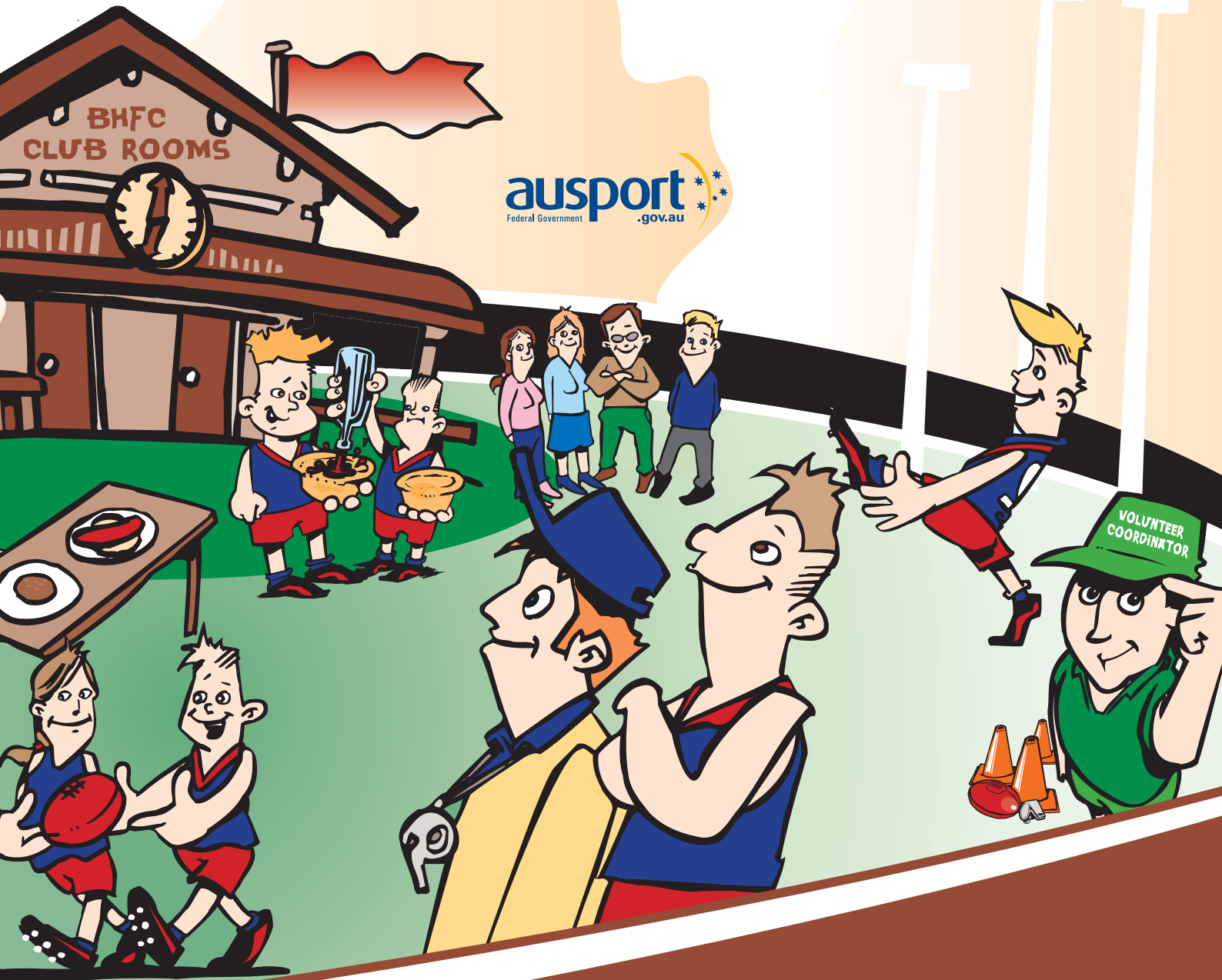




## Club management program



**JUNIOR  
DEVELOPMENT**  
FOR FOOTBALL CLUBS



# Club management program

**Published by the Australian Football League.**

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## **Welcome to the AFL club management program**

The Australian Football League recognises that club volunteers and administrators make a significant contribution to Australian Football. It also recognises that the demands on club volunteers and administrators are increasing along with the need for clubs to operate in a professional manner.

As a result, the AFL, in conjunction with the Australian Sports Commission, has developed the AFL club management program aimed at supporting community football through providing an education program for club administrators. Community football clubs and leagues form the cornerstone of the AFL game and the support of community club football is a critical component to the overall success of the competition at all levels.

The AFL club management modules have been developed through extensive consultation with volunteers and administrators and the six modules have been identified as the main priority areas of assistance required by community clubs.

Each module of the AFL club management program has been designed as a stand-alone workshop/ seminar to allow for clubs members to attend the workshops that are particularly relevant to their role within the club or their own interests.

While the six modules are designed to be stand-alone, it is important to recognise that the planning module is the foundation upon which club management is based. Therefore all club members are encouraged to participate in the planning module and, ultimately the club's overall planning process.

I encourage you to attend and be part of all workshops offered through your local league/association and in the process help better your club and grow community club football.

I wish you all the best in these endeavours.



**Andrew Demetriou**

Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Football League

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# AFL club management program

The AFL club management program consists of the following modules:

**Planning** – The purpose of this module is to:

- Identify the need for clubs to plan.
- Provide the basic framework for organising a planning workshop.
- Outline the planning process and the 10 basic stages involved.
- Provide practical templates to assist in writing a plan.
- Identify methods of reviewing the effectiveness of the plan.

**Risk management** – The purpose of this module is to introduce:

- The application of specific legal principles in the football environment.
- Considerations relevant to liability and duty of care.
- The risk management process.
- Waivers, indemnities and warnings.
- Risk management policies and procedures.
- Legislative requirements.
- Insurance – National Risk Protection Program.
- Match-day checklists.
- The importance of establishing a risk management officer.

**Volunteer management** – The purpose of this module is to:

- Outline the rights and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Encourage clubs to appoint a volunteer coordinator.
- Outline the importance of job descriptions.
- Identify ways to recruit, retain and recognise volunteers.
- Identify how to develop a volunteer management policy.
- Outline the process of selecting and screening volunteers.
- Identify the need for succession planning.

**Community partnerships** – The purpose of this module is to:

- Explore the ways in which a community club can build relationships with other sports and groups within the community.
- Identify how clubs can form favourable partnerships with local government authorities.
- Develop ways of attracting sponsorship and fundraising opportunities.
- Show ways of obtaining grants and funding from various agencies – local, state and federal level.
- Establish how to create a healthy environment within the club.
- Identify how to attract and support umpires.
- Provide ways clubs can promote their activities within the community.

**Financial management** – The purpose of this module is to:

- Explore the roles and responsibilities of the treasurer within a football club.
- Outline the processes involved in and the issues that should be addressed when considering the financial management of a football club.
- Provide information that will assist the club treasurer in fulfilling his/her role with regard to the financial management of a club.

**Junior development** – The purpose of this module is to:

- Develop an understanding of AFL Game Development structure and philosophy.
- Provide an understanding of the underpinning principles at each level of the participation pathway with a focus on AFL Auskick, youth football, recreational football, female football and children with disabilities.
- Identify the responsibilities of clubs and AFL Auskick centres in relation to the organisation of junior programs and competitions.
- Outline the coaching and umpiring support and resources available for all levels of Australian football.
- Identify the value in developing club links with AFL Auskick centres, schools and the community.
- Indicate ways of recruiting and retaining children and parents in junior development programs.
- Highlight the importance of developing a quality club environment.

## Introduction

The AFL recognises that community football clubs, together with the contributions of thousands of volunteers, form the cornerstone on which the game of Australian Football is built.

This module considers the participation pathway and the philosophies, guidelines and requirements of players and volunteers in junior football. The effective management of junior development is vital to the success of any football club. Junior development is about succession planning to ensure that your club has a continued flow of players, officials, coaches, umpires, parents and supporters.

### The purpose of this module is to:

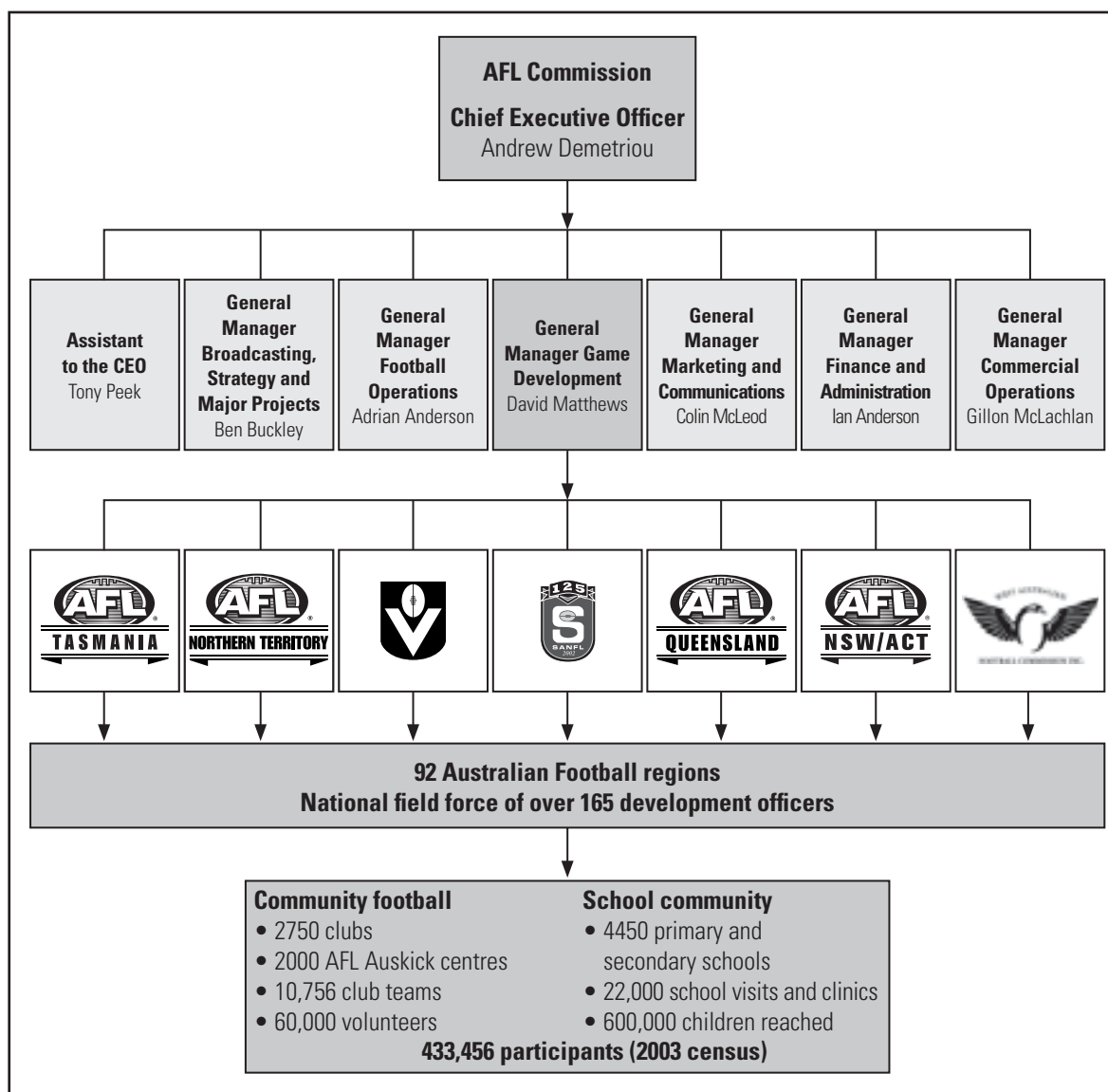
- Develop an understanding of AFL Game Development structure and philosophy.
- Provide an understanding of the underpinning principles at each level of the participation pathway, with a focus on AFL Auskick, youth football, female football and children with disabilities.
- Identify the responsibilities of clubs and AFL Auskick centres in relation to the proper organisation of junior programs and competitions.
- Outline the coaching support and resources available for all levels of the AFL game.
- Provide an outline of the AFL umpiring pathway.
- Identify the value in developing club links with AFL Auskick centres, schools and the community.
- Indicate ways of recruiting children and parents to junior development programs.
- Highlight the importance of developing a quality club environment.



# Section one - AFL structure, programs and guidelines

## AFL Game Development

The structure and relationship between AFL Game Development and affiliated state/territory football organisations is shown below. The interaction between national and state/territory football organisations ensures that national programs are developed in consultation with the states and territories, but are delivered locally to meet the needs of individual states and territories.



### **Mission statement**

The AFL Game Development department's mission is to administer, coordinate and promote the development of the AFL game nationally and internationally through quality programs that promote fun and enjoyment. Additionally, AFL Game Development aims to achieve maximum participation and support in the community through schools and clubs at all levels and provide opportunities for the more talented to achieve their potential.

