

2016

ANNUAL

REPORT



AUSTRALIAN
FOOTBALL LEAGUE





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AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
120TH ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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◀ Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge presents his Jock McHale Medal to injured skipper Robert Murphy, a touching gesture that earned him a Spirit of Australia award.

Cover: The wait is over ... Luke Beveridge (obscured), Robert Murphy and captain Easton Wood raise the premiership cup, which was presented by club legend John Schultz (left).

99,981

The attendance at the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

4,121,368

The average national audience for the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final on the Seven Network which made the Grand Final the most watched program of any kind on Australian television in 2016. This total was made up of a five mainland capital city metropolitan average audience of 3,070,496 and an average audience of 1,050,872 throughout regional Australia.

18,368,305

The gross cumulative television audience on the Seven Network and Fox Footy for the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series which was the highest gross cumulative audience for a finals series in the history of the AFL/VFL.

► The Bulldogs' 62-year premiership drought came to an end in an enthralling Grand Final, much to the delight of young champion Marcus Bontempelli and delirious Dogs supporters.





6,306,336

Total attendance for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

31,850

The average attendance per game for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

875,197

The total number of AFL club members in 2016, which was the 16th successive season in which AFL clubs have set a record for total membership. One in 28 Australians is a member of an AFL club, while 11 of the 18 clubs had 50,000 members or more.

◀ Flying Kangaroo Majak Daw took his game to new heights in 2016, soaring for the Woolworths Mark of the Year against Collingwood in round 18.



Brownlow Medal

PATRICK DANGERFIELD
GEELONG CATS

2012 Brownlow Medal

TRENT COTCHIN **SAM MITCHELL**
RICHMOND HAWTHORN



Norm Smith Medal

JASON JOHANNISEN
WESTERN BULLDOGS



Coleman Medal

JOSH KENNEDY
WEST COAST EAGLES



NAB AFL Rising Star

CALLUM MILLS
SYDNEY SWANS

\$255.87 million

Total payments and distributions by the AFL to AFL Clubs in 2016, compared with \$245.2 million in 2015.

\$224.97 million

The total of gross payments to AFL players in 2016 consisting of \$204.3 million in gross player payments, \$18.99 million in additional services agreements and \$1.68 million in employment agreements and marketing agreements with associates of AFL clubs. The 2016 total was a two per cent increase on the 2015 total of \$220.5 million.

► Geelong star Patrick Dangerfield was a runaway winner of the Brownlow Medal, polling a record 35 votes.





195,719

Total number of NAB AFL Auskick participants in 3541 Auskick centres around Australia.

1,404,176

Total domestic participation in Australian Football in 2016, up 12.55% on the 2015 total of 1,247,575.

360,648

Total number of participants in community club football in 2016 throughout Australia involving:

- ▶ 14,772 teams
- ▶ 2755 clubs
- ▶ 230 leagues

132,890

Total number of participants in various countries around the world.

◀ Bearded Demon ruckman Max Gawn, seen here during the shoot of a NAB AFL Auskick commercial, became a cult hero in 2016 with a career-best season, earning All-Australian selection.

380,041

Total female participation in Australian Football in 2016 compared with 318,880 in 2015.



► The foundations were laid for the NAB AFL Women's competition, with star players (back from left) Daisy Pearce, Ebony Marinoff, Emma Swanson, Kiara Bowers and Moana Hope, and (front) Darcy Vescio, Tayla Harris and Katie Brennan proudly displaying their colours at the launch of Cotton On as the official apparel partner of the competition.

GREATNESS

OUR TRADITION OUR AMBITION.



Retiring Champions

Two of Geelong's most decorated players, Jimmy Bartel and Corey Enright, were among a number of champions to call time on their careers at the end of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Games record-holder Brent Harvey, Matthew Pavlich, Nick Dal Santo and Dane Swan were others to bid farewell in 2016.

Triple premiership heroes Bartel and Enright received a standing ovation from a packed Simonds Stadium following the round 19 victory over the Western Bulldogs.

On a memorable night for Cats supporters, Bartel registered his 300th match, while Enright surpassed Ian Nankervis' club games record with his 326th appearance.



► Geelong champions Jimmy Bartel and Corey Enright went out on a high in 2016.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



MIKE FITZPATRICK
CHAIRMAN

This year marks my 14th and last year on the AFL Commission and 10th as the Chairman. Over that time, the AFL has expanded to an 18-team competition, grown in attendance, viewership and reach across Australia. In 2016, we developed a strategic and investment plan after signing historic broadcast rights agreements in 2015.

But 2016 will be remembered and celebrated for two key reasons – the breaking of a 62-year premiership drought for the Western Bulldogs and the laying of the foundations for the first national women's competition.

