the financial report for the year. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and whether the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence
In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

Auditor’s opinion
In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis, of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended 31 October 2015 complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

KPMG
M Bullette
Partner
Melbourne
15th February 2016

FLYING BOMBER
Brendon Goddard makes a spectacular attempt to mark in the traditional Anzac Day game against Collingwood. The match between the arch rivals attracted a bumper crowd of 88,395 at the MCG.
COMMITTEES AND ADVISORS

AFL Audit Committee
Chris Langford (Chair), Mike Fitzpatrick, Richard Goyder

AFL Broadcasting Committee
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Mike Fitzpatrick, Paul Bassat, Kim Williams

AFL Remuneration Committee
Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Sam Mostyn, Paul Bassat

AFL Nominations Committee
Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Richard Goyder, Peggy O’Neal, David Koch

AFL Executive Committee
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Travis Auld, Darren Birch, Peter Campbell, Andrew Dillon, Mark Evans, Ray Gunston, Simon Lethlean, Elizabeth Lukin, Tony Peek

AFL Football Operations Sub-Committee
General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (chairman), Wayne Campbell, Patrick Clifton, Simon Gor, Emily Groves, Patrick Keane, Jennie Loughnane, Ben Lowe, Tom McCoy, Tessie McManus, Michael Poulton, Scott Taylor, Vicki Lloyd (secretary)

AFL Tribunal
David Jones (Chair), Ross Howie (deputy chairman), Daniel Harford, Stewart Loeve, David Pittman, Wayne Schimmelbusch, Richard Lovernedge, Wayne Herwood, Michael Sexton, Shane Wakefield, Paul Williams, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Laws Of The Game Committee
General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (Chair), Brett Burton, Wayne Campbell, Michael Christian, Chris Fagan, Tom Harley, Hayden Kennedy, Leigh Matthews, Guy McKenna, Michael Poulton, Ian Prendergast, Jack Riewoldt, Jack Trengove, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

Appeals Board
Peter O’Callaghan QC (Chair), Brian Collins QC (deputy chairman), Brian Bourke, Michael Green, Stephen Jonca, John Schultz, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

Match Review Panel
Luke Ball, Nathan Burke, Michael Christian, Brad Sewell, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Grievance Tribunal
Professor Geoffrey Guicci AO (Chair), Murray Kellam AO (deputy chairman), David Maddocks, Michael Moncrieff, Kevin Power

AFL Legal Counsel
Jeff Gleeson QC, Nick Pane QC, Andrew Woods

Virgin Australia All-Australian & NAB AFL Rising Star Selectors
Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Mark Evans, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson, Kevin Sheehan (NAB AFL Rising Star only), Warren Tredrea, Tom McCoy (secretary)

Australian Football Hall Of Fame Selection Committee
Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Dennis Cometti, Jim Mars, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin, Michelangelo Rucci, Col Hutchson (statistics & history consultant), Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Research Board
Michael Poulton (Chair), Dr David Buttifant, Matt Finnis, Brett Johnson, Dr Peter Harcourt, Dr Michael Makdissi, Assoc Prof Colin McLeod, David Rath, Dr Anthony Schache, Lawrie Woodman, John Wortford, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Concussion Working Group
Dr Peter Harcourt (Chair), Simon Clarke, Dr Andrew Daff, Assoc Prof Gavin Davis, Mark Evans, Clay Mackinnon, Dr David Maddocks, Dr Michael Makdissi, Prof Paul McCrory, Ian Prendergast, Dr Hugh Seward, Dr Ank Shawdon, Dr Harry Unglik, Lawrie Woodman, Patrick Clifton (secretary)

AFL Medical Directors
Dr Peter Harcourt, Dr Harry Unglik

AFL Legal Advisors
Hall and Wilcox, K and L Gates

AFL SportsReady Ltd Board
The Hon Steve Bracks AC (Chair), James Montgomery (Chief Executive Officer), Paul Bassat, Jenny Samms, Graeme Billings, Paul Marsh, Marilyn Morgan, Andrew Blair AM, Andrew Dillon, David Huggins