### **Key objectives**

The key objectives of the AFL Game Development department are:

1. To establish a coordinated national structure for the administration and implementation of AFL programs.
2. To develop and implement an integrated range of programs, which promote fun, enjoyment, skill development, social skills and the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle, and are facilitated by accredited coaches, umpires, trainers and managers.
3. To recruit, educate, retain and recognise the myriad of volunteers at all levels who provide the community club infrastructure.
4. To market and promote the AFL brand and its range of programs to all levels of the community to increase interest in and support for the game and broaden the customer base.





## Supporting community football

Community clubs benefit through the following activities funded by AFL development expenditure of \$32 million (in 2004).

### AFL AUSKICK

- Benefits and programs for more than 123,750 AFL Auskick participants plus their friends and families.
- Resources for volunteers at 2000 centres.

### SCHOOLS

- More than 33,000 visits and clinics for schools and community groups, reaching more than 700,000 children.
- Competitions for more than 4650 school teams.

### GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

- National field force of more than 165 development officers who manage AFL Auskick, coach accreditations, school clinics and talent programs across more than 92 football regions.
- Accreditation for more than 4000 coaches and umpires each year.
- KickStart program for indigenous Australians in northern Australia.

### TALENT

- State and regional talent programs around the country.
- National AFL Draft camp, National AFL under-16 and under-18 championships, AIS/AFL Academy squad and under-17 team series against Ireland.
- Support for state league competitions, particularly in SA and WA.
- Rewards for community clubs for developing AFL players.

### GROWTH

- \$8 million spent on code development and code promotion in NSW and Queensland.

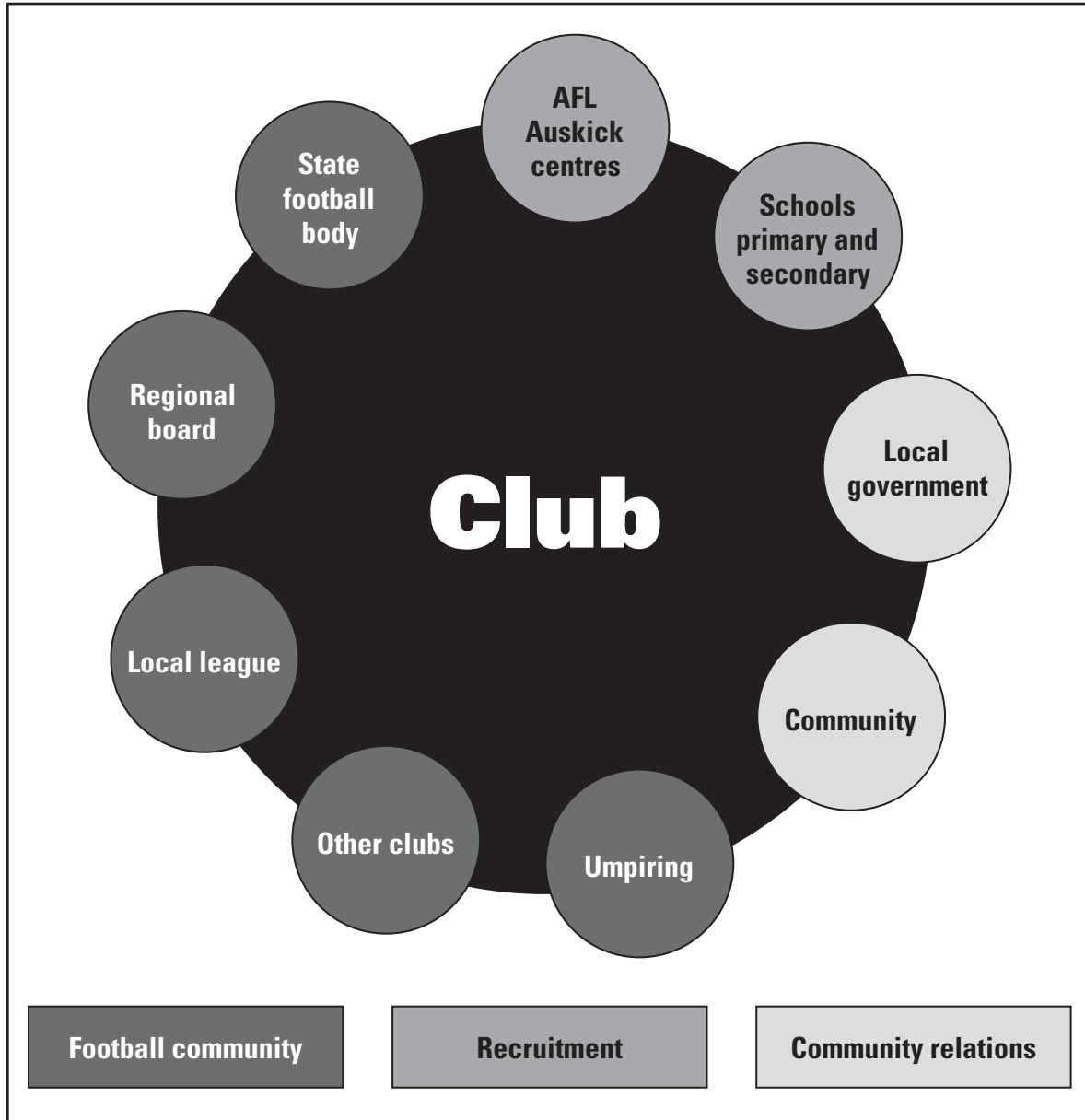
### CLUB DEVELOPMENT

- Administration capacity for the massive football network of 433,456 participants, more than 60,000 volunteers and 10,756 club teams.
- Football-specific education and training programs for community club volunteers and administrators.

More information can be obtained from the National Census of Australian Football Participation, 2003.

## Community club relationships

Community clubs form the foundation on which the AFL game is built. At the grassroots level, clubs have a direct relationship with many stakeholders. The clubs' ability to grow and foster these relationships is vital.



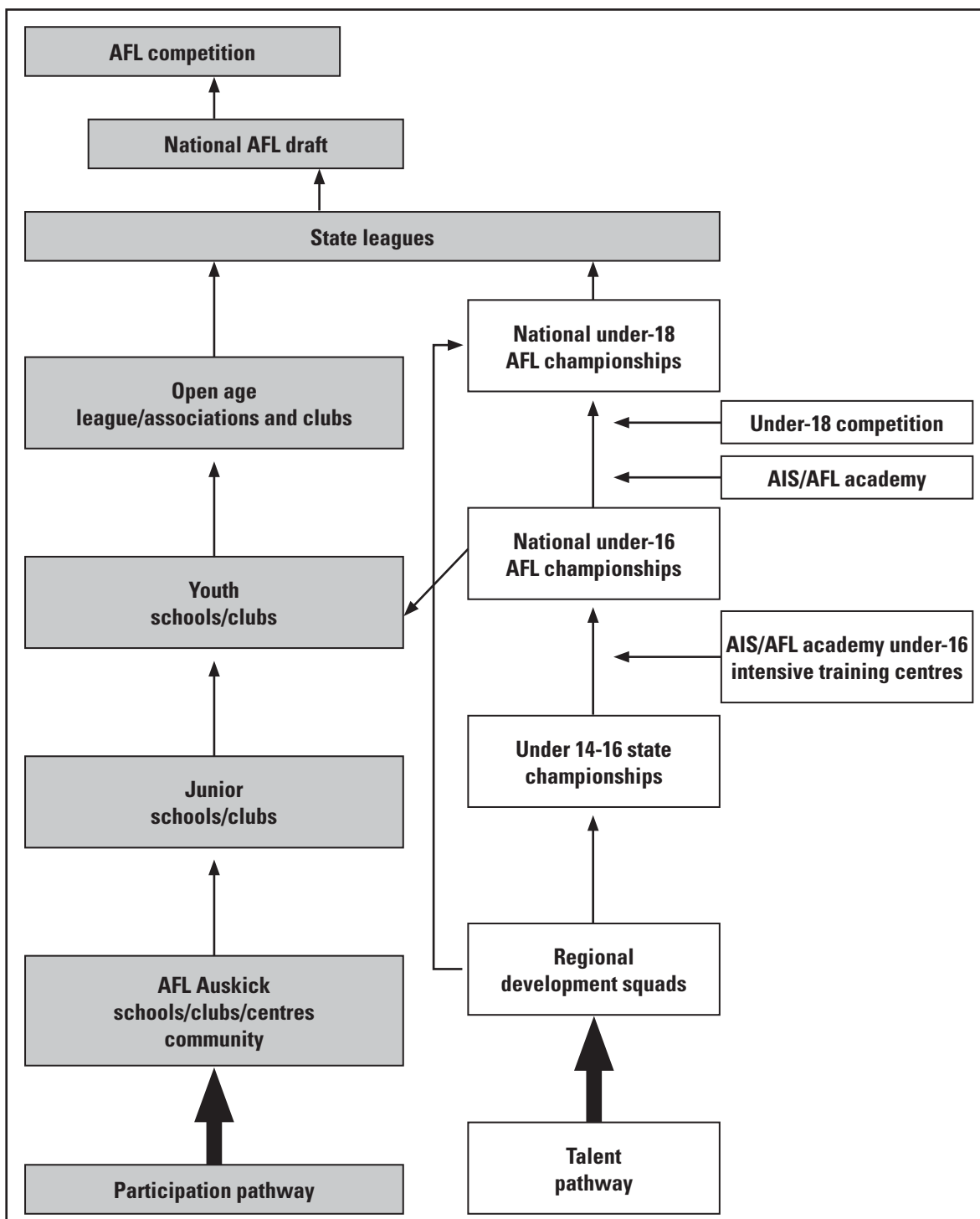
Further information on building community relationships can be found in the *Community Partnerships Manual* of the AFL club management program.

## Section two – Participation

The AFL and the state/territory football organisations believe that any person wishing to participate in Australian Football must be able to do so in a manner that is appropriate to his or her skills, needs and aspirations and which takes into account the facilities available.

This can be best achieved by providing a quality environment in which young players can sequentially develop their skills through activities, games, match rules and conditions commensurate with their stage of learning and level of ability.

### The participation pathway



## Junior development programs

1. AFL Auskick
2. Youth football
3. Female football
4. Children with disabilities

### 1. AFL Auskick

AFL Auskick has been developed with primary school-aged participants and their parents in mind. AFL Auskick offers a sequential package of programs for primary school-aged children that cater for the above view.

#### The AFL Auskick policy

The AFL Auskick policy refers to the philosophy, guidelines and requirements in conducting football for children in the primary school-age group (five to 12 years). The aim of the program is to recruit children and parents to the AFL game through the delivery of quality programs. The policy is broadly underpinned by two components:

- 1. AFL Auskick program:** the key introductory program for children and parents consists of a skill program of graded warm-up games, skill activities, skill games and a match program based on appropriate AFL Auskick rules.
- 2. AFL Auskick rules:** the rules and procedures for conducting modified matches at varying developmental levels, particularly for children of primary school age, are designed specifically to maximise participation, skill learning and development. AFL Auskick rules are a feature of the AFL Auskick program but, importantly, are also recommended for adoption by primary schools, community clubs and leagues that deliver football to this age group.

The AFL Auskick policy seeks to build on the strength of the AFL Auskick brand that describes a core philosophy and communicates desired consumer perceptions. This philosophy has seen AFL Auskick become the most successful junior sporting program in Australia.

Three core elements make the AFL Auskick program successful.

- 1. Fun and safe:** football needs to be fun for all, but especially for this age group. Research has established that a developmental program for children that is sequential and appropriate and extremely safe, particularly when involving appropriately accredited coaches, can improve skill development. We need to emphasise skill development as a priority, provide challenging match programs and specify a logical transition from introductory level through to competitions at club and/or school.
- 2. For children and parents:** both parties play a fundamental role in the AFL Auskick program. Parents must ensure a smooth progression from one level of involvement to the next based on rules and procedures appropriate to the children involved. The rules and procedures are simple to follow and supported by resources and coach education.
- 3. Managed by the community:** the environments at centres, clubs and schools are managed and controlled by the community. The importance of community ownership and management must not be underestimated. As a result, participant costs for the program are kept to a minimum.

***“Costs would be even higher for parents if not for the volunteer contribution. Sporting organisations and clubs are administered by volunteers in a not-for-profit environment. If every parent was paying for that volunteer, the costs would skyrocket”<sup>1</sup>***

*(Source: Darryl Durham, Australian Sports Commission)*

### **AFL Auskick policy requirements**

All organisations aiming to provide football for children need to offer:

- A program that enables all individuals to experience personal achievement in terms of competence, enhanced self-esteem, social cooperation, maximum participation and skill development in a FUN environment.
- Appropriate warm-up activities.
- Appropriate skill teaching in a sequential program.
- Appropriate skill drills and games.
- Appropriate AFL Auskick matches.
- Appropriately trained/accredited coaches, umpires and officials.
- Ethical behaviour conforming to the AFL's codes of conduct for all participants.



***"There is no doubt that your Auskick program is the benchmark. We've used it to model our programs."***<sup>2</sup>

*(Source: Interview with development arm of competing code)*

### **Why primary school-aged children participate in junior sport**

It is important to remember that children are not little adults, and their motivation to participate in sport differs from that of an adult. Adults need to be aware of the physical, emotional, social and skill learning characteristics that differentiate children from adults and one another.