The year of the Bulldogs

After a wonderful season of football in the 2016 Toyota Premiership Season and a thrilling finals series, the Western Bulldogs Football Club won their first Toyota AFL Grand Final in 62 years, downing the Sydney Swans after an enthralling contest.

Congratulations to the club and board and especially CEO Gary Kent, coach Luke Beveridge, captain Bob Murphy and, of course, indefatigable president Peter Gordon.

It could be called a fairytale ending to the season, but that would belie the wonderful game played by the Bulldogs, the commitment shown by the team to each other and their coach and the hard work over many years by many committed people.

The Western Bulldogs delighted many football fans and certainly delivered for their members, supporters and community in the west, who turned out in big numbers to celebrate the premiership cup.

The club is a testament to resilience and innovation and I thank all involved for their commitment.



► On the eve of his record-breaking 427th game, North Melbourne's Brent Harvey is joined by fellow members of the AFL's top-10 (from left) – Brad Johnson (364 games), Robert Harvey (383), Kevin Bartlett (403), Michael Tuck (426), Adam Goodes (372), Dustin Fletcher (400), Craig Bradley (375) and Simon Madden (378). Bernie Quinlan (366) was absent.

Building the foundations for the national women's league

For all the changes and growth over the past 14 years at the AFL and, indeed, since I played my first senior game 47 years ago for Subiaco in the WAFL, this year may well mark the most remarkable and positive change to our game in my lifetime.

Standing on the MCG, announcing the eight AFL clubs which had been granted licences to be part of the inaugural season of the NAB AFL Women's competition was a moment of pride for me as Chairman, for the AFL Commission and for the entire football community.

Women have played Australian Football for more than 100 years and our code has stood apart from other football codes with the high levels of women's support as fans, attendees and members.

But 2017 will see the women's game reach a new level on the national stage.

I would like to commend our Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan for his leadership in bringing forward the establishment of the NAB AFL Women's competition, which was originally planned for 2020.

We have been overwhelmed with the public and community response. The support has driven the AFL team to take bigger and bolder steps and the goodwill from all levels of our game, the media and the broader community for this new venture bodes well for its future.

▼ Perth's Foy and Gibson team from 1917. Back row – Nettie Green, Olive McKenna, (great great aunt of West Coast Eagles premiership player Guy McKenna), Eileen Oliver, Ruby Foster. Second row – Hilda Fraser or Ethel Gillies, Rita Thorn, Robert Davidson (factory manager), Gladly Golding, Lissy Taylor, Daisy Watson. Third row – Hannah Martin, Beattie 'Big' Binney, Hilda Fraser or Ethel Gillies, Eileen O'Connor (captain), Dorrie Donaldson, Maudie Davidson. Front row – Doris Godfrey, Ina Carlton, Alice Rowe (vice-captain).
COURTESY OF STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Every section of our game has responded positively – AFL clubs, state and territory leagues and our AFL staff which made 2016 a year of hard work and tough decision-making to get the women's league operational for kick-off in 2017.

It is appropriate to acknowledge the positive contribution of the Melbourne and Western Bulldogs football clubs, who have played women's exhibition games for the past three years, and for championing the development of football for women.

In 2016, the AFL Commission agreed to establish a Women's Advisory Group, chaired by AFL Commissioner Major Gen. Simone Wilkie.

Members of the advisory group also included Susan Alberti (Bulldogs board member and philanthropist), Michelle Cowan (Fremantle AFLW coach), Craig Starceovich (Brisbane Lions AFLW coach), Libby Gorr (media commentator), Debbie Lee (past player and stateswoman of women's football), Holly Ransom (Port Adelaide board member), Jane Woodlands-Thompson (SANFL Commissioner), Xavier Clarke (NT Thunder coach) and Darcy Vescio (Carlton player).

The group first met on May 5, and I would like to thank all the members for their continued support to the AFL Commission and our hard-working Game Development staff led by General Manager Simon Lethlean and Head of Female Football and Junior Development Josh Vanderloo.

Further detail on the establishment of the NAB AFL Women's competition can be found in a special section of this report starting on page 78.

GROWTH OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL HAS BEEN A 100-YEAR REVOLUTION – IT DIDN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

THE CONVERSATION

Reprinted courtesy of *The Conversation*

► Tonight, when Collingwood ruck Emma King jumps to tap the ball against her Carlton opponent, the spirits of thousands of women who have played Australia's national game will be leaping with her.

The game is the first in the Australian Football League Women's (AFLW) competition, which kicks off with eight teams in a condensed season. It is an initiative the AFL describes as a "revolution" that will change the game "forever".

However, there has so far been scant understanding of – or credit given to – the historical background to the AFLW's creation.

AFLW: why now?

