

STRUCTURAL REVIEW OF **FOOTBALL**



WEST AUSTRALIAN
FOOTBALL COMMISSION INC.

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West Australian Football Commission Structural Review of Football

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Background

Role of the WA Football Commission

The West Australian Football Commission (WAFC) was established in 1989 as a body to develop Australian Football ('football') in WA, providing leadership, support, resources and funding to ensure Australian Football remains the most popular sport in WA.

The WAFC has a responsibility to ensure the health of our great game. To fulfill this responsibility, it is incumbent on the WAFC to continually explore opportunities that will allow future generations of Western Australians to engage, participate and enjoy all the benefits that our game has to offer.

To do this, the WAFC must act in the interests of the sport as a whole, balancing the interests of different parts of the football industry. This includes promoting, encouraging and overseeing the growth and development of football at all levels, providing guidance and leadership, ensuring the effective management of the WAFL competition and Western Australia's AFL Clubs, managing Domain Stadium (Subiaco Oval) in its final year of supporting AFL football and providing guidance, advocacy and planning for other football facilities.

Reasons for this Review

The WAFC has undertaken this Structural Review of Football to ensure the long term sustainability and success of the game. Whilst it is widely acknowledged that WA is a football heartland state that has achieved significant milestones in key football indicators over an extended period, there are some significant challenges facing our game in WA in the foreseeable future.

Based on research and evidence, this review provides insight into the opportunities to support a proactive and planned approach to enhance the success and sustainability of football both on

and off the field. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for WA football to reform the way we administer, structure and align our sport, to ensure that football remains successful and sustainable.

In the lifecycle of any sport it is important to continually review and assess performance and structures to ensure they are relevant for today and also for the future. Through this review we have been able to identify industry trends, market challenges, stakeholder feedback and, importantly, opportunities for how we can improve football in WA.

Over the last 30 years, the AFL has risen as a national league, taking the sport to new heights in terms of popularity, professionalism and expectations. It has changed how people watch and engage with football and has increased the financial strength of the game overall. The significant cultural, sporting and social influence that the AFL offers to the national sporting landscape has in turn created a relevance challenge for all state leagues, along with a growing expectation that state bodies are allocating appropriate resources to the critical foundations of developing talent and supporting broad based community participation.

Success of football in WA is heavily dependent on the on-field and financial success of our Western Australian AFL clubs, through their financial investment, support of community programs and development of football fans across the state.

Broader societal changes have also had an impact on football, with an increased range of leisure options available to potential players, both within and outside sport, plus the emergence of new market demands such as female football, engaging with multicultural markets and attracting and retaining youth in our game.

The WAFC is committed to ensuring that the reforms reflect the scope of the game in WA. The reforms aim to:

- ensure a balanced and fair allocation of resources;
- develop an integrated, aligned and sustainable football model;
- deliver positive outcomes for all West Australians participating in our game;
- outline appropriate governance models for the leadership of the sport; and
- develop effective talent pathways for those aspiring to play at the elite level.

Review Process

The WAFC engaged external global strategy consultants, The Boston Consulting Group ('BCG'), to undertake a detailed review of the football structures in Western Australia to assess their effectiveness in delivering football outcomes in a sustainable system across the State, and to make recommendations.

BCG was selected due to its global reputation in strategy consulting and its specific experience in the sports sector, advising professional and non-professional bodies, and governments, on issues relating to sport.

In undertaking the review, BCG developed an understanding of the key issues facing WA football through interviewing more than 70 stakeholders and surveying an additional 1000 people from the WA football industry. They conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of data sourced from WAFC, WAFL clubs, the AFL and community clubs. They drew from other states and other sports, across Australia and internationally. They engaged with numerous stakeholders in the development

of their recommendations, through one-to-one discussions, an Industry Reference Panel, a WAFC Project Reference Group and numerous meetings with the WAFC Commissioners.

In addition to the work undertaken by BCG, the WAFC also undertook other research, including a stakeholder satisfaction survey with over 2000 respondents, a Youth Football Review and the first phase of work on a female football engagement strategy. These projects have provided additional information used to complement the BCG findings to shape the final reform initiatives in this report.

The BCG team was overseen by Colin Carter, who has had a long history with football, including writing the report for the VFL in 1985 outlining a national competition and draft and salary cap strategies to keep clubs competitive. BCG produced a report with 19 recommendations, which is attached to this report. The WAFC Commissioners and management have worked together to consider these recommendations and have accepted 18 of these 19 recommendations.

Having regard to the work done by BCG and additional work done within the WAFC, the WAFC has developed this report, which outlines the reform agenda for the coming years under our three pillars of Engagement, Talent and Sustainability. We will now continue to consult with all stakeholder groups in relation to the reform initiatives, refine them as necessary and work together on implementation over the next five years. In doing this, the WAFC will continue to balance and consider the interests of the different parts of the football industry.

The reform recommendations outlined in this report will ultimately form part of a new strategic plan for the WAFC, which will articulate in more detail how the WAFC will support the new vision for football in WA over the next five years.

VISION

for WA Football

To offer all Western Australians a positive connection with football throughout their lives.



Engagement

More people are engaged in football than with any other sport in WA.

Talent

WA contributes proportionately more, higher quality talent to the AFL than other states.

Sustainability

WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially sustainable, with integrity at all levels.

GOALS

- Introduce all WA children to football
- Increase the number of players who choose to continue to play football
- Support all types of participants, including volunteers
- Deliver measurable community benefits through football
- Maintain a quality state league competition

- Increase the number and quality of AFL draftees
- Ensure career pathways for talented coaches, umpires and administrators

- Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs
- Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model
- Improve the quality of governance and integrity
- Build the capacity of staff and volunteers
- Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities

The vision and strategic pillars developed by BCG as outlined above will be further refined after the consultation process.

Key Findings

Engagement

Current state

The review found that WA performs relatively well on engagement¹. We have a high rate of engagement compared to other states and strong growth, driven largely by introductory participation programs, which have been effectively delivered through schools. The drop-off in participation between junior and youth levels in WA is more pronounced than in other states. In country areas football still remains popular but faces its own unique challenges with changing demographics and changing populations of the towns. There is some complexity in the structure of the district system, which underpins junior football and how it fits with other parts of the football industry.

Football is underpinned by a large and valued network of volunteers, who, in our clubs, are seeking more support and resources to assist them to deliver better club and game day environments, particularly in the areas of coaching, umpiring and administration².

The WAFL has contributed so much to the game of football in WA, reflecting much of our history, culture and the structure of our game. WAFL clubs are under considerable pressure, being pulled in multiple directions: providing a talent pathway for the AFL, playing a community role in their districts and regions, managing and trying to commercialise their home venues and striving to win premierships for their passionate members.

Reforms

Our reforms under the engagement pillar relate to attracting more players, especially women, better supporting community football through a simplified well-resourced district structure, supporting an exciting WAFL competition and a more focused allocation of resources to deliver agreed outcomes.



Football development is currently divided into nine districts in the metro area. Consolidating these into three Football Development Regions will simplify the structure, without any disruption to the way junior competitions currently operate. WAFC development staff can then be located together in appropriate and geographically convenient accommodation to effectively service the region.

Coaching, umpiring, club development and youth football will be enhanced significantly via increased investment into front line roles in the three regions. This investment provides further resources to clubs and schools. The WAFC will continue to work closely with both public and private schools in the delivery of introductory programs, competitions and investigating shared use facilities to support the growth of our game.

¹ Pages 13-32 of the BCG report outline analysis and recommendations relating to engagement

² The 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey (attached) confirms that these are areas of priority.



“The recent increase in the scale and profile of women’s football presents great opportunities for WA football.”

Specific measures will be taken to increase youth retention and engagement, in line with the findings of the recent Youth Football Review, which is attached to this report.

WAFC will have targets based on club participation, retention and stakeholder satisfaction with a focus on conversion rates from introductory participation into club environments. The WAFC will establish a centrally managed development levy which will be reinvested into community football programs. Clubs will continue to receive existing registration fees with an overall objective of keeping football affordable.

The recent increase in the scale and profile of women’s football presents great opportunities for WA football. The development of a new female competition aligned to the WAFL as part of the pathway to AFLW offers an exciting opportunity for the industry. Integration of women’s football with men’s at a community level will provide a source of engagement, growth and regeneration in coming years.

An opportunity has been identified to release WAFL clubs from the increasing demands of the AFL in relation to talent development to allow them to

focus on providing the premier, broadcast-quality competition as the peak of community football in the state. Work will be undertaken to ensure that the WAFL is an exciting option for fans and players by helping establish its unique position within the market, through greater competition equalisation measures and game day experience improvements, whilst enhancing connections to the community. Funding of WAFL clubs will have three components, baseline funding, outcome-linked funding and the opportunity for special project funding.

The existing AFL club partnership model with the WAFL will be renewed until 2021 under the same conditions, to provide a clear direction, an ongoing revenue source and to continue contributing to the success of our AFL clubs, which is key for WA football sustainability.

There is also potential to align the governance of regional football to ensure the best use of limited resources across our enormous state, by investigating greater coordination and alignment between the Regional Football Development Councils and the WA Country Football League.

Further work is also to be undertaken to better understand the needs of Aboriginal players to improve player retention whilst also looking to further develop coaches, umpires and administrators. Initiatives will also be pursued to make football more accessible for people with disabilities and target multicultural participants, coaches, umpires and administrators.

Talent

Current state

Fans (and their money) are increasingly drawn to the AFL and the production of talent for the AFL is important for football’s sustainability in WA, our two AFL teams and as an attractive pathway to build engagement.

The talent produced by WA for the AFL is inconsistent and has been in decline³. The number of top 20 draft picks has been declining by 16% per annum over the last 10 years. BCG established that this is consistent with the views of AFL clubs, who rate WA the worst or second worst state in terms of ‘focus on preparing players for the AFL’ and ‘ability to prepare players for the AFL’.

This has been driven by three factors. Firstly, an inadequacy in resources supporting the talent pathway in WA. In the last 12 months the WAFC has put significant effort into increasing resources and structures within the WAFC to support talent development.

The second factor relates to inconsistencies in player program delivery, crowded player pathways and a lack of alignment between player outcomes and club objectives. Thirdly, it is affected by drop out rates in male youth football. To maximise the development of talent, a consistent and fully-aligned system is required, with a clear ‘player first’ mentality. WA has been very successful in the development of female talent to support the AFLW competition, although more work is required to support the growing expectations and demands.

Reforms

BCG made two recommendations in relation to talent. The first was to move to a centrally-managed talent development program. The second was to set up a separate six team elite talent competition to replace the existing Colts competition.

The WAFC has deeply considered these recommendations and has decided to implement only the first and closely monitor the outcomes of this reform. This reform will involve the complete transfer of responsibility for the WA talent pathway to the WAFC, including the operation of the existing nine WAFL club development programs and Colts programs. Whilst the WAFC will assume full



operational, financial and governance responsibility for the pathway, the nine programs will continue to be aligned with and branded as the nine WAFL clubs.

The BCG research suggests that a six team competition would deliver a greater talent outcome. However, the WAFC believes that this degree of change is not justified without first testing whether improved talent outcomes can be achieved by the WAFC managing the talent pathway, while retaining the connection with WAFL clubs. The WAFC believes this will achieve a more focused and consistent approach to the talent pathway, while still creating player pathways and loyalty to WAFL Clubs.

Delivering improved talent outcomes without moving to a six-team competition will require full commitment from the industry and a strong working relationship between the WAFC and WAFL clubs.

The WAFL will still be the only state-based competition in WA where mature aged players can be recruited to the AFL. The WAFC talent program will provide support to high potential mature age players in the WAFL.

The new talent program will provide enhanced access and opportunity for talented regional players and ensure players are not overloaded. An equivalent pathway for female participants will also be developed and implemented.

³ Pages 34-52 of the BCG report outline analysis and recommendations relating to talent



“While the AFL clubs operate with considerable autonomy, there is still a strong connection between grass roots and elite football.”



Sustainability

Current state

At a high level, the financial sustainability of WA football is healthy⁴. WA is the only state where royalty payments go directly from AFL clubs into community football, which occurs because the WAFC owns the two AFL licences. While the AFL clubs operate with considerable autonomy, there is still a strong connection between grass roots and elite football.

Our AFL clubs are well managed, which is important to the financial sustainability of football across the state.

At the next level, WAFL clubs are under financial pressure. Many clubs are currently developing new facilities, which increase opportunities, but also risks. While average WAFL revenue has increased at five percent per annum over the last ten years, expenses have increased at six percent over that time. The average net balance (revenue less expenditure) over the last five years is significantly lower than the previous five years for 7 of the 9 WAFL clubs.

In relation to governance, it is intended that the WAFC represents all of WA football. A voting mechanism is in place to give all stakeholders a role in the appointment of commissioners, but the final decision must be ratified by a majority of the members, who are appointed by the AFL clubs and the WAFL clubs. Because of this, the WAFC is perceived by some as not representing the interests of all of football and being too heavily weighted towards the AFL or the WAFL.

Reforms

Reforms have been identified to ensure we work together as one football family, match resources to roles and support our volunteers.

A number of changes are recommended to ensure that the WA football industry is working together. Firstly, a change to voting structure is proposed to ensure that community football has an appropriate role in the voting process for the WAFC Board of Commissioners. The other side of this change is to bring the constitutions of affiliate organisations (community football) in line with the WAFC constitution, to ensure that all parts of football work together in the interests of the sport. For example, an industry-wide approach to player payments will be developed with all relevant stakeholders, to ensure an aligned approach across the sport.

At a district level, governance will be simplified, with three Development Councils in place of the current nine.

Changes are being made at the WAFC to ensure that its organisational structure and resource allocation match its purpose and professional development opportunities are in place to attract and retain the best people. All WAFC funding will be reviewed and linked to clear criteria, to ensure that funding is being spent in the best interests of the sport as a whole. Additional focus will be placed on facility planning, advocacy and shared use opportunities, including appropriate facilities for female participants. Opportunities for sharing services and branding with the AFL (such as AFL WA) will be investigated further.

A periodic WA Football Innovation Forum is also proposed, to take into account concerns and innovations from all football stakeholders, and ensure that WA football continues to improve and build on these reforms, in line with future strategic plans.

WAFL sustainability will be addressed in a number of ways. Transferring responsibility for talent development from WAFL clubs provides the catalyst for reviewing further equalisation measures (such as hard and soft caps on spending) that will support their revised role.

Changing to an 18 round season will allow for all teams to play each other twice whilst reducing the financial costs associated with supporting the current 22 round format. Further work will be done to maximise the value of WAFL club assets and membership and position the WAFL as our premier competition. A long term broadcast deal will be sought to support the relevance, exposure and sustainability of the WAFL competition.

No recommendations are being made in relation to the number of WAFL clubs, but funding to clubs will be adjusted in accordance with a more focused role and linked to the delivery of agreed outcomes. Individual WAFL clubs will need to be financially sustainable and in the case of financial distress, mergers will be preferred over bail-outs by the WAFC, to ensure that the WAFC is not diverting resources from key strategic objectives of the WAFC.

The high demands on volunteers is a major challenge for community clubs and will be addressed in a few ways. Firstly, it will be addressed through a volunteer engagement program, to make it easier to attract and retain volunteers. Secondly, the WAFC will develop a club consolidation guide to support clubs that want to merge, reducing duplication and volunteer burden and improving sustainability. This will focus on junior and senior teams sharing the same name and facilities.

⁴ Pages 54-73 of the BCG report relate to analysis and recommendations relating to sustainability

Reforms by Football Segment

The WAFC recognises the breadth of the review and acknowledges the various stakeholders who have a strong interest in the review findings. This section of the report outlines the key reforms relevant to the main industry segments, although a number of reforms will have impact across multiple segments of our game.



West Australian Football League

The West Australian Football League (‘WAFL’) competition is an integral component of the WA football structure and will continue to be positioned as the premier state league.

The challenges

The review found the following challenges in relation to the WAFL competition.

- WAFL clubs are being pulled in multiple directions: providing a talent pathway for the AFL, playing a community role in their districts and regions, managing and trying to commercialise their Club/home venues and striving to win premierships for their passionate members.
- WAFL clubs are under financial pressure, with expenses growing faster than revenue in recent years, challenges with growing attendances and memberships, and a difficult commercial market.
- The quality of AFL draft talent produced in WA has been inconsistent and is declining.
- The WAFL competition has a history of consistently successful and consistently unsuccessful teams, both on and off the field, which creates an opportunity to create a more equal, competitive and exciting competition.
- The growth of women’s football represents a significant opportunity for WAFL relevance.
- In their current form, some WAFL game day facilities and experiences face challenges in attracting a new generation of fans, growing memberships and attendances at games.
- A quality state-based competition must be maintained, to support our AFL clubs and avoid the need for a national reserves competition.

The objectives

The overarching objectives of the proposed changes relating to the WAFL are to:

- support the WAFL as the pre-eminent competition in WA.
- clearly define the role of the WAFL competition (and its clubs);
- ensure the necessary resources are provided to support this defined role; and
- invest and manage these resources effectively to ensure the WAFL competition thrives as the nation’s best state league competition.

The WAFC is committed to working with WAFL clubs to ensure that the reforms outlined below are implemented effectively and that they serve to protect and support the ongoing health of this important competition.

The WAFL has a rich history that we want to preserve whilst keeping the WAFL relevant to the next generation of players and fans. We want to support a competitive, broadcast-quality competition, that supports our AFL teams, provides great experiences for their communities and supports mature age talent for the AFL.

The reforms

The reforms that directly relate to the WAFL competition are outlined below.

1. Renew the partnership model until 2021, to provide stability to the competition and a clear development pathway for our two AFL clubs.
2. Transfer full strategic, operational and financial responsibility for the WA talent pathway from the WAFL to the WAFC (with commensurate changes to WAFL funding and AFL draft fees).
3. Monitor the impact of the new talent structure in line with clear, measurable targets relating to talent outcomes, player retention and participant satisfaction.
4. Adjust funding to WAFL clubs to ensure a sustainable level of spending consistent with WAFL’s defined role as the premier state league, through a model that considers baseline funding, outcome-linked funding and project-specific funding, with clear criteria linked to objectives. This will be done in consultation with clubs, providing an adequate transition process.
5. Identify and implement other specific competition equalisation measures that support club sustainability, team competitiveness and a broadcast-quality competition.
6. Undertake a feasibility study of joint commercial assets and membership structure of the WAFL to increase value and financial return of those assets, whilst delivering increased value to partners.
7. Seek a long term broadcast deal that can offer new revenue opportunities for WAFL Clubs and showcase the WAFL to the broadcast market in WA.
8. Implement strategies to work with the WAWFL to develop a new WAFL-aligned women’s competition and determine size and licence conditions for teams in the competition.
9. Change the WAFL home and away season to an 18 round season to assist in managing the costs of the competition.
10. Undertake a detailed review of community expectations for WAFL clubs to develop an appropriate mix of facilities, services, food and beverage experiences plus marketing strategies to attract a new generation of members and fans to the WAFL.
11. Ensure the WAFL remains the only senior competition in WA from which AFL players can be drafted and provide support to potential draftees accordingly.
12. Relocate the district development staff into 3 metropolitan based offices, central to their geographic area of responsibility (which could be at a WAFL club, subject to appropriate facilities being available).

QUESTION	ANSWER
Why is the partnership model with AFL clubs being renewed?	The ongoing success of our AFL clubs is vital to the health of the sport in WA, in terms of engagement and financial stability. The WAFL is the state's premier competition and participating through partnership with WAFL clubs is the best fit for our AFL clubs. The partnership enhances the competition and eliminates the needs for a national reserves competition. Extending to 2021 also allows more time to review the partnership model once other reforms have been implemented.
What impact will the reforms have on existing player alignments to WAFL zones?	Players will continue to be bound to their respective WAFL clubs by existing WAFL boundaries as per the WAFL rules and regulations. This was an important consideration of the WAFC.
Will WAFL clubs still receive AFL draft fees for mature age talent drafted from the WAFL competition?	AFL draft fees will remain with the WAFC for any player drafted from the under-age competition and re-invested directly into the WA player pathway to support future programs. A revised financial model for mature age talent will be developed that acknowledges the WAFL club's role in supporting mature age talent.
Do the reforms dilute the role of the WAFL competition and its standing in the community?	<p>One of the overarching objectives of the reforms is to provide the WAFL competition with a clear role and purpose in the WA football system. This purpose may be slightly different to what it has been in the past, but it provides the WAFL with a wonderful opportunity to clearly position itself to be the premier state league in the country.</p> <p>The reforms include additional work to be undertaken to review the existing facility standards, marketing strategies, commercial/ membership assets and customer expectations, to resource the WAFL competition to meet its redefined role.</p>
What happens to the WAFL Talent Manager role that currently exists at each WAFL club?	<p>Employment obligations for each WAFL Talent Manager will be assumed by the WAFC.</p> <p>Similarly, the employment arrangement for all coaches, trainers, support staff etc who are engaged through the existing talent pathway (WAFL 14s, 15s and 16s development squads and WAFL Colts) will be transferred from the individual WAFL club to the WAFC.</p> <p>The WAFC will work closely with the WAFL Clubs through the transition period to develop adequate resources of both paid employees and volunteers to support the talent pathway.</p>

QUESTION	ANSWER
What happens to the existing funding that is provided by the WAFC to each WAFL club through the WAFL Funding Agreement?	<p>The WAFC acknowledges that any variations to funding must be carefully managed and provide appropriate time for adjustment by the clubs. In the short term, the funding that is directly allocated to WAFL club's talent programs will be re-invested into the WAFC operated talent pathway. Given that this money is currently tagged for specific talent program resources, the reallocation of the funding will have a neutral impact on each club's financial position.</p> <p>In the medium to long term, WAFL funding will move to a model that supports sustainability and competition equalisation objectives. This model will include baseline funding, outcome-linked funding and special purpose funding. This model will be developed in consultation with the clubs and give consideration to a transition period, allowing the WAFL opportunity to adjust and reset financial operating models. A feature of this revised model will be the development of agreed key performance indicators in line with the support provided.</p>
Will this have an overall adverse effect on players dropping out of football altogether?	The aim of the reformed talent pathway is to provide a clearly defined and well-resourced under-age pathway that offers talented players the best possible environment to succeed. The connection to community youth football and to the senior pathway within WAFL clubs and senior community football will still be strong, allowing opportunities for players to transition once they move out of the 18's competition. Through the talent pathway, those who 'fall out' will be supported and engaged to keep playing football.
Doesn't removing the AFL draft fees from the WAFL clubs take away an important source of revenue?	The redefined role of WAFL clubs will no longer include responsibility for the development of players from 14 to 19 years and this will include the expense that is associated with this role. With the WAFC assuming responsibility for the talent pathway (including all expenses), the reallocation of AFL draft fees to the WAFC will allow the money to be invested directly back into under-age development programs that will further support the development of the next wave of talented players and coaches to support the program.
Why aren't WAFL clubs merging?	<p>WAFL clubs are currently in a range of different financial situations. While the WAFC will work with WAFL clubs to explore opportunities to maximise the value of club assets, it is ultimately the responsibility of each WAFL club and its board to ensure financial sustainability. The financial sustainability of a club is an indication of its relevance to the market.</p> <p>Under the new funding approach, it will be incumbent on WAFL clubs to demonstrate their relevance through their financial sustainability. Mergers may be considered by clubs as a path to financial sustainability. Such changes would be considered but not forced by the WAFC.</p>



The objectives

The overarching objectives of the proposed changes relating to talent pathways are to:

- Ensure we are providing all Western Australian players the best chance of being identified as a talented player regardless of socio-economic status, personal circumstances or geographic location;
- Ensure that we are providing identified talented players with the best possible developmental opportunity to maximise their individual potential, regardless of socio-economic status, personal circumstances or geographic location;
- Ensure AFL clubs and the AFL regard WA as the pre-eminent development state for talented players, capable of transitioning easily to the demands of AFL football;
- Ensure that WA is regarded as a state that has best practice processes and people to underpin its talent development model;
- Ensure that WA leads the development of female talent to support the new AFLW competition;
- Support mature age talent through the WAFL competition; and
- Support the development of quality coaches in the talent pathway.