Children love sport because they enjoy:

1. Being physically active.
2. Developing new skills and improving existing ones.
3. Being with friends and making new ones.
4. Being part of a team.
5. Learning from coaches.
6. Playing with parents.
7. Wearing a uniform and using good equipment.
8. Competing and achieving.
9. Receiving benefits and rewards.
10. Health and fitness.

These 10 reasons are covered through the AFL Auskick program. AFL Auskick allows children to play sport in a relaxed environment where making friends, having fun with their parents and improving their skills are given equal weight. It also provides excellent social value.

AFL Auskick provides a strong base for children to move into competitive sport.

### **Why AFL Auskick is a national success.**

**The AFL Auskick program involves more than 123,750 children nationally, and has been rated the best junior recruitment program around. It owes its success to the many parents and volunteers who contribute their time and effort to the program during the week and on weekends.**

**It's amazing to think that if you invited all the children in the program to the MCG, you would fill it to capacity. Two MCGs would be needed if we were to also fit all of the parents and volunteers who help deliver the AFL Auskick program to children in every state and territory.**

## 2. Youth football

### Youth participation barriers/competitors

Aside from traditional competitors, other sporting activities are competing for potential football participants. Over the past decade, the main growth in sporting participation has been in recreational, non-traditional forms of sport. These sports cater for busy lifestyles and reflect a desire to achieve fitness without risking injury.

Research tells us that many young people won't commit to a team sport every Saturday and two nights a week for six to nine months of the year. For mid-teens, study, social activities and part-time work pressures are increasing. Furthermore, entertainment opportunities such as movies, music and online games compete with the AFL for spectator interest. According to the latest youth research, there are two drop-out chasms.

***"Critical transition periods coincide with 'intrusive' changes in football playing conditions, such as a dramatic change in the rules of the game and the movement from primary to secondary school, which affects kids around 12-13 years of age. And then, the movement from junior to a senior club which affects the 17 to 18 year olds ...***

***Limited opportunities to play, or a product, which does not meet the expectations or needs of the youth accelerate the drop out. ... Saturday morning football ... Uncool"***

*(Source: Australian Football League Youth Participation Research Report: Deakin University 2001)*

Participation drop-out begins after the under-12s and accelerates through the teenage years. While social issues are a major factor, the football structure accelerates the drop-out rate due to inflexible youth competition structures.

To attract and retain youth players, the football product must be tailored to their needs. It is impossible to cater for the complex array of young people's needs and attitudes, but some responses are possible. These include changing traditional views on the timing of games, modifying rules, altering the focus of coaching, offering broader life experiences and specific branding and marketing.

Community leagues and clubs responsible for delivering youth football competitions need to understand the motivating factors and popular elements in football as perceived by youth participants so that competition structures can be tailored to meet their needs.

### Youth football participation - motivators and demotivators

The Australian Football League Youth Participation Research Report 2001, completed by Deakin University, highlighted the following as youth participation motivators and demotivators (popular and unpopular elements).

#### Motivators (popular elements)

- Social interaction - participants are drawn to the opportunity to socialise, develop/maintain friendships and operate as a team. At an age where the peer group is of utmost importance, football offers a sense of belonging and acceptance.
- Fast – the pace of play keeps participants engaged in the game and offers exciting competition.
- Skills – when players are able to execute their skills successfully on the field, they experience a sense of fun and mastery.
- Competition v winning - while on the surface players say that winning is fun, a closer examination reveals they are more concerned with the quality of the competition. The implication here is clearly for well-graded competitions that match the skill level of opposing teams.
- Fun – the social interaction, fast pace of the game and the opportunity to play skilfully culminate in fun for players. The pace of the game engages players' attention, adrenaline is produced in close competition and success is experienced through skilful play. All of this is shared with peers.
- Body contact – with the increased testosterone levels that accompany adolescence, combined with psychological angst, it is hardly surprising that the opportunity for body contact is relished. The football field provides a socially acceptable and controlled environment for physical expression.

### Demotivators (unpopular elements)

- Poor coaching.
- Uneven competition.
- Inconsistent umpires.
- Injuries.
- Negative comments and abuse from parent spectators.

Leagues/associations and clubs must deliver youth competitions according to a format that is based on an understanding of participants' needs.

### Competition structures/formats

Clubs, leagues and associations need to assess whether their competition structures and formats cater for the youth participant's needs. Traditional elements such as match day and times, team numbers and rules, especially for divisional competition structures, may need to be modified to provide:

- A well-graded even competition.
- Innovative fixturing.
- Opportunities for social interaction.
- Quality coaching.
- Fun, fast and skilful competition.
- Safe controlled environment.



### Alternative competition: AFL recreational football

AFL recreational football is a non-contact game developed to provide an opportunity for all Australian Football enthusiasts to enjoy participating in a game that has strong parallels with traditional football. AFL recreational football is easy to play, is not physically demanding, can be played by all ages and genders and, most importantly, has an emphasis on fun and safety. Played in a friendly social environment, it enables people of all ages and ability levels to participate in male, female or mixed teams.

The major differences between AFL and AFL recreational football include the following:

- It is played between two teams of eight on an oval that measures 100 metres by 50 metres.
- The number of interchange players is unlimited and players can be interchanged at any time and as often as required.
- To dispossess a player with the ball there are two options available:
  - Option one: an opponent either removes one or two 'flags' attached to the player.
  - Option two: or touches him/her.
- The field is divided into three zones – a mid-zone and two scoring zones.
- Teams score by kicking the football to designated forwards in their attacking scoring zone.
- Forwards take a set shot for goal only after marking (catching) the ball in their scoring zone. Forwards may score only from a set shot at goal; playing on when kicking for goal is not permitted.
- A mark is awarded irrespective of the distance travelled.

This form of the game could be used during pre or post season to recruit youth-aged participants and their friends or as an alternative for youth-aged participants opting out of traditional football due to the factors identified above. For an AFL recreational football rule book and how to access the equipment required please contact your relevant state territory/body.

### 3. Female football

Females have long played key roles in the AFL game, as volunteers, administrators, teachers and mums, yet they have rarely been encouraged to play the game. AFL Auskick allows girls to play safely and 11 per cent of registrations are girls. Female senior competitions are established and steadily growing.

Female participation provides an opportunity to grow the participation base. The AFL and states/territories need to encourage associations, leagues and clubs to support and provide opportunities for females to continue their involvement in the game as players beyond AFL Auskick. Opportunities for female participation could include the following:

- **5-12-year-olds** – AFL Auskick and/or AFL Auskick rules competitions.
- **13-18-year-olds** – youth girls' competitions.
- **Open age** – senior female competitions.

### 4. Children with disabilities

Some people may feel apprehensive about including children with disabilities in mainstream sport. It is important to remember that every child has the right to be involved in sport, especially a sport such as Australian Football. There are many children with disabilities who want to take up a sport.

Including children with disabilities is not difficult – it just requires enthusiasm and understanding. When involving children with a disability in your club, remember to:

- Encourage the carer/parent to be involved and assist in activities and be responsible for the needs of the child.
- Work with what the child can do and if you are not sure, ask their parent or carer.
- Introduce the child to other members and create a "buddy" system with other children.
- Make simple adaptations or modifications to various activities. This will allow greater participation by everyone.
- Allow the child to participate in all aspects of the day's activities.
- Provide activities where children can succeed and develop self-esteem.
- Encourage all children to participate in all activities.

**Further information on how to include participants with disabilities in your club can be found in the *Community Partnerships Manual* of the AFL club management program.**





## Section three – Coaching

At all levels of Australian Football, the coach has significantly more influence on players than any other official or person connected with football. As such, all coaches need to be appropriately accredited.

Coaches are the primary reason why players either stay or leave football. There is nothing more directly linked to drop-out than an abusive, angry, bad-tempered or too serious coach.

**Good coaches are the most important gatekeepers and determine participation retention in this (9 to 13 years) age range. There was nothing more directly linked to speculations of quitting than having an “abusive” or “angry”, “bad-tempered”, “serious” coach ... As gatekeepers of fun, coaches have the ability to compromise the natural pleasure that the game provides to young participants. Focus needs to be on inclusion and play for all.**

*(Source: AFL Youth Participation Research Report: Deakin University, 2001)*

**“One in three kids drop out of sport because of a bad experience with the coach.”**

*(Source: WA Department of Sport and Recreation)*

**“Whether playing football at the highest professional level or simply for fun, the importance of a good coach cannot be underestimated. The FA, through its extensive training program for coaches, has always had as a priority improving the technical quality of coaching which would, in turn, reap rewards on pitches up and down the country”... The Football Association Coaches’ Association’s overall purpose is “to affect positively the attitudes, ethics, knowledge and performance of football coaches... Our goal is a better-educated, informed and knowledgeable pool of football coaches.”**

*(Source: English FA website)*

*(Source: AFL Youth Participation Research Report: Deakin University, 2001)*

Coaches need to be able to communicate with primary school-aged children and youth. Training in coaching and communication techniques is critical for a number of reasons:

- The primary years are the golden years in the development of fundamental motor skills and in skill learning specific to sport. Not only is this the most rapid learning phase of their lives in this regard, but also a failure to develop such skills before adolescence is a major factor in teenage dropout in sport.
- Coaches influence the formation and development of personalities of children in their care.

### Training programs - coaching courses

The development of the AFL game, particularly at the grassroots and club level, depends primarily on the environment in which the game is organised and played, the manner in which:

- Football clubs and facilities are managed by club personnel.
- Football activities and games are presented and managed by coaches.
- Games are umpired.
- Players are supported by trainers, first aid and sports medicine personnel.

These are key elements in establishing a first-class environment for the recruitment and retention of participants in the AFL game.

The AFL, through its Game Development department, develops, implements and conducts training programs for the development of coaches, umpires, trainers and other medical support personnel and is developing education programs for club administrators.

These training programs are generally conducted through the AFL’s state and territory affiliates. In line with Australian Sports Commission education programs and sport industry vocational programs, the AFL’s accreditation programs for coaches, umpires and trainers are competency based.

## Mandatory accreditation

All states and territories have a mandatory accreditation policy and coaches **MUST** complete an approved AFL coaching course if they are coaching children. There are no second chances - children need to be appropriately coached through their formative years.

## Types of coaching courses

There are various coaching courses available to suit specific needs and age groups. These include:

- AFL Auskick – orientation, Level 1 and coaching coordinator.
- Club and school coaches of teenagers – Level 1 (youth).
- Coaches of adults (open age) – Level 1 (senior).
- AFL Level 2 (youth/senior).
- AFL Level 3 (high performance).

For the purposes of this section, AFL Auskick and Level 1 (youth) coaching courses are outlined. For information on other courses, contact your Australian Football state/territory body.

### AFL Auskick

The coaching of children at AFL Auskick centres is the most important aspect of the program. Failure to develop coordination and basic skills is the single greatest factor in preventing children from continuing to participate in their chosen sport, or sport generally.

Parents can access courses that are highly practical in their content and presentation.

### Orientation course

- Introductory three to four-hour course.
- Conducted through practical, hands-on involvement under the guidance of trained personnel.
- Designed for parents/helpers who, regardless of their football background, would like to assist in running activities.
- Outlines the conduct of a 'typical' AFL Auskick session and how it fits into a season-long program.
- Introduces appropriate warm-up activities.
- Demonstrates the skills of Australian Football.
- Shows, through practical involvement, how to teach the skills to children.
- Demonstrates a variety of skill games and activities.
- Introduces the principles of conducting and umpiring modified football games.
- Offers credits to AFL Auskick Level 1 certificate.

### AFL Level 1 (AFL Auskick) course

- The AFL's minimum coaching accreditation for coaching children aged five to 12 and is conducted for around 14 hours
- Conducted through practical, hands-on involvement of participants under the guidance of trained personnel and expert presenters.
- Designed for parents/helpers who want to assume a coaching role, organise activities, teach the skills of the game and conduct modified games. It has a specific orientation towards issues surrounding the participation and practices appropriate to the development and enjoyment of players in this age range.



Topics include:

- Role of the coach.
- Planning and organisation of the training session.
- Teaching the basic skills of Australian Football.
- Skill games and modified games/forming a basic team plan.
- Growth and development/safety issues/legal issues.
- Candidates will be assessed practically either in course time or on the job or both.
- Excellent AFL coaching manuals and further presenters' notes are provided as part of the course.
- Coaches are required to agree to the AFL coaches' code of conduct as part of gaining their accreditation.
- As accredited coaches, successful candidates receive an AFL Level 1 (AFL Auskick) coaching certificate and are entered on the national database.
- The teachers' Level 1 AFL Auskick course takes into account the RCC (recognition of current competency) policy and is an abbreviated course.

### **AFL Auskick coaching coordinator course**

- Designed for coaches who want to further develop their skills in managing a coaching program as a leader coach.
- As with other higher qualifications in coaching, such as the Level 2 youth/senior accreditation, this course would normally be conducted over a long weekend and in a live-in environment.
- Coaches undertake activities and are assessed over a full season (in this case, an Auskick season) by qualified staff.
- Improving the coaching knowledge and skills of candidates, along with their technical planning and management skills, are the priorities of this course.