AFLW's sceptics have questioned everything: the fast-tracked implementation of the competition, the extent of public support, the depth of the player talent pool and the potential quality and appeal of the female game, which will be 16-a-side and played with slightly modified rules and a smaller ball.

However, the women's code has been part of a remarkable transformation in Australian sport. There is a new appreciation of female achievements, including in horse racing, cricket, soccer and netball. Increasingly attractive financial and sponsorship arrangements and broadcast deals are also being put in place.

Due to swelling interest, the inaugural AFLW match has been shifted from Olympic Park to Princes Park, so more fans and curious onlookers can attend. Public awareness continues to build on the back of savvy AFL marketing and branding and helpful mainstream media coverage.

Also, a deluge of supportive social media campaigns have been driven by clubs, teams and players and independent enthusiasts keen to encourage an exciting venture in women's sport.

A long history

But the AFL hierarchy has only reluctantly trumpeted that women first played a series of competitive matches in Perth more than 100 years ago. They have played thousands of matches around Australia since.

Primary sources have thrown up remarkable stories and statistics; these create a rich and fascinating picture of the women's game.

More than 41,000 people turned out to watch a women's football match on Adelaide Oval in 1929. Women working in munitions factories, steel mills and on farms during World War II also played football fundraisers,

with teams in Broken Hill being dubbed the "Spitfires" and the "Bombers".

By 1950, the women's game had been played in more than 20 towns around Tasmania. A four-team competition was even run in Brisbane in the 1950s, when sides also emerged in Darwin and Alice Springs.

The tribalism of football in Victoria extended to the female game. Where women's teams in other states grew from workplaces and rural populations, from almost the beginning in Victoria, female teams were linked to established clubs.

In the first game in Melbourne, in 1921, one team was kitted out in St Kilda uniforms – also breaking the tradition of women playing in skirts or dresses.

In 1923, the Richmond ladies football team played in a match against male counterparts to raise funds for the junior team trip away.

In 1933, while Melbourne was still in the grip of the Great Depression, the Carlton and Richmond football clubs hosted a women's football match at Princes Park for charity. Carlton recruiters were over-run by young girls, older women and those in between, who were eager to wear the Blues' guernsey.

Administrators from other sports voiced disapproval as elite netballers and track-and-field athletes flocked to train with the Carlton squad, who were coached by senior player Micky Crisp. Thousands of spectators attended and footage of the game was shown on a Cinesound newsreel.

Immediately following World War II, women kept playing and helped raise funds for the Red Cross Food for Britain appeal.

The South Melbourne, Footscray, Hawthorn and St Kilda clubs formed a round-robin female competition. The games generated significant media coverage, especially when South Melbourne prodigies like 15-year-old Gladys Phillips, who later represented Australia in cricket and softball, were lauded by *The Sporting Globe*.

Even renowned hard-man Jack Dyer, then captain-coach of Richmond, agreed to umpire a women's match between North Melbourne and South Melbourne, which was played in front of a crowd of 9000 people.

Other VFL celebrities also umpired or coached women's matches. Eminent players like Essendon's John Coleman and Collingwood's Ron Todd featured in pre-match or half-time goalkicking contests. Geelong included a women's match as part of a past players' day at Kardinia Park in 1954.

But it was Footscray Football Club that kept the women's code alive and in the public eye during the 1950s. The impetus seemed to come from high-profile players like premiership captain-coach Charlie Sutton and rising stars Ted

Whitten and Jack Collins, who tapped into the ever-present desire of women to play football.

Over several years, interclub games were often played. Whitten's Wonders competed against Collins' Cuties, for instance, to raise funds for the local hospital. Or sometimes a combined Footscray team travelled to play an outer suburban or country rival.

A Victorian squad that played the first interstate women's game and was defeated by a Tasmanian northwest coast team in 1959 was comprised mostly of Footscray players.



Bulldogs AFLW star Katie Brennan.

Women belonged in the past, too

No biographical profile of Sutton, Whitten or Collins, nor the club's official history, make any mention of the role they had in fostering women's football.

The same is true of other VFL clubs. The exception is Carlton, where Myra MacKenzie, who played for the club in 1933, was feted in a number of press articles and features on the club's website, and was interviewed by academics before her death in 2016.

With the AFL's seeming indifference to what had gone before, few clubs pitching for a women's team in the new competition included any substantive historical links to bolster their bids.

However the AFL presents the AFLW, women's football is not a "revolution" that starts with the first whistle on Friday. Nor did it begin with the advent of the modern women's leagues in the 1980s. It began in 1915, when 36 pioneering young women in modest and cumbersome outfits took to the field and showed that women belonged there, too.

This piece was co-authored by Brunette Lenki, lead author of *Play On! The Hidden History of Women's Australian Rules Football*.





