

WA FOOTBALL: SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT



FOOTBALL COMMISSION INC.







FOREWORD

For so many West Australians, football is far more than a game, it is a way of life. It is distinctively Australian and one of the cornerstones of our community.

Football has the power to unite, influence and inspire both on and off the field. From the elite level to community football clubs, right across Western Australia there are stories of the positive impact of football both on and off the field.

Stories of clubs helping players struggling with mental health issues, sustaining regional communities, creating jobs and opportunities, and encouraging active, healthy lifestyles.

This year, the West Australian Football Commission has launched the most comprehensive study ever into the economic and social benefits of club-based football to the WA community.

We've always known the benefits of footy go beyond being a great game to play and watch. Now we have the research and findings to confirm this.

I'm excited to present these key findings from ACIL Allen, an independent economic consultancy. It marks an important milestone in our goal to connect and enhance WA communities through our great game.

Football has a proud history in Western Australia. As the premier sport in the State with the largest number of players, officials and volunteers, we play a key role in building active and connected communities.

This work will help us to remain focused on contributing more to communities right across WA, and providing a positive and meaningful impact to all who engage with our great game.



Gavin Taylor
WAFC CEO



SOCIAL BENEFITS OF CLUB BASED FOOTY

Independent economics consultants ACIL Allen found that club based footy generates **\$225 million in social benefits to the community each year.**

Of course, club-based footy leads to improved physical health.

It makes sense that being active and connected to a community through a club has mental health benefits.

And if our kids are playing footy, they are less likely to get into trouble.

These findings appear obvious, but ACIL Allen have put numbers next to these and other benefits to help us appreciate just how important footy is to WA.

For your average footy club member, **this means \$3,000 of social benefits directly related to being involved in club football.** The strongest benefits are delivered in the areas of mental and physical health.

For example, our study estimates that participants were active for 11.4 million hours. That means on average a person playing club-based footy would be active for almost three hours a week, which is even more than the 150 minutes the Heart Foundation recommends weekly for optimum health.

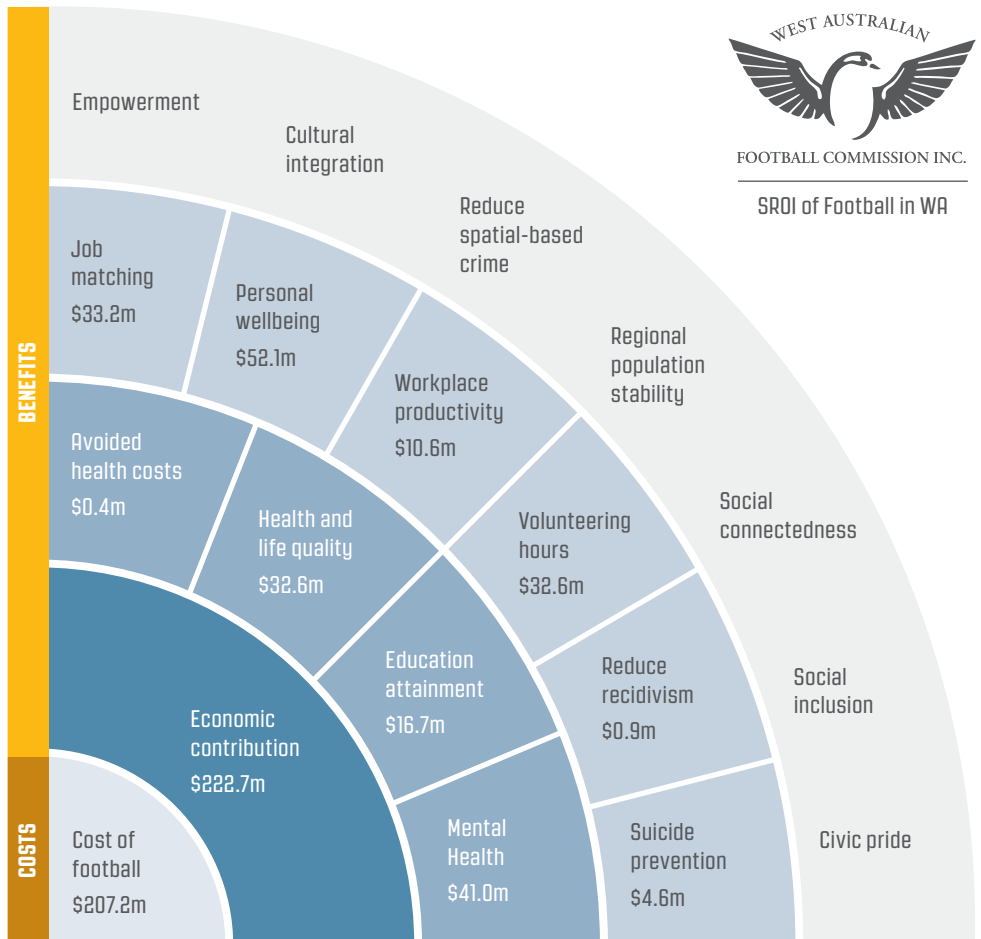
The ACIL Allen report also noted a number of social benefits that couldn't be measured: the impact of welcoming a new Australian to the local football club, empowering a young woman to become a leader in her community, or sustaining the population of a regional community. This means the true social benefits of club-based football could be even greater than \$225 million.