### **Club and school coaches of teenagers**

#### **AFL Level 1 (youth) course**

- The AFL's minimum coaching accreditation for coaching participants aged 13 to 17 years and conducted over about 14 hours.
- Conducted through practical, hands-on involvement of participants under the guidance of trained personnel and expert presenters.
- A specific orientation towards understanding youth participation in Australian Football, which permeates all aspects of the course. It has a specific focus on the things which motivate and demotivate youth in football, the social aspects of working with and managing players in this age range, specific communication skills and developing higher level skills and understanding of the game.

Topics include:

- Role of the coach.
- Communication with youth-aged players.
- Issues surrounding youth participation in Australian Football.
- Growth and development factors.
- Planning for participation and development.
- Teaching the skills of Australian Football.
- Organising the training session.
- Team play and tactics.
- Fitness for football, recovery and rehabilitation.
- Coaching and safety issues.
- Practical assessment.
- Candidates will be assessed practically either in course time or on the job or both.
- Excellent AFL coaching manuals and further presenters' notes are provided as part of the course.
- Coaches are required to agree to the AFL coaches' code of conduct as part of gaining their accreditation.
- As accredited coaches, successful candidates receive an AFL Level 1 (youth) coaching certificate and are entered on the national database.
- Teachers' Level 1 youth course takes into account RCC (recognition of current competency) policy and is an abbreviated course.

## Section four - Umpiring

Participation numbers cannot grow unless a commensurate number of umpires are recruited to officiate in games. Australian Football is losing umpires at a faster rate than they are being recruited as a result of the negativity that characterises public and media views of umpires. While there will always be a passionate relationship between spectators, players and umpires because of the nature of the game and of the many rules, spectators, players and administrators must be fully aware of the role of the umpire so that negative attitudes towards umpires are reduced.

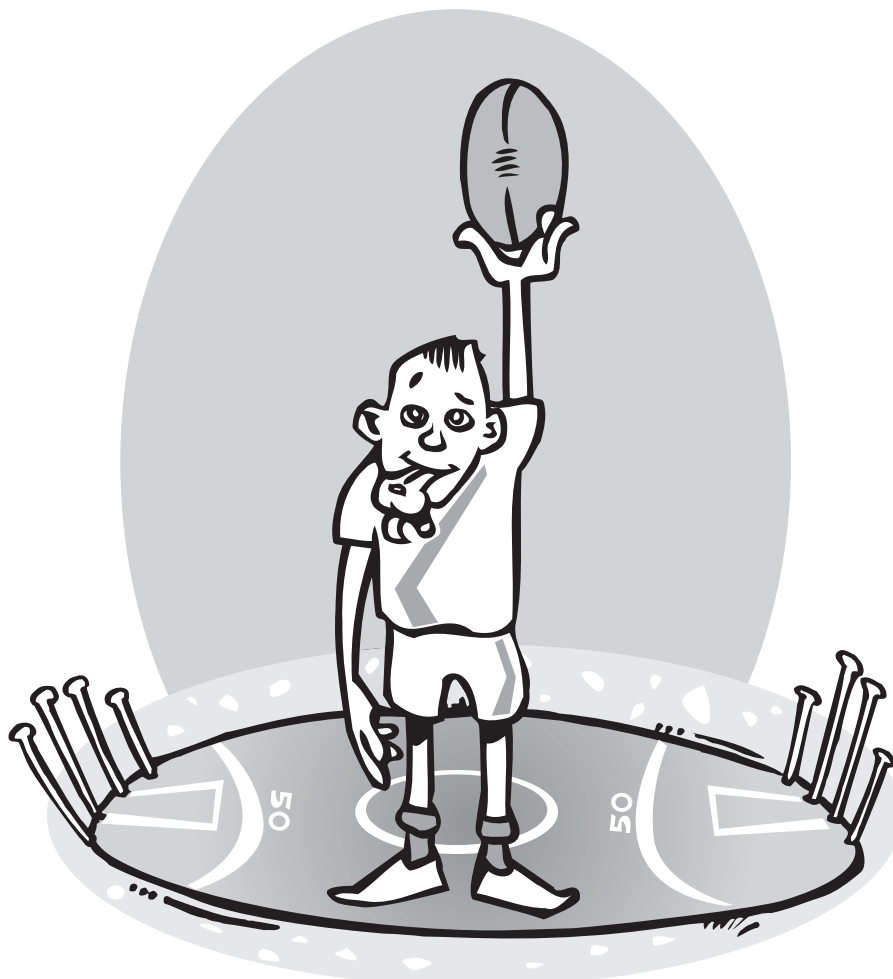
Through the junior club system, the education of spectators, players and administrators on the role of the umpire is vital in order to change negative community attitudes and football culture to create an environment of more recognition, support and respect for the contribution of umpires to the game.

***"My son is 14 and he umpires locally. He was walking off after umpiring an under-12s game and had parents screaming abuse in his face. Why would he stick with it when he could just play with his mates and no one would care how many mistakes he made?"***

*(Source: Interview - AFL Youth Participation Research Report: Deakin University, 2001)*

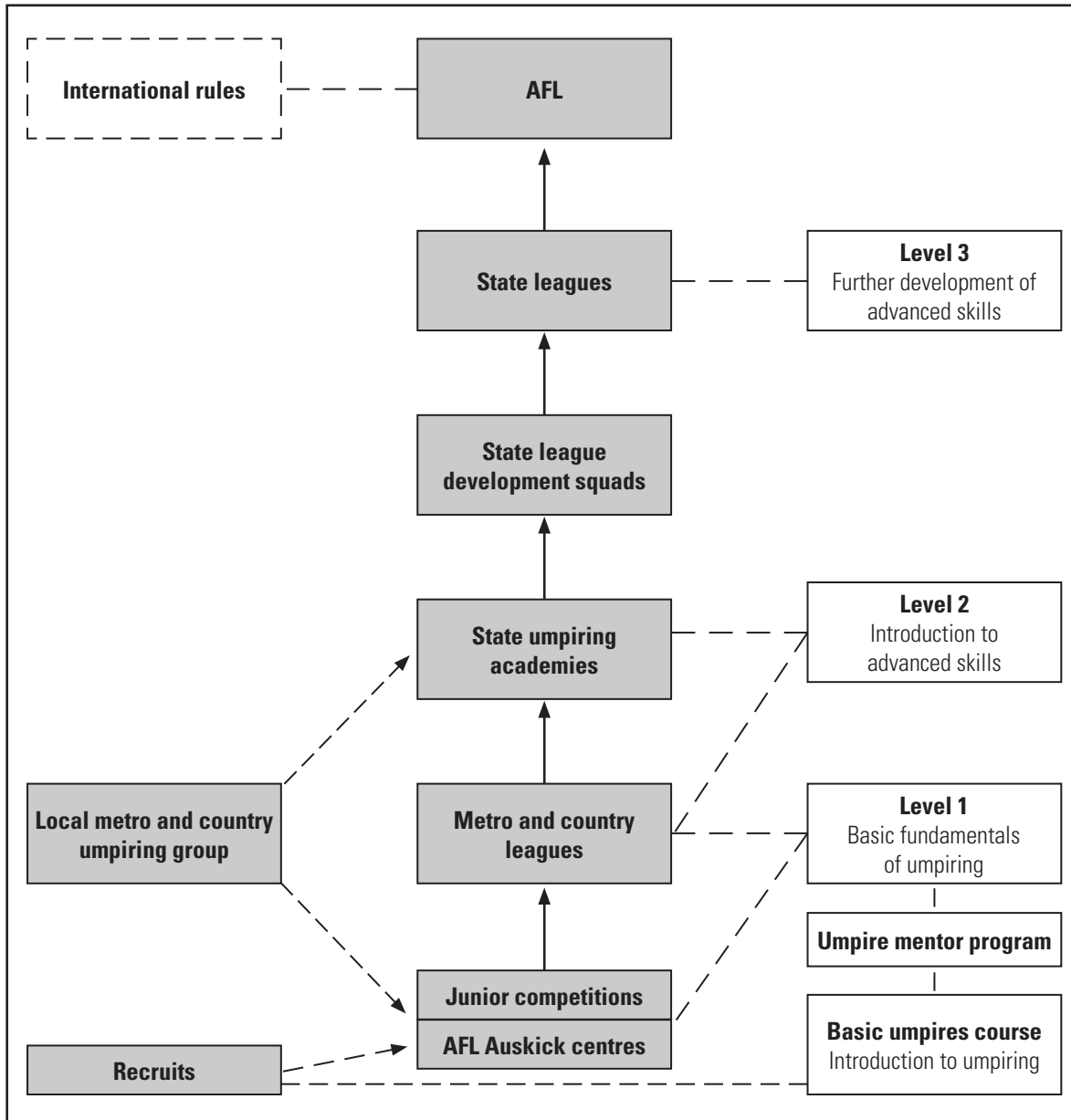
***"I started up umpiring due to the monetary incentive but soon started to appreciate it for more than that. I now love umpiring. It is a great challenge because you deal with slightly different scenarios every week. It also keeps me fit, which increases my self confidence and enables me to do well in other aspects of life, not just umpiring. I have developed great friendships since taking up umpiring, both within the umpires' group and with football players and clubs. I look forward to the football season now. I am still making money, although this is not the reason I umpire. I have gained so much out of umpiring, and you can too."***

*(Source: Andrew, 16-year-old umpire, AFL Capricornia)*



## AFL umpiring pathway

Umpiring provides an excellent opportunity to maintain an active involvement in the AFL game. The AFL umpiring pathway provides a terrific sporting alternative and career path for those not wishing to play the AFL game.



## AFL umpiring accreditation courses

Training is provided by accredited umpiring coaches in local umpiring groups.

### Basic umpiring course

The Level 0 umpire accreditation course is available for secondary schools. It is the ideal way for students to understand what umpiring is all about. Accredited teachers or local umpiring groups can deliver this course as part of students' sport and physical education programs.



### Umpire Mentor Program

An umpire education and development program that aims to use experienced umpires to mentor new and inexperienced umpires.

The mentor program connects new and inexperienced umpires with an umpiring mentor to assist them with their early development. The mentor program entitles the new and inexperienced umpire to wear a coloured shirt to signify that they are learning their craft and are being supported by a mentor. Coaches, players and supporters are asked to consider this and play their part in helping the umpire develop their skills.



### Level 1: for local metropolitan and country field, boundary and goal umpires.

Participants trained in the basic fundamentals of umpiring Australian Football. A prerequisite for field umpires wishing to undertake Level 2.



### Level 2: for local metropolitan and country field, boundary and goal umpires.

Participants trained in advanced skills. Prepares umpires to officiate in open-age football. A prerequisite for field umpires wishing to undertake Level 3.



### Level 3: for state league field umpires.

Once selected at state league level through the umpiring pathway, field umpires undertake intensive training to a Level 3 standard. It prepares them for state league matches and is a prerequisite for trial to the AFL squad.

Further information on the role of the club in developing and supporting umpires can be found in the *Community Partnerships Manual* of the AFL club management program.



## Section five - First-aid/sports training

A major responsibility of a football club is risk management and providing a safe environment in which members can participate in the game.

One way of reducing the risk of injuries and their consequences to players is to ensure that clubs provide appropriate first-aid during games and training. This is normally carried out by trainers who are appointed by clubs to carry out this role.

Sports Medicine Australia (SMA), the leading authority on the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries in sport, recommends the following minimum requirements for sporting events:

- A sports first-aider is present where participants are under 16 years of age (all AFL Auskick programs)
- A sports trainer is present with participants 16 years and over

### Education for trainers

Sports Medicine Australia conducts the Safer Sport Program. It is designed to educate people involved in sport and recreation of the basic principles of injury prevention, first-aid and sports medicine.

It offers courses throughout Australia at four levels:

- Sideline help course – 3 hours.
- Sports first-aid course – 16 hours.
- Level 1 sports trainer – 25 hours.
- Level 2 sports trainer – 16+ hours.

Safer Sport has an emphasis on prevention, the primary objective being the prevention of injuries. However, when injuries have occurred the aim is then to provide appropriate initial management and early referral for medical attention if required, by:

- Preventing adverse secondary effects.
- Reducing recovery time.
- Preventing a delay in return to full activity.

Details about these competency-based courses follow.

#### Sideline help course

The sideline help course is a non-certified, three-hour workshop for coaches, school teachers, students parents and administrators, or anyone interested in sport. The course aims to provide information on the prevention of injury, and the need for safe, effective and efficient initial care and referral of sports injuries. Sideline help is also designed to stimulate interest in completing higher level courses.

#### Sports first-aid course

The sports first-aid course teaches basic first-aid skills, with an emphasis on injuries that occur during sport. The course is aimed at school teachers, coaches, parents, club officials, prospective sports trainers, athletes or anyone interested in learning about sports first-aid. There are no prerequisites for entry into the sports first-aid course.

The sports first-aid course is a 16-hour course, of which more than half is dedicated to practical sessions. The course covers topics such as:

- Prevention of injury.
- Assessment and immediate management of sporting injuries.
- Crisis management.

The sports first-aider is trained to help make sport safer. They can help prevent injuries and are competent in first-aid and crisis-management procedures. On successful completion of the course, the sports first-aider will receive a certificate, identification card, log book and a three-year subscription to the quarterly publication, *Sports Trainers' Digest*.