Talented Players

The identification, and development of talented players is an important pathway in the WA football system.

The challenges

The national sporting landscape is a competitive market where sports compete for the best athletes to play their game. The AFL and our AFL Clubs have high expectations for the talent system in WA, to ensure that talented athletes are trained, developed and prepared both physically and mentally for their competition.

The BCG report identified that the talent produced by WA for the AFL is in decline. The number of top 20 draft picks has been declining by 10% pa over the last 10 years. This is consistent with the views of AFL clubs, who rate WA the worst or second worst state in terms of ‘focus on preparing players for the AFL’ and ‘ability to prepare players for the AFL’.

This has been driven by a few factors. Firstly, an inadequacy in resources supporting the talent pathway in WA. In the last 12 months the WAFC has put significant effort into increasing resources and structures within the WAFC to support talent development.

The second factor relates to the pathways and competitions available to participants. To maximise the development of talent, a fully-aligned system is required, with a clear ‘player first’ mentality, which puts player development ahead of team results. Thirdly, the drop out rates in male youth football has reduced the pool of players available to recruit into the talent pathway.

The reforms

The reforms that directly relate to talent are outlined below.

1. Transfer full strategic, operational and financial responsibility for the WA talent pathway to the WAFC.
2. Establish a clear, appropriately resourced, female talent pathway that supports the development of female talent.
3. Develop an annual calendar of competition that incorporates both the needs of schools and state-based talent academies to reduce overloading players.
4. Provide support to mature age talent playing in the WAFL competition.
5. In conjunction with community football, establish a more concise pathway to allow talented regional players to be identified and developed.
6. Work closely with our AFL clubs to effectively align Next Generation Academies with WAFL programs and planning.

QUESTION

ANSWER

How will WAFL clubs survive?

The WAFC will continue to fund WAFL clubs to the extent necessary for them to play their role in WA football.

The WAFC will also work with WAFL clubs to explore opportunities to maximise the value of club assets (including memberships), either collectively or individually.

Will WAFL clubs still have access to the community within their district and country regions?

Under the revised model, WAFL clubs maintain relevance and connection to community football without having to invest into talent programs. The WAFC will work with WAFL clubs to develop effective engagement strategies with their communities, in line with their more focused role in WA football.

From a regional perspective, the WAFC will assume responsibility for regional talent identification and development. The reform relating to the WACFL and the RFDCs will also consider the formation of regional development hubs and these hubs could form an integral component of how regional talent development is resourced in this future model. Existing WAFL zones will remain in place to support connection with community.

QUESTION	ANSWER
WAFL clubs have had the role of developing talented players for years. How can the WAFC do it any better?	<p>Central responsibility for talent development aims to drive the establishment of a consistent player development model, game structures, enhanced player development opportunities and a more effective allocation of resources.</p> <p>WAFC will be able to develop a model with a 'player first' focus, without the pressure of competing club priorities. This will allow the WAFC to make decisions in the best interest of individual players and the overall objectives of the talent program. The key focus will be on best practice player development.</p>
Will existing WAFL zones still be in place under the talent program?	As a baseline, the existing WAFL zoning arrangements will remain in place. Upon graduation from the talent program, players will be residentially bound to their WAFL club.
Is the AFL dictating how we set up our talent pathway?	<p>The AFL is an integral partner and we acknowledge its role in leading the game in a national context. Importantly our two AFL Clubs are key customers to our talent pathway, where their first choice athletes come from WA. The restructure of the WA talent pathway is designed to deliver a best practice player development model that builds on our existing model and is open to learning from other leading models. We believe the recommendations will deliver enhanced outcomes for the AFL and the AFL clubs whilst at the same time offering all talented West Australian players the opportunity to maximise their potential.</p> <p>The AFL has been an important stakeholder throughout the review process, however it has not at any point dictated to the WAFC what the WA talent pathway should look like.</p>
This looks like the TAC Cup. Whilst this has produced a lot of AFL players, doesn't this focus on pure talent development result in players who don't get drafted walking away from the game?	<p>We have not elected to adopt a TAC Cup model, recognising the importance of keeping players aligned to WAFL Clubs.</p> <p>The aim of the restructured talent pathway is not only to identify and develop the best talent, but also to ensure that if talented players are not drafted, they remain engaged in our game for their whole life. The delivery of a holistic development model, across the whole talent pathway will support the production of talented, well-rounded and well-prepared players who will be highly sought after once they make the transition into senior football ranks.</p>
What is the AFL contributing?	The AFL will be engaged as a funding partner for the talent model, having already invested an additional \$256,000 towards talent in 2017.

QUESTION	ANSWER
Why did you not elect to go with the BCG recommendation of a six team competition?	<p>Whilst the BCG research indicated this would be an ideal model in consolidating resources, effort and quality of the talent competition, it also would have meant a fundamental restructure to the football system in WA.</p> <p>This recommendation has been carefully considered by the WAFC. Whilst offering benefits it was also seen that it could fracture the structure of the football system in WA and in particular the WAFL competition. The branding and alignment of teams to a WAFL Club will remain a feature of the talent competition, with a clear transition pathway into WAFL Clubs for mature aged players.</p> <p>The WAFC also considers that a broader depth of talent across 9 teams rather than 6 provides more opportunities to showcase and develop talent, knowing that the youth market is significantly affected by different ability and development rates of players.</p> <p>The WAFC wants to assess the effectiveness of fully managed and adequately resourced talent program.</p>
How much does the WAFC currently put into talent and what will be required under this proposed model?	Last year, the WAFC invested \$2.7 million in talent, either directly (\$1.2m) or through the WAFL funding agreement (\$1.5m). It is expected that the new talent program will have minimal additional cost, as talent funding through the WAFL funding agreement will be redirected to the WAFC talent program. The WAFC will also be working with the AFL and potential external partners to ensure the program is funded appropriately.
Many say that talent should not just be measured on the number of players drafted but also how quickly they play their first game and for how long they remain an AFL player. Is the BCG data too simple and what will be the WAFC's measure of success for talent?	Draft quality and total numbers drafted represent how the market views the level of talent in each state, at that point in time. It is the best reflection of each state's ability to identify and develop talent. Once a player is drafted, there are many other variables that can affect their long-term performance, for which the WAFC and other state football bodies have no control over. These variables make any broader measure meaningless or open to wide interpretation. We are satisfied that 'total numbers drafted' is an appropriate and consistent measure for talent.
How will regional players access the talent program?	<p>The WAFC will assume responsibility for the development of talent in regional areas. The WAFC staff (Regional Development Managers and Talent Managers) will manage the operational aspects of their respective regional talent programs.</p> <p>As a baseline, players will be zoned according to residential status. The WAFC may implement flexible programming and fixturing strategies to ensure enhanced access for regional players.</p>



“Community is the beating heart of football in WA.”



Community Football

Community is the beating heart of football in WA. It represents the largest proportion of participants in our game, providing an opportunity for all West Australians to engage in our game, regardless of their age, geographic location or ability. Community football creates many social, physical and community benefits starting from Auskick through to Masters football.

The challenges

Despite strong growth in introductory programs and high community engagement, there are some challenges in relation to community football:

- Volunteers are under significant pressure to play multiple roles in community clubs, especially in regional areas;
- Lack of clear participation pathway for women;
- Participation numbers drop off between junior and youth levels;
- Metro development structures contain duplication and lack specialised on-the-ground support resources (e.g. in coaching, umpiring, administration);
- Development staff are focused on introductory programs;
- Inconsistencies in player payments create misaligned incentives and place financial pressure on clubs; and
- Community football feels under-represented in the WAFC governance structure.

The objectives

The overarching objectives of the reforms relating to community football are to:

- ensure that all levels of the game experience safe, fun and engaging game day environments, sound governance frameworks and appropriate facilities;

- provide enhanced support to the large number of coaches, umpires, administrators and volunteers who participate in community football throughout the state;
- restructure the WAFC to align our staffing model to our strategic priorities whilst focusing on putting more staff in the front line to better engage and service stakeholders;
- focus on creating lifelong participants in our game through an aligned participation pathway where affiliates, competitions and WA football structures work in partnership;
- ensure that community football is appropriately represented in the WAFC governance framework;
- deliver a more efficient and consolidated governance framework in metropolitan and regional areas; and
- provide support to regional football, recognising the disproportionate community impact it can have.

The reforms

The reforms will have a broad influence across key community stakeholders including Senior Amateur Competitions, Women’s Football, Junior Competitions, Schools and Country. The reforms that directly relate to Community Football are outlined below:

Reform metro development structure

1. Minimise duplication by consolidating into three football development regions in the metropolitan area and eight country regions, without disruption to the existing junior and senior district competition structures, with corresponding governance reform.
2. Increase the number of development staff working in the specialised areas of coaching, umpiring, club development and youth football.

3. Implement clear KPIs to measure retention of participants in the key transition phases of their participation journey to create more life-long participants in our game.
4. Locate WAFC development staff together in appropriate and geographically convenient accommodation to effectively service the region.
5. Implement a best practice management framework that supports the WAFC having the responsibility for the management and governance of any player registration levies that support community investment.
6. Introduce an annual qualitative survey on stakeholders’ perception of the health of our game and the delivery of key programs and initiatives.

Engage with key groups

7. Develop and adopt a clearly defined and resourced female participation and talent pathway.
8. Implement Youth Football Review strategies for better retention.
9. Diversify football leadership roles to better reflect the community.
10. Implement strategies to support the needs of Aboriginal players, coaches, umpires and administrators to improve retention and engagement.
11. Develop a diversity action plan to target multicultural participants, coaches, umpires and administrators.
12. Work to develop and implement engagement programs for people with disabilities.

Work better together

13. Develop and adopt a revised WAFC governance model that more accurately represents the existing mix of WA football stakeholders.
14. Support affiliate organisations to revise their constitutions to deliver enhanced consistency and alignment to industry goals.
15. Undertake an industry-wide review of player payments and establish a clear policy on how these payments can be implemented and monitored across all senior competitions in WA.
16. Investigate greater coordination and alignment between the Regional Football Development Commissions and the WA Country Football League.

Reduce burden on volunteers

17. Undertake a volunteer engagement program for customisation by different affiliates, to make volunteering easier to navigate and less onerous.
18. Consider undertaking a social impact study of football to better articulate its benefits and the need for ongoing support.
19. Develop a ‘how to’ guide that provides a framework for junior and senior clubs voluntarily considering amalgamation.

Improve facilities planning

20. Increase the focus on community facility planning, advocacy and shared use opportunities, including appropriate facilities for female participants.

QUESTION	ANSWER
Doesn't the new development model make it confusing for players / parents to understand the pathway?	The reformed development model is designed to enhance governance, better support volunteers and increase front-line resources to community football. The reformed model does not impact on the existing structure of any junior or senior community competition. All of these competitions will continue to function as they currently do. The reformed model streamlines governance and puts more human resources into the critical areas of coaching, umpiring, youth football and club development.
Won't dictating targets from head office remove local ownership on key challenges?	The philosophy of local solutions for local challenges is still one that will remain a strong point of reference for the WAFC. The WAFC will look to support these local solutions as much as possible. Some fundamental pillars are critical to the health of our game. These pillars include coaching, umpiring, good governance, player welfare and safety and game integrity. The measures of success for these fundamental pillars will be developed in partnership with staff and key stakeholders and will reflect an all-industry approach to the key aspects of our game's future. Importantly, our targets will focus on engagement, retention and satisfaction of those involved in our game.
Will removing WAFC development staff from WAFL clubs diminish the WAFL club brand and increase the disconnect between the clubs and their respective districts?	The relocation of WAFC development staff provides a far more efficient and aligned management structure for development staff with effective access to each other and their respective manager. The opportunity to share ideas, communicate quickly and effectively, plan development activities and execute plans will be greatly enhanced. WAFL clubs will still have a development officer working within their district (as is currently the case) and still have an unrestricted opportunity to engage with their heartland junior clubs. WAFL Clubs with appropriate accommodation to support development staff would be the preferred location for development teams.
Shouldn't any monies levied on football participants remain with the local development council?	The intent of the recommendation relating to WAFC governance of any registration levies is to ensure that the appropriate management and accountability protocols are in place for these funds. A model will be developed for player registration levies to continue to support clubs and competitions, with the aim of centralising the levy collection currently in place for junior football. The model will focus on maintaining the affordability of our game whilst allocating part of the levies towards strategic and targeted community football programs and initiatives. The WAFC would seek to establish an advisory committee to provide feedback and advice on appropriate community investments. This change will alleviate any risk/responsibility that exists for the various volunteers in managing stakeholder levies.

WAFC

As a key part of WA football, the structure, role and governance of the WAFC was also subject to the review.

The challenges

The WAFC must represent the sport as a whole in WA, balancing the interests of different parts of the football family. The following challenges exist for the WAFC in this role:

1. The AFL club licence ownership structure is unlike other AFL club structures, prompting calls for WAFC to either exercise more control or cede ownership of the AFL club licences;
2. Community football is under-represented in the current WAFC governance structure;
3. The WAFC organisational structure has not been matched against a strategic plan. Funding from WAFC is not always linked to enforced performance criteria, connected to the overall good of the sport; and
4. Branding within the sport can be confusing, with AFL, AFL Clubs, WAFC, Districts, Affiliates and WAFL club brands sometimes competing for attention.

The objectives

The overarching objective of the proposed changes relating to the WAFC is to ensure that the WAFC is structured and resourced to act in the interests of the sport as a whole.

- Ensure WAFC represents all WA football stakeholders;
- Re-align the WAFC resources, including staff, to the reform and new strategic priorities;
- Ensure all funding is spent in the interests of football in WA; and
- Continue to seek deep engagement with stakeholders through the reform period to ensure an effective transition.

The reforms

The following reforms outline the areas that were identified throughout the review that will directly affect the WAFC.

1. Retain the existing WAFC / AFL club legal relationship and develop a new royalty model, as it serves as a unique and sustainable funding model for the future of our sport.
2. Develop and seek endorsement of a revised WAFC governance model that more accurately represents the existing mix of WA football stakeholders.
3. Review the existing WAFC resource allocation and organisational structure to align to the new strategic objectives of the WAFC.
4. Develop new funding criteria for all funding recipients, to ensure football remains sustainable and aligned in its objectives.
5. Review opportunities for shared services and branding with the AFL, which could include re-naming/re-branding the WAFC and integration of corporate services such as marketing, IT, HR, whilst maintaining the constitutional independence of the WAFC.



QUESTION

ANSWER

There is no benefit in the WAFC owning the WCE and FFC. Why wouldn't they sell the licences and invest the proceeds into WA football?

The relationship with FFC and WCE is unique across the AFL industry and offers WA football a sense of unity and integration that other states lack. There is clear financial benefit to the WA football industry via the ongoing royalty model which injects \$4.1m into grass roots football each year, along with the direct and indirect investment that both clubs make into their respective community programs and partnered community programs with the WAFC.

The relationship with FFC and WCE also provides a united state position on key strategic priorities that are often on the agenda with the AFL and the State Government. In 2017 the WAFC and the two AFL clubs will establish a new royalty model as a result of the changing role of Domain Stadium.

Wouldn't becoming AFL WA mean we lose our independence and become another franchise state of the AFL?

The concept of moving to an AFL WA brand is one that needs to be assessed. The AFL brand is the biggest sporting brand in the country and it is the brand that all people in our game immediately connect with and understand.

This recommendation involves investigating what the integration of 'AFL WA' could involve, ranging from a change in branding to developing a shared service model.

How will WAFC be restructured?

The WAFC will be assessing its existing structure in line with the BCG review, the revised WAFC vision and pillars and the WAFC strategic plan. The WAFC is committed to ensuring that our allocation of human and financial resources more accurately reflects our key strategic priorities of engagement, talent and sustainability.



Implementation

Implementation Principles

The WAFC has developed these reforms in the interests of the sport as a whole. Implementing them successfully will take time and cooperation from all segments of WA football. Implementation will be phased over the next five years, to ensure that all stakeholders have time to adapt. There will be ongoing consultation in relation to these reforms, to ensure that unintended consequences are minimised. Working groups will be formed with representation from different stakeholder groups to manage the implementation process.

The WAFC acknowledges that the implementation of the reform package will require significant evaluation of existing financial resources. The WAFC will continue to delve into the detail of the financial implications of each reform initiative and include appropriate transition processes for any new funding models. We are confident that the reforms outlined in our response will be appropriately costed and fall within the scope of our future financial forecasts.

Implementation Funding

While it is anticipated that there will be some transitional costs incurred in making the reforms outlined in this report, it is expected that most of these reforms will not require a material change in ongoing annual expenditure. Although state government negotiations have not been finalised, the WAFC is working on the assumption that football will be no worse off as a result of the new stadium, and it will therefore be possible to implement these reforms. To the extent that there are incremental costs, such as for the new talent program, the WAFC will work with its funding partners (e.g. the AFL), to support our common objectives. The WAFC organisational structure and resource allocation is also being reviewed to ensure it is efficient in its role and effective in the distribution of funding to WA football.



Implementation Timing

2017

In 2017, the focus of reform will be on planning and consulting with stakeholders to ensure reform will be undertaken in a measured and considered manner.

In relation to engagement, some quick wins will be implemented, introducing new engagement targets and commencing the implementation of the youth football review. Planning will commence in relation to the shift to three development regions and the allocation of more resources to support community clubs. Greater coordination and alignment between the Regional Football Development Commissions and the WA Country Football League will be investigated.

In relation to talent, planning will commence in relation to shifting responsibility for the talent pathway from WAFL clubs to the WAFC.

In relation to sustainability, the WAFC organisational structure and resource allocation will be reviewed, both to ensure the successful implementation of these reforms, and to ensure consistency with the agreed vision and goals. An industry-wide approach to player payments will be developed by all the relevant stakeholders.

Planning will commence in relation to developing funding models for the WAFL and other recipients, as well as governance reform.

2018

In 2018, the focus of reform will be on embedding the new talent model and working with WAFL clubs in relation to financial sustainability and relevance.

In relation to engagement, the three-region restructure will occur in the Perth area and additional resources will be added to development teams to support community clubs and player retention through transition points. WAFC development staff will be located together in appropriate and geographically convenient accommodation to effectively service the region. A women's competition aligned with the WAFL will be trialled. A diversity action plan to target multicultural participants, coaches, umpires and administrators will be developed.

In relation to talent, complete responsibility for the talent pathway and competition will be shifted to the WAFC, incorporating a pathway for women as well.

In relation to sustainability, the WAFL competition will move to an 18 round season and the new funding model will be developed with WAFL clubs, to ensure they are able to plan appropriately for 2019 and beyond. Work will be undertaken to contribute to the financial sustainability of WAFL clubs. A feasibility study of joint commercial assets and membership structure will be undertaken and a review of WAFL game day facilities, services and marketing.

Governance changes will be made to ensure affiliate organisations are aligned with the WAFC and adequately represented in the WAFC. Shared services and branding options with the AFL will also be identified and implementation commenced.

2019

In 2019, the focus of reform will be on implementing the new WAFL funding model and conducting an end of year review to assess its impact.

In relation to engagement, strategies will be implemented to support the needs of Aboriginal players, coaches, umpires and administrators to improve retention and engagement. Initiatives will also be pursued to better support accessibility to football for people with disabilities. A model will be implemented to manage player registration levies through the WAFC. Further competition equalisation measures will be implemented in the WAFL. It is expected that a women's competition aligned with the WAFL will be implemented by 2019.

In relation to talent, the first year of the new talent model will be reviewed and any necessary adjustments made to maximise the success of the 9-team talent structure.

A volunteer engagement program will be undertaken in conjunction with affiliates and community clubs interested in merging will be assisted with a 'how to' guide developed by the WAFC.

2020

In 2020, the focus of reform will be finalising outstanding reforms and establishing appropriate structures and processes for continuous improvement.

In relation to talent, outcomes will continue to be measured and adjustments made accordingly.

In relation to sustainability, an annual football innovation forum will be established to address emerging issues and ensure WA football continues to evolve.