The National Game

The 2016 season delivered on our commitment to a national competition.

For the first time, crowd numbers in Sydney and Canberra surpassed 620,000 attendees for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Our Toyota AFL Finals Series had teams from four states competing and we played three finals in Sydney, one in Perth, one in Adelaide and four in Melbourne.

Most importantly, 2016 delivered our first all-Sydney final in week one. More than 60,000 people turned up to ANZ Stadium in their red and white or orange and grey to watch the expansion team from the west take on the established Sydney Swans, with the Giants prevailing.

The bye week – Festival of Football

The decision to have the week off between the end of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Toyota AFL Finals Series was a great success.

This was indeed a captain's call, and I have to congratulate Gillon McLachlan for pushing the case for the week off.

Congratulations also goes to the executive and AFL staff for great execution of the bye, delivering successful games and events during that 10 days, including the E.J. Whitten Legends game, the Women's All-Star match between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs at Whitten Oval, a successful Virgin Australia All-Australian team dinner and NAB AFL Rising Star Award and a boost for the state and community league finals.

The decision to have the week off was in response to what we believed was an integrity issue, and the result was great for the game, delivering competitive, hard, uncompromised football for our finals.

New financial model and long-term investment plan

The AFL Commission believes the broadcast and digital media rights agreements secured in 2015 for 2017-22 have given our game a generational opportunity to secure the long-term future of Australian Football at all levels.

While overall our game is in a healthy state, it is not something we ever take for granted.

We are living in a period of great change, shaped by technological and demographic shifts, and we must continue to move with the times, maintain and grow our existing supporter and participation base, while also embracing new communities.

The AFL, led by our General Manager, Finance, Corporate and Major Projects Ray Gunston, consulted widely across the industry in 2016 to develop a financial model that delivers security and sustainability, not for the next six years, but for the next 20 years.

◀ The Bulldogs had many heroes on Grand Final day, including small forward Liam Picken who kicked three goals and hauled in this spectacular mark.

The financial model is based on delivering for the critical pillars of our game, as stated in the AFL strategic plan – strong clubs, spectacular game, revenue and investment, community football, fans and our people.

The investment model must deliver:

- ▶ Strong and financially viable AFL clubs, with all teams competitive, and each with its own unique identity;
- ▶ The most talented and best-paid athletes, well officiated and exciting games in the best stadiums;
- ▶ A leading reputation for integrity;
- ▶ Growth in community football clubs, leagues and competitions, an elite women's and second-tier competition;
- ▶ A national, representative game reflected of and connected to the community;
- ▶ A diverse fan base that reflects the next generation of fans, and a game for men as well as women, with new technology and products to drive new consumption;
- ▶ A highly engaged and high-performing diverse workforce.

In 2016, we finalised new funding arrangements with AFL clubs and a new Competitive Balance Policy, but a new CBA with the players is yet to be finalised.

The club-funding model adopted by the AFL Commission includes the following key components:

- ▶ Removal of the gate levy and revenue-sharing mechanisms;
- ▶ A system to adjust club distributions, but not a tax on club revenues;
- ▶ The AFL to fully fund increased costs to clubs flowing from the Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2017-22, including increases in player payments, additional services agreements and allowances;
- ▶ Funding support for NAB AFL Women's competition teams and Next Generation Club Academies;
- ▶ Increased funding for structural differences between clubs;
- ▶ Improve the capacity of smaller and medium-size clubs to fund competitive football programs and write profits;
- ▶ Addressing the structural cost base issue by strengthening the soft cap on non-player football department spending and holding the level of the cap.

Having an independent Commission is the key to making far-reaching decisions on behalf of all of the competition.

The independence of the decision-making in our governance structure is at its best when making financial decisions on behalf of, but not beholden to, any one stakeholder in our game. It has allowed our game to grow and invest and make the right decisions for the future.

I would like to acknowledge all AFL clubs for their support of the new funding and competitive balance arrangements. There was lively debate at times, as there should be, but ultimately the clubs supported the new approach and acted in the best interests of the game.



▲ An artist's impression of the AFL's plans for Etihad Stadium, which the League became the owner of in 2016.

Building strong foundations for the future – Etihad Stadium

The AFL became the owner of Etihad Stadium, acquiring the management rights and freehold title to the land on November 2, 2016.

Etihad Stadium is an important part of the sporting and cultural infrastructure of Melbourne and Victoria and a critical asset for the AFL competition.

The AFL was entitled to take over the management rights in 2025 for a nominal fee, but the early purchase of the rights and the freehold land was a strategic decision that the Commission believes will deliver financial benefits to the competition.

The ability of the AFL Commission to make a decision of this magnitude is thanks to strong financial management in the past.

