



2015–2016 **STRATEGIC PLAN**

A plan for building capacity, enhancing structures, consolidating resources and promoting and developing the game of Australian Football in the South East Region.

SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMISSION
AFL SOUTH EAST



AFL SOUTH EAST

Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

To ensure Australian Football is the sport of choice within the region for males and females of all ages and of all backgrounds.

Mission

Through the provision of strategic direction and resources, AFL South East seeks to develop and support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable football and netball clubs and leagues which support growth, promote development and are community focused.

Values

- Accountable
- Respectful
- Responsible
- Progressive

Values Statement

Our values ensure AFL South East is engaging, focused and attentive to all stakeholders in the region. We encourage and support innovation, collaboration and diversity through a consultative approach.





AFL SOUTH EAST REGION

Geography and Demographics

The South East Region covers an expansive area inclusive of all or part of the following municipalities:

- City of Casey
- City of Greater Dandenong
- City of Frankston
- City of Kingston
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

The Region encompasses significant diversity including areas of significant population growth, areas of high unemployment and social disadvantage and areas of high socio-economics. It also encompasses rural settings, major metropolitan centres and regional townships of varying size.

Strengths

- A strong football culture within the region backed by over 125 years of history. There is significant interest in the sport within the region and generally clubs have a strong support base.
- Participation numbers are the highest of any region in the state. The region has nearly 30,000 participants and all junior leagues are experiencing growth at their youngest age brackets.
- The majority of clubs have very strong community links, particularly in townships where they are a strong social conduit within those communities.
- The sport is well covered by the media in the region and most articles are of a positive nature.

- Clubs in the region are well supported by a strong volunteer network, many of which are ex-players from within those clubs.
- In general, councils are very supportive of the sport and clubs within the region.

Concerns

- Many clubs in the region are vulnerable, with changing demographics, deteriorating finances and the absence of appropriate planning creating uncertainty.
- The attraction and retention of quality umpires remains a concern.
- Varying governance and administrative structures within junior and senior leagues in the region creates inconsistencies, inefficiencies and structural conflicts.
- Player pathways are not always clear and conflicting structures within the region have added an element of confusion.
- Lack of cohesion within league administrations to work together to confront the issues impacting on our game.
- There is concern around player payments within the region. In particular, the will of clubs to invest heavily in player payments at the expense of infrastructure and junior development, which are key to the sustainability of leagues and clubs.



- The ability to attract and retain quality administrators and volunteers. The majority of leagues and clubs are too heavily reliant on key people which is clearly a risk.

Direction

The following points provide direction on key priorities and requirements to address issues and the concerns of AFL South East within the region

- Direct resources provided to clubs in order to assist with strength and sustainability wherever possible.
- Develop and support strong pathways from Auskick right through to open age football that encourage and support maximum participation.
- Provide a greater emphasis on coach education by revamping the local coaches association, strengthening links to AFL clubs and providing more targeted seminars and development/education opportunities. Particular focus will be on establishing coaching coordinators and up-skilling junior coaches.
- Facilitate stronger relationships and integration between junior and senior clubs. Encourage a "one club" mentality to all facets of club operations.
- Provide operational efficiencies for leagues through RAC (regional administration centre) offerings – reducing costs and providing a greater level of service. This includes the opportunity of utilising economies of scale to improve buying power and the attraction of partners.

- Conduct a facility audit within clubs and instigate a Facility Development Plan for the region working with all levels of government (local, state and federal).

- Provide quality volunteer support including training opportunities, recognition programs and efficiency offerings designed to ease volunteer burden. Explore mentoring and "special interest" groups within the region to support volunteer roles (i.e. Trainers Association).
- Provide a regional approach to the recruitment, development and retention of umpires. Explore additional and innovative programs.
- The Commission is committed to bringing all football stakeholders in the region together including leagues, the Dandenong Stingrays, VFL clubs (Frankston and Casey), AFL Clubs with interests in the region (St Kilda, Melbourne and Richmond), local and state government, netball, partners, volunteers and supporters.
- Review and assess competition structures to ensure they are conducive to growth, service the needs of all stakeholders and allow for maximum equality.
- Continue to invest in resources including Football Development Managers and Game Development Officers who are focused on both game development and club development priorities.