Of course, numbers don't tell the complete picture. Which is why we are lucky to have so many stories among the 75,000 registered people involved in club-based footy in WA which demonstrate the benefits.





SROI OF THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



LOCAL CLUBS, LOCAL STORIES

Our local football clubs play an important role across our state. The following stories give just a taste of the thousands of amazing stories, volunteers and games happening at footy fields and clubrooms every weekend.



Footy clubs for everyone

Luke McLachlan has always been an avid footy fan. Born with down syndrome, Luke's footy career has taken him from Auskick at Kenwick Junior Footy Club, all the way to Optus Stadium to play on the same ground as his beloved West Coast Eagles as a member of the Perth Football League's Integrated Team.

Finding his way to integrated football through a friend of a friend, Luke is now a key team member at Fremantle CBC. Integrated football encourages the inclusion and participation of athletes with an intellectual disability. There are now 10 teams, and over 260 athletes competing in the 13-week footy competition each year.

For Luke, he feels that footy has given him major life skills; confidence, leadership skills and a job working in property a day a week, that was set up through his club. He has become a mentor for the younger men in his team and the club, and his confidence has continued to grow through playing footy.

At 37, he reached the significant milestone of 100 games, running through the banner with his two nephews alongside him and slotting two goals during the game to celebrate. This milestone impressed Eagle Josh Kennedy, who sent Luke a video congratulating him on his 100th game!

For more information on Integrated Football head to: perthfootball.com.au/programs/integrated-football

Clubs connecting communities

Not many people have encountered the kind of adversity faced by Sharon 'Shaz' Kenney, and become such a strong leader for their community.

A proud Noongar Yamatji Woman (Yorga), Shaz's early life was marked by trauma, including the loss of her brother Digby, a talented young footballer who took his own life. Through her own heartbreaking circumstances Shaz has built a community that uses club football to heal herself and her community.

“Digby taught me how important footy was and that I had to find something normal outside of trauma and grief.”

Working closely with her local junior football club and community, Shaz and her husband Brad founded the Djinda Falcons through the West Perth Football Club in honour of her brother, creating a safe space built around football. Djinda Falcons support young Aboriginal men and women to use football as the vehicle to support their social and emotional wellbeing. The word djinda (meaning stars) was chosen to represent “stars for life, stars of the future, stars looking over us our ancestors.”

For many of the kids involved in the team, footy was the only place where they felt they thrived. Through Shaz and the broader community, she has seen so many of her players grow to also thrive at school, at home, and be role models in their own families and communities.

“Some of us get quite emotional about how much we love the game, some of us sit quiet. But footy brings all of my parts together. Footy teaches you about community, and a I hope we've built the kind of community that would have helped my brother.”