The purchase of the stadium will allow the AFL to further invest and develop a long-term vision for the stadium and the precinct. We are aiming to deliver a modern, world-class stadium that provides the very best match-day experience for our fans and for all customers attending events at the stadium.

Owning Etihad Stadium enables the AFL to continue to strengthen the financial health of several of our Victorian clubs, develop an asset for our whole industry and commit to being a serious stakeholder in the future of the Docklands precinct.

We will continue to operate Etihad Stadium as a multi-purpose entertainment venue hosting AFL matches, other sports, concerts and a broad range of entertainment options.

Our commitment as owners of Etihad Stadium is to work with government to provide a stadium experience for our fans equal to the best in the world, as well as explore how we can help improve the stadium's relationship to Docklands and the city.

Etihad Airways will continue as the naming rights partner to the Stadium under its agreement to 2019, with options to further extend that partnership.

The key factors behind the AFL Commission's decision to purchase Etihad Stadium included:

- ▶ The AFL was already strongly invested in the stadium's performance, with the venue hosting 46 home and away matches during the 2016 Toyota AFL premierships season, representing more than 20 per cent of total AFL match-day attendances across the competition;

Our commitment as owners of Etihad Stadium is to ... provide a stadium experience for our fans equal to the best in the world

- ▶ The purchase of the stadium would allow the AFL to improve home-tenant club arrangements with the competition now having the ability to manage all stadium assets and inventory at the ground;
- ▶ The AFL now has the capacity to develop a long-term vision for the stadium and the precinct, to ensure the match-day experience for fans remains among the best in the competition;
- ▶ The stadium's wider multi-purpose focus represents a new and significant asset to the AFL competition;
- ▶ The timing of the sale worked well for all parties in advance of the changes in arrangements in nine years' time.

It was the clear view of the AFL Commission that the benefits of undertaking an early purchase of Etihad Stadium far exceeded any perceived advantage in waiting until 2025 when the rights fell to us automatically.

The Commission looks forward to working closely with the Victorian Government to ensure that this stadium, in the heart of the city and the gateway to Docklands, is a great piece of public infrastructure that is loved by Victorians and attracts the best national and international acts and sporting events.

Grassroots football – the lifeblood of the game

As former Commissioner Bill Kelty said: "The elite level of the game is the tip of the iceberg, the community is the iceberg."

I want to congratulate our Game Development team and the states and territories for the focus and delivery on participation and the community level of our game.

As a Commission, we deal with the overall governance and decision-making at the strategic and structural level of the business and the game, and much of our time is spent on the 18 clubs and the national competition.

However, the success of the AFL competition is dependent on a healthy and sustainable grassroots organisation, and so-called elite sports that do not prioritise the grassroots do so at their peril. It was a successful year at our community level in 2016.

The AFL and the state bodies delivered growth during a time of great change and challenge throughout 2016.

The Future Directions of Football Review, conducted by our game and market development team and under the direction of Bill Kelty, delivered an action plan for 2016 that involved changes across our talent pathways, in community football and in state governance and funding processes.

The numbers which illustrate the success are detailed in the game and market development section of this report on page 86.

150-year celebration of football in Queensland

The 2016 season marked the 150th year Australian Football has been played in Queensland, with the first game played in 1866 at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens between members of the Brisbane Football Club, divided into the Civil Service team and All-Comers.

AFL Queensland hosted events including an official launch in Brisbane in March, a 150-year themed game in round four between the Brisbane Lions and the Gold Coast Suns at the Gabba, a community barbecue at the Botanic Gardens, the launch of the book *The History of Queensland Football* and an AFL Commission meeting in July in Brisbane.

Congratulations to AFL Queensland for organising and delivering on the events, and the future of Australian Football in Queensland looks promising, with strong participation figures and a great increase in the number of girls and women playing the game.

The Commission recognises the success of the two AFL clubs is important for the continued growth of the game in Queensland. We still have many hearts to win over, but we continue to maintain our strong commitment to growth and sustainability of the game in that state.

Football milestones

The past year was a remarkable one for milestones with no fewer than six players registering their 300th AFL match.

Sam Mitchell, Jimmy Bartel, Drew Petrie, Nick Riewoldt, Shaun Burgoyne and Scott Thompson all joined the 300-game club, while Matthew Pavlich took his tally past 350 and Corey Enright became Geelong's games record-holder before retiring at season's end.

There was one milestone though that stood above all others and on behalf of the Commission I would like to reiterate our admiration for North Melbourne champion Brent Harvey, who became the AFL's all-time games record-holder and retired having played 432 games.

It is a record that may never be surpassed and Brent's commitment to our game and to his club is extraordinary. He embodies the best values of our game – a team player and a remarkably humble champion. He retired with the love and appreciation of all North Melbourne fans and many supporters across the competition.