KEY STRATEGIC PILLARS

The following form the 7 key strategic pillars for AFL South East. The objectives and key strategies identified within each will provide the focus and direction of the Commission through the planning period

PARTICIPATION

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

COMMUNITY

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

ENGAGEMENT

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

DEVELOPMENT

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

FACILITIES

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

PARTNERSHIPS

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

PEOPLE & CULTURE

- Attract, develop and retain quality people and develop a culture of excellence in line with AFL South East's key objectives and values.



Participation

Strategic Objective:

Develop and support pathways to build participation and promote retention at all levels of the game.

Key Strategies:

Auskick

- Review Auskick centre to population ratios to identify potential new centres
- Survey parents to ensure Auskick delivery is at a desired level
- Ensure all Auskick centres have a junior club alignment
- Ensure appropriate training and appointment of District Managers in order to further develop the program

Junior Football

- Assist leagues in the providing competitively balanced matches through grading and divisional structures
- Assist with the adoption of the Junior Match Guide in 2015
- Reinforce a focus on fun and enjoyment for participants

Junior to Senior Transition

- Make recommendations for the appropriate structure of football through the 16-20 year old age bracket within the region, through the form of an official review
- Work to strengthen junior and senior club relationships
- Constantly review initiatives and analysis to build retention through the transition age group

Senior Football

- Assess competitive balance within regional leagues.
- Discuss and review the outcomes within the region of the AFL Victoria review into player payments
- Assess alternative competition structures including social and veterans competitions

Female Football

- Look to establish new senior female clubs within the region and assess the viability of a regional competition



- Support new youth and junior female competitions
- Develop female only Auskick centres which will promote players through to junior age brackets

Schools

- Continue to promote AFL Victoria's Schools Program through the creation of more AFL School Ambassadors
- Strengthen connections between senior clubs, school ambassadors and junior clubs

Multicultural and Indigenous

- Support and promote AFL Victoria's Multicultural Programs
- Continue to support and develop multicultural and indigenous focused rounds within local leagues
- Establish ambassadors within multicultural communities



Community

Strategic Objective:

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

Key Strategies:

Club Development

- Implement a club "health check" regime and provide overview to leagues and clubs
- Ensure all clubs are provided assistance with sustainable financial modelling
- Provide all clubs with templates for strategic planning, club policies, position descriptions and financial management
- Provide training and educational seminars based on development needs identified by clubs

League Support

- Provide assistance and advice to leagues as required and requested
- Provide leagues with information regarding industry initiatives from other regions, leagues and clubs
- Support operating efficiencies through administration centre offerings and other support mechanisms
- Ensure a collaborative approach is maintained to league interactions

Volunteers

- Provide yearly development seminars for volunteers and officials covering topics including (but not exclusive too) financial management, marketing and sponsorship, sports medicine, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement and club culture/environment
- Build on existing volunteer recognition programs in consultation with AFL Victoria, leagues and clubs. Provide for additional recognition programs in a local setting
- Assist clubs with volunteer recruitment, retention and management

Schools

- Develop stronger links between local schools and clubs
- Continue to develop the AFL School Ambassador Program locally
- Work with AFL Clubs (Melbourne, St Kilda and Richmond) to strengthen engagement at primary school level



Engagement

Strategic Objective:

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

Key Strategies:

Stakeholder Engagement

- Implement a “social responsibility” program across all clubs within the region, with targeted curriculum for junior and senior clubs
- Deliver AFL programs to clubs including Respect and Responsibility, Racial and Religious Vilification, Taking the Tackle and Multicultural Programs
- Provide refresher training on a yearly basis to all clubs
- Provide regular information and briefings to clubs on shifting trends with regards to demographics, ethnicity and community issues
- Promote the inclusion of disability and female teams with existing clubs within the region