For more information on the Djinda Falcons, head to: facebook.com/djindafalcons/



The heartbeat of the bush

In most country towns in WA, from April to September, weekend activities revolve around the local football club. During the annual Landmark Championships held in Perth in July, four country footballers in town for the weekend shared how footy is the heartbeat of their local communities.

Craig Doney and Simon Duckworth

Craig Doney has a footy record that speaks for itself. The 600+ game veteran from Kukerin-Dumbleyung has represented the Country state team for 10 years and is a former League President. Craig still occasionally makes training and spends weekends as the water runner for his daughter's under 14s team.

Described in some footy circles as “the best kick the WAFL has seen in the last 30 years”, Simon Duckworth is now back at his family farm, playing, coaching and administering at his local club; Kulin Kondinin FC. Most clubs would have a player with the nickname ‘Fossil’... but at 41, not many of them still manage to be the league's leading goalkicker in a premiership year.

Both reflected on the significant role that football plays in the mental health and wellbeing of those that are part of our clubs in the bush. For those in smaller towns, footy is often the thing that brings the community together. When the community next door to Craig lost its football team, they soon after lost their hockey and netball teams. They also reflected on the mental health challenges that are common to many across the farming community and the role they have seen football clubs play in helping people avoid or recover from depression and other mental health challenges.;

“You don't always know what people are going through... but football provides you with a community and a place outside the farm that you feel you belong and people care about you.”

“I'm a farmer which can be tough at times. I find when I go to footy training – it can be a cold winter's night, spring in the air – if things are tough at home – you've made a mistake on the farm or something hasn't gone quite to plan, you can go and talk to mates or one on one. You go out of there thinking ‘maybe I'm not the only one who's had this experience.’”

Craig plans on keeping the boots on for another couple of years, if only to play a couple of senior games with his young fella (currently 12) before retirement. Simon is hoping for his team to challenge for back-to-back premierships – but that an injection of younger players for next season might mean that he can give his knees a break.





Lewis Upton and Dylan Indich – Regional All Stars

Lewis is a local in Karratha, playing for the Dampier Sharks. It has been a great place for his young family to grow up. His son has started Auskick this year and the senior teams are regularly helping out at the junior club. With a significant FIFO population, he sees footy as providing a home away from home for his colleagues moving to town. “New blokes move to town that don’t know anyone, all the time. You say ‘come down to the footy club’ – by the end of the season they have a bunch of mates and a whole new support network.”

For Dylan, footy on the weekend is a whole town event, with all four clubs in the Newman National Football League around the one oval. “We play double headers in the evening and everyone is out there to watch and have a great time.” For Dylan, it’s not uncommon to have up to 10 changes a week in his team. “My team is 90% Aboriginal. There are lots of boys that travel in from places like Jigalong, that come and play from time to time when they’re in town... they’re pretty handy.” But while rivalries are strong on the field, it’s all in good humour after “because you’re probably going to see your opposing number down the shops tomorrow.”

To learn more about senior country footy, head to WA Country Football League, wacfl.com.au/
For more on our junior country competitions, head to wafootball.com.au/competitions/juniors-youth



ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF FOOTBALL IN WA

According to ACIL Allen, **every dollar spent by football in WA creates two dollars for the local economy**. This is money spent in local communities, with local businesses, generates local jobs.

To put this in to context, every dollar spent by a major mining company in a regional community generates an additional 43 cents.

On top of this, **for every person employed by football directly, another job is created in the community** because footy spends nearly all of its money in local communities.

The WA football industry accounted for 1,477 direct and indirect FTE jobs in 2016-17 and contributed \$220.3 million to the WA economy.

An important feature of the ACIL Allen study is that it has been very conservative in its assumptions.