Indigenous Commissioner announcement

At its meeting in May, the AFL Commission committed to the appointment of an Indigenous Commissioner by 2018.

The commitment was part of the AFL Commission's broader acceptance of the AFL's enhanced Indigenous Strategy presented to us by the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council. The decision was announced as part of the celebrations of Sir Doug Nicholls Round with the AFL's Indigenous Advisory Council Chair, Paul Briggs.

The AFL Commission believes the promotion of Indigenous leaders throughout all levels of the game must start at the top and that the AFL Commission should reflect the strong participation of Indigenous players and communities in the AFL.

We acknowledge the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women at all levels of our game remains a challenge and we commit to working to ensure better representation across AFL clubs, state bodies and at the community level. We need to turn the nine per cent representation at player level into more Indigenous coaches, administrators and board members.

Financial result

The key financial highlights were as follows:

- ▶ Revenue increased by \$11.0 million to \$517.0 million;
- ▶ Operating expenditure increased by \$18.8 million to \$186.8 million due to revenue related increases, costs associated with the acquisition process of Etihad Stadium, expenditure required to launch the AFL's Women's Competition and legal costs in respect of Essendon Football Club matters;
- ▶ The operating surplus before distributions decreased by two per cent to \$330.5 million;
- ▶ The AFL provided distributions of \$348.3 million in 2016, primarily comprised of the following:
 - ▶ \$250.4 million to AFL clubs
 - ▶ \$41.7 million of game development grants
 - ▶ \$22.3 million to the AFLPA
 - ▶ \$10.6 million to the development and improvement of facilities and grounds
 - ▶ \$5.5 million to the development of the new markets
 - ▶ \$1.3 million to corporate and social responsibility initiatives
- ▶ In addition, the AFL recorded an accounting adjustment of \$16.5 million, \$11.0 million of which related to distributions to new markets and \$5.5 million of which related to club future fund distributions over the 2012 to 2016 period.
- ▶ After these distributions, which include the \$16.5 million accounting adjustment outlined above, the AFL's net profit decreased by \$20.3 million in 2016 to a \$17.8 million loss which was in line with the 2016 budget.



▲ The Bulldogs' drought-breaking premiership win was a special moment for president Peter Gordon (right) and his predecessor David Smorgon, who between them have been at the helm of the club since late 1989.

◀ Brisbane Lions star Daniel Rich hauls in a strong mark against Melbourne in round nine. While its two AFL clubs struggled on the field, Queensland football celebrated its 150th year in 2016.

Integrity of the competition

The 2016 season also marked the end of the doping issue that affected the Essendon Football Club.

On January 12, 2016, the Court of Arbitration for Sport handed down a 12-month ban for 34 current and former Essendon players after the World Anti-Doping Authority successfully appealed a decision of the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal in 2015 that found it was not comfortably satisfied the players had taken a banned substance, Thymosin Beta 4.

As I said at the time, the penalty was harsh and we were disappointed for the players, who we felt had been victims in this process. Nevertheless, after four years, it was time to accept the decision and move forward with the 2016 season.

The players appealed the decision, but the appeal was rejected in October.

The AFL worked closely with the Essendon Football Club to ensure it had the capacity to field a team in 2016 and this is covered in the Legal and Integrity section of this report.

The AFL Commission believes the promotion of Indigenous leaders throughout all levels of the game must start at the top



▲ The 2016 AFL Commission (from left) – Andrew Newbold, Paul Bassat, Richard Goyder, Jason Ball, Mike Fitzpatrick (Chairman), Gillon McLachlan (Chief Executive Officer), Kim Williams, Gabrielle Trainor and Major Gen. Simone Wilkie.

The 2012 Brownlow Medal

Following the dismissal by CAS of the appeal by the Essendon players in October, the Commission announced a process to decide the future of the 2012 Brownlow Medal, awarded that year to Jobe Watson, one of the players banned for breaches of the Anti-Doping Code in 2012.

The Commission met on November 15, 2016, and ruled that, having served a ban for a doping offence, Watson was not eligible for the 2012 Brownlow Medal.

For the record, Watson had announced the week before that he would hand back the Brownlow Medal, in recognition of the decision facing the Commission.

The Brownlow Medal is the most prestigious individual award in our game and celebrates the competition's best and fairest player. In handing back the medal, Jobe demonstrated a willingness to consider the game beyond his own personal situation and paid respect to the traditions and values of the Brownlow Medal.

The Commission, in accordance with AFL Regulations, awarded the 2012 Brownlow Medal to joint winners, Sam Mitchell and Trent Cotchin.

An event to award the Brownlow Medals was held on December 13, attended by the AFL Commission, the two players' families and friends and representatives of the Richmond, Hawthorn and West Coast Eagles football clubs.