### Level 1 sports trainers' course

The Level 1 sports trainers' course is a progression from the sports first-aid course, introducing new skills that are required as a sports trainer. This course educates prospective sports trainers, teachers, coaches, administrators and parents on the basic principles of sports medicine. Entry into the Level 1 sports trainers' course requires a current sports first-aid certificate.

The Level 1 sports trainers' course involves 25 hours of lectures and practical sessions in subjects such as:

- Management of specific sporting injuries.
- Warm up, stretching and cool down.
- Taping.
- Nutrition.

The accredited Level 1 sports trainer is a competent, trained person who can help athletes prevent injuries and ensure that the correct immediate assessment and management procedures for sporting injuries are used. On successful completion of the course, the Level 1 sports trainer will receive a certificate, identification card, log book and a three-year subscription to the quarterly publications, *Sports Trainers' Digest*.

### Level 2 sports trainers' course

The Level 2 sports trainers' course is a progression from Level 1. It is designed to give the active sports trainer the flexibility to structure the course to suit their own needs by offering optional modules in addition to a compulsory core module. Current Level 1 sports trainers' accreditation, 12 months of experience and 50 hours of practical field experience are pre-requisites for entry in the Level 2 sports trainers' course.

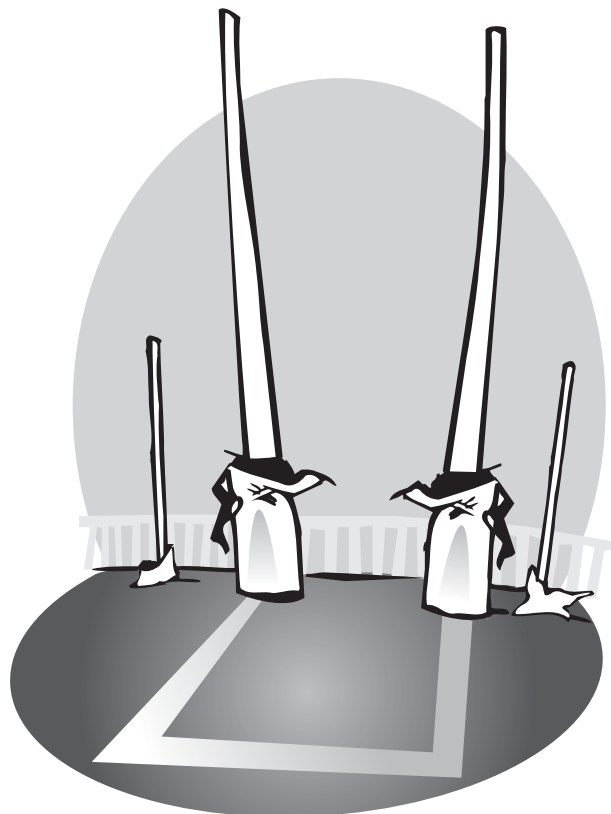
### Continuing education

Sports first-aiders are certified for three years and are then required to re-certify. Level 1 and 2 sports trainers are accredited for three years and are then required to undertake a re-accreditation program. Also, sports first-aiders and sports trainers are encouraged to keep their log book up-to-date and to attend relevant seminars and workshops.

Other agencies such as St John Ambulance and the Red Cross also offer first-aid courses, and club members who hold current certificates from such organisations may be a good starting point in recruiting helpers in this area.

### The role of the coach

The coach must share in the responsibilities associated with the prevention and management of football injuries. One of the most important roles of the coach is to provide an environment that does not predispose the player to any unnecessary injury. An effective coach must be concerned with the prevention, immediate care and rehabilitation of injuries. The coach's role is to ensure continued liaison between the training/first-aid staff and the coach regarding the care and welfare of the players. Coaches and players must take responsibility and be up-to-date with the latest methods of injury prevention. Injuries will occur, however an effective coach will take measures to ensure they are kept to a minimum and players fully recovered before resuming full competition.





## First-aid equipment

The following is a basic list of equipment and supplies for a first-aid kit/room. The contents of a kit will vary depending on:

- Budget.
- Length of the session.
- Sport.
- Number of players/teams.

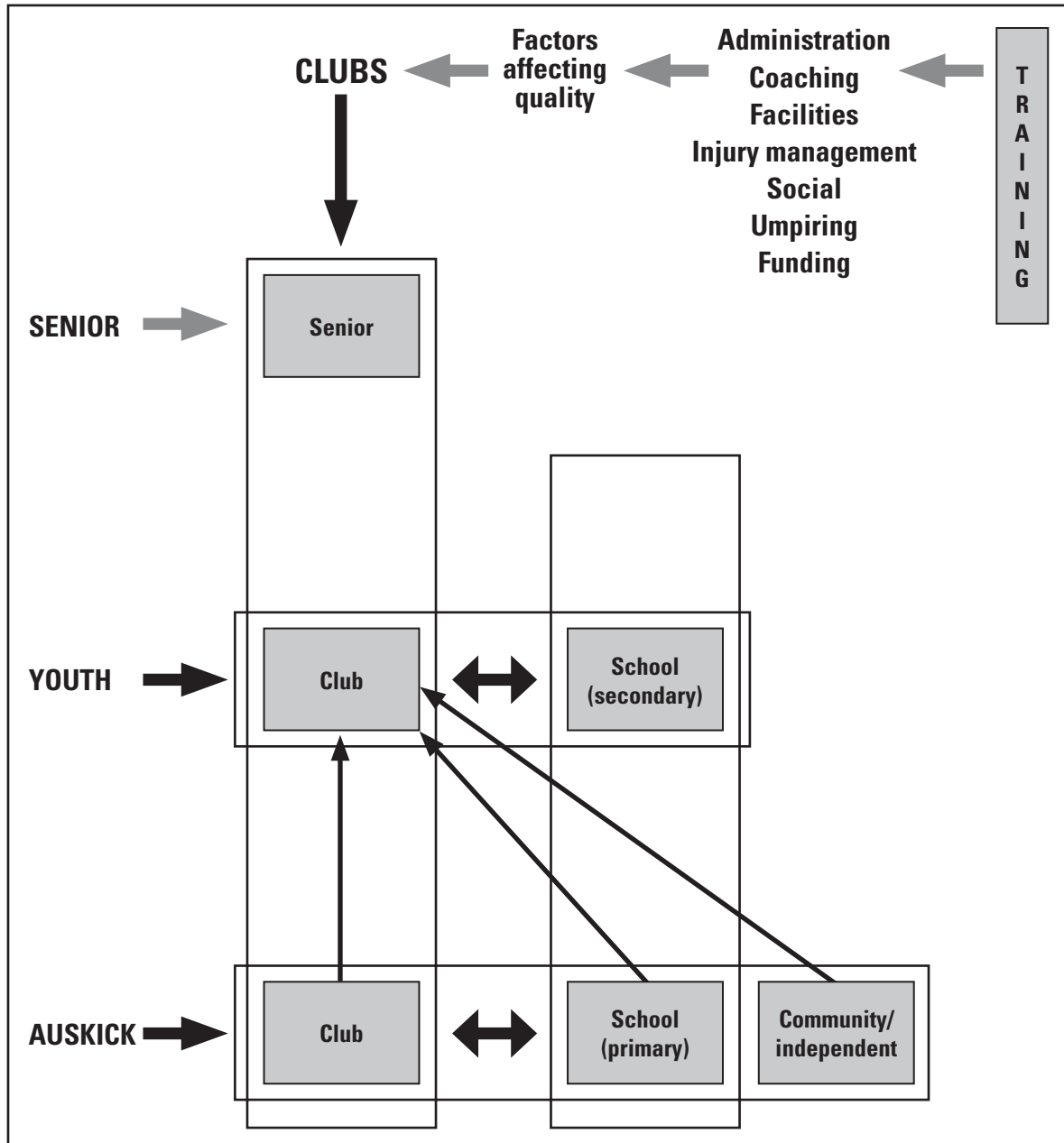
Go through this list by ticking what supplies you need at your club and write how many of each item is required.

PRODUCT	USED FOR
Antiseptic solution or swabs. Alcohol swabs/sterilising solution. Gauze swabs. Cotton wool. Non-adhesive dressings. Adhesive dressings. Band-aids. Gauze bandages. Micropore tape. Wound closure strips. Rigid sports tape. Sterile eye pads. Eye wash. Triangular bandage. Safety pins. Sterile needles or blood lancets. Disposable latex gloves. Stainless steel tweezers. Stainless steel scissors. Jelly beans or sugar water. Resuscitation mask. Sports injury register, pen paper. Crushed ice. Esky. Thermal blanket. Towels or plastic bags. Telephone or access to one. List of medical conditions/ allergies.	Cleaning wounds. Cleaning reusable equipment. Applying lotion and bathing wounds. Applying lotion and bathing wounds. Wound dressings (sizes 5x5 and 7.5x7.5). Wound dressing (sizes 7.2x5 and 10x8). Cover small wounds. Secures dressing of wounds (sizes 2.5, 5 & 7cm). For sensitive skin. Close/bring wound edges together. For strapping purposes (38 & 19mm). For protecting eye after trauma or foreign body. For removing foreign bodies or irritants from eye. For arm slings or compression. To secure sling. Foreign bodies, blisters or injections (medical use only). Protect against transmission of blood borne diseases. Removing splinters, wound debris (sterilise to reuse). Cut tape and bandages. Diabetics. Used for CPR, universal precautions. Recording injuries, treatments and actions. For making ice packs. To store ice. For hypo-thermia, shock. Making ice packs. For emergency calls. To ensure appropriate care.
<b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> <b>All medications, including Panadol or Aspirin, antifungal creams and powders, antibiotic creams and ointments, and sunscreen should be provided by the athlete. It is not the sports first-aider's role to provide these.</b>	
Optional Extras	Optional Extras
Finger or thumbs splints. Neck soft collar. Tongue depressors. Vaseline. Pen light. Clear plastic wrap. Fixamul. Mirror.	Prevent further damage after finger injury. To protect neck if suspect soft-tissue injury. For oral examination/temporary finger splints. For prevention of chaffing and rubbing. Assessing pupil reaction. Securing ice in place and applying compression. Wound dressing. Athlete self-examination.

## Section six - Community links

To maximise the transition of participants from one level of the participation pathway to the next, it is vital that linkages between levels are established. Fostering links between school and club environments and other elements of participation will help to educate, recruit and retain players and their parents (volunteers) as they progress through the pathway.

### Participation linkage model



The factors that affect the quality of the environment are also outlined in the participation linkage model, as they are key influences in shaping football participation and in the success or failure of a club to maximise its potential.

## Club linkages with AFL Auskick centres

AFL Auskick is the first step in the player participation pathway. In terms of the retention of children and their parents, it is vital that this step is a quality and enjoyable one.

Clubs cannot assume that parents of children participating in the AFL Auskick program understand the next level of participation (junior club football) and how to find and access their closest club.

To maximise the transfer of children (players) and their parents (potential volunteers) from the AFL Auskick program to junior club football, clubs must ensure that there is a linkage to the surrounding AFL Auskick centres.

The first step in developing a linkage is to contact your regional development manager to obtain a list of centres and contact details so you can send letters of introduction and offers of assistance.

**A sample letter of introduction is included in the Appendix. An expression of interest form has also been included.**

The following activities could form part of a community club's offer of assistance.

### Coaching assistance

- Provide coaching assistance to participants.
- Provide coaching assistance to the clinic coaches.
- Assist coaches/coordinators financially to attend coach education courses (orientation, Level 1 etc).
- Roster senior players to visit the AFL Auskick centres to assist parents, coaches, sign autographs.
- Help with coaching clinics using AFL or state league players.
- Have junior teams visit AFL Auskick centres for skill training sessions and barbecues.
- Have AFL Auskick coaches assist in skills session at club's junior training.

**Some sample guidelines for conducting a clinic in a school or Auskick centre have been included in the Appendix. It is important that you evaluate the clinics afterwards and an evaluation form has also been included in the Appendix. These guidelines and checklists have been provided through Football Victoria's club fostership program.**

### Resources

- Provide access to a set of jumpers.
- Donate footballs and markers.
- Help with the provision of portable goal posts and handball targets.
- Club and AFL Auskick sharing resources.

### Facilities

- Use of club ground on away games.
- Use of club's ground lighting facilities for 'AFL Auskick under the stars' night.
- Use of clubrooms, canteen, social club etc.

### Umpiring

- Provide players to umpire AFL Auskick matches and grid games.

### Community

- Club has an AFL Auskick mascot of the week and invites parents and guests.
- Club hosts AFL Auskick family day at junior club venue or senior team match, or at the main oval on a non-match day.
- Club provides certificates/trophies for AFL Auskick presentation.
- Club offers free membership to AFL Auskick coordinators and coaches.
- Club entertains parents/children after games, for example with a pie night or sausage sizzle.
- Club offers invitations to club functions and family days.
- Senior club to organise and host a round robin series or gala/cluster day for the local AFL Auskick centres.

### Playing opportunities

- Offer opportunities to play half-time matches at home games.
- AFL Auskick players invited to be guest players at the club.

### Club organisation

- AFL Auskick representative on club committee.
- Club brochures/prospectus provided to AFL Auskick families.
- Club invites AFL Auskick parents to participate in club administration courses.
- AFL Auskick provides club with the opportunity to speak to children (and their parents) interested in playing club football in the following season.
- Club invites AFL Auskick children and their parents to a 'meet the coach' evening.