Summary of REFORMS



Engagement

Attract more players

- Develop women's participation pathway, including state league and senior community structure
- Implement Youth Football Review strategies to improve retention and engagement
- Implement strategies to better support Aboriginal players, coaches, umpires and administrators
- Broaden the range of engagement programs for people with disabilities
- Develop a diversity action plan to target multicultural participants, coaches, umpires and administrators

Support community football

- Add development staff for coaching, umpiring, club development and youth football
- Restructure to three metropolitan development regions and relocate WAFC staff to better serve these regions
- Establish a centrally-managed participation levy to support investment in community football
- Investigate greater alignment between the Regional Football Development Councils and WA Country Football League

Support an exciting WAFL competition

- Implement revised WAFL funding model and other WAFL competition equalisation measures
- Change WAFL to 18 round season
- Extend existing AFL club partnership model to 2021 under the same conditions
- Develop plan to enhance WAFL game day facilities, services and marketing, to attract new fans
- Ensure WAFL is the only senior competition from which AFL players can be drafted

Re-align WAFC targets

- Develop broader WAFC targets to drive club participation and retention
- Develop regular community perception measures
- Undertake social impact study to show value of football, especially in regions

Talent

Player first approach

- Transfer responsibility for talent development and colts competition from WAFL clubs to WAFC
- Establish a female talent program
- Continue to support mature age talent through WAFL
- Enhance access and opportunity for talented regional players
- Develop annual youth football calendar to improve integration and reduce player overload

Sustainability

Match resources to roles

- Develop funding criteria for all funding recipients of the WAFC to improve accountability and alignment of objectives
- Implement revised WAFL funding model to better reflect more focused role
- Investigate feasibility of joint commercial assets and membership structure for the WAFL
- Seek a long term broadcast deal for WAFL
- Adjust WAFC resource allocation and organisational structure to match goals
- Increase focus on facility planning, advocacy and shared used facilities with a focus on female participants

Work better together

- Reform WAFC governance model to better reflect stakeholder make-up
- Retain existing WAFC/AFL club legal relationship with a revised royalty model
- Investigate shared services and branding with the AFL
- Reform affiliate constitutions for consistency
- Establish industry-wide approach to player payments
- Diversify leadership roles within football industry to better reflect community
- Establish Football Innovation Forum

Support our volunteers

- Develop volunteer engagement program
- Develop a 'how to' guide for junior and senior clubs voluntarily considering amalgamation

Further Input Into Reform Process

The WAFC understands that many football stakeholders are likely to have questions and concerns in relation to the reforms and how they are implemented. The role of the WAFC is to balance the interests of all parts of the football family and as such, we acknowledge that not everyone will agree with every reform.

WAFC management will invest significant time in the coming weeks to address concerns and listen to feedback from stakeholders.

The WAFC also invites stakeholder groups to submit their feedback on the reforms. In your feedback, please consider the overall intention of the WAFC and the reforms: to allow future generations of Western Australians to engage, participate and enjoy all the benefits that our game has to offer.

The following types of feedback are welcomed:

- Support/objection to particular reforms, with reasons and alternatives;
- Notification of any possible unintended consequences of the proposed reforms;
- Issues to be considered in the implementation of particular reforms; and
- Additional areas for reform not identified in this report.

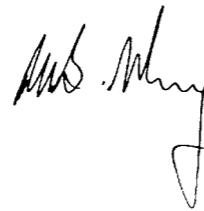
To enable all feedback to be considered appropriately, the WAFC seeks feedback from industry groups. If you represent an individual or a club, please provide your feedback to the relevant affiliate organisation, so that it can be included in their submission, or submit your feedback directly on our website.

To ensure that your feedback can be taken into account in implementation planning, please submit it by 15 May 2017, by email to srf.feedback@wafc.com.au. The WAFC will continue to work closely with stakeholder groups during the implementation phase.

Thank you for your interest in this report. We look forward to working with all of WA football to build a stronger sport in the coming years.



Gavin Taylor
Chief Executive Officer
West Australian Football Commission



Murray McHenry
Chairman
West Australian Football Commission



Structural Review of WA Football Recommendations

18 November 2016

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Executive summary

WA football aims to offer all Western Australians a positive connection with football throughout their lives

- Three pillars support this aim: engagement, talent and sustainability

While WA is delivering relatively well on grass-roots engagement, talent outcomes are declining and the WAFL competition is facing sustainability issues

The major recommendations to support the industry's aims are

- **Engagement:** Focus more resources on supporting community club development, simplify the district model and better measure what is considered important
- **Talent:** Move to a centralised talent program to deliver better outcomes to the AFL
- **Sustainability:** Make governance and funding adjustments to reflect the more focused roles of the WAFL and WAFC

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Structural review of WA football

The West Australian Football Commission (WAFC) was established in 1989 as Australian Rules' governing body, providing leadership, support, resources and funding to ensure Australian Rules remains the most popular sport in WA

The WA football landscape has changed since the establishment of the WAFC and is facing significant change in the near future

- Rise of the AFL over the last 30 years
- Changing demographics and societal trends affecting football
- Current changes to the football funding model, with the construction of Perth Stadium opening in 2018

The Boston Consulting Group was engaged to undertake a structural review of WA football in this context to undertake a detailed review of the football structures in Western Australia to assess their effectiveness in delivering football outcomes in a sustainable system across the State

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BCG is the world's leading adviser on strategy, with deep sport expertise in Australia and globally

BCG is the world's leading adviser on strategy

- We partner with companies, governments, institutions and associations in all sectors and regions to identify their highest value opportunities, address their most critical challenges and transform their businesses and organisations
- In Australia, we have the largest footprint of the top-tier strategy consulting firms, and the leading public sector practice with more than ten years experience working with State and Federal Governments

In the sports sector, we have considerable experience in Australia and across the world advising professional and non-professional bodies, and governments, on issues relating to sport. Recent local examples include

- **Australian Sports Commission (ASC)**: Preparing an "Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport" in order to inform the ASC's efforts to achieve their ambitious goals and strategy objectives
- **Football Federation Australia (FFA)**: Supporting the development of the FFA's strategic direction for football—both the strategic review of the Hyundai A League, involving comparison and benchmarking against other Australian and overseas leagues, and the development of FFA's 2016–19 strategy

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Our Vision statement gives the industry a common purpose

WA Football Vision

To offer all Western Australians a positive connection with football throughout their lives

Engagement

More people are engaged in footy than with any other sport in WA

Talent

WA contributes **proportionately more, higher quality talent** than other states

Sustainability

WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially **sustainable**, with integrity at all levels

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Twelve goals to convert WA football's vision into reality

Pillar	Goals	Rationale
Engagement <i>More people are engaged in footy than with any other sport in WA</i>	Introduce all WA children to football	Strong introductory programs are a vital first step in life-time engagement with football. All WA kids should have access to football through a range of inclusive formats that meet the needs of diverse groups.
	Increase the number of players who choose to continue to play football	Clear pathways for all ability levels enable long-term engagement with football. Focusing on transition points between football formats makes each individual's football journey easy to navigate. Quality coaching provides support to all players to find their highest level of engagement.
	Support all types of participants, including volunteers	Providing training and support to coaches, umpires, officials and volunteers provides other engagement pathways and underpins the creation of a positive football environment.
	Deliver measurable community benefits through football	Football contributes to the fabric of society by engendering a sense of belonging, common purpose, discipline and healthy lifestyle choices. Attempting to measure these benefits ensures our focus is on delivering what the community values.
	Maintain a quality state-based second-tier competition	Below the AFL level, an exciting competitive state-based competition is important for football in WA, as the local peak of the engagement pathway, recognising the cultural significance of the WAFL's long history.

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Twelve goals to convert WA football's vision into reality

Pillar	Goals	Rationale
Talent <i>WA produces proportionately more, higher quality talent to than other states</i>	Increase the number and quality of AFL draftees	As the elite competition, the AFL is our 'customer' for talent. To ensure WA men and women are well-represented at the elite level, we must attract the best athletes to football, identify and develop their talent and provide them with a clear supported pathway to the AFL.
	Ensure career pathways for talented coaches, umpires and administrators	Supported career pathways for those who work in football will attract quality staff and ensure WA is contributing to the sport at a national level.

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Twelve goals to convert WA football's vision into reality

Pillar	Goals	Rationale
Sustainability <i>WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially sustainable, with integrity at all levels</i>	Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs	Our AFL Clubs are the heart of WA football, inspiring greater participation, bringing the football community together and providing financial resources to support the industry. Their ongoing success is important for the health of the sport.
	Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model	Focusing spend in the most effective areas and protecting and growing revenue streams will ensure that all parts of football are able to play their role within their means.
	Improve the quality of governance and integrity	Governance structures should be appropriate to the respective roles of different parts of WA football. The integrity of the game is vital to maintain its reputation and role in the community.
	Build the capacity of staff and volunteers	All parts of WA football should be overseen and managed by capable, well-supported people, aligned with our collective vision. Investment in building skills and support for coaches, umpires and administration will deliver value for the sport over the long term.
	Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities	Quality facilities are necessary to support the ongoing growth of the game and a positive experience for all involved.

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Engagement: No case for radical change, but greater focus on club support recommended

Five goals will deliver "more people engaged with footy than any other sport"

WA performs relatively well on engagement

- High engagement rate compared to other states
- Strong growth, driven largely by non-elective (introductory) participation

Opportunities exist to optimise the approach and achieve deeper engagement

- Focus the district model more on club engagement
 - Repurpose some WAFC roles and investigate relocating district teams
 - Clarify structure of bottom-up funding
- Clarify KPIs and improve reporting to provide the right incentives

Opportunities exist to better focus the WAFL on being an exciting, premier, state-level competition

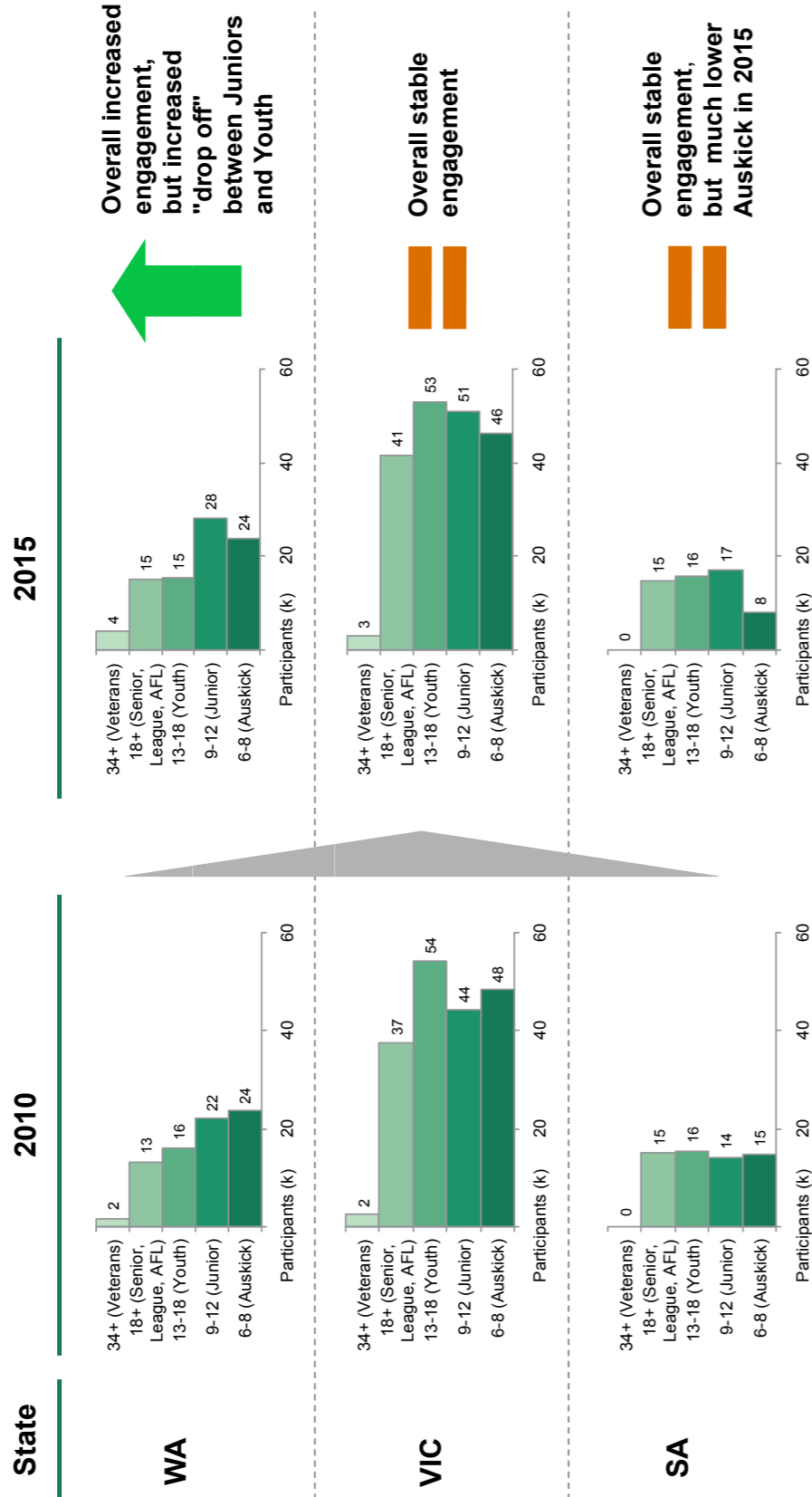
- Greater equality in the WAFL competition
 - Investigate expanding WAFL to women

A move to a fully decentralised WAFL model, in relation to engagement, represents a significant risk

WA is performing well on introductory programs, with potential improvements against other goals

Pillar	Goals	Current performance
Engagement <i>More people are engaged in footy than with any other sport in WA</i>	Introduce all WA children to football	✓ Strong growth in introductory programs
	Increase the number of players who choose to continue to play football	✓ Community footy engagement is relatively high, with drop-off occurring at transition points (especially between Junior and Youth) ✗ Resourcing unbalanced towards intro programs
	Support all types of participants, including volunteers	? Lack of focus on club development (coaching and governance) may be impacting volunteer engagement and player retention
	Deliver measurable community benefits through football	? Main KPI is participation, driving focus on intro programs Tension between districts/WAFL around community role
	Maintain a quality state-based second-tier competition	✗ Inequality of teams affects quality of competition Sustainability issues for WAFL clubs

Grass roots engagement is strong in WA today as it is in other heartland states



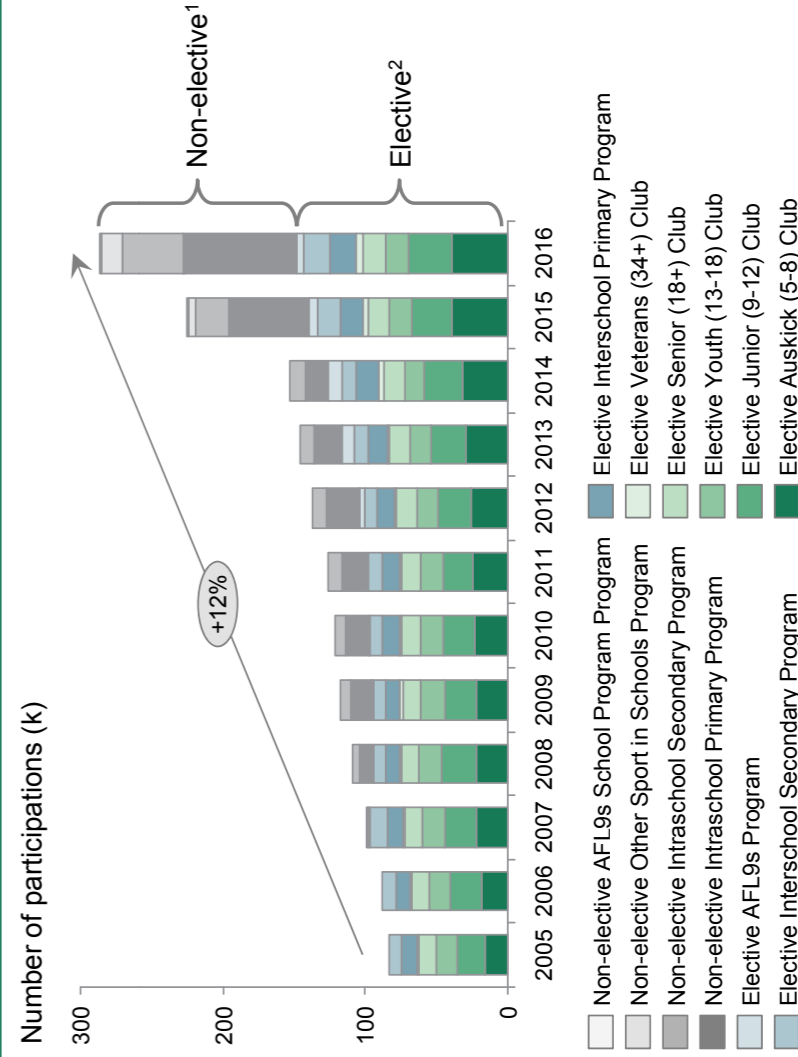
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Source: AFL Draft History, AFL Census Reports 2008 to 2015, BCG analysis
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Non-elective school programs driving growth in engagement

Elective participation growing at slower rate than non-elective



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1. Non-elective participation is where the participant has not actively chosen to play 2. Elective participation is where the participant has actively chosen to play football
Note: Senior category includes WAFL Comp Participations (650 per year) . Census methodology changes between 2014 and 2015, particularly for non-elective school programs
Source: WAFC Participation Census data 2005 - 2016

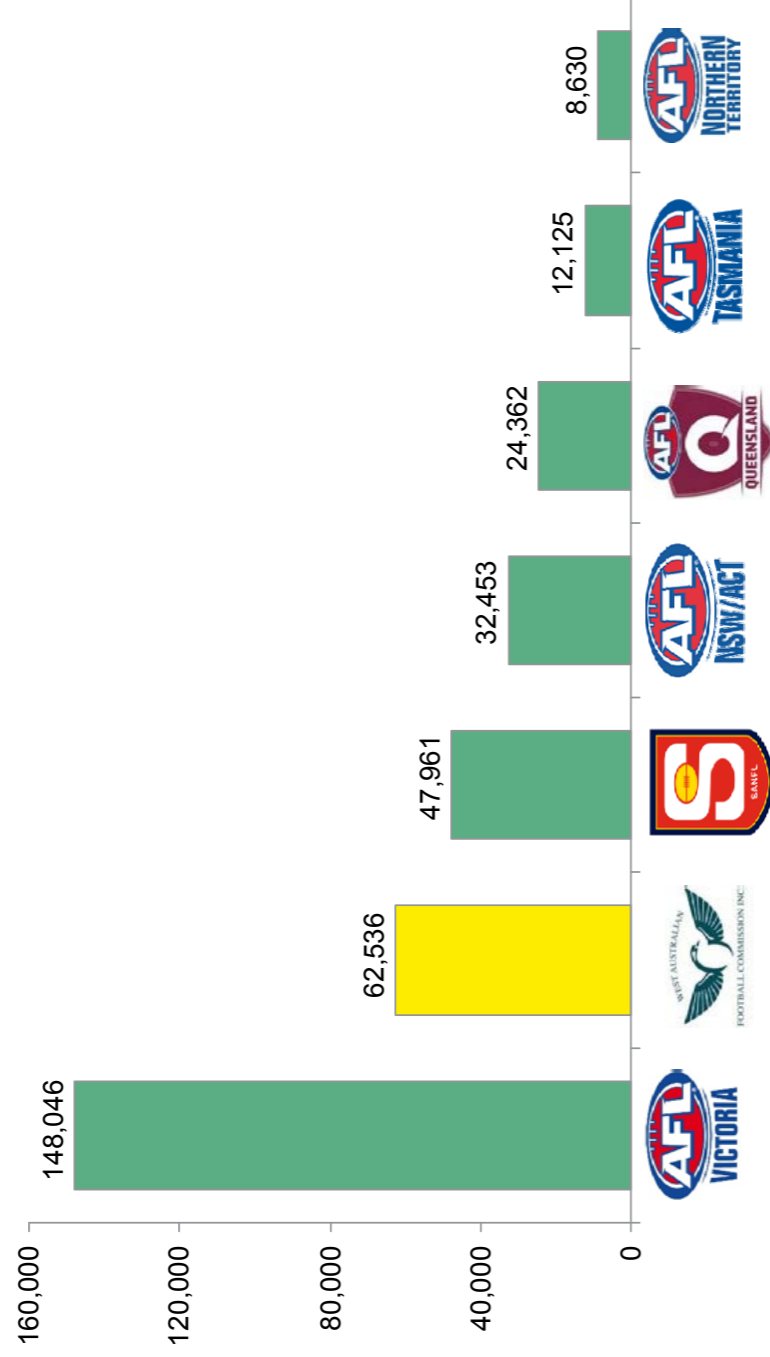
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WA also performing well on deeper club participation

Absolute numbers view

More than 60,000 participants involved in community football in WA



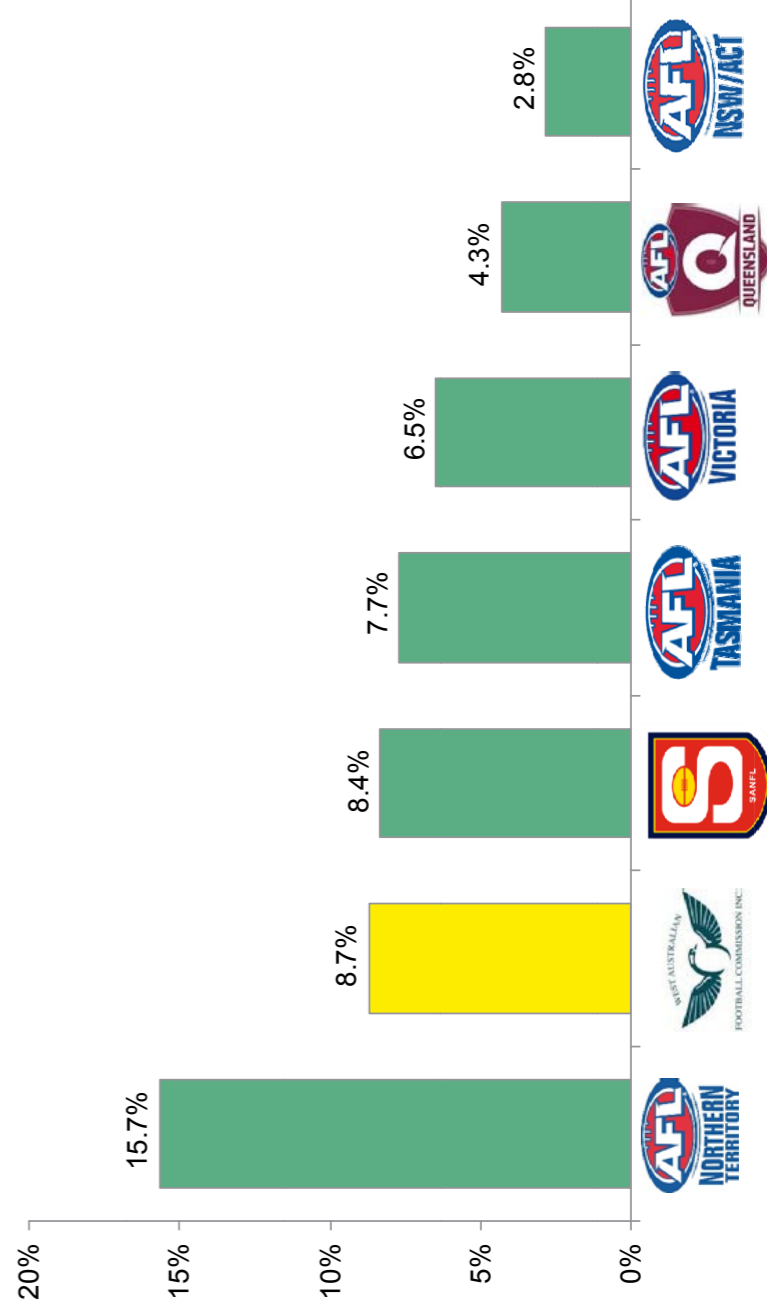
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Source: AFL participation census, ABS population statistics, BCG analysis
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On a participation per-capita basis, WA outperforms all other states and territories, except the NT