The 2012 Brownlow medallists are celebrated elsewhere in this report.

Clubs

I want to take this opportunity to thank the 18 club presidents and chairs and all board members for their hard work during the year.

Being on a club board can seem glamorous from the outside, but in reality it is demanding and time-consuming and our clubs are increasingly complex businesses. Our club board members are all volunteers and bring broad skills to our clubs, including in business, football, membership and marketing.

I would like to make particular mention of North Melbourne chairman James Brayshaw, West Coast Eagles chairman Alan Cransberg and Fremantle president Steve Harris who retired in 2016 after long and distinguished service to their clubs in particular and the game in general.

Final Annual Report

On February 9, 2017, I announced my retirement to the AFL Commission, as Chairman and Commissioner.

The Commission appointed Richard Goyder to become Chairman from April 4, 2017.

It has been an absolute honour to serve as AFL Commission Chairman and a privilege to be part of building the game around Australia. I leave proud of the progress the AFL has made and what the game has become.

I have been fortunate to work with two visionary CEOs in Andrew Demetriou and Gillon McLachlan, who had different styles but a common commitment to building a stronger national code.

The game is in very good hands. Gillon and his team have a clear vision of where to take the game and the code and I am honoured to be succeeded by Richard who is an outstanding Commissioner and a leading figure in Australian business life. Richard has strong links to amateur football in Western Australia and is a former board member of the Fremantle Football Club.

I want to thank the Commissioners I served with over the past 14 years.

To the present Commissioners – Andrew Newbold, Jason Ball, Kim Williams, Paul Bassat, Gabrielle Trainor, Richard Goyder and Simone Wilkie – thank you for the support and I wish you well for the next phase of the AFL's growth.

To previous Commissioners – Colin Carter, Bill Kelty, Bob Hammond, Graeme John, Linda Dessau, Sam Mostyn, Chris Lynch and Chris Langford – I learned from each of you and thank you for your ongoing friendship.

To Ron Evans, I owe a continued debt of gratitude. Ron passed away in 2006 and was the Chairman when I was appointed to the Commission and deserves our ongoing recognition for his service to the game.

Special thanks to my wife Helen Sykes and my family for their support in allowing me to commit so much time and energy to the game. Helen has attended some 600 games of AFL/VFL football, a measure of her commitment.

Lastly, I want to say that the one constant in football is the commitment of our supporters.

I have had the privilege to meet thousands of volunteers and supporters during my time and their passion and genuine care for our game is what I think sets us apart as a code.

That passion serves as constant reminder for all administrators that the game belongs to everyone.

MIKE FITZPATRICK
CHAIRMAN

Retirement of Mike Fitzpatrick

In February 2017, Mike Fitzpatrick announced his retirement as AFL Commission Chairman and from the Commission.

Mike's journey in our game spans 47 years, from his first senior game for Subiaco in the WAFL to being the Chair of the decision-making body of the industry.

He leaves an extraordinary legacy and has cemented his place in the history of our game as a premierships captain, Carlton legend and outstanding administrator.

Mike played 97 games for Subiaco, including a premiership in 1973, and 150 games for the Carlton Football Club as a triple premierships player, winning the best and fairest in 1979 and captaining the club in its back-to-back premierships of 1981-82.

Mike joined the Commission in 2003 and was appointed Chairman in 2007, succeeding the late Ron Evans.

He has led the Commission during a time of unprecedented growth and change, including:

- ▶ The establishment of two new clubs;
- ▶ Three media rights negotiations;
- ▶ More than \$2.5 billion worth of stadium and football infrastructure, including Adelaide Oval, the purchase of Etihad Stadium, Simonds Stadium and Metricon Stadium;
- ▶ The creation of AFL Media;
- ▶ The successful launch of the NAB AFL Women's competition.

Mike's chairmanship will be remembered for his capacity to demand improvement and innovation, while protecting the traditions and history of the game.

On behalf of the AFL Commission, I wish Mike and his wife Helen all the best for the next phase of their lives and know that, while he has retired from the Commission, he will never be far from the game. Helen has been an integral part of Mike's term as Chairman and has shared much of his journey in football. It is more than appropriate to recognise her role and support for the game in partnership with Mike.

I take over as Chairman on April 4, 2017, with the competition in a very strong position, and I look forward to delivering for our fans, clubs, players and the community to grow and protect the game so many Australians love.