Community Engagement

- Utilise the resources and expertise of partner organisations such as Beehive, Keep Your Cool and local government departments in the delivery of social responsibility programs
- Develop a Local Government Reference Group to identify key community engagement activities
- Utilise media outlets and social media for the promotion of community engagement initiatives from clubs and leagues
- Through the support of interest groups, develop a Cultural Awareness Program for clubs within the region, particularly those within areas of high diversity



Development

Strategic Objective:

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

Key Strategies:

Player Development

- Manage and oversee the V/Line Cup U15 Program, creating another boys' and a new Youth Girls team for the championships under the banner of Peninsula Stingrays
- Manage and oversee the Junior Inter-league Carnival and continue to review its scheduling, composition and age classifications
- Consolidate and integrate talent programs in the region with leagues and clubs
- Assist in the promotion and management of inter-league at all levels
- Increase skill development opportunities for players through clinics and holiday programs

Coach Development

- Release a coaching strategy for the region in consultation with AFL Victoria
- Explore options to develop and enhance the Level 1 Coaching Course, providing a diverse range of information for coaches at all levels
- Provide 4 additional yearly seminars for coaches at no cost for AFCA members. These seminars shall, where possible, include AFL, VFL and TAC Cup Coach presentations
- Provide yearly coaching grant opportunities to AFL South East member clubs
- Promote coaching pathway opportunities for region coaches with the representative and talent pathways
- Develop and build the coaching coordinator program through all levels of football in consultation with both junior and senior leagues in the region
- Develop a coaching mentor program through AFCA and level 2 coaches

Umpire Development

- Work with regional umpiring associations to promote umpiring through the community including junior and senior clubs, schools and multicultural communities
- Promote AFL Victoria Country academy programs and umpiring pathways
- Support and develop umpire coach education programs
- Support and promote a more defined “player to umpire” program within the region



Facilities

Strategic Objective:

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

Key Strategies:

Government Relations

- Create a local government reference group with representatives from all municipalities from across the region to discuss facility and topical club/league issues
- Update councils on the latest information regarding football's economic and social impact
- Maintain an apolitical position working with the government of the day whilst continuing to build relationships with the opposition

Facility Development

- Conduct a facility audit of all club facilities in reference to the AFL National Facility Standards
- Produce a report on all current and prospective facility developments in the region
- Consult with clubs, leagues and local government to ensure all facilities are being maximised



Partnerships

Strategic Objective:

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

Key Strategies:

Commercial Partnerships

- Develop strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with small, medium and large scale businesses.
- Develop a partnership profile which has the capacity to reduce operational costs for clubs and leagues
- Ensure there are strong "business to business" networking opportunities for all league and Commission partners
- Survey league and Commission partners to ensure there are high levels of satisfaction with partnership outcomes and/or objectives

Community Partnerships

- Develop a strong and diverse network of community partners which provide support to community engagement and responsibility objectives
- Provide support for one charity partner per year, with a partnership not to exceed a two year period. This will ensure the Commission will, over time, have the ability to support a number of charities in a meaningful and significant manner

Sports and Government Partnerships

- Continue to build relationships with partner sports (i.e. Netball) and seek new opportunities with other sports as they present.
- Build a consultative relationship with government at all levels in order to further the cause of leagues and clubs.
- Ensure all candidates from all sides of politics are familiar with AFL South East and the needs of clubs and leagues within the region.





People and Culture

Strategic Objective:

Attract, develop and retain quality people and develop a culture of excellence in line with AFL South East's key objectives and values

Key Strategies:

Staff

- Provide additional resources to the region including the procurement of a new Football Development Manager by the end of 2015
- Ensure all staff have access to strong professional development opportunities including conferences, seminars and training courses suited to their needs
- Support league and RAC staff through regular briefings, meetings and information sharing.
- Develop a pathway for staff progression within the industry, including support for staff development from the AFL and AFL Victoria

Commission

- Ensure the skill sets within the Commission provide a diverse range of support for leagues and clubs
- Ensure Commissioners have the necessary support and are equipped to provide such support
- Ensure the values of the Commission are adhered too throughout the organisation including staff and commissioners