9% of WA population participates in football, ahead of SA and VIC



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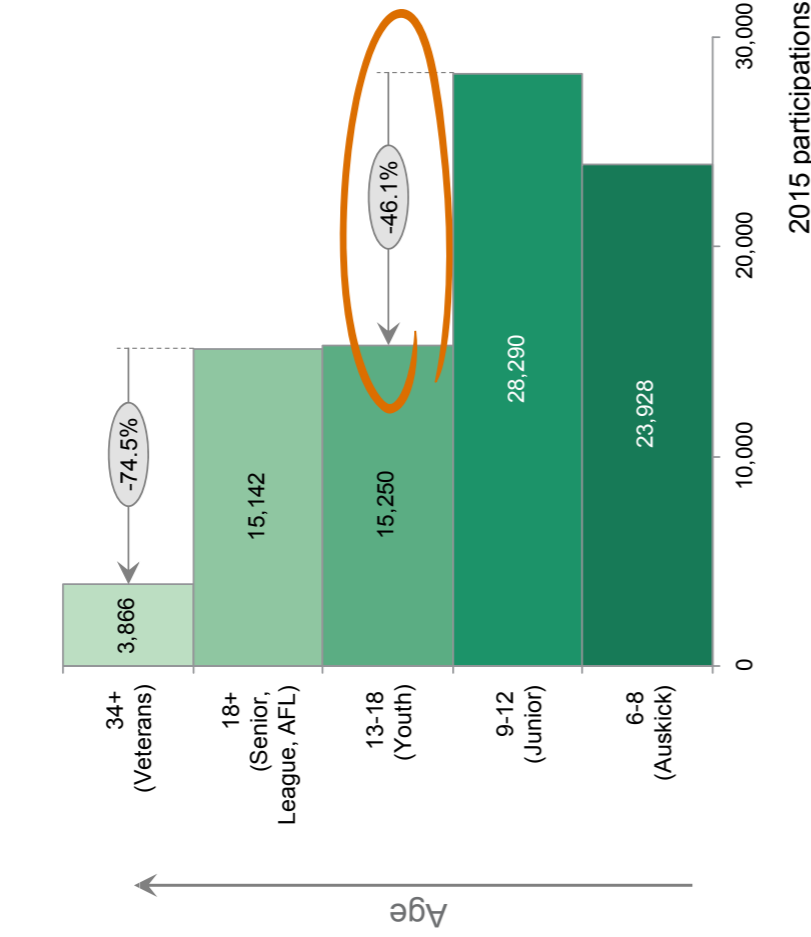
Source: AFL participation census, ABS population statistics
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Despite the overall growth story, opportunities exists to improve focus on conversion to "deep engagement"

Progression across key club pathways over playing lifecycle

Takeaways



Many causes of drop-off at Youth level are beyond control

- Increase in interschool sport (e.g., PSA) at 13 y/o
- Increase in school and study workload at 15-18 y/o
- Introduction of contact so increased perception of risk

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Some causes are more easily addressed

- Inadequate resourcing for club support: e.g., coaching quality
- Move from 15- to 18-a-side encourages team merges
- Traditional format/product offering doesn't suit today's teenagers

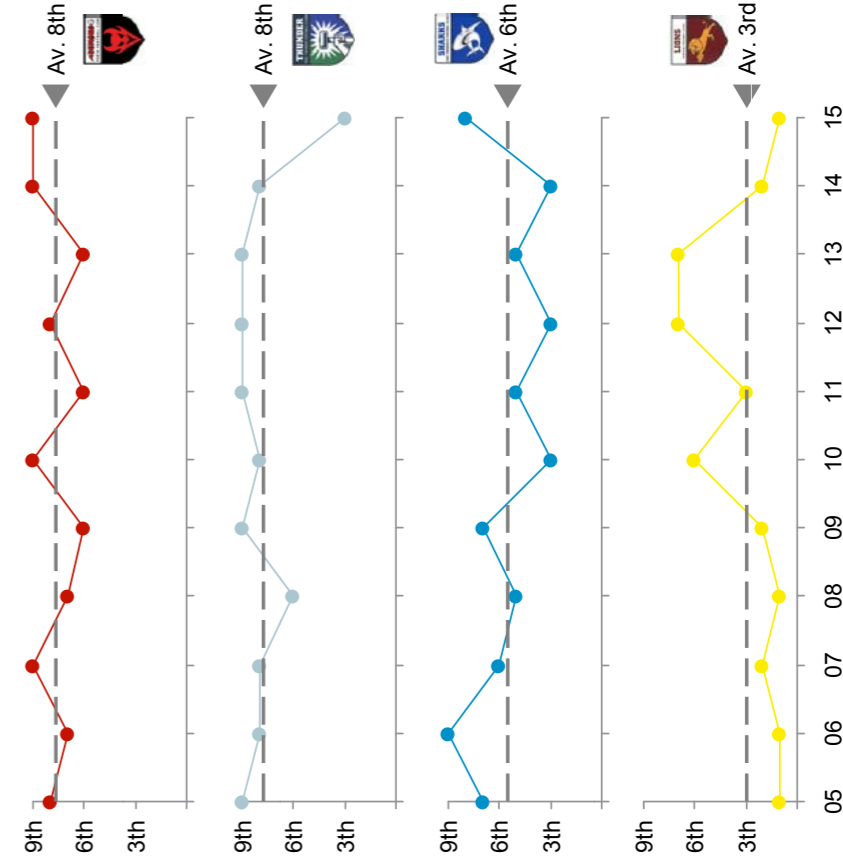
Retention through these transitions is critical to reducing the participant loss

Note: Total Auskick participations recorded here, including both school and club based participations
Source: AFL Draft History, AFL Census Reports 2008 to 2015, BCG analysis
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On-field inequality of WAFL continues to be an issue

Ladder positions relatively stable over 10 year period ...



... with teams consistently under and over performing

Subiaco has won five of past eleven Premierships

Six teams have won Premierships in last ten years

South Fremantle have not made a Grand Final since 2009, with Swan Districts last qualifying in 2010

Perth has not qualified for the finals since 1997, a 20-year drought

Prior to the partner alignment with Fremantle and consecutive finals campaigns, Peel's best placing was 6th across 18 seasons

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Changes are recommended against these engagement goals

Pillar	Goals	Recommendations
Engagement <i>More people are engaged in footy than with any other sport in WA</i>	Introduce all WA children to football	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Introduce conversion KPI for Development staff
	Increase the number of players who continue to choose to play football	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Unlock additional club development staff by restructuring 3 Investigate re-locating district teams 4 Investigate merging WACFL and RFDCs 5 Manage bottom-up funding through WAFC
	Support all types of participants, including volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Add coaching and club development staff to districts
	Deliver measurable community benefits through football	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Introduce annual qualitative survey on perception of footy, use as a KPI for Development staff
	Maintain a quality state-based second-tier competition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Implement further team equalisation measures 9 Progress incorporating women in WAFL club structure

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1 7

Better reporting of KPIs will allow focus on key local issues

Focus on retention as KPI would enable effort to be focused on key retention issues in each area

- Retention data is technically available in Sports.TG for 95% of 'sticky' participants, but reporting is currently time consuming

A qualitative survey is best for measuring community benefits

Non-club programs are important

- Double counting in introductory programs unlikely to be fully addressed
- Possible partial solution for school-based elective participants

Sample Engagement Report: Players

Retention		Non-club programs
Age group	Club members (#)	# participants
6-8	xxx	Conversion rate to club
9-12	xxx	If schools won't use Sports.TG, this could be addressed through, e.g., question on registration form
13-18	xxx	
18-35	xxx	
35+	xxx	
Cut by club, team and coach		
Average engagement life of participant		
Participant satisfaction		
		Community benefits
		Annual qualitative survey on perception of football: inclusiveness, access, responsiveness to issues
		Coaching and umpiring recruits, courses, accreditation rate
		Total club memberships

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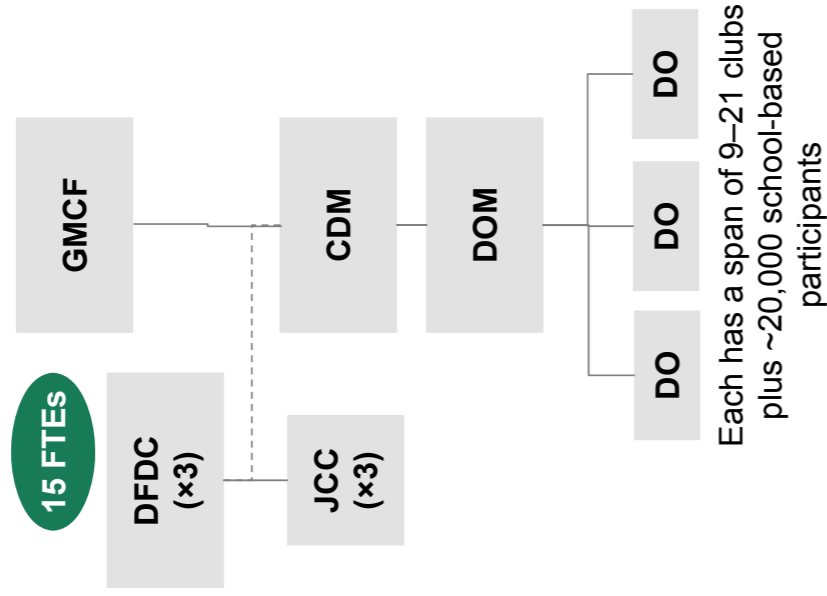
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The current metro district structure has some issues

Current metro structure (x3)



Responsibilities

- Ensuring consistency of strategy with WAFC strategy
- Setting engagement strategy for district
- Strategic direction for district: local government relations, budgeting, issues management
- Oversees junior competition, coaching clinics, scheduling projects
- Deliver programs to schools, Auskick, EO for JCC

Issues

- Three strategy-setting bodies for one CDM, to save duplication/complexity
- Too many layers?
- Focus mainly on introductory programs

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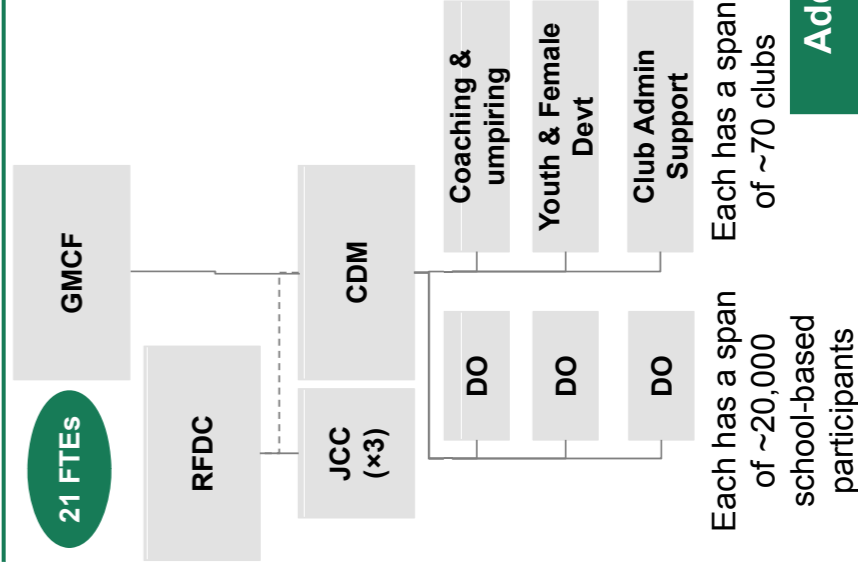
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6

Restructuring to simplify and re-purpose resources for club development is recommended

Proposed metro structure (x3)



Responsibilities

- Ensuring consistency of strategy with overall strategy, setting KPIs and targets
- Advising on engagement strategy for region
- Delivering on KPIs and targets, local government relations, budgeting, issues management
- DOs deliver introductory programs in each existing (WAFL) zone
- Specialists deliver across whole region (70 clubs)

Changes

- 1 DFDC only – reduces complexity
- Replace 1 DOM with 3 specialised Club Development Officers working across whole area (additional funding requirement)

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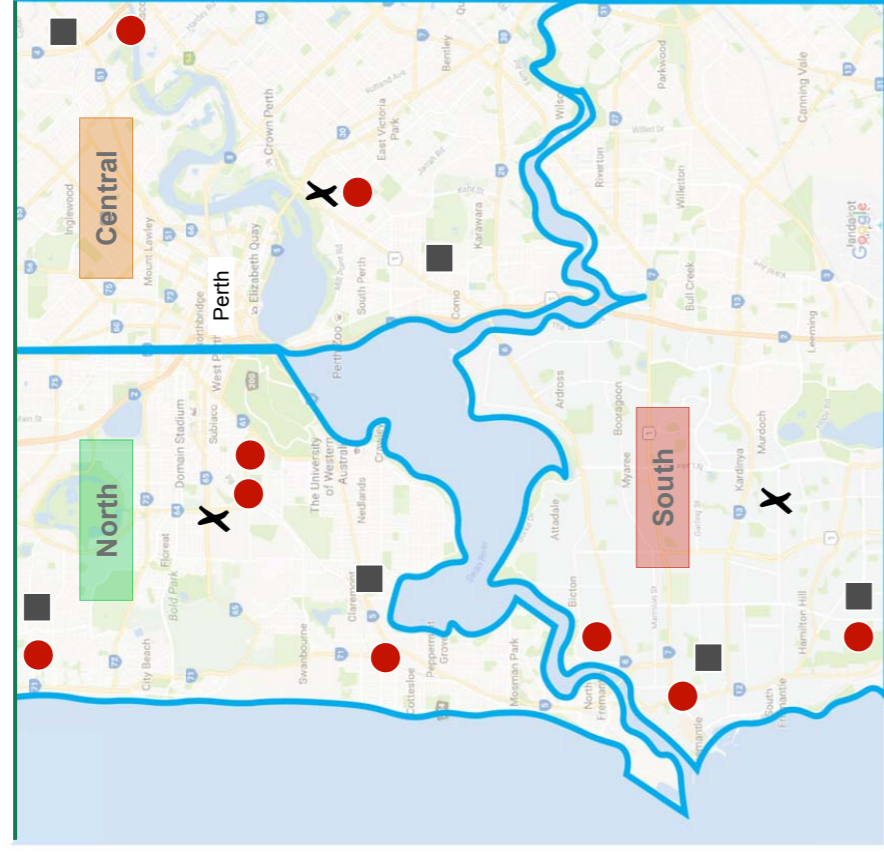
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Additional resources allocated subject to bottom-up funding and local need

2 6

Regional model divides metro area into three

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE



Features of regional model

Regional offices

- All engagement staff housed together in single office
- Funding provided to Region for sourcing accommodation
 - Could be at WAFL club, DSR or local Government

Talent team

- Two talent teams per region, managed centrally
- Matches to be played at WAFL facilities
- Training and home base to be sourced separately
 - Potentially WAFL facilities
 - Universities considered a good option

WAFL club

- Focused role on providing good 2nd tier competition
- Continue to engage with local communities
- Potential to share facilities with other stakeholders

Incremental cost dependent on how many HQ staff are repurposed for regions

X Regional Office ● WAFL Club ■ Talent team

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3

Investigate relocating metro district teams

Locating district staff in some WAFL clubs may raise some downsides

- Lack of oversight of Development staff
- Varying quality of relationships between DO role and WAFL clubs' role

Co-locating the district staff for each of three proposed new districts would have some benefits

- Greater oversight, management and support
- Greater co-operation and sharing of best practice
- Clearer accountability
- Clearer career paths for staff

The benefits outweigh the downsides

- Potentially paying rent to an entity outside the footy family

The three teams of six to eight people could be located anywhere central to their geographical area, for example in

- Local government
- A WAFL club
- Elsewhere

Opening up location options makes mutually beneficial activities more transparent

- WAFL clubs must currently host district staff and are funded to do so through grants
- Removing this requirement and its funding could lead to more efficient and mutually beneficial solutions

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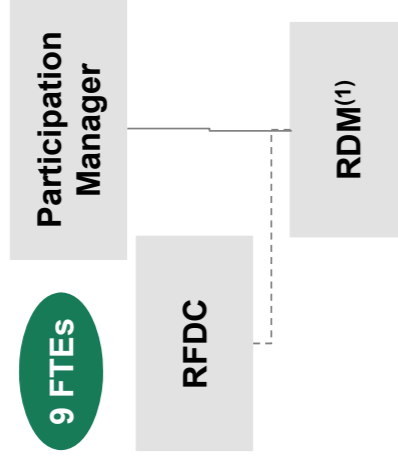
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4

No immediate structural change to regions is recommended ...

Current regional structure (x8)



Each has a span of 19–53 clubs plus ~3,500 school-based participants

Issues

Need to be everything to everyone (talent, coaching, governance) 33,000 club members (27% of total)

Distance is an issue

Lack of connection to WAFC and WAFC IT system

Changes

Set clear KPIs for RDMs

Investigate opportunities for better integration/best practice sharing

(1) South-West has a Coaching and Talent Manager as well
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4

... but merging WACFL and RFDC is worth investigation

WACFL aims are a subset of RFDC aims

- Grow the game and ensure club sustainability, *but only at a senior club level for WACFL*

Merging these entities would create efficiencies

- Reduce overheads
- Better relationships
- Ensure ongoing flexibility required for highly varied circumstances in regional areas

But a number of issues would need investigation

- Governance changes in the merged body to ensure focused on entire sport

5

Bottom-up funding should be managed through WAFC

Bottom-up funding in junior football is relatively low compared to other sports

- Districts charge a development fee (currently capped at \$10)
 - This low cap makes football cheap to play and probably drives additional participation
- DFDCs currently manage these funds and allocate then to employ additional staff, run programs and purchase resources

It is unusual and not ideal to have these funds managed by the DFDCs

- DFDCs are voluntary boards
- Lack of transparency/consistency between districts
- District-funded staff are technically WAFC employees, but answer to two masters

It is preferable for bottom-up funding to be managed by WAFC staff

- Greater consistency across districts and better transparency
- Funding could still be "ring-fenced" for the region
- DFDCs play an advisory role, with ultimate allocation of funding to be determined by WAFC

This would be even more important if the funding cap is increased, as is currently proposed

- Potential to increase bottom-up funding to \$1.2m, so transparency even more important

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Develop community benefit measures

DSR is currently working with sports on how to better measure community benefit

Some possible measures include

- Total club membership (showing how many people are prepared to pay for community benefit)
- Number of clubs at optimal size (showing clubs are not under stress from being too big/small)
- Club membership trends for traditional low participation groups (e.g., migrants)
- Coaching and umpiring: number of recruits, courses, accreditation rate

These depend on the availability of accurate data

A regular qualitative survey would be the best way of delivering "soft" community benefits

- To measure perception of inclusiveness, responsiveness to social issues (e.g., gambling, alcohol)
- Would need to be cut by region so CDMs are accountable for results

DSR engagement in developing this survey will ensure it measures what is valued

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8 Greater equalisation of WAFL teams would improve the quality of the competition

The nine WAFL clubs, including two with AFL partner alignments are in very diverse positions both on and off field

Despite this, the funding grant from the WAFC to WAFL clubs is equalised

- The only exception is for the two AFL partner clubs

The last boundary review was completed in 2007, with significant change in the composition and distribution of the metro population in the boom years which have followed

- Potential to redraw boundaries
- Alternative option is to review points system and adjust based on productivity of zone

Compliance with the TPP is potentially an issue with varied levels of policing undertaken by the WAFC

- Trade off needs to be made with resourcing required to enforce and better competitive outcomes

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9 Incorporating women's footy into WAFL provides an opportunity to strengthen its role as the premier competition

Women's football is a growth area for the game

Bringing women into all levels of WA football is key to the future success of the game in WA

A women's team in the WAFL competition would be a win for the WAFL and for women

- New players, fans, sponsors are good for WAFL sustainability
- Embedding a women's team in the WAFL gives women's football status and security

Both stakeholders would need to see the potential opportunities to make this work

- WAWFL may see it as a loss of control
- WAFL clubs may see it as an impost on resources

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Recommend further investigation and stakeholder engagement on rolling women into WAFL structure

Contents

Executive summary

Context

Vision for WA Football

Issues and recommendations

- Engagement
- Talent
- Sustainability

Summary of recommendations

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A centrally-run talent program recommended to halt draft decline and deliver upon talent goal

Talent is one of the pillars of WA Football's Vision; and success in this area is measured by

- Increasing the number and quality of AFL draftees, and
- Maintaining a premier WA talent competition

We have not been performing well in either the quantity or quality of talent going on to national level

- WA contributes fewer players to the national draft than it did 10 years ago
 - WA's contribution dropped from a high of 21 draftees in 2010 to a low of 8 draftees in 2015
 - Continued decline has relevance and funding implications for WA
- Accompanying this has been a decline in the quality (as perceived by national clubs) of drafted WA players
 - The number of top 20 draft picks has been declining by 16% each year
 - While the rate for top 40 picks has declined at 10% each year

This decline has serious funding implications, and addressing these goals will require change

- Victoria's talent system is the industry benchmark for quantity and quality; its cost structure shows good ROI
- WA could implement a similar system, using the \$3m funding already available to the WA talent system

Analysis suggests this would deliver a significant increase in the average number and quality of draftees out of WA each year and an ongoing role within AFL for a WA-controlled talent pathway