## Club linkages with primary and secondary schools

Traditionally, the school system, through Australian Football competitions, physical education classes and the schoolyard, has been the nursery ground for young footballers. Today, however, the capacity for the school system to deliver football is greatly reduced. Teachers are under increasing pressure and are less likely to run programs both inside and outside school hours. There are fewer male teachers, particularly in primary schools where approximately 78 per cent of teachers are female. School football programs are increasingly reliant on volunteers or paid field staff.

Developing linkages with schools, both primary and secondary, provides clubs with many benefits including increased awareness in an immediate market, promotional benefits and a positive image for other local community groups and businesses. Local schools are the hub of the community and if a club is associated with a school, it will also be noticed by the larger community.

The following activities help clubs both support and become involved in their local schools.

### Coaching

- Provide coaching assistance to a school's Australian Football coach.
- Provide a coach if the school has no teacher with coaching experience.
- Help with coaching clinics using state league or AFL players.
- Support coaches/teachers financially through Level 1 courses.
- Assist in training teachers in Australian Football – skills, drills, activities, modified games.
- Involve schools in sports expos.
- Conduct 'come and try' days on a regional level or at a school venue.

### Equipment

- Provide access to a set of jumpers.
- Donate footballs and markers.
- Provide portable goal posts and handball targets.

### Facilities

- Offer use of the club's facilities for night games or training.
- Provide access to the oval and changerooms for games.

### Umpiring

- Provide umpires for school matches.
- Link with local umpiring group and bring an umpire to school football clinics.



### Playing

- Primary school player to be invited to be 'guest player' at the club.
- Senior club to organise and host a lightning premiership or round robin.
- Offer night finals as part of the school competitions.

### Curriculum

- Assist teachers with lesson plans focusing on skills, drills, activities, modified games.
- Talk to students about Australian Football and its importance to the local community.
- Provide school activity packs, teacher resources.
- Organise footy theme days.
- Assist teachers with an AFL sport education program.
- Contact AFL regional development manager to give a talk about careers in Australian Football.
- Provide teachers with information on skill development, modified games, coaching, training sessions for Australian Football.
- Provide teachers with information on running a community football club.

### Community

- Organise pie nights and games nights for your school football team/s, after training at the club oval.
- Buy an AFL activity pack for the school.
- Have mascots of the week, invite parents as guests.
- Conduct a handball target football clinic at the school fete and give out club information.
- Provide school with a guest speaker or hand out certificates and trophies for the school football team presentation.
- Offer to conduct player clinics for schools.
- Link in with the schedule of clinics conducted by regional development staff, distribute club information flyers to school children. Follow up and invite children to join in the club's activities.
- Conduct an activity at the school's footy day celebrations.

### Club organisation

- Invite school representatives to be on the club committee.
- Put a news item in the school newsletter to promote the club and its activities for the upcoming season.
- Offer free club membership to local teachers involved in school football.

**A sample club promotional brochure has been included in the Appendix.**



## Linkages between junior and senior clubs

To assist with the transfer of players between junior and senior football clubs, the following fostering strategies can be put in place.

### Coaching/training

- Roster senior players to assist with training nights.
- Conduct a coaches' seminar hosted by the senior club coach to discuss coaching philosophy, sharing of ideas, etc.

### Equipment

- Share resources - goal posts, handball targets, markers, footballs, jumpers.

### Facilities

- Share clubrooms, canteen, social club.
- Invite junior team to train with the seniors at the senior ground.

### Community

- Have a 'buddy system' between senior and junior players. During the year, the senior player trains with his buddy and watches his buddy play a number of games.
- Entertain parents and children after games, for example, with a pie night, sausage sizzle.
- Invite both clubs to club functions, family days and other activities.
- Host a junior team family day on a senior team home-match day.
- Invite junior members to a 'meet the senior coach' evening.

### Club organisation

- Offer free club membership to junior club coaches.
- Distribute club brochures/prospectus to all junior families.
- Include a junior football club representative on the senior club committee.

An example of a club fostership program has been included in the Appendix. (Football Victoria).



## Section seven - Recruitment and retention

### Recruiting children

For the majority of children and their parents, AFL Auskick will be their first AFL experience. This first experience must be one of quality to maximise the transfer of children and their parents (potential volunteers) to the next level of the participation pathway.

It is imperative, particularly when introducing new members to the AFL Auskick centre, that the coordinator maintains a sound volunteer base to manage the new participants. The ratio of one adult for every five children must be maintained to ensure appropriate opportunities for skill development.

To recruit people to AFL Auskick and junior clubs, display promotional material at schools, local shopping centres and football clubs. Don't underestimate the importance of word of mouth as one of the best recruiting tools.

If a junior club or AFL Auskick centre wishes to use schools as a recruiting pool, it should:

1. Identify all local schools in the surrounding area.
2. Establish contact with the principal and/or the physical education teacher at each school.
3. Gain the school's approval to publicise through the school newsletter.
4. Place club posters in strategic positions such as on school noticeboards, in canteens and classrooms.
5. Distribute club flyers to school children and their parents, ensuring the correct contact details and registration information are displayed.
6. Hold a club information night and invite interested children, parents and teachers.
7. Place information about the club at sign-in desks at after-school care programs and holiday programs.

AFL Auskick centres and junior clubs should seek assistance and link in with development programs conducted by AFL regional development staff where appropriate. It can also be useful to join forces with other local sport groups, such as cricket. Many children may be keen to join a winter sporting club such as a football club when their cricket training finishes for the season.

**Contact your state or territory football organisation for the contact details of your regional development staff.**

**The Glasshouse Hinterland Lions Junior Football Club is committed to the ongoing development of Australian Football in schools on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.**

**In 2001, the club organised former Brisbane star Richard Champion to present AFL activity packs to eight primary schools in the area. It assisted AFL Queensland to run an Australian Football competition with the primary schools for the first time and all schools are keen to be involved again. The Glasshouse junior football club has also conducted training sessions in the schools.**

**It is currently looking at further ways to develop its relationship with the primary schools and has looked at supporting the development of the AFL competition in secondary schools by providing trophies for schools' presentation nights.**



## Recruiting parents

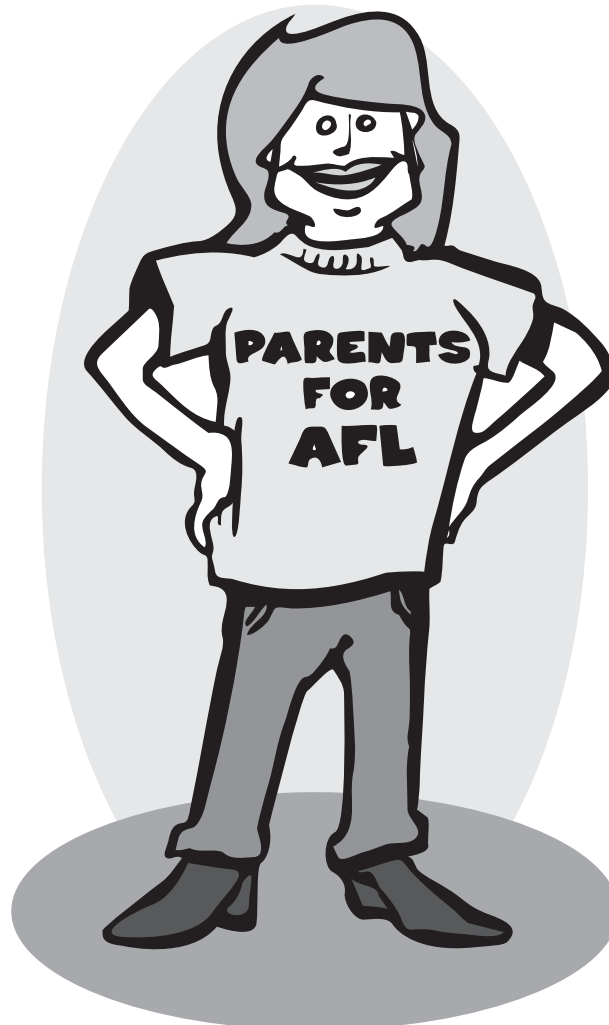
Parents are the backbone of junior football clubs and should always be encouraged to become involved with their children's sport. Recruitment of parents is always needed given parents typically move through the sport with their children. Once a child becomes too old to play for a junior football club, parents generally move on with their children.

It is essential to inform parents on a regular basis of happenings within the club. They should also be acknowledged frequently for their effort and involvement. Encourage parents to complete basic coaching courses that are relevant to the age and skills of players at the club, and make sure there is regular communication between all parents and the club.

The following information should be sent to parents on a regular basis:

1. Information about all AFL Auskick or club activities in the form of an official newsletter or club handbook.
2. The season's fixture and yearly plan should be distributed before the start of the season, including match programs and any planned social events.
3. A registration form should be sent to encourage parents to register their availability as volunteers. The registration form should ask parents to identify the skills and interests they can bring to the club.
4. Distribute job descriptions to all volunteers so they are aware of the positions that are needed within the club and the duties involved. Copies of job descriptions can be found in the Volunteer Management module. These can be adapted to suit the needs of your club.
5. Draw up a roster at the start of the season and emphasise that the presence of parents and their active participation is encouraged at all AFL Auskick sessions or club functions, whether they are on the roster or not.

One of the best ways of getting parents involved in the organisational side of the club is to set up social days such as barbecues, coffee mornings and picnics, where people can meet and talk about various aspects of the club in an informal setting.





## Communicating with parents

It is important that the program's aims and the coach's philosophy, role and goals are communicated to parents. One of the most effective ways to do this is to conduct a parents' orientation meeting before the season starts.

Before the orientation meeting:

- Send out an agenda to all parents.
- Ask for RSVPs so you can follow up with anyone who has not responded.
- Provide some catering such as light refreshments.
- Ensure the meeting is planned and won't take too long.

A typical orientation program could cover the following topics:

- Welcome and introduction.
- Overview of topics to be addressed.
- Major goals of the program.
- Outline of the coaching philosophy.
- Codes of behaviour.
- Role of the umpire/acceptance.
- Behaviour expectations.
- Parents' roles and responsibilities.
- Involvement with the team and club.
- Assisting with training and other activities.
- Administrative arrangements (fees, season schedule, special events, transport, safety, fundraising).
- Question and answer/group discussion, for example, about parents' expectations.



To maintain communication, the season should include social activities involving parents and children. Parents also need the opportunity to provide feedback to the coordinator. It is important that parents are given a feedback survey midway through the season, as well as at the season's end. This will enable any modifications to take place during the season. If feedback and comments are requested, it is vital the club or AFL Auskick centre responds to the suggestions. Opportunities to review the success of the program should be encouraged at all times.

### Parents for AFL

**AFL Queensland has introduced a new initiative designed to assist parents with their important role in their child's sport. The aim of the program, Parents for AFL, is to ensure the highest quality environment for children by providing guidelines for parents.**

**When a child registers for a junior football program, parents take home a copy of the registration form, which includes a code of behaviour and the guiding principles for the parents. This code of behaviour has been adapted from the Australian Sports Commission's codes, with some additional clauses from AFL Queensland, and is a positive step in the attempt to make the "ugly parent syndrome" a thing of the past.**

**The environment for the children extends to the parents and spectators and initiatives such as this are vital for the advancement of junior sport.**

**For more information on the Parents for AFL program, please contact your state/territory football organisation.**

## **Player retention**

It is vital that junior leagues/associations and clubs have an understanding of the things that motivate and demotivate (turn off) participants. This will then provide ways to retain participants in the game.

The following initiatives and suggestions can be adopted by leagues, associations and clubs to enhance retention of youth participants.

### **1. Ensure competition structures and formats meet the needs of participants**

- Match days – increasingly, many junior players are obtaining part-time work with the requirement of working on a weekend. As a result, leagues may wish to schedule matches on alternative days or time slots, including night games if facilities permit.
- Venue – ensure that the football grounds are centrally located, or home to several teams, which can create excitement and a competitive atmosphere.
- Length of the game – can participants commit 2.5 hours to football on the weekend? If not, shorter game times may be more appropriate.
- Length of the season – having two seasons in one would allow different entry points for participants.
- Modified program – non contact competitions in lower youth divisions will assist with the transition from Auskick Rules to youth competitions.
- Divisional competitions – to cater for all ability levels.
- Flexibility in team numbers – a full side of 18 players is not always possible, particularly in country regions. If this is the case, clubs should ensure that equal numbers from both teams are on the field at all times, and extra players regularly interchanged.
- AFL recreational football may provide an alternative competition format for youth participants opting out of traditional football competition.

### **2. Quality coaching is the major factor that determines participant retention**

- Ensure all coaches have the appropriate level of accreditation.
- Appoint coaches to age levels commensurate to their level of experience.
- Appoint coaches who can communicate and establish a rapport with the players in their care.
- Coaches need to alter their primary focus from winning games to maximising the quality of the playing experience.

### **3. Quality of the playing experience**

- Ensure that each team participates in a well-graded competition that matches each team's skill level.
- Make the playing experience fun and enjoyable – the outcome of the game should be secondary to that of each player's level of enjoyment.
- Give every player the opportunity to participate, regardless of ability.