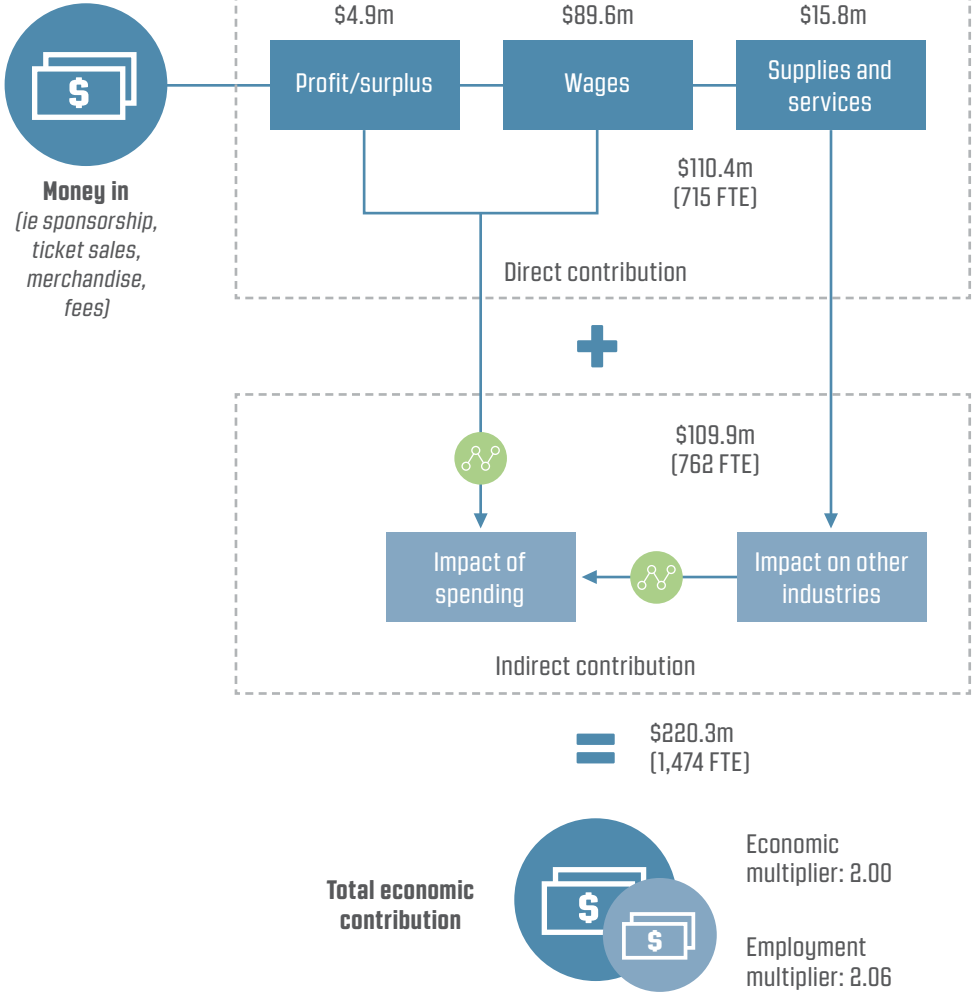
Research by Sports Australia shows that about half of the people playing footy wouldn't play any other sport, if they didn't play footy. So, we've only attributed the benefits of half of the people playing club-based football, to football.

The report also doesn't include the economic contribution of match attendance at any level of football. The benefits of a family getting lunch or a coffee at a local business after going to a community game or the impact of inter-state tourism for a match at Optus Stadium aren't captured in this report.

This means the economic benefits of footy are even greater.

Football clubs build and sustain WA communities in the regions, the suburbs, and the heart of the CBD. WA football supports local businesses, creates local jobs, and contributes to the local economy unlike any other sport in WA.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA





FOOTBALL COMMISSION INC.

WEST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMISSION

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The West Australian Football Commission acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia as the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders both past and present.



ACIL ALLEN

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FIND YOUR LOCAL CLUB

Australian Football is the sport for everyone. From NAB AFL Auskick to Junior football and beyond, footy is fun for all. So if you're new to the game, want to play socially or hope to become an elite AFL sports star, you can find a version of football that's right for you.

Head to **play.AFL** to find your local team