**These recommendations only relate to male talent
At the appropriate time, a parallel female talent program could be established**

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WA talent system delivering diminishing returns in terms of absolute number and quality of AFL draftees

Pillar

Talent
 WA contributes proportionately more, higher quality talent to the AFL than other states

Goals

Increase the number and quality of AFL draftees

Current Performance

Talent

WA contributes proportionately more, higher quality talent to the AFL than other states



Downwards trend in number of draftees out of Western Australia, with accompanying decline in quality as measured by number of Top 20 and Top 40 picks

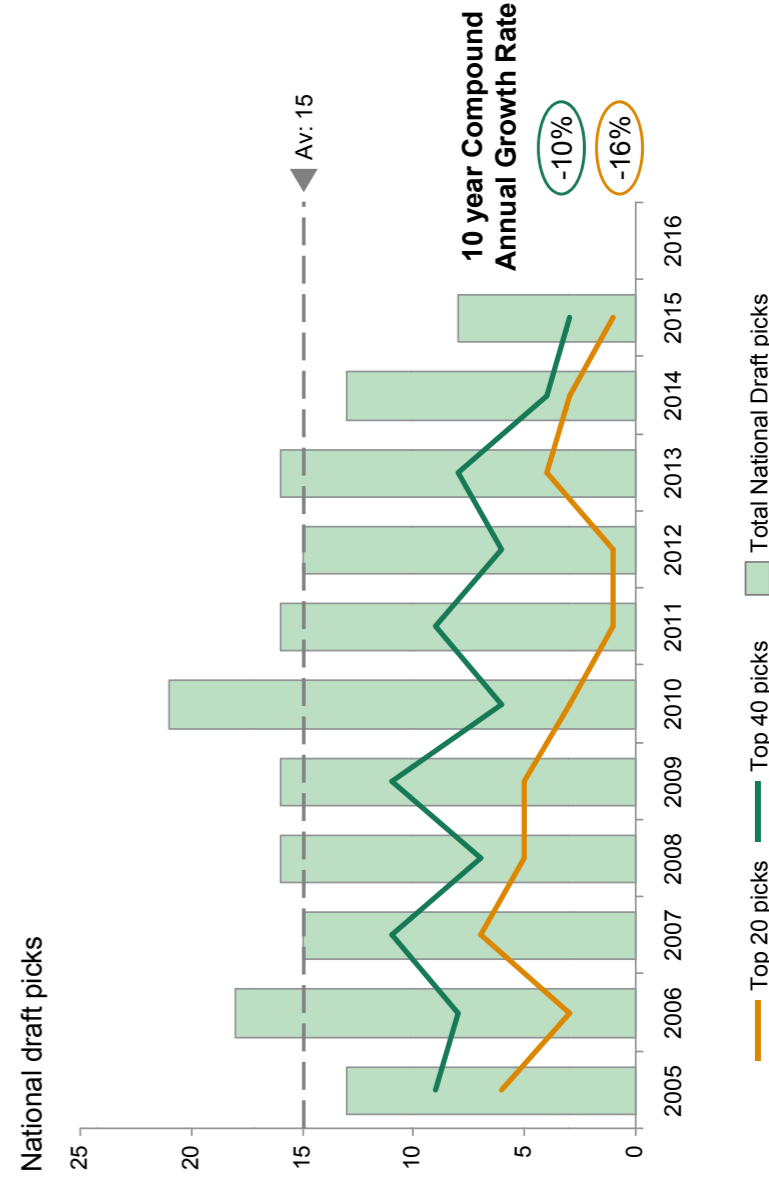


Qualitative assessment by AFL recruiters places WA talent system at bottom or second bottom in terms of focus and ability to prepare players for the AFL

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WA contributes less talent to the National Draft than it did 10 years ago, with an accompanying quality decline

WA's contribution to the National Draft has declined over 10 years



Commentary

WA's contribution is below 15 players (long-term average), worsening in the last two years

Between 2009 and 2013, total draft numbers were stable but WA's Top 20 CAGR performed badly

- WA -16%
- Vic +3% (Vic's draft contribution is more stable than WA or SA)

The 2010 spike is consistent with other states and reflects the entry of GWS and Gold Coast into the national competition

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That continuing decline has funding implications for WA

The AFL focuses on producing talent so that its product remains the pre-eminent spectator sport in the country

If WA is not meeting the AFL's needs by producing the talent required to support the competition, the AFL has the ability to sideline the WAFC and WAFL in the talent pathway

- Reduction in draft numbers could trigger this, initially via reduced funding to WAFC
- Talent-related transfer fees of \$1,165,000 could be reduced to ~\$850,000
 - Talent funding is based on historical draft performance, reviewed every few years
 - Last reviewed in 2011 when our draft percentage was 19%
 - Draft percentage over past five years is 14%, which would equate to ~\$300,000 less according to formula currently used

The introduction of AFL Next Generation Academies indicates the beginning of this shift

- From 2017, AFL Clubs will play a more active role in the 11–15 year old pathway
- Initially draft concessions will only apply to Indigenous and multicultural players
- Potentially, AFL could extend academy-related concessions to all academy participants, with significant implications for the WAFC and WAFL clubs

An increase in the AFL's role would result in reduced or changed funding formats for existing talent pathway

- Payments to state league clubs are unique to WA, and if the AFL sees better talent sources that may be at risk
- Declining source of revenue due to decreased drafts

Source: AFL funding data, BCG analysis
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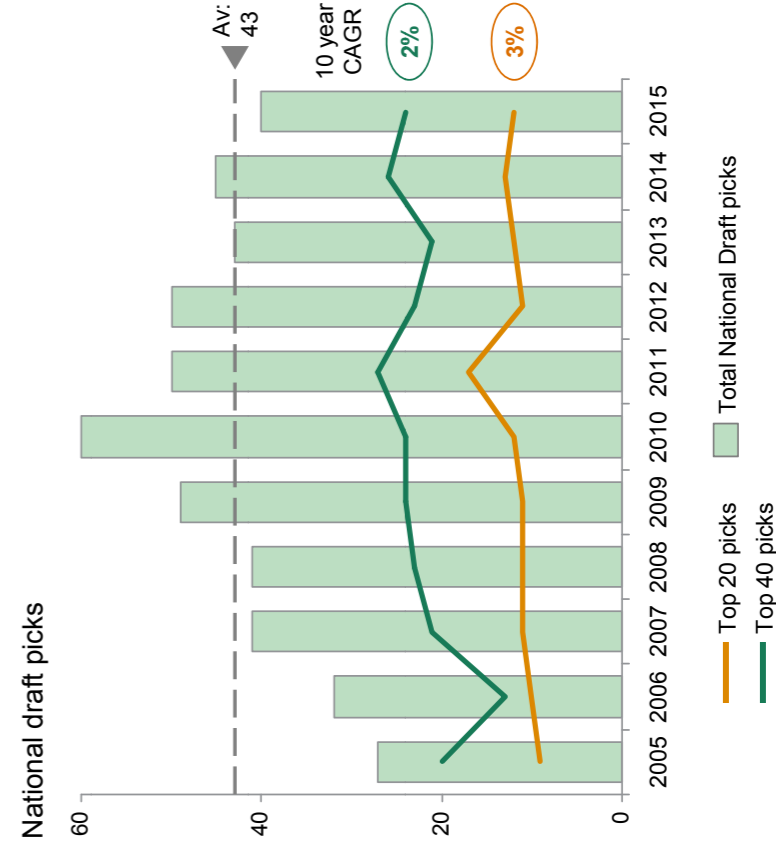
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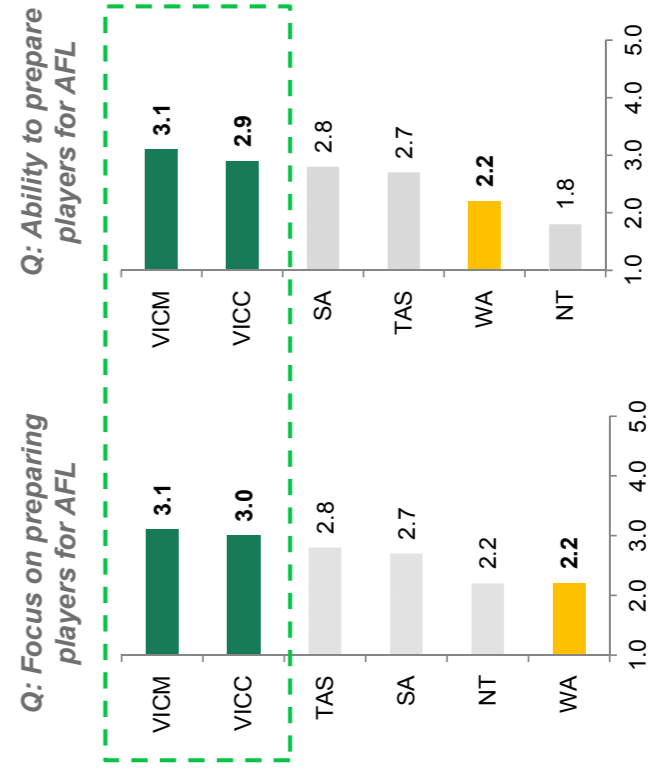
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VIC's talent system is "best in class" for delivering quantity and quality of elite players ...

Delivers av. 43 draftees each year ...



... and highest perception of AFL preparedness



Source: AFL Draft History, AFL Census Reports 2008 to 2015, AFL Victoria TAC Development Program summary
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... while also ensuring strong retention within football system, after players leave the talent pathway



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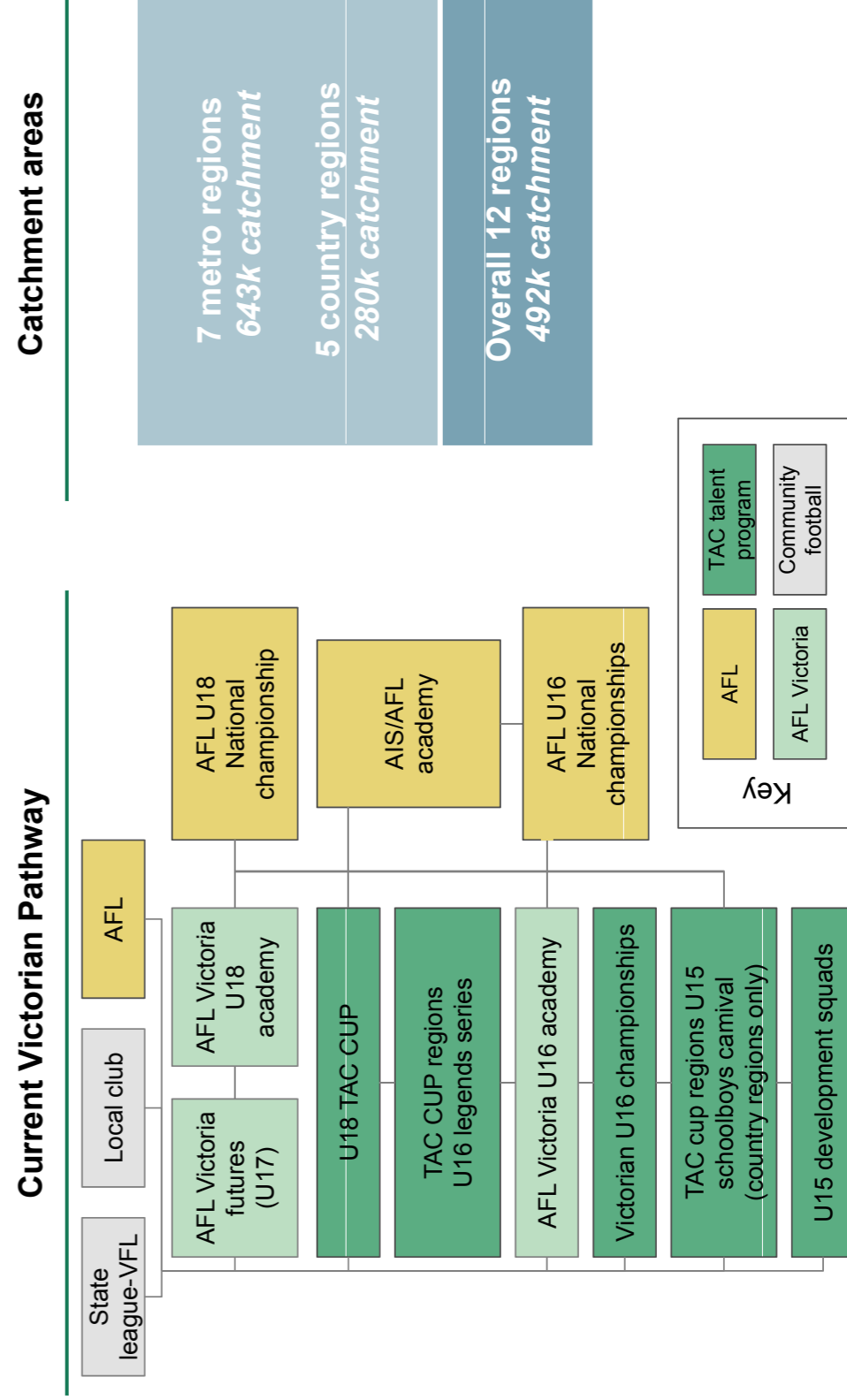
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Backup

VIC's system supports under-15s to elite under-18 comp.

Separate from VFL clubs and competition



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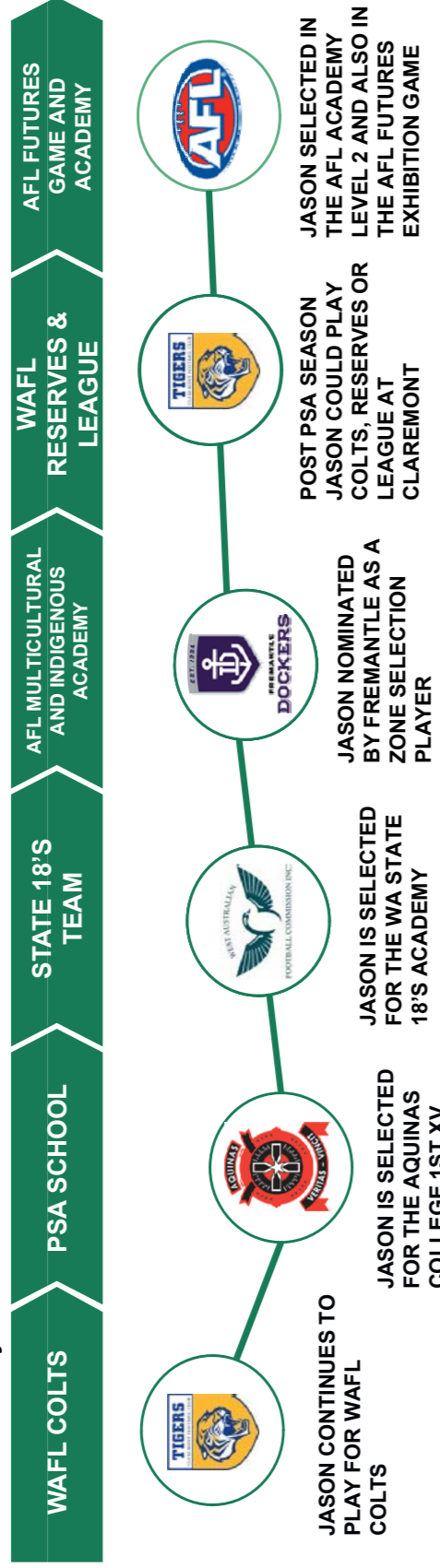
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Talent: Lack of management of crowded talent pathways

Talent pathway for a high potential player from WA (17th Year)

Jason's Journey in one season



Description

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 night/week • Games on weekend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 game season, training 2 night/week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 week program 3/week, and 3 trial games and 4 national championship games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various involvement with Fremantle FC throughout the year • Weights program, nutritionist, train at club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 camps plus a game in Melbourne on Grand Final day
--	---	--	---	--	---

Overall, Jason might:

Play for **5–10 different teams**

Play up to **30 games**

Have **5–10 different coaches**

Next Generation Academies change the talent landscape

Pre-2016

Academy model setup and operating in two expansion markets

- GWS Giants & Sydney Swans in NSW
- Gold Coast & Brisbane Lions in Queensland

WAFL clubs responsible for 11–18 year olds

AFL Clubs in WA enter talent sphere



2016

Academy model expands to other 14 AFL clubs with indigenous and multi-cultural focus

- In WA Fremantle focuses on Kimberley and West Coast focuses on Pilbara

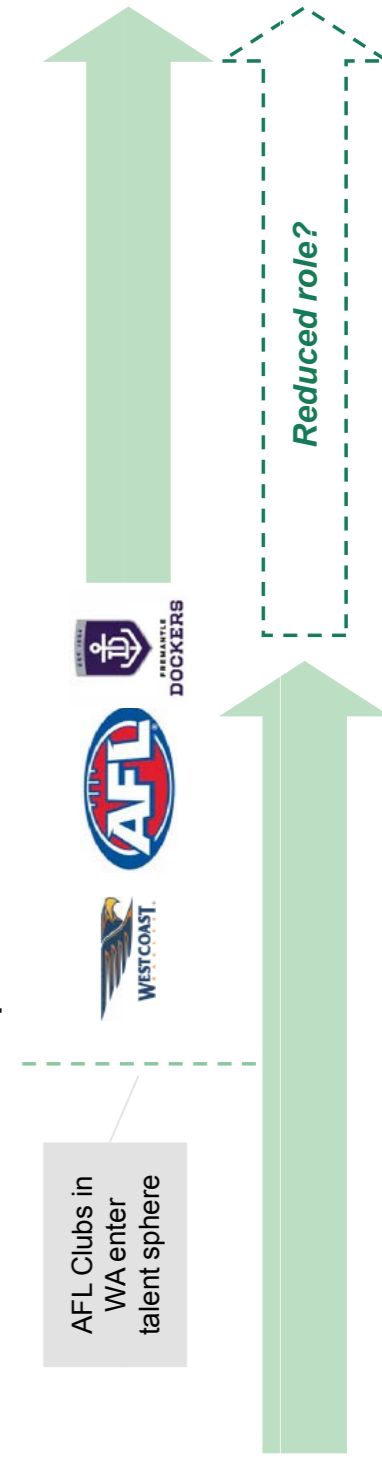
WAFL clubs retain responsibilities

2017 onwards

Model expands further with metro areas now in play

- WA split between West Coast and Fremantle
- In Victoria Academies to take over responsibility for 14–15 year olds from TAC Talent System

WAFL responsibilities potentially reduced



Two additional recommendations are made to address current challenges and deliver our talent related goal

Pillar	Goals	Recommendations
Talent WA contributes proportionately more, higher quality talent than other states	Increase the number and quality of AFL draftees	10 Shift complete responsibility for the talent pathway from WAFL clubs to the WAFC 11 Setup separate 6 team elite talent competition to replace colts
	Ensure career pathways for talented coaches, umpires and administrators	6 Add coaching and club development staff to districts (1)

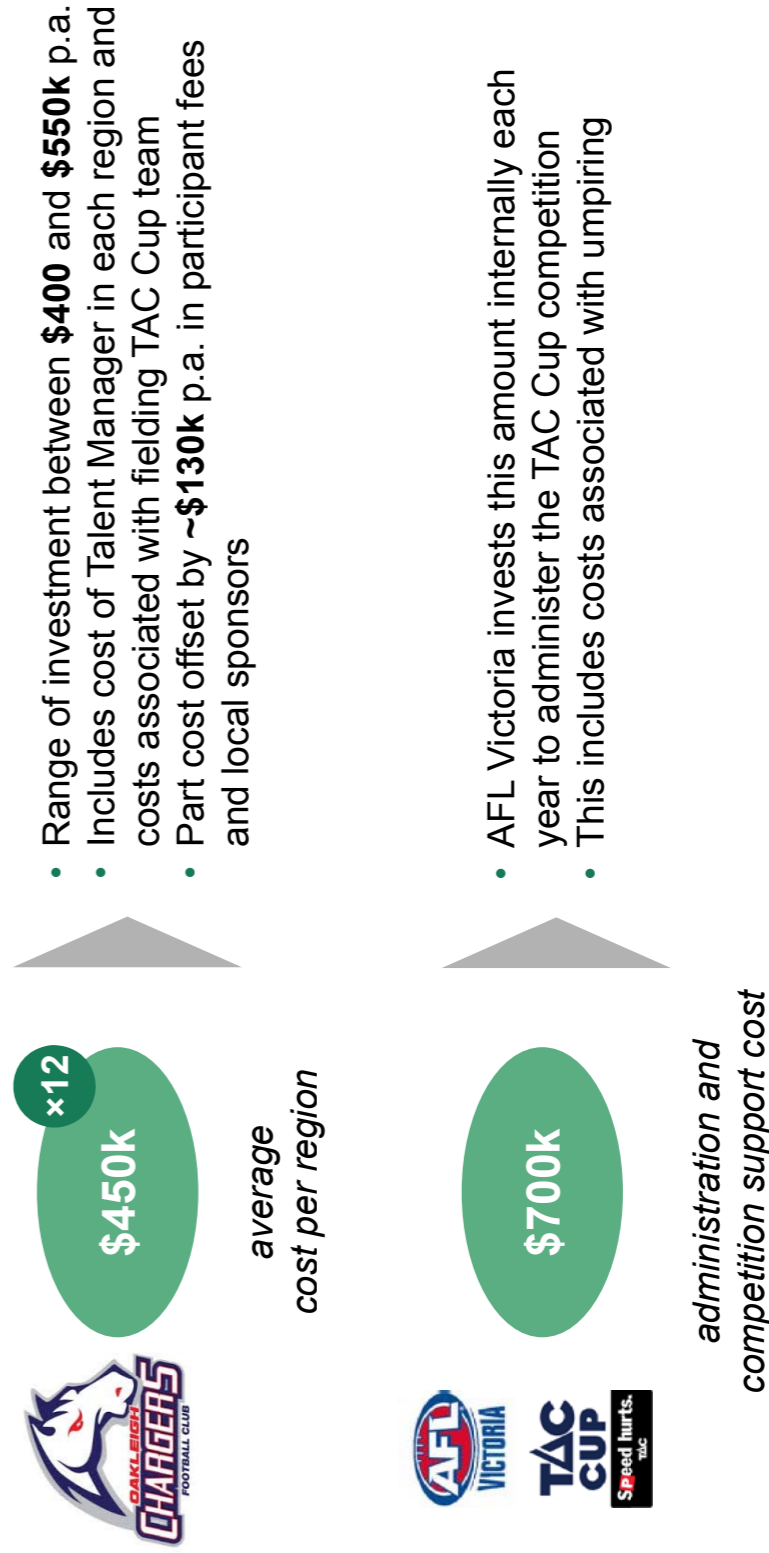
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1. WAFC to develop additional recommendations focused on talent pathway for coaches, umpires and administrators
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Current investment in the VIC pathway is approximately \$6m