### **4. The quality of the club environment impacts on retention**

- Codes of conduct policies should be promoted and enforced regularly.
- Alcohol and smoke-free policies should be implemented at all times.
- Clubs should also promote opportunities for social interaction, which will provide a sense of belonging and a further source of enjoyment.
- Expectations or standards of behaviour and sportsmanship around the club should be enforced at all times.

As the above suggests, to retain youth players the traditional football product may need to be tailored to meet their complex array of needs and attitudes.

## Section eight - Providing a quality club environment

### Club environments

Volunteers are critical to the growth of the game because they determine the quality of the club environment and the quality of the experience for players and their families.

To create a quality club environment, the following factors/policies should be addressed:

- Smoke-free policy.
- Responsible serving of alcohol policy.
- Racial vilification policy.
- Volunteer management policy.
- Codes of conduct.
- Sun-smart policy.
- Risk management policy.
- Roles and responsibilities of the committee.
- Playing policies.
- Coaching curriculum.

**Information on how to develop these policies and procedures can be found in the following AFL club management manuals:**

- *Risk Management Manual.*
- *Volunteer Management Manual.*
- *Community Partnerships Manual.*

Research is conclusive that player participation drop-out rates increase when the quality of the club environment is poor. Clubs need to look to ways of developing a quality club environment not only to grow but also to survive.

### Codes of conduct

Adults play an essential role, whether as parents, coaches, administrators or officials, in supporting junior football. Children learn best by example, so codes of conduct for adults provide clear behavioural guidelines and promote a quality environment in which both the game and the participants can flourish.

Codes of conduct need to be strictly monitored by community clubs, leagues and associations and an appropriate procedure must be put in place to deal with any breaches. Clubs, with support from their governing body, must take responsibility for members' behaviour.

The following codes of conduct have been adapted from the Australian Sports Commission's codes of behaviour. Clubs can modify these to suit their own needs. The AFL coaches' code of conduct has also been included.

### **Parents/spectators**

Parents of young football players should be particularly mindful of their conduct during a match. Poor behaviour can reflect onto the players themselves. Parents should:

- Encourage children to participate whatever their ability.
- Encourage participants to always play by the rules.
- Never ridicule mistakes or losses.
- Remember that participants learn best by example. Applaud good play by all teams.
- Never publicly disagree with officials. If you disagree with an official, raise the issue privately through appropriate channels.
- Actively discourage racial abuse.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches.
- Remember that participants play for fun and not for the entertainment of the spectators. They are not miniature professionals.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encourage players to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Demonstrate exemplary social behaviour at all times by not using foul language or harassing players, coaches or officials.

### **Administrators/officials**

Administrators and officials should abide by the following codes of conduct:

- Ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of ability, size, shape, sex, age, disability or ethnic origin.
- Ensure that the rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules take into consideration age, ability and the maturity level of participants.
- Ensure adequate supervision by qualified and competent coaches and officials.
- Remember that children participate for enjoyment and play down the importance of rewards.
- Arrange adult education. Develop improved standards of coaching and officiating with an emphasis on appropriate behaviour and skill technique.
- Promote fair play. Ensure that parents, coaches, officials, sponsors, physicians and participants understand their responsibilities with regard to fair play.
- Modify rules and regulations to match the skill level of participants and their needs.
- Promote respect for opponents and condemn unsporting behaviour.
- Maximise enjoyment. Publicly encourage rule changes that reinforce the principle of participation for fun and enjoyment.
- Keep up to date with sound administration skills.

### **Players**

Players should also conduct themselves in an acceptable and appropriate manner at all times. They should:

- Play by the rules - they are for the good of all.
- Never argue with an official. If you disagree, discuss the matter with your coach or teacher after the game.
- Control your temper. Never resort to verbal abuse or racial or religious vilification of other players or provoke an opponent or the other team.
- Be a good sport. Applaud all good play by your team members and your opponents.
- Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player.
- Cooperate with your coach, teammates and opponents. Without them, there would be no game.
- Play for the 'fun of it' and not just to please parents and coaches.

**The Kwinana Junior Football Club, near Fremantle in Western Australia, believes that all members should be responsible for their actions. They have introduced strict codes of discipline for all players, coaches, parents and administrators, which outline the importance of respecting each other and the value of a positive and nurturing club environment.**

## Example of an AFL coaches' code of conduct



### COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby commit, to the best of my ability, to uphold the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.

**I understand that as an integral component of my accreditation, I must maintain a standard of behaviour and conduct that is in the best interests of the game and the players/staff in my care.**

**In representing myself in an honest manner, and without bringing the coaching profession or the game into disrepute, I will endeavour to uphold the following to the best of my ability:**

1. I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals within the context of my involvement in Australian Football and will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background or special ability/disability.
2. I will abide by and teach the AFL Laws of the Game and the rules of my club and league/association.
3. I will be reasonable in the demands I make on the time commitments of the players in my care, having due consideration for their health and well-being.
4. I will refrain from any form of personal abuse or unnecessary physical contact with the players in my care.
5. I will have due consideration for the varying maturity and ability levels of my players when designing training schedules and activities and during competition.
6. I will not 'overplay' the talented players, but will ensure that all players have equal game time.
7. I will stress safety always.
8. In recognising the significance of injury and sickness, I will seek and follow the doctor's advice concerning the return to training of injured or ill players.
9. I will endeavour to stay informed about sound principles of coaching and skill development and of factors relating to the welfare of my players
10. I will, at all times, display and teach appropriate sporting behaviour, ensuring that players understand and practise the principles of fair play.
11. I will display and foster respect for umpires, opponents, coaches, administrators, parents and spectators.
12. I will ensure that my prime role – to provide a positive environment where players can learn skills and develop – is not overshadowed by a desire to win.
13. I reject the use of performance-enhancing substances in sport and will abide by the guidelines set forth in the AFL drug policy.

**Note:** This coaches' code of conduct is to be signed and adhered to as part of the accreditation requirements of the AFL. Coaches should be aware that in addition to this code, they may be obliged to sign a further code of conduct/ethics with their club and/or league.

## Risk management

Risk management is about assessing what might go wrong and acting to prevent possible accidents and undesirable events. The law requires people with a duty of care over others – as coaches have a duty of care to children – to take reasonable steps to avoid risk of harm or injury to those in their charge. Generally, the younger the person in care, the greater the duty of care that is owed.

To help avoid injury or harm, a risk management plan should be developed to address:

### Pre-training

- Warm-up equipment, facilities/changerooms, general environment.

### Training

- Equipment, environment, weather, ground surface, the physical condition, inexperience and attire/adornments of children.

### Post-training

- Physical condition of children and general environment.

**More detailed information regarding risk management for football clubs can be found in the *Risk Management Manual* of the AFL club management program.**

## Health and safety checklists

It is important that clubs develop health and safety checklists. Listed below are some examples of possible inclusions for the checklists.

### Players

- Health – medical conditions and medication needs. Ensure full recuperation before allowing children to resume activity.
- Highlight risks and stress safety practices.
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed.
- Protection – for example, insist on a mouthguard and encourage use of shin guards.
- Provide adequate warm-up exercises.
- Provide adequate supervision at all times.
- Activities should be appropriate to skill levels.
- Injury management – have a process for managing injuries.
- Group management – strategies are required to manage large groups of children.
- Match players of similar size, strength and skill levels.
- Rehydrate – encourage regular drinking to ensure children do not become dehydrated.
- Provide adequate warm-down exercise activities.
- Don't over-tire children.

### Activities

- Avoid high-intensity activities and over-training.
- Avoid activities which may cause injury.
- Stay within recommended procedures and conform to all rules. Quickly intervene if children engage in potentially harmful behaviour.

### Response to injuries or emergencies

- First-aid – have a trained first-aid person and appropriate equipment, including first-aid kit, ice and stretcher.
- Contacts – have emergency telephone numbers in a prominent location.
- Communication – have a telephone handy.
- Transport – have emergency transport available and know where medical services are located.

The following precautions should also be introduced to protect players from possible HIV (AIDS) and hepatitis B infection:

- Immediately report and treat all cuts and abrasions.
- Maintain a strict level of hygiene.
- Ensure blood spills are cleaned up immediately.
- Send players off the field if they have blood on themselves or their clothing, and deal with the problem.
- Encourage all players and team officials to be vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- Discourage communal bathing and sharing of towels and drink containers.
- Treat all blood-contaminated clothing and equipment as potentially infectious and discard appropriately.

### Providing a safe environment

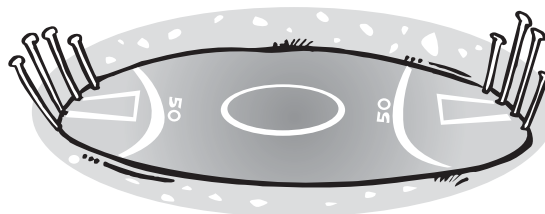
A safe environment is vital for all AFL Auskick centres and football clubs. The following areas should be considered:

#### Playing/training equipment

- Only use approved equipment.
- Ensure markers and other training aids are safe.
- Keep equipment in good condition.
- Train children in the use of all equipment.

#### Playing field

- Ensure all grounds are correctly marked, for example, is there enough distance between the boundary and the fence?
- Ensure a safe surface - check for holes, protrusions and debris.
- Make sure the perimeter is safe - for example, goal posts and light poles should be highly visible and padded. Remove equipment from near the boundary.
- Use zone markings to increase safety.



#### Weather

- Avoid training or playing in extreme weather conditions - lightning, severe cold and heat, thick fog or dust.
- Protect children from sunburn. Encourage them to use caps and sunscreen and utilise shade where available.
- Ensure players drink plenty of water before, during and after activity.
- Ensure children warm up after breaks. In cooler conditions, encourage them to wear warm clothing when not active.

#### General environment

- Ensure all spectators are outside the boundary/fence.
- Control the car-park - ensure the child pick-up areas are safe.
- Determine safe methods for crossing nearby roads - escort children across roads if necessary.
- Ensure changerooms are clean and safe, including all furniture and fixed items.
- Be alert to strangers around young children and warn children about approaching them.

#### Legal responsibilities

AFL Auskick coordinators and coaches are required to:

- Provide a safe environment.
- Adequately plan activities, taking into account the age and skill level of children and the possible risk factors.
- Evaluate players for injury and incapacity and ensure that injured or incapacitated players are not exposed to any additional risk of harm.
- Match players according to size, skill and maturity to avoid undue risk of injury.
- Provide safe and proper equipment that meets approved codes and standards.
- Warn players of the inherent risks of the sport so they know, understand and appreciate the risk before participating.
- Closely supervise activities to ensure the practice environment is as safe as possible.
- Know first-aid and basic emergency procedures such as a STOP and RICER procedures for managing injuries. Ensure medical assistance is available and that nothing is done to aggravate a child's injury.
- Develop clear, written rules for training and general conduct.
- Keep adequate records on all players, including relevant general information, medical information, accident reports and progress reports.

### **AFL Auskick Watch**

AFL Auskick Watch is an initiative aimed at preventing harm or danger to children attending AFL Auskick programs. The AFL Auskick Watch program can also be adapted to a junior club setting. Based on the Neighbourhood Watch program, the initiative involves selected parents or guardians being given the responsibility of observing nominated groups of children.

#### **Guidelines**

The coordinator must implement and maintain levels of supervision and care throughout the centre, and coordinate socially acceptable behaviour and interaction between parents and children.

The role of the group carer involves:

- Keeping all members of the group accounted for.
- Assisting the coach in keeping the children on task.
- Directing children to parents when required.
- Coordinating children to get to and from activity areas safely after drinks breaks.
- Ensuring parents collect their children after sessions.
- Providing extra supervision of the group and encouraging parents to assist.
- Being vigilant and aware of any unusual situation that may occur.

Committees must formalise procedures to prevent and safeguard children from harmful or dangerous situations.

**The NSW Department of Sport and Recreation has produced a resource, *Guidelines for Sport and Recreation Organisations – Working with Children and Child Protection*. This can be found on the website at [www.dsr.gov.au](http://www.dsr.gov.au).**

#### **Child protection legislation**

Child protection refers to keeping children safe from abuse and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children. Legislation in each state of Australia has been developed to protect children from inappropriate behaviour. The major focus of the legislation involves rigorous background checks on any individuals that wish to work with children. Under the current legislation a child refers to any person under 18 years of age.

Children have a fundamental right to be safe from any form of abuse while involved in sport. Child protection requires a commitment at all levels of sport to ensure that sporting environments are safe for children. This means that football clubs need to be aware of their legal and moral obligations to the children in their care and to appropriately establish policies and procedures to counter and deal with child misdemeanours.

The following strategies should be implemented to minimise the risk to both the club and the children of the club:

- Be aware of the risks and indicators of child abuse.
- Openly communicate the risk of child abuse.
- Know what relevant policies and procedures your sport has in place at the local, state and national level.
- Adopt or update codes of conduct at your club.
- Adopt thorough recruitment practices.
- Appoint a contact officer.
- Use accredited coaches and officials.
- Provide information to coaches and others working with children, on how to recognise signs of abuse.
- Ensure legal requirements are met.
- Manage suspected cases of child abuse.
- Know where to go for further advice.