Spread across 12 regions and competition management



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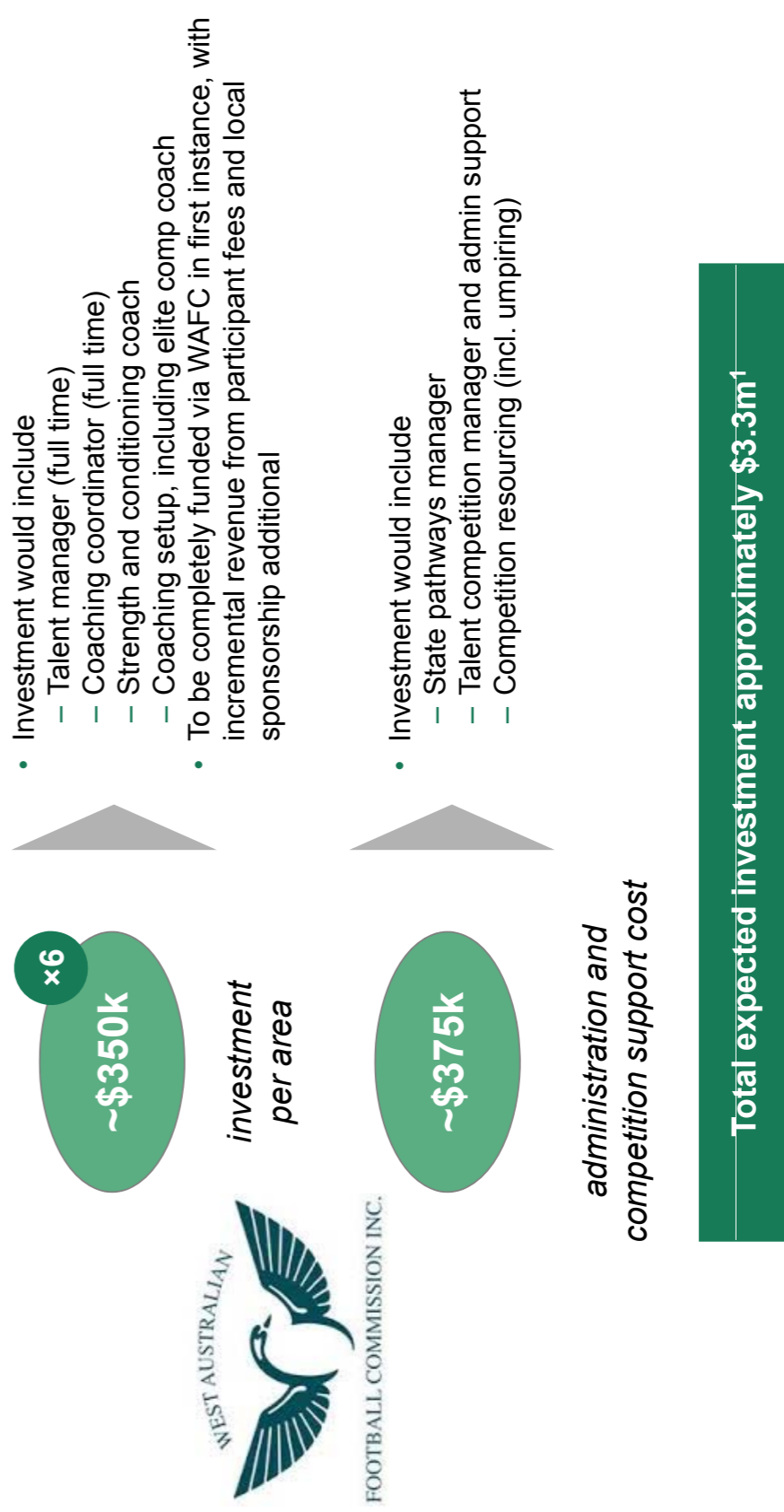
11 Current talent investment in WA talent pathway is approximately \$3.2m ...



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11 ... which, if repurposed, would cover the costs of a new six-area talent setup based on the VIC model



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11 Six team structure delivers appropriate schedule and depth, with carnival added to provide opportunity for regional talent

Six team sizing based on competition needs and benchmark

Require minimum of four teams for a viable competition

Six teams provides for 10 week season as well as balance between depth of talent in teams and opportunity for players

- Each team to play each other twice
- 132 players playing each week
- Approximately 300 players in top level squads versus approximately 450 today

Current TAC system of 12 regions has average catchment size of 492k population

- Blended average across seven metro teams and five non-metro teams
- Applying same ratio to WA results in five teams

Regional involvement via mini-carnival mid-season

Regional talent given the option to move to Perth and play in talent comp

- Based on same model to current colts setup – e.g., Sam Petrevski-Seton, Tim English
- Players zoned to talent teams per current system

New mechanism to enable broader set of regional talent to compete

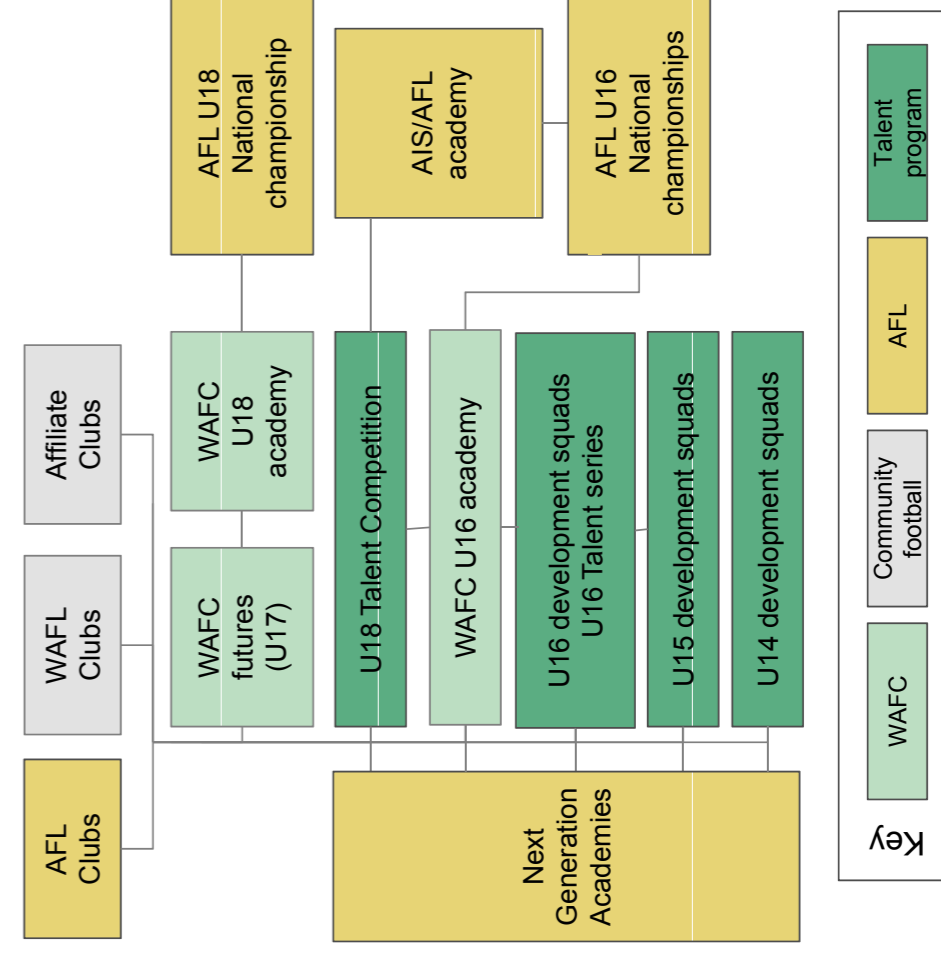
Mini-carnival to be run in Perth in school holidays with regional teams competing

- 2–3 week competition
- 5–6 regional teams together with 6 metro teams
 - e.g., Pilbara, Kimberley, Great Southern, South West, Wheatbelt, Mid West

Similar concept to Tasmania & NSW involvement in TAC Cup

10 11

Proposed new WA talent pathway, based on VIC model



Indicative cost structure for the new talent pathway structure

Area cost structure

Item	Cost	Comments
Talent Manager	90,000	Full-time role per current WAFL setup
Resources (footballs, training equipment, GPS)	50,000	Scaled for increased role
Talent Manager PD	3,000	Per current funding guideline
Technology	15,000	Scaled for increased role
Strength & Conditioning coach	60,000	Scaled for increased role
SUB-TOTAL	173,000	
Coach co-ordinator	70,000	Full-time role due to increased scope
Talent comp coach	50,000	Increased salary over current WAFL colts guideline
Other coaching	20,000	Scaled for increased role
Vision costs	20,000	As per current
SUB-TOTAL	160,000	
Cost per Area: \$333,000		

TALENT

Admin cost structure

Item	Cost
State pathways manager	150,000
Talent competition manager	75,000
Talent competition admin support	50,000
Competition resourcing (umpiring etc.)	50,000
SUB-TOTAL	325,000

Admin cost \$325,000

COACHING

Potential for additional one-off setup costs e.g., Redundancies, infrastructure

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New structure expected to deliver increases in the quantity and quality of draftees, based on the benchmark

+ **3-5** draftees

Based on per capita ratio achieved by Victorian talent system

+ up to **1** point

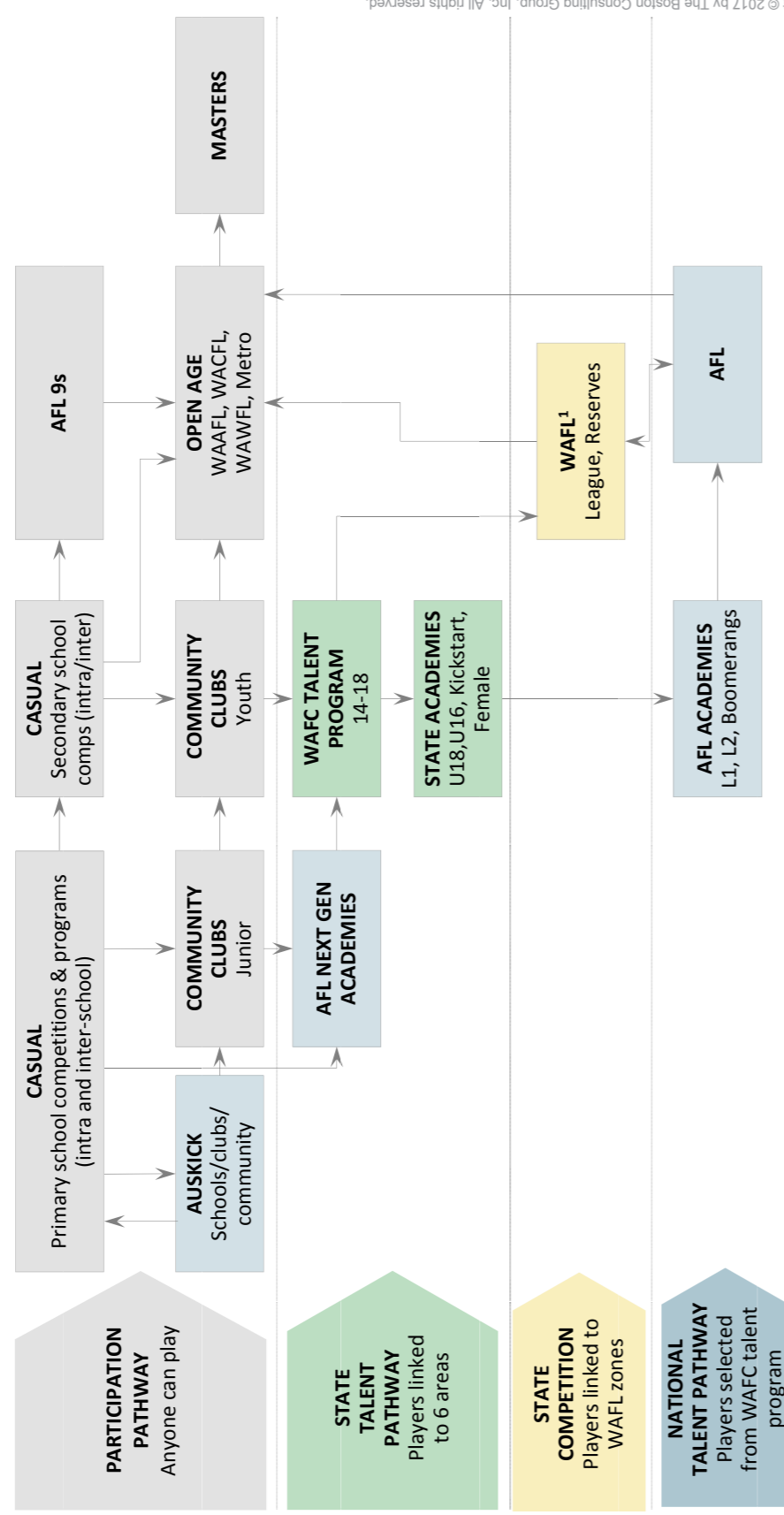
Based on results of AFL talent survey achieved by the Victorian talent system

New model ensures that the level of control over talent pathway remains in WA

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Recommended state talent program fits with AFL pathway and WAFL competition



1. WAFL is the only part that has no current plans to cater for male and female players

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Backup

Reduced role of WAFL clubs in the pathway has significant implications for key stakeholder

Talent role	<p>Removal of role within the talent pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes eliminating colts team, shifting of talent staff <p>Under 14s-16s to be taken over by new talent program/Next Generation Academies</p> <p>Under 16s-18s to be taken over by new talent program</p>
Funding	<p>Removal of all talent-tagged funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$163k per team <p>Removal of participant fees collected within talent programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~\$45k per team <p>May have knock-on effect for sponsorship and other partner funding</p>
Relevance	<p>Current colts setup is a key part of the relevance of WAFL clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing colts reduces relevance to be premier 2nd tier competition <p>Removes key connection point to local community</p>

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Five goals for delivering on sustainability

Pillar	Goals	Rationale
Sustainability <i>WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially sustainable, with integrity at all levels</i>	Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs	Our AFL Clubs are the heart of WA football, inspiring greater participation, bringing the football community together and providing financial resources to support the industry. Their ongoing success is important for the health of the sport
	Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model	Focusing spend in the most effective areas and protecting and growing revenue streams will ensure that all parts of football are able to play their role within their means
	Improve the quality of governance and integrity	Governance structures should be appropriate to the respective roles of different parts of WA football. The integrity of the game is vital to maintain its reputation and role in the community
	Build the capacity of staff and volunteers	All parts of WA football should be overseen and managed by capable, well-supported people, aligned with our collective vision. Investment in building skills and support for coaches, umpires and administration will deliver value for the sport over the long term
	Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities	Quality facilities are necessary to support the ongoing growth of the game and a positive experience for all involved

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Current performance against the sustainability goals is mixed

Pillar	Goals	Current performance
Sustainability WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially sustainable, with integrity at all levels	Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs	✓ AFL Clubs are relatively successful ✓ Partnership model has delivered a mechanism for the participation of WCE/FFC teams in the WAFL
	Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model	✗ WAFL Clubs are under financial pressure ? WAFL facilities raise risks and opportunities ✗ Player payments may drive the wrong incentives
	Improve the quality of governance and integrity	? WAFC/AFL club legal relationship doesn't reflect reality ✗ WAFC not seen as representing all of WA football
	Build the capacity of staff and volunteers	✗ High impost on volunteers for club governance ✗ Coaching inadequately resourced
	Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities	✗ WAFL facilities being improved, but no overall visibility of facilities at community level ✓ Country footy has good facilities in many areas through R4R

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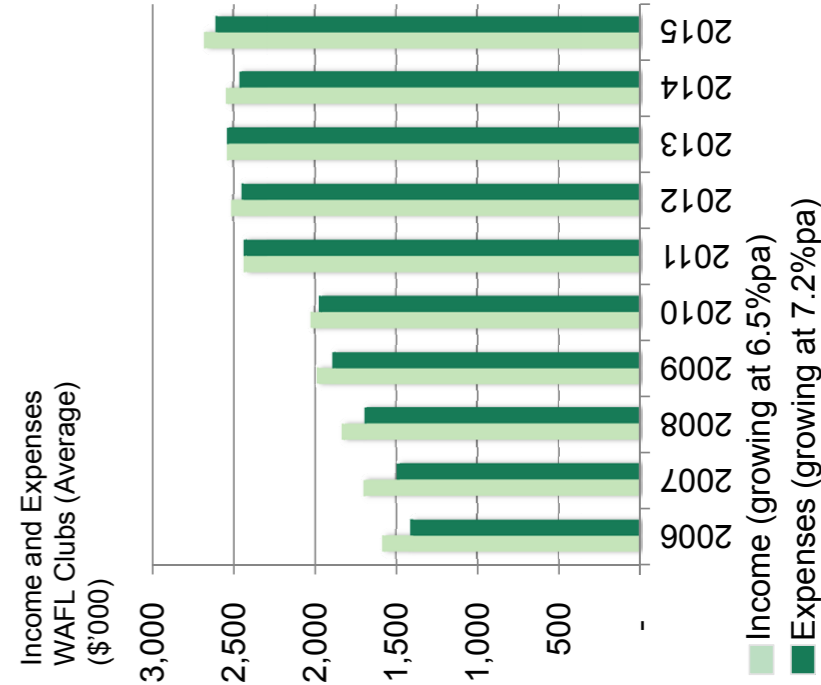
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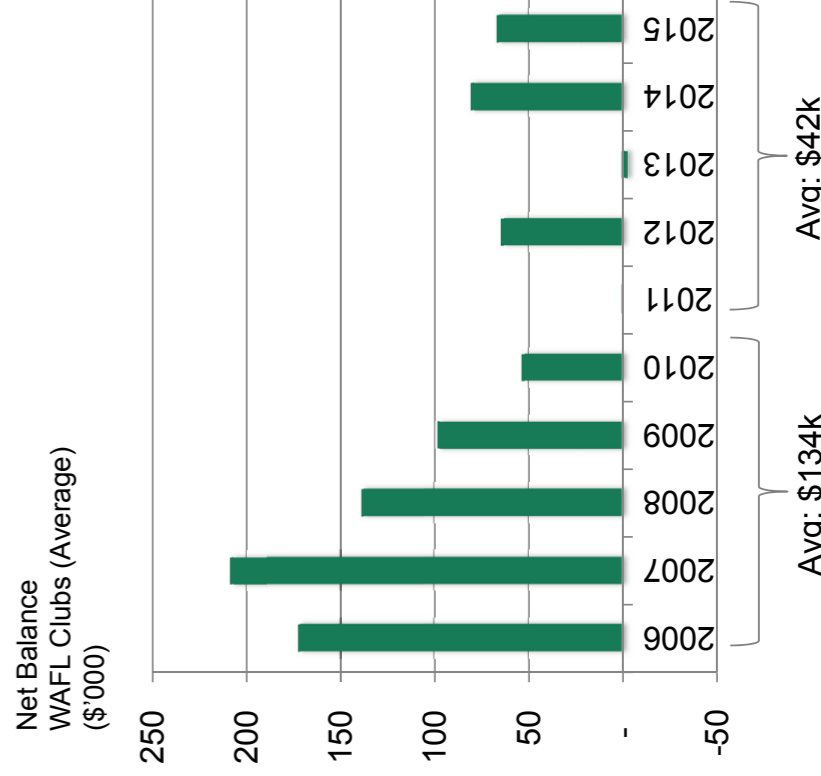
WAFL clubs are under financial pressure

Expenses are growing faster than income

Average expenses have grown slightly faster than income...



...resulting in a declining average net balance



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WAFL clubs are under financial pressure

Eight clubs have a lower 5 year average net balance than previous period

WAFL club income less expenditure 2006–15 (\$'000)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2006–10 average	2011–15 average	% change
 Claremont	145	303	16	04	-183	54	70	05	-110	-50	57	-06	-111%
 East Fremantle	145	173	180	-22	141	141	141	-36	73	24	123	69	-44%
 East Perth	114	89	48	-26	184	105	08	230	410	341	82	219	168%
 Peel	615	333	-348	280	162	46	154	05	-64	-69	208	14	-93%
 Perth	56	143	195	126	16	22	-03	25	101	85	107	46	-57%
 South Fremantle	440	270	06	225	-91	-13	-13	-263	12	21	170	-51	-130%
 Subiaco	224	299	426	89	119	176	136	185	101	164	231	153	-34%
 Swan	-246	247	616	144	146	-301	62	36	203	100	181	20	-89%
 Districts	60	21	113	65	-14	-232	24	-212	-02	-14	49	-87	-279%
 West Perth	172	209	139	98	53	0	64	-03	81	67	134	42	-69%
Average													

WAFL 5 year average net balance is 69% lower than previous

Source: WAFL Club data and WAFC income and expenditure reports for WAFL clubs 2006–15
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Renewed WAFL facilities raise opportunities and risks

Most WAFL clubs are in the process of upgrading their facilities

- Claremont, Perth and West Perth currently under construction
- South and East Fremantle in discussions to co-locate at Fremantle Oval

These upgrades will increase the quality of facilities available to the WAFL

- Providing better playing and training facilities for players, as well as better amenities for members and spectators
- Additionally they will create potential new passive revenue streams for clubs

But will also create an ongoing maintenance burden

- Significant funds will be required to maintain facilities, either directly or via lease payments to local governments

WAFL clubs will need to ensure they have adequate revenue sources to meet the maintenance burden

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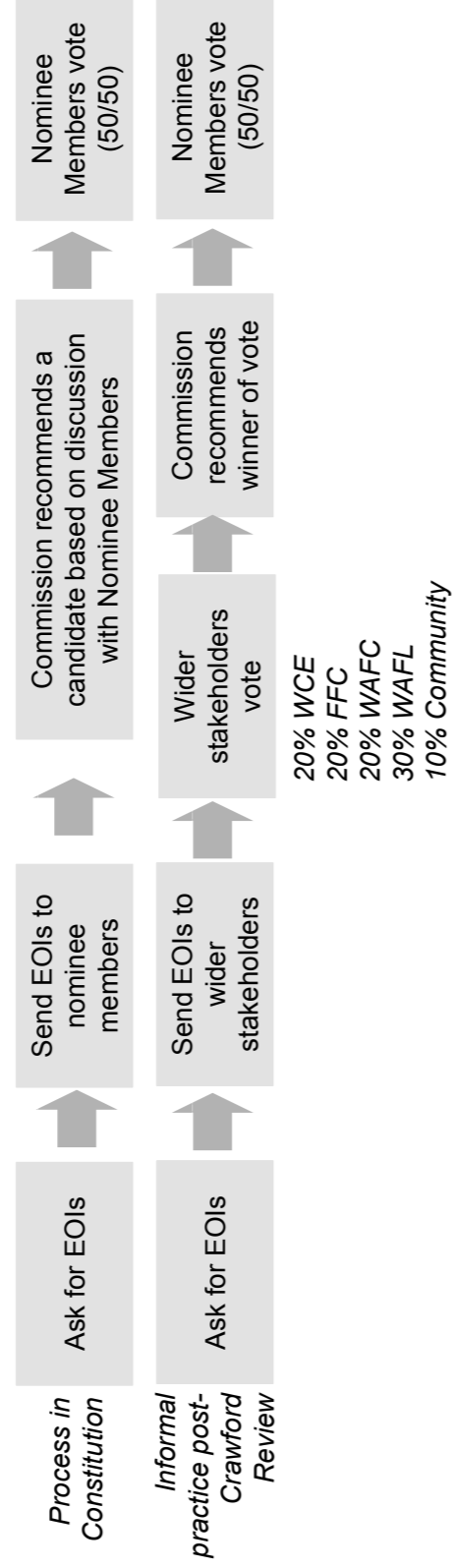
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Current WAFC board appointment process is an informal compromise arising out of Crawford Review

WAFC constitution says the Commission recommends candidates for board appointment and the Nominee Members vote (50% WAFL, 50% AFL)

The Crawford Review recommended expanding votes to include community football and the Commission itself, but these changes were not approved by the Nominee Members

A compromise approach is now taken, readopted annually by Nominee Members



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Extra step is unlikely to have an actual effect on the outcome – AFL & WAFL still have 50% vote each

There are eight recommendations to meet sustainability goals

Pillar	Goals	Recommendations	
Sustainability <i>WA clubs and competitions are well-governed and financially sustainable, with integrity at all levels</i>	Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review partnership model for 2019+ to continue supporting AFL clubs but respect integrity of WAFL competition 	
	Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Right-size WAFL club P&L to match role Review WAFC resource allocation and organisational structure to match goals Establish an industry-wide approach to player payments 	
	Improve the quality of governance and integrity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Retain existing WAFC/AFL legal relationship Reform WAFC governance to better reflect stakeholder makeup Reform affiliate constitutions for consistency Manage bottom-up funding through WAFC 	
	Build the capacity of staff and volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional support for club governance, coaching and umpiring 	
	Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase focus on facility planning and advocacy 	

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12 Continuing to support our AFL club reserves is important to WA football

AFL clubs value having a competition in which their reserves can play together in the same team

- Victorian AFL clubs have this advantage through the VFL and our WA clubs are potentially disadvantaged without it

The current partnership model is perceived to have delivered on AFL club needs, despite having created some issues for the WAFL

- There is a perception that it has undermined the integrity of the WAFL competition
 - Diminished connection between partner clubs and local communities
 - Created on-field and off-field inequalities between teams

The ongoing involvement of our AFL club reserves in the WAFL is important for all stakeholders

- AFL clubs see it as being of value
- On-field success of our AFL clubs is important to sustainability of WA football
- It increases the standard and relevance of the WAFL competition: Without it, an AFL reserves competition becomes more likely

Partnerships are due to expire in two years and the model for future involvement will need to be developed

- Possible models include
 - Stand-alone AFL Club teams participating in the WAFL competition
 - An amended partnership model (e.g., requiring seven games for finals eligibility)
 - AFL reserves teams play WAFL teams on WAFL team bye weeks

13 WAFL clubs could deliver on their refined role with a streamlined P&L (I/II)

Football Staffing	
Item	Cost
Football Manager	90,000
Senior Coach	70,000
Ass. Coaches	40,000
Support Staff inc S&C, Medical	40,000
Reserves Coach	10,000
Reserves Ass. Coaches	6,000
Reserves Support Staff	3,000
PD expenses	7,500
SUB-TOTAL	266,500

Football Operations	
Item	Cost
Player payments	300,000
Recruiting	10,000
Transfer fees	15,000
Insurance	20,000
Injury payments	20,000
Equipment	15,000
Uniforms	30,000
Match day expenses	15,000
Ground expenses	50,000
Medical expenses	25,000
SUB-TOTAL	500,000

Total football spend: \$766,500

13 WAFL clubs could deliver on their refined role with a streamlined P&L (II/II)

Administration	
Item	Cost
CEO/GM	150,000
Partnerships/Marketing Manager	80,000
Admin support	40,000
Facility lease/upkeep	50,000
Shared services (Finance, HR)	50,000
Misc inc IT, office, utilities	70,000
SUB-TOTAL	440,000

Marketing	
Item	Cost
Promotions and Communications	20,000
Merchandising	5,000
SUB-TOTAL	25,000

Current average WAFL club turnover is ~\$2m with significant additional spend on administration (\$150k), facilities (\$90k) and marketing (\$175k)
 Spending on talent (\$163k) removed and delivered by new talent system
 Expenses related to bar and function activities not included

Total admin and marketing spend: \$465,000
Total overall expenditure: ~\$1.23m

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WAFC resource allocation should be reviewed

Allocation of funding between pillars should be re-examined

Current allocation is weighted towards WAFL

- \$7m net investment

Shared services opportunities across the industry should be investigated

- May enable a more efficient allocation of resources
- Could be with WAFL clubs, districts or AFL

Vision-related KPIs set for all funding allocations

WAFC should be able to justify all its funding allocations by referring to the outcome that is being achieved

This will involve setting appropriate KPIs for all funding recipients, with reporting mechanisms

These KPIs should link back to the vision and goals

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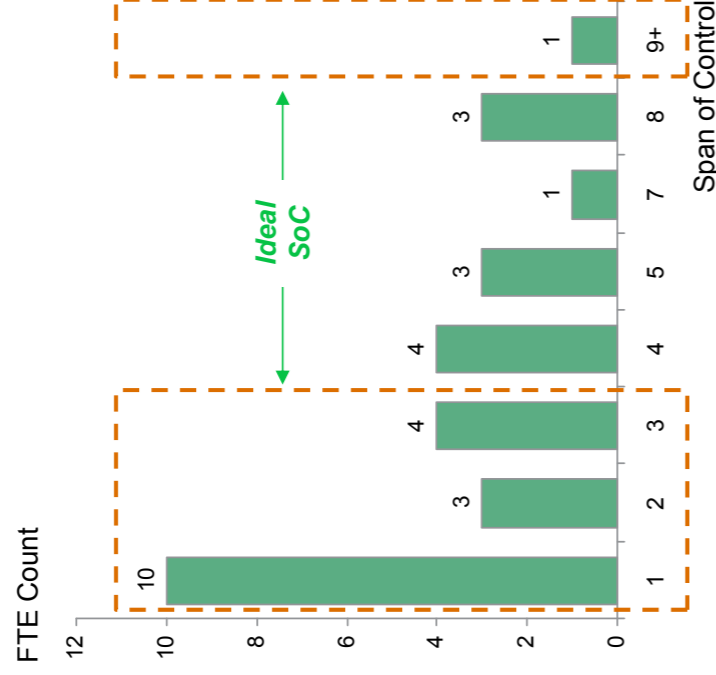
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WAFC organisation can be restructured to match goals

More than 60% of Managers have span of control outside benchmark ...



... indicating need to streamline structure and emphasise people on the ground

Reduce number of player-coaches

- 1:1 management relationships should only apply in specialised areas
- e.g., Umpiring

Increase spans of control for middle management

- Managers to be focused on people and stakeholder management
- Operational staff to be focused on operations

Adjust balance on the Executive team away from Corporate Services

- Reduce number of Corporate Services executives

Shift some community staff from WAFC HQ to regional structure

- Focus to be on "boots on the ground" staff

Note: Excludes 77 FTEs with no direct reports
Source: WAFC staff database, BCG analysis
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An industry-wide approach to player payments is recommended

Player payments occur in three different parts of WA football

- WAFL
- WACFL
- WAAFL (informal only)

Player payments create incentives for players to switch from one league to another

Limits on and mechanisms for player payments need to be agreed by all stakeholder groups to incentivise movements that are in the interests of the sport as a whole

- The WAFL's role is to be the premier state-based competition
- An "arms race" is not in the interests of any stakeholder groups, other than a small number of players
 - Increases costs to run football
 - May not create the best incentives for talent pathway
- This needs to be balanced against the ability of each league to increase the quality of its games

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16 Retain the current legal relationship between WAFC and AFL Clubs

The relationship between our AFL Clubs and WAFC is unusual

- AFL Clubs are wholly-owned subsidiaries of WAFC
- WAFC approves board appointments for AFL clubs
- AFL Clubs each has a 25% vote to elect WAFC's board
- No other AFL clubs are owned by a state sporting body

Selling licences back to the AFL would more accurately reflect the actual relationship today

But the current arrangement delivers on current needs

- Ongoing revenue stream to community football from AFL clubs
- Well-balanced skill-set on AFL club boards
- Ability to remove the AFL club boards in an extreme situation
- Functional relationships between WAFC and AFL club boards

There is no urgent need to change this relationship

- WAFC would only change it if a new model gave greater security to ongoing funding, which would be challenging
 - Either a large lump sum or secure ongoing payment
- AFL clubs would only want to change it if they preferred an alternative board election mechanism

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17 Governance changes are recommended so the WAFC is seen to represent all of WA football

Best practice is an independent board, acting in the interests of the sport as a whole

- Representative boards tend to factionalise rather than take a big picture view
- Balance of skills and experience enhances board effectiveness

Constitutional change is recommended to formalise the representation of broader stakeholders in board appointment process, through a balanced appointments committee requiring unanimous agreement

- A balanced appointments committee reduces the risk of a board favouring the interests of one stakeholder group
- Requiring unanimous appointments helps ensure the board is not factionalised

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Formalising community football's role in board appointments would ensure WAFC is seen as representing the whole sport

Stakeholder group	Advantages of representation	Disadvantages of representation	Current representation	Proposed representation
AFL Clubs	Strongest part of WA footy, significant funding source	Focused on elite level	2 members, 50% vote for board	1 member
WAFL Clubs	Historical role, WA focused	Vested interest in status quo	9 members, 50% vote for board	1 member
Community football	Represent 98% of WA football participants	Interests may not align with elite level	0 members, 0% vote for board	1 member
WAFC Commission	Understand the needs/issues for appointment, acting in interests of whole sport	Self-perpetuating: may discourage disparate views	0 members, 0% vote for board	1 member
AFL	Significant funding source	Focused on elite level	0 members, 0% vote for board	0 members

Unanimous agreement required, so stalemate mechanism needed

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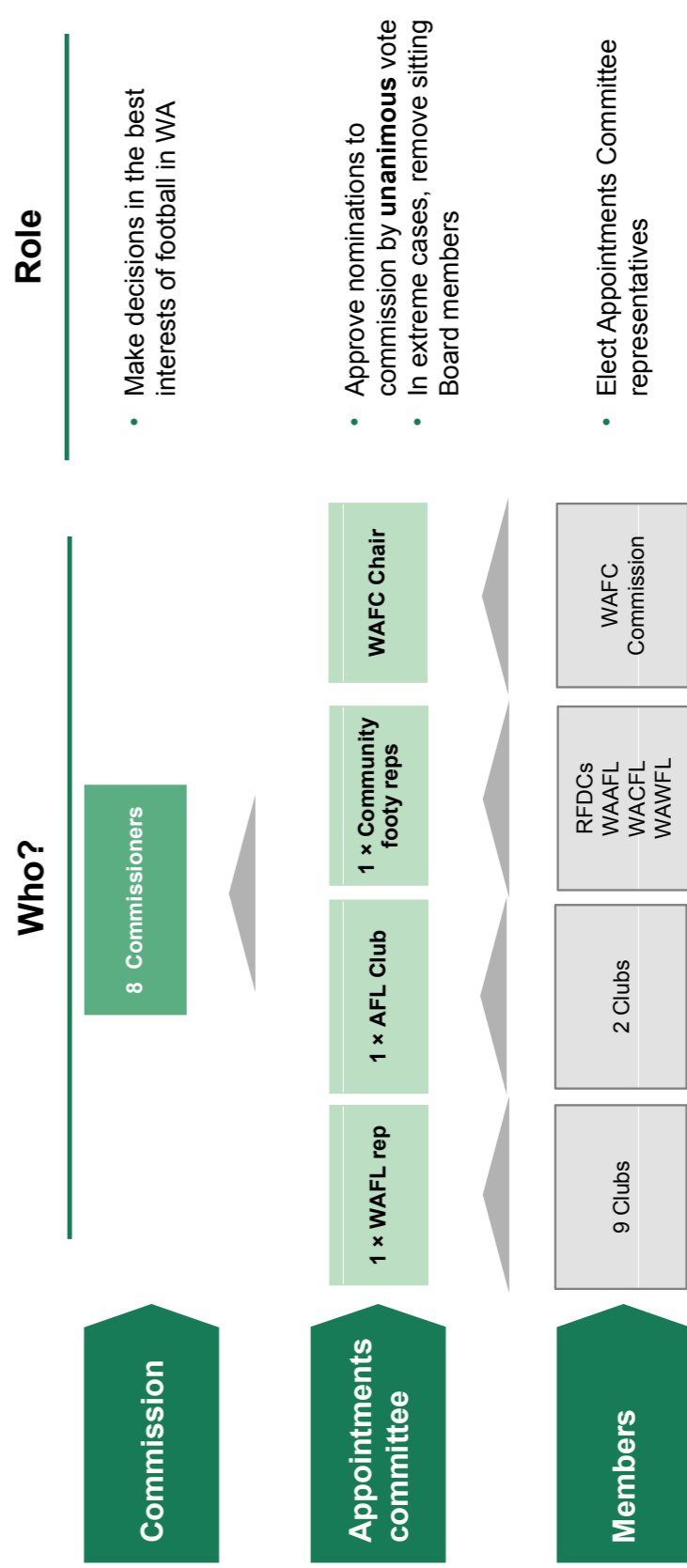
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Unanimous approval by a representative Appointments Committee is recommended



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Member groups would need a mechanism for appointing their representative to the Appointments Committee

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Illustrative

Unanimous approval of broader Appointments Committee would support board skill mix rather than special interests

Desired Board attribute (illustrative only)

- Professional expertise in
 - Finance
 - Marketing
 - Legal
- Experience as CEO
- Senior exec. experience in organisations larger than the WAFC
- Elite football experience
- Understands grass roots football
- Access to state government
- Adequate diversity
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Multi-cultural

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Affiliate constitutions should be amended to ensure consistent direction

Each affiliate organisation has its own constitution, which do not necessarily work together smoothly

- WAAFL
- WACFL
- WAWFL
- Metro League
- Masters

In order to ensure all affiliates act in the best interests of football in WA and to reduce complexity and duplication, it is recommended that affiliates amend their constitutions

- To a standard best practice form, to simplify compliance
- To include a clause requiring compliance with the WAFC constitution

This will require the agreement of all affiliate bodies, so will require a significant stakeholder engagement campaign

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19 Facilities planning and advocacy should be an important role for the WAFC

Facilities could be a hard limit on the growth of football in WA

- Playing fields cannot be used for more than ~25 hours/week without damage to turf and many are operating close to this maximum
- There is a fixed number of playing fields in the metropolitan area
- New housing developments are prioritising other, smaller, active open spaces for economic reasons
- The growth of women's football (and therefore separate games/times) increase the pressure on playing fields and other facilities (e.g. change rooms)

WAFC needs to play a strong role in advocacy and facility planning with state/local government and property developers

- Ensuring that community benefits of football are clearly articulated to property developers and state/local government
- Actively scoping/reviewing facilities requirements in new areas
- Preserving existing facilities

Existing facilities funding approach needs improvements

- Undertake a facilities audit
- Develop a clear facilities plan
- Work closely with DSR and AFL facilities programs to unlock additional funding
- Communicate program clearly with stakeholders

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Overview of recommendations

Engagement

- Introduce conversion KPI for Development staff
- Unlock additional club development staff by restructuring to three metro districts
- Investigate relocating district teams
- Investigate merging WACFL and RFDCs
- WAFC to manage bottom-up funding
- Add coaching and club development staff to districts
- Introduce annual qualitative survey on perception of footy, use as a KPI for Development staff
- Implement further equalisation measures
- Investigate incorporating women into WAFL

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Talent

- Shift complete responsibility for the talent pathway from WAFL clubs to the WAFC
- Setup separate six team elite talent competition to replace colts, commencing in season 2018

Sustainability

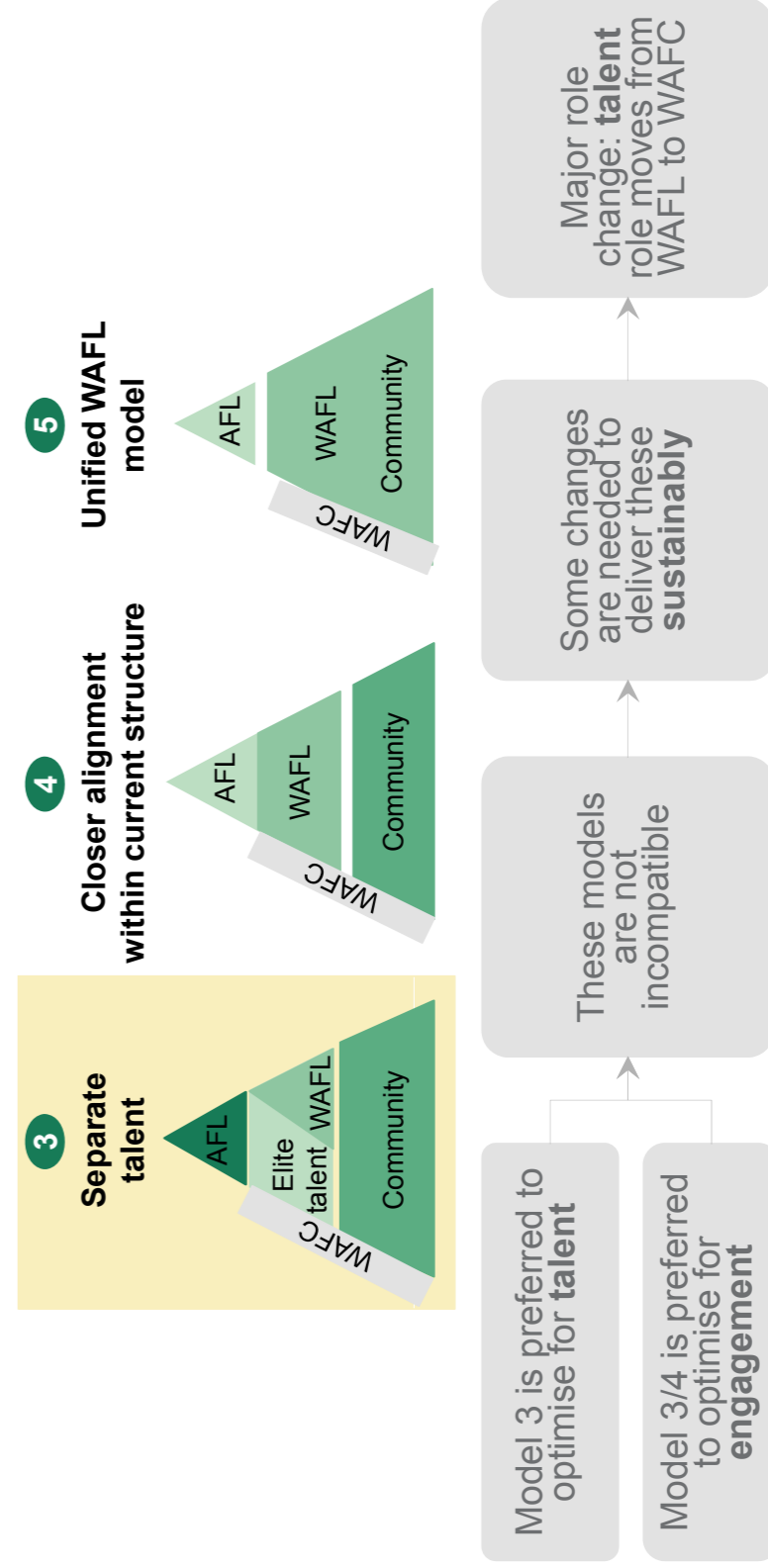
- Review partnership model to continue supporting AFL clubs but respect integrity of WAFL competition
- Right-size WAFL club P&L to match role
- Review WAFC organisational structure to match goals
- Establish an industry-wide approach to player payments
- Retain WAFC/AFL Club legal relationship
- Reform WAFC governance to better reflect stakeholder makeup
- Reform affiliate constitutions for consistency
- Manage bottom-up funding through WAFC
- Provide additional support for club governance, coaching and umpiring
- Increase focus on facility planning and advocacy

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When all the recommendations are considered together, a version of model 3 emerges the winner

Models under consideration



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Stakeholders contribute to our goals in different ways in our future model

Pillar	Goals	WAFC	WAFL	FDCs	Clubs
Engage-ment	Introduce all WA children to football	Primary focus			Secon-dary
	Increase the number of players who continue to choose to play football			Primary focus	
	Support all types of participants, including volunteers		Secon-dary		
	Deliver measurable community benefits through football	Secon-dary			Primary focus
	Maintain a quality state-based second-tier competition		Primary focus		
	Increase the number and quality of AFL draftees			Secon-dary	
Talent	Support the ongoing success of our AFL clubs	Primary focus			Secon-dary
	Ensure all parts of football have a sustainable business model				
Sustain-ability	Improve the quality of governance and integrity				
	Build the capacity of staff and volunteers				
	Ensure football is supported through appropriate and quality facilities			Secon-dary	Secon-dary

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Recommended roles for key organisations

WAFC	Provide leadership to the WA football industry by driving participation and talent development and contributing to sustainability for all parts of the industry
WAFL	Provide an exciting premier, state-level competition
FDCs	Provide advice to WAFC staff on effectively growing football participation in each area
Affiliates	Run competitions to enable clubs to provide opportunities for life-long engagement with football and community benefits
Clubs	Provide opportunities for life-long engagement with football and community benefits

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Appendix A –

WAFC 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey




Who Responded?