### Employment and volunteer screening

Clubs and associations responsible for delivering junior football need to be aware of their state's position on volunteer screening. Several states have developed Child Protection Acts, which have significant implications for sport and recreation organisations.

Clubs should note that employers can be prosecuted for not asking paid and volunteer staff to make and sign a declaration. It is also mandatory for employers to screen all new applicants for paid child-related employment, which includes all employment that involves direct, unsupervised contact with children. This mostly affects coaches, group leaders, team managers and medical personnel in sport and recreation settings.

**For further information on police checks and related costs, contact your local police station.**

**Further information on risk management issues and legal responsibilities for club volunteers/administrators can be found in the *Risk Management Manual* of the AFL club management program.**



## Conclusion

This module has shown the importance of developing an understanding of the philosophies and guidelines behind junior football programs and the underpinning principles of the participation pathway from AFL Auskick through to the AFL elite competition.

The quality of coaching and umpiring is a vital part of junior football and this module has also outlined the support and programs available for coaches and umpires of the AFL game. However, the importance of ensuring a quality club environment for children extends further than the coaches and umpires. Other important components of developing the highest quality environment possible are also considered, including recruiting strategies for volunteers and players, and developing codes of conduct for parents on how to provide a safe environment at the club or AFL Auskick centre.

Finally, this module has shown how clubs can develop linkages with:

- AFL Auskick centres.
- Schools (primary and secondary).
- Junior and senior clubs.

Community football clubs, together with the many volunteers and administrators, form the cornerstone from which the AFL game is built. The effective management and appreciation of junior development programs is essential in order for community football and the AFL game to prosper.

## Glossary

**AFL Auskick** – AFL program conducted for children in the primary school age group (five to 12 years).

**AFL Game Development department** – one of the departments within the AFL, responsible for the development, administration and implementation of coordinated, integrated and quality national AFL programs.

**AFL participation pathway** – the pathway highlighting the progression from AFL Auskick through to the AFL elite competition.

**AFL umpiring pathway** – the pathway highlighting the career path for umpires from AFL Auskick/junior programs through to the AFL elite competition.

**Demotivators** – unpopular elements of the AFL game in relation to youth participation.

**Drop-out chasms** – breaks in continuity when children appear to drop out of playing the AFL game.

**Gatekeeper** – person who has the most influence on the child's experience while playing the AFL game, that is, coach, parent.

**Grassroots football** – football programs at the local community level as distinct from the elite AFL competition level.

**High performance** – football programs at the elite level - AFL, state league, TAC cup and other elite programs.

**Junior football** – football programs incorporating AFL Auskick (five to 12 years) and youth football (13 to 18 years).

**KickStart program** – football programs designed for indigenous Australians in northern Australia.

**Linkages** – methods of connecting or developing relationships.

**Mandatory accreditation** – compulsory level of training required.

**Motivators** – popular elements of the AFL game in relation to youth participation.

**Participation linkage model** – model indicating vital linkages between school and club environments.

**Policy** – a statement that expresses some position, value or belief and/or a plan or course of action, including specific steps and procedures.

**Recruitment** – a process designed to attract new players or volunteers to the football club.

**Risk management** – the term applied to the logical and systematic method of identifying, analysing, assessing, treating, monitoring and communicating risks that are associated with any activity, function or process, thereby enabling a football club to minimise losses and maximise opportunities.

**Volunteer** – a person who freely gives his or her time to support club activities.

**Youth football** – AFL program conducted for children in the secondary school age group (13 to 18 years).

## Notes

1. Australian Sports Commission, *The Sport Educator*, vol. 13 no. 2, 2002 (reprinted with permission from *Sunday Mail* (Adelaide) September 16, 2001 (Rachel Hancock).
2. Australian Football League together with Boston Consulting Group, *Investing in The Future of Australian Football*, October 2001.

## References

*AFL Record* (2001) AFL Publishing.

Australian Football League, (2001) *Youth Participation Research Report*, Deakin University.

Australian Football League, (2001) *Investing in The Future of Australian Football*.

Street Ryan and Associates, (2003) *National Census of Australian Football Participation*.

## Further information

**Australian Football League** – [www.afl.com.au](http://www.afl.com.au).

- AFL Auskick program.
- Youth football.
- Senior (open age) football.
- Umpiring.

**National Junior Sport Policy** – [www.activeaustralia.org](http://www.activeaustralia.org).

**Harassment-free sport: protecting children from abuse in sport** – [www.sportnet.com.au/activeaustralia/national/resources/hfs.htm](http://www.sportnet.com.au/activeaustralia/national/resources/hfs.htm).

**Guidelines for sport and recreation organisations - working with children and child protection** – [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au).

**State/territory departments of sport and recreation**

ACT – [www.sport.act.gov.au](http://www.sport.act.gov.au).

NSW – [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au).

NT – [www.nt.gov.au/dsr/](http://www.nt.gov.au/dsr/).

Qld – [www.sportrec.qld.gov.au](http://www.sportrec.qld.gov.au).

SA – [www.recSPORT.sa.gov.au](http://www.recSPORT.sa.gov.au).

WA – [www.dsr.wa.gov.au](http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au).

Tas. – [www.osr.tas.gov.au](http://www.osr.tas.gov.au).

Vic. – [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au).

# Appendices



## Letter of introduction

(Insert current date)

**AFL Auskick Coordinator/Principal/Junior Club President/Secretary**

Dear **(Name)**

The **(Club Name) Football Club**, is committed to supporting the development of Australian Football in our local community. We acknowledge your valuable contribution to football in our area and would like to offer some tangible forms of assistance to you and your members.

We do not want to intrude on your operations in any way, but by sharing our facilities, resources, coaches and players, we may be able to enhance your total program through the attached offers of assistance.

In addition, the **Operations Manager for the (League name) Football League, (name), and Regional Development Manager, (name)** assists in developing best practice policies at club level. We have worked closely with **(insert names of both)** in developing this offer. Our Club Development Officer, **(name)**, will be responsible for liaising with your **AFL Auskick/School/Club** should you be interested in our proposal.

We believe that by offering quality programs at club level and by forming supportive relationships with other football providers in our area, we can work together to ensure a strong and healthy pathway for children to follow. We have listed on the attachments various activities which our club can offer to your children and parents as part of our commitment to a fostership program in the area.

In addition we have enclosed a club prospectus and a response sheet for your use and information.

My executive team and I are looking forward to introducing ourselves and the **(name) Football Club** to you so that we can commence discussions with you and develop a closer working relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Development Officer

### Expression of interest form

**Yes** we would like to meet with your Development Officer to discuss developing a relationship with your club.

**No** we appreciate your offer but do not wish to pursue it at this stage.

AFL Auskick/School/Junior Club name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Coordinator/Principal/Club President: .....

Contact phone numbers: .....

.....

**Return the above to:**

(Development Officer name,  
club name and address  
and contact numbers)



## **Guidelines for conducting school clinics or assisting at AFL Auskick centres**

### **Aims**

The aims are going to be important in defining what happens on the day.

They include:

- Fun.
- Quality promotion of Australian Football.
- Promotion of the club and the league.
- Promotion of other groups involved (state league, AFL club, etc).
- Promotion of local AFL Auskick centres.
- Educational/instructive to teachers.
- Provides ongoing contact with other Clubs in the League.
- High energy/lots of activity.
- Chance for kids to meet/interact with local players/coaches.
- Ultimately, recruitment of players, coaches, officials and supporters.

### **IMPORTANT**

#### **Expectation of teachers during school clinics**

- Teachers are bound by duty of care for their classes, whether in or out of class.
- Do not conduct activities or accept responsibility for children in the absence of a teacher. Teachers must be with the group at all times.
- Teachers are encouraged to participate in the sessions either by practising the skills or by taking a group.
- At the same time, coaches and players also must act responsibly at all times.
- Ensure activities are safe, low risk and appropriate to the age, physical stature and maturity of the children involved.



### **Guidelines for conducting club clinics**

- The number of children should be in a ratio of no more than 30 children to each player (involve other players/coaches in attendance – state league, senior club, U18s etc).
- The number of footballs should be one between two children.
- Players should carry their own full-size football for demonstrations.
- When conducting warm-ups and running skill activities children should work in pairs with one football between each pair.
- Footballs should never lie idle while children line up in long queues. This is the greatest turn-off for kids and the cause of “mucking around”.
- Players should demonstrate the correct way of performing what is to be done (whether a warm-up activity or correct technique for performing a skill or running through how a relay is to be performed). Kids learn best by seeing rather than hearing.
- Players need to wear their club jumper.
- Kids like to see demonstrations of skills by the players (just simple lane work demonstrating the various skills).
- Skill activity teaching should progress using those skills in modified games (relays, races, ...). Kids get bored just doing drills.
- Players should always have a whistle (and make children aware that blowing it means stop/freeze).
- When addressing the group, position children in a U-shape with their backs to the sun; make sure speakers can be heard.
- Disciplining of children for misbehaving or not cooperating should be dealt with by quietly isolating the children from the rest of the group (have a teacher take charge of the child/ren for a period of time until they appear ready to return cooperatively).

**NEVER TOUCH A CHILD EXCEPT TO AID IN TEACHING A SKILL OR AS A “PAT ON THE BACK”**



**Feedback sheet for a school visit**

**EVALUATION FORM**

Contact: .....

Name of school: .....

Telephone: .....

Date of clinic: .....

Were all participants actively involved in the clinic?

Yes

No

Did the children enjoy the clinic?

Yes

No

The presentation of the clinic was:

Excellent to very good

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

The suitability of the skills taught were:

Excellent to very good

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

Teacher's comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's recommendations for future clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return the above to:**

Club Development Officer

Postal Address

## Sample club promotional brochure

### **(Club Name) Football Club**

The **(Club name) Football Club** is committed to the development of Junior Australian Football in our area.

As part of the (League) Football League and in conjunction with the **(State Body)** Development we are determined to create a "pathway" leading from the early skills development programs to junior football and on into senior football in our immediate area.

The attached prospectus details all you may need to know about the activities of our club.

### **Primary school-aged children**

**A.** The **(Name) Football Club** actively supports the AFL Auskick programs in the area, particularly those conducted at:

(Auskick name, coordinator's name and contact no.)

(Auskick name, coordinator's name and contact no.)

**B.** For children in grades five or six who want to enter into competition, we offer club teams in the (League) Football League under-10 (non-premiership) and 12 age groups. These children are coached by accredited coaches in a supportive environment under the guidance of the match committee within the club.

**C.** We also offer football clinics to our local primary schools and purchase the Classroom Footy Activity pack for our main primary schools each year.

### **Secondary school-aged**

**A.** Teams are entered in the **(League) Football League** at Under-14, Under-16 and Under-18 age groups.

**B.** Coaches are accredited and supported by the match committee within the club. The club is sensitive to the demands of school and part-time work for many of our players and attempts to develop open communication to best modify training and playing demands.

**C.** We host secondary school football matches on our oval each year, providing various forms of support where needed (sports, trainers, coaching support, etc).

### **Facilities**

**A.** The **(Name) Football Club** operates from the (Ground name and address).

**B.** Full lighting facilities for winter training.

**C.** Large clubrooms incorporating two changerooms and a main carpeted social room.

### **Interested in finding out more?**

We are a financially stable club fully aware of our responsibility in the community, conducting an active fostership/linkage program through local Auskicks, primary and secondary schools.

If you are interested in finding out more about our club, please contact our Development Officer as follows:

(Development Officer Name)

(Club Name) Football Club

(Address)

Telephone: (Contact numbers)



**Cover page for your fostership/linkage program**

Insert club logo

**“PROPOSED FOSTERSHIP/LINKAGE PROGRAM”**

This is an offer of support to

**(Name) Junior Club/AFL Auskick/Primary School**

On behalf of the

**(Club Name) Football Club**

affiliated with the

**(League Name) Football League**

A member of **(State Body)**

In offering this package, the club has the full support of the **(League Name) FL**,  
together with the **(State Body)** Development and its Regional Development Manager based at the **(Region)**

Presented by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Development Officer

## Sample fostership/linkage program

### Templeton Football Club fostership/linkage program

**Purpose statement:** To attract new members, playing and non-playing, to the Templeton Football Club through the conduct of community based football activities.

#### Fostership/linkage program:

##### AFL Auskick

- Club officials and players to attend the first day of the AFL Auskick program to conduct skills sessions.
- Grade five and six children to be invited to under-12 training.
- Official letter to be sent to all grade six participants, inviting them and their parents to join the under-12 team for next season.
- AFL Auskick children invited to participate in half time matches during the season – rounds 3,7,11 and 17.

##### Primary school

- Organise a coach for the Harold Street PS football team.
- Conduct a football clinic for grade \_ students at ground, link in with Smoke-Free Clinics organised by Football Victoria Development.

##### Secondary school

- Offer venue for a night Grand Final for Year seven and eight secondary school football.
- Club treasurer to talk to VCE business management class on how a community football club operates – business plan.

##### Junior football club

- Invite the under-16 players and their parents to a club lunch at a home game – round 13.

Senior players rostered to attend junior training to assist coaches.



**Notes**

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