 **2,636**
people

 **70.3%**
males

 **29.7%**
females

Mostly representing

1. East Fremantle District 12.1%
2. Perth District 9.7%
3. West Perth District 9.4%
4. Swans District 9.2%
5. Claremont District 9%
6. South Fremantle District 8%
7. Peel District 7.8%
8. East Perth District 7.2%
9. Subiaco District 6.7%
10. South West Region 6.5%

Mostly representing

- 1 Parents Junior Community 
- 2 Player Senior Community 
- 3 Coach Junior Community 
- 4 Member / Spectator WAFL 
- 5 Volunteer Junior Community 

Foreword



In 2016 the WAFC invested resources into assessing stakeholder satisfaction levels with football through the WAFC Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey was independently coordinated by FTI Consulting to ensure the validity of the data.

The purpose of the survey was to create a stakeholder satisfaction benchmark which will enable the WAFC to not only measure the quantity of participation, but also the quality of engagement that participants and supporting stakeholders experience.

The survey was very well received with 2,636 community and WAFL stakeholders providing responses on a range of topics from the overall service provided by the WAFC, to the game environment at community matches. The survey also captured a range of comments and suggestions that will assist in improving our game.

The data that was established from the survey will provide the WAFC with a number of operational improvements such as an increase in training materials and resources for coaches. The survey will also play a role in providing data to guide the development of the WAFC Strategic Plan by creating an understanding of what football stakeholders see as important strategic priorities.

In addition to this, the WAFC will utilise the detailed satisfaction ratings captured to implement targets for staff to increase customer satisfaction ratings across the board. This measure will be linked to staff KPI's.

Some key actions within the trending analysis are;

- Ensure the WAFC Strategic & Operational Plans address and align to the Key Themes and Five Elements to Success;
- Empower all staff to increase the WAFC Overall Satisfaction Ratings;
- Provide the industry with a greater understanding of the role of the WAFC in 2017.
- Creating a stronger focus on delivering a 'good service' and creating positive relations to all stakeholders of Football in WA.

This report provides an overview of the key themes and benchmark satisfaction ratings that were present in the 2016 WAFC Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Gavin Taylor
Chief Executive Officer
West Australian Football Commission

Our role in football



93%

VALUE OPPORTUNITIES & PATHWAYS FOR TALENTED PLAYERS



64%

ARE CONFIDENT IN THE FUTURE OF FOOTY IN WA



92%

THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE WAFC PROVIDE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP TO THE WA FOOTBALL INDUSTRY



49%

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF WAFC



Five Elements to Success



Respondents prioritised the key pillars that underpin a successful football system in WA

Umpiring

"We really need access to suitably qualified umpires for school games. Students umpiring students is far from an ideal situation. I understand this is a challenge to organise and appreciate your efforts."

"Umpires need more support at games. First games should be done with a buddy to increase confidence. Official umpiring coaches need to monitor and give constructive feedback."

Alignment of clubs

"Inappropriate for the two AFL clubs to load their sides with players in the WAFC finals that have not played in the WAFC competition since mid-July"

"The alignment teams should face much harsher terms of qualification of AFL players to play in WAFL finals"

Females

"More support/funding is needed for Women's Football at the grassroots level-WAWFL, Youth Girls, School Girls comps, Girls Auskick to provide a stronger pathway from Auskick to WAWFL and then possible selection in Women's AFL."

"We need to start seeing changes in attitudes towards female football by the WAFL clubs"

Sportsmanship

"Coaches must pull players off the field who are playing outside the spirit of the game, preferably before an umpire sends them off. Smaller players (especially as others grow) need to be protected. First aid/injury care should be a compulsory skill for at least one person per team."

Regional club support

"Local supporters and volunteers are the most important thing in country footy, I would like to see a campaign or a round that acknowledges their efforts."

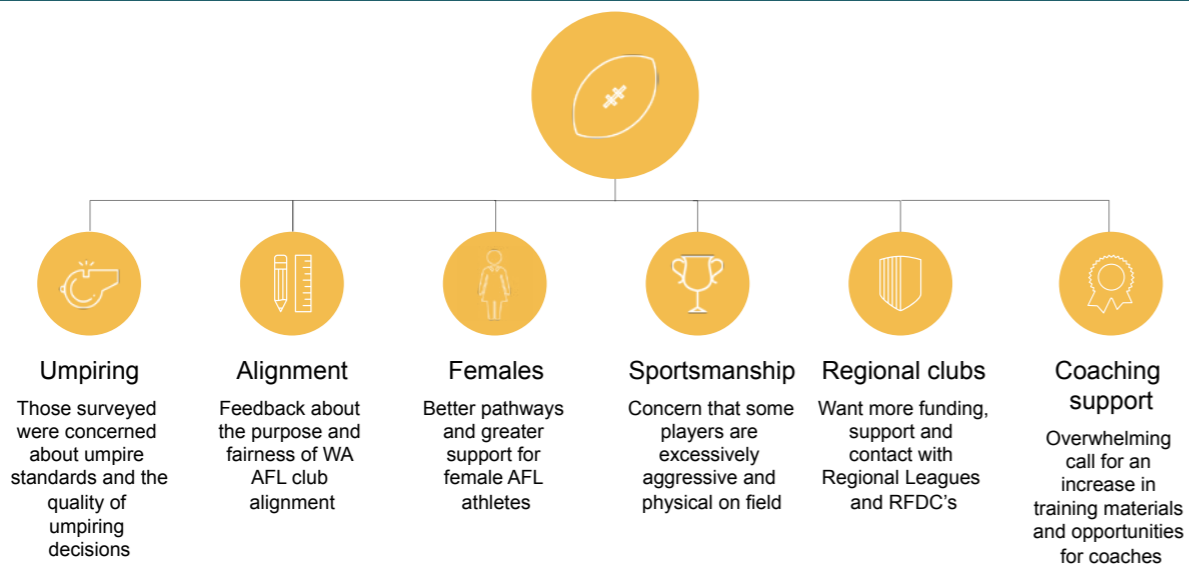
"Need to do more to help the transition of country footballers to the WAFL"

Coaching support

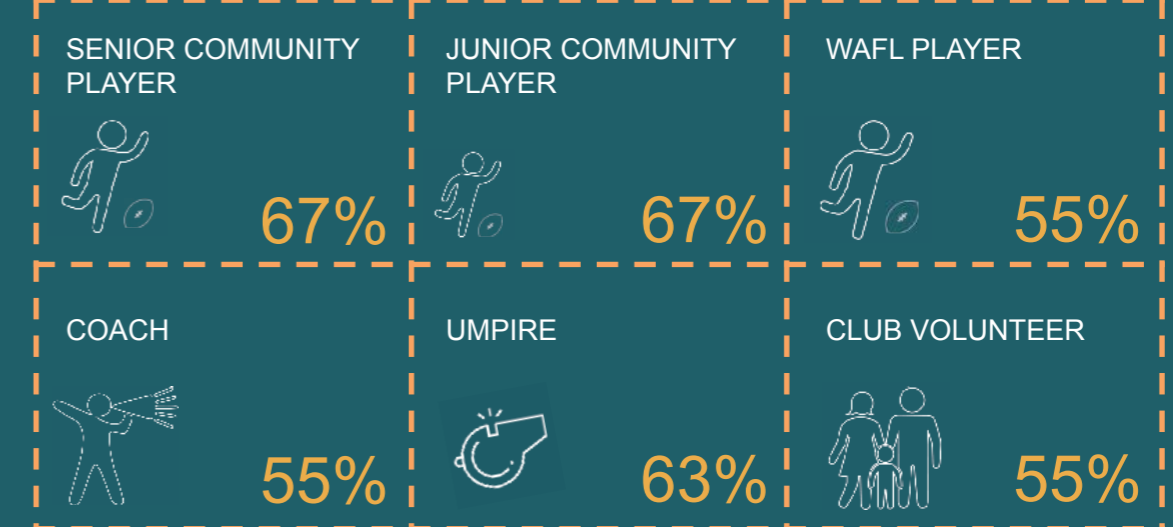
"Formal, standardised coaching courses and materials supported by the presence of WAFC officials 'in the field' "

"More access to coaching and learning for our coaches and the players outside the metro area."

Emerging Themes From Comments



Stakeholder Satisfaction Snapshot



Overall satisfaction ratings are an average satisfaction rating from all responses provided by each response group

Appendix B –

WAFC Youth Football Working Group Recommendations 2017-2020



OBJECTIVES

1. Within the youth football participation plan for 2017 – 2020, it is expected that the following objectives will be addressed;
2. To identify a suitable competition format to provide growth in male youth community club football.
3. To establish a strategy to improve player retention at the key drop off ages.
4. To assess the current development squad format and identify strategies to increase long term player retention once a player enters the talent pathway.
5. To identify strategies that increase the interaction of school football with community competitions and the talent pathway.
6. To identify an alternative football framework that engages youth who don't currently play football or who wish to play a different format to the traditional game.
7. To identify the influence of club coaches and volunteers on player recruitment and retention and establish a plan to positively impact this.
8. To provide direction on the appropriate allocation of resources and investment required to support the plan.

PROCESS

1. Establishment of a **working group** (12 months),
2. Conducted research within the current youth football market (**youth survey**),
3. Conducted **consultations** and received input from key stakeholders,
4. Explored and researched current **global best practice** in engaging and retaining youth aged participants,
5. Debated the **merit of the research** and findings and sought input from appropriate football stakeholders,
6. Present to WAFC Football Affairs Committee,
7. Final recommendations discussed with stakeholders,
8. Final report finalised and released.

YOUTH FOOTBALL WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2017 – 2020



RECOMMENDATION 1

Undertake a legitimate trial of night football for Youth participants over a four-week block during the regular season, with a coordinated evaluation approach implemented to collect participant satisfaction data.

OVERVIEW

Background

Throughout the consultation process and through participant and parental surveys there has been a wide belief that additional night games may provide different opportunities for both players and parents and that the shift from a traditional structure of football may help enhance youth retention.

Findings

The following considerations have been taken into account in the development of the recommendation;

- Consultation suggests that more night football should be played.
- The two key nights suggested are Thursday & Friday nights.
- Due to facility constraints it would be difficult to schedule all games for a single competition at night.
- No research has been conducted specifically into the satisfaction of participants and parents after night games.

The ability to evaluate the proposed trial will allow the WAFC to extend the pilot if warranted. The availability of venues with lighting capability for competitive games in some Districts may be a challenge that needs to be assessed and a determination on viability made.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Develop a suitable competition format to deliver Year 12 football in order to drive transition from Youth to Senior.

OVERVIEW

Background

It has been agreed throughout the consultation process that the current link between youth and senior football isn't strong enough and the current structures and formats have a significant influence on this.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a plan for the inclusion of an additional phase to the junior football pathway via the implementation of a 15 a side competition for Years 7 to 9.

OVERVIEW

Background

Global trends and local surveys indicate that participation factors are strongly linked to enjoyment, and enjoyment can be directly linked to how many times a player touches the ball when playing a game of football. Further to this, at a key drop off age of Year 6 to 7, there is an increased requirement for players per team (jumping from 15 to 18) meaning a team has to recruit 3 additional players in order to be able to field a team. This often leads to teams merging around this age group.

Findings

The concept of reducing player numbers on team was developed based on the following positive elements;

- It will increase the chance of a player touching the football – a key factor in deciding whether a player has 'fun'.
- It will decrease the ability for coaches to hide players in forward/back pockets as there will be a push for more players up the ground - a key element of 'fun'.
- It has the potential to increase the number of teams (due to less required players) which will increase the ability to effectively grade sides.
- There will no longer be an increase in players required to field a team from Year 7 to Year 8 and therefore teams will remain together for longer.
- It is envisaged that this would be initially in the Year 8 – Year 10 age groups.

The concept was raised throughout the consultation process to generally positive feedback. All negative feedback revolved around the fact that the traditional game is played with 18 players on the field.

Findings

- Whilst there are some strong case studies for links between Junior & Senior clubs, these haven't been adopted across the board.
- The current format and competition structure of Year 12 football needs to be altered to attract more players and link current players between Junior & Senior Football.
- There wasn't any survey data specifically addressing how the pathway link can be improved.

Whilst the group explored a range of different models, it was identified that if a decision was to be made on altering the Year 12 competition to drive transition between Youth & Senior football, it would need strong buy in and engagement from Junior & Senior Club stakeholders as they will potentially act as a delivery mechanism.

The group found that a Working Group made up of appropriate stakeholders should develop a suitable competition format for the transition of players from Youth to Senior Football.



RECOMMENDATION 4

WAFC High Performance (in conjunction with Community Football) establishes a more concise regional talent pathway that will provide consistency, direction and quality training to players in regional areas.

OVERVIEW

Background

The consultation process showed that there is a significantly inconsistent talent pathway across regional areas a lot of which is dependent on how strong a WAFL club is in the region. The two key effects on players which are;

- The ability for a player to move through a talent pathway is heavily reliant on the relationship with the WAFL club in the area.
- For a player to effectively be a part of a WAFL talent program is reliant on the ability to travel to and from Perth.
- The ability for a player to receive high level local training that will enable them to reach their potential is limited to the resources and systems within the area.

Findings

It was acknowledged that the Great Southern Storm model is effective and has anecdotal benefits on participation. It was also identified that the Department of Sport and Recreation can offer a lot to assist this process.

Whilst this is an issue that impacts on participation, it is felt that this group doesn't have the charter to develop and suggest a model for implementation across the state. It is thought that this is best developed through the Talent Advisory Group or a suitable group as determined by WAFC Executive Manager Football Affairs.



RECOMMENDATION 5

To establish a reference group (that includes representatives from WAFC High Performance) to develop and implement a Long-Term Athlete Development approach to development of youth players that will propose and endorse a specific sport development model that will guide the direction and decision making for this segment of the game.

OVERVIEW

Background

It is imperative that the Talent Programs through sport are driven by a sport development model that best meets the needs of the stakeholders. It provides the philosophy behind a sports approach to talent development. Exploring the merits of the various player development models that currently exist and identify the preferred model for implementation within the WA talent pathway.

Findings

- The following observations were made of the current talent structure;
- Concerns on the impacts deselection has on the youth market
 - Initial Talent ID conducted by parents or community coaches
 - Moving to smaller squads earlier is a concern for the game
 - Youth players told at 13/14/15 that they have limited future in talent pathway moving forward and the possible impact on Youth retention within community football
 - Reputational risk for WAFL

Through further consultation and research, we also discovered;

- All WAFL Clubs still rely heavily on Community Coaches for Talent ID
- WAFL Clubs recognise reputational risk deselection can have on relationship with District clubs
- Nearly all WAFL Clubs deselection, some up to 40% of intake
- Some clubs are changing and moving to a more educated Talent ID structure so they can limit deselection
- Issues sit with capacity to properly conduct TID and having expertise on the ground
- A number of TM's are the FM of Colts, which limits capacity to correctly deliver TID



RECOMMENDATION 6

Develop a Youth Football Calendar to better align School, Community, WAFL and State Academy programs that further supports the welfare of the player and the existing stakeholder relationships

OVERVIEW

Background

The various segments within football (community, talent and school) do not currently collaboratively approach the development of their fixtures and schedules. This process therefore puts the competition ahead of the welfare of the players as opposed to introducing a player first mentality that seeks to develop a coordinated approach to a player's football journey.

Findings

After investigating various case studies, it was evident that some talented players could be playing 40+ games in one season, which is universally agreed as far too many.

- To develop an integrated youth football calendar that aligns community and school football (PSA/SSWA/ACC) more effectively
 - A formal, coordinated workshop with all key competition stakeholders (PSA, ACC, SSWA, WAFL, community and State Academy) be held post season to explore the concept of how we all better plan and subsequently fixture the various competitions that operate across the football calendar.
 - The WAFC facilitate a meeting prior to the end of Term 1 with each WAFL club (and their respective TM), the relevant schools in each district and the relevant JFC's to formalise the process for individual player planning to identify how many games each individual plays, who with and on what weekend, how many training sessions per week (and who with) in order to ensure a clear, agreed plan for talented players within each district that may be involved in multiple programs.
- The WAFC to explore the following strategies to better support the relationship with PSA/ACC/SSWA schools:
 - WAFC issue a public 'statement of intent' acknowledging the role the ACC/PSA/SSWA plays in supporting football.
 - The development of an agreed MOU between the ACC/PSA/SSWA and the WAFC.



RECOMMENDATION 7

Investigate if there is an alternative format of football that could engage youth who don't currently play football or who wish to play a different format to the traditional game.

OVERVIEW

Background

With the advent of shortened versions of sport such as Twenty20 and Fast Five should football develop an alternative version that can be picked up and played. It is imperative that Football does not go blindly down this path as it is currently 'trendy', but rather investigate through research, data and insights to determine if there are alternative ways in which the game could be developed.

Findings

It is acknowledged that football doesn't have an alternative structure in place to engage youth who don't currently play football. With this in mind the group explored various options taking into account the current social product, AFL 9s, and various other considerations.

Whilst we have a strong understanding of what our current football player's motivations are, we don't have strong sport specific evidence to show how we should engage youth that aren't currently playing football.

A working group will be established to identify if there is a possible alternative structure being mindful that there may well not be, and will look to gather sport specific evidence to support the decision that is made.



RECOMMENDATION 8

Develop a revised staffing structure that would better support the delivery of a more targeted and considered approach to coach education and development across the state

OVERVIEW

Background

It is acknowledged both locally, internationally and through research papers (including Troy Kirkham's Churchill Fellowship paper on Youth Retention), that the coach is one of, if not the, most important factors in engaging and retaining youth participants in sport. They play a critical role hence the WAFC need to refocus staff priorities into this important area of the game.

Findings

- There are a large number of coaches who are unwilling to participate in ongoing education for numerous reasons. These include lack of interest, time poor, the need to travel to attend sessions, and individual opinion that they already have enough coaching knowledge
- There are limited opportunities for coaches to engage in ongoing learning opportunities.
- The opportunities available are often developed around what venue, time etc. suits the presenter not the attendee. So, the education sessions must be taken to the attendee to make it easier to engage
- The current accreditation system sees coaches accredited after attending a one-off course that requires little to no follow up. Ongoing education is critical to better coach development and in term better youth retention and engagement.
- A large majority of coach contact is after an issue arises so is very reactive instead of being proactive.



RECOMMENDATION 9

Develop a process to enhance team selection including manipulation of players and merging teams.

OVERVIEW

Background

The formation of youth team's year on year is a convoluted process which is exacerbated by the continuing drop out of players from youth football. As teams lose players (for whatever reason) each year they are required to reassess their position leading into the next season and often need to recruit, either from other teams or players not playing the game, to stay viable.

This process usually occurs close to the season start date, leaving players, clubs and competition organisers in the dark as to some team's player numbers and viability for that year as the season approaches.

Findings

- Clubs often wait too late to make decisions about team viability due to an unwillingness to commit to merging with or even conceding players to another club.
- Some club committees are unwilling to prioritise youth teams, leaving many team decisions to the coach and team support staff who may be more emotional and results driven when discussing player movement.
- District rules, policies and timelines regarding player/team formation are inconsistent and locally influenced

Therefore, the WAFC should implement the following measures to address this:

- A team nomination timeline across all Districts should be standardized (within reason) starting from September the year prior with a set final date for nominations.
- A "Hub" system should be introduced in local sub areas to provide assurance of team viability in traditionally difficult youth markets. This involves a club being nominated as the "hub" for a year group within a locality, where they would commit to hosting a certain team well in advance (potentially up to 2 years) to counteract uncertainty leading into a susceptible age group.
- District involvement needs to increase throughout this process to provide back office support for early decision making. This would include statistical analysis of likely drop off areas, organizing of local hub meetings and support to youth team clubs to promote the likelihood of team and player retention. This simply requires a realignment of priorities around key times of year.



RECOMMENDATION 10

Develop a reward and recognition program, coupled with accountability guidelines, for youth player retention.

OVERVIEW

Background

For many years, the WAFC have educated coaches and clubs to prioritise player retention over winning. This includes introducing some rules and regulations to reinforce this education such as playing time requirements and player rotations. However there has never been any reward or recognition for those that comply with these actions. Conversely, each year we still celebrate the coach that wins the premiership with a flag and medal, whereas the coaches that may have taken a less competitive outlook (but rather focused on developing and retaining players) are forgotten.

The actions of winning-focused coaches, such as player recruitment or "poaching", minimising playing time and rotations for lesser players and an overly aggressive approach to results based outcomes are all detrimental not just to their team, but to their competition as a whole. This is a critical factor in youth drop out.

Findings

- Player recruitment by teams looking to improve the talent in their side has a negative effect on competition team numbers.
- Coaches who seek to alter their playing list for the benefit of improved team performance are doing so without focus or punishment.
- Coaches who excel at player retention through positive development strategies are not recognized in a way equal to those who win premierships.

The WAFC needs to elevate the status of coaches who retain player's year on year as opposed to those coaches who win, but turn their list over regularly. It is also important that other coaches learn from those coaches that retain greater numbers of players – what strategies do they use, what approach do they take, etc.



RECOMMENDATION 11

Establish a sustainable Youth Advisory Council

OVERVIEW

Background

There are a number of organisations (including sport) that have a Youth Advisory Council of some description both from a local context and internationally. Research clearly indicates that when youth have an ownership over an issue, structure or activity and are empowered through authentic opportunities to impact decision making then there is a real engagement in purpose and connection.

Findings

Create a Youth Advisory committee that has a strong inclusive component that engages youth from diverse backgrounds (both playing and non-playing). It is imperative that this is not viewed as tokenism, and is in fact an authentic opportunity to shape the direction and strategy of their football experience.



RECOMMENDATION 12

Develop a comprehensive process that collects and distributes data, research and insights to assist all stakeholders

OVERVIEW

Background

Sport as an industry has historically had a low investment into Research, Data and Insights, and as we start to focus more attention on evidence based decision making it is imperative that we have live Year to Date data and research available to inform our decision making.

Internationally, research has suggested that some sports invest as much as 8-10% of their annual budgets on this area as they see and understand the significant benefit that it can provide.

Findings

The WAFC to increase the amount of research, insights and data that they utilise for decision making around youth engagement and retention.



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