RICHARD GOYDER
AFL COMMISSION CHAIRMAN ELECT

▶ Carlton captain Mike Fitzpatrick and coach David Parkin raise the premierships cup after the Blues went back-to-back in 1982.
PHOTO: NEWSPIX

MIKE FITZPATRICK'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE GAME

Football Career
Subiaco Football Club
97 games
1973 premierships player

Carlton Football Club
150 games
Three premierships, two as captain
1979 best and fairest
Director of Carlton Football Club 1989-95

During Mike Fitzpatrick's time as AFL Chairman, the AFL has:

- ▶ Expanded to have premierships season matches every week in the mainland states following the League's expansion with the Gold Coast Suns (2010) and Greater Western Sydney Giants (2011) and games played in every state and territory.
- ▶ Invested in the construction or renovation of stadiums and training and administration centres across the country since 2007, including Adelaide Oval, Perth Stadium (scheduled to open in 2018), Metricon Stadium, Spotless Stadium, MCG, SCG, Gabba and Simonds Stadium, with the latest addition – the \$22 million headquarters for the Gold Coast Suns – which opened in January 2017.
- ▶ Grown participation in the game by more than 140 per cent from the start of the 2007 season to 2016, with 1,404,176 participants, including a 3200 per cent jump in the number of female participants to a record 380,041 in 2016.
- ▶ Started the NAB AFL Women's competition three years ahead of schedule, which saw more than 50,000 people attend the first round.
- ▶ Continued the growth of revenue coming into the game and the successful completion of record TV broadcast deals, including the \$2.5 billion TV broadcast rights deal secured off the back of expansion into Queensland and New South Wales.
- ▶ Continued work by the clubs to attract supporters, with memberships of AFL clubs hitting a record high of 875,197 in 2016 – an increase of almost 70 per cent since 2006.
- ▶ Created AFL Media to build a stronger digital presence for the game, resulting in AFL Media now attracting an average 4.26m weekly unique visitors in season, while TV audiences per round for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season across the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel averaged 4.5 million.
- ▶ Adopted all recommendations of the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council, including a commitment to appoint an Indigenous Commissioner by the end of 2018.
- ▶ Developed the Respect and Responsibility Policy.
- ▶ Increased resources and policies governing integrity and doping.

(Fitzpatrick) will be remembered for his capacity to demand improvement and innovation while protecting the traditions and history of the game



CEO'S REPORT



GILLON McLACHLAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The success of the Western Bulldogs in winning the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final was the culmination of a year which produced positive outcomes for all levels of our game and also shaped Australian Football for the next 10-20 years.

Major decisions taken by the AFL Commission during 2016 which will shape the longer-term direction of Australia's only Indigenous game and are covered by Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick and elsewhere in this report included:

- ▶ Establishment of the NAB AFL Women's competition, with initial teams involving eight AFL clubs;
- ▶ Adoption of a strategic plan and investment model;
- ▶ A new club funding model and competitive balance policy;
- ▶ The purchase of the management rights and freehold of Etihad Stadium in Melbourne.

While they were the major off-field decisions, it was the Western Bulldogs who captured the attention of the public and reinforced the theory that anything is possible when you have a committed group of people working together to achieve an outcome.

Despite losing a number of key players to long-term injuries during the year, including a season-ending knee injury to club captain Robert Murphy in round three against Hawthorn, the Bulldogs re-wrote history with a number of firsts including:

- ▶ Becoming the first club to win the premiership after finishing seventh under the current final eight system introduced in 2000;
- ▶ Winning their first premiership since their inaugural flag in 1954 after joining the competition in 1925;
- ▶ Appearing in their first Grand Final since 1961 when they lost the decider to Hawthorn.

▶ Despite lowering their colours against the Western Bulldogs in the Grand Final, new skipper Josh Kennedy's Sydney Swans continue to be one of the benchmark teams of the competition.





To achieve those firsts, the Western Bulldogs delivered a spectacular month of finals football which included:

- ▶ Travelling to Perth and beating the favoured West Coast Eagles in the first week of the Toyota AFL Finals Series;
- ▶ Downing three-time reigning premier Hawthorn at the MCG in the second week;
- ▶ Travelling to Sydney in week three and, after losing seven previous preliminary finals, downing favourites the GWS Giants at Spotless Stadium;
- ▶ Facing seasoned finals performer the Sydney Swans on Grand Final day.

It was a close and enthralling Grand Final with less than a goal separating the teams with about seven minutes remaining in the last quarter. The joy on the faces of the Bulldogs fans at the MCG after the final siren was everything that is great about our game and a fitting end to an exceptional Toyota AFL Finals Series highlighted by:

- ▶ The 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final was the fourth most-watched game in AFL/VFL history, with a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 4,121,368 on the Seven Network, and was the most watched program of any description on Australian television in 2016.

▲ **St Kilda made big strides in 2016 thanks to the brilliance of players such as gun midfielder Jack Stevens, who won the Saints' best and fairest for the third time.**

- ▶ In terms of Grand Finals, this placed the match behind only:
 - ▶ 1996 - 4.4 million, North Melbourne v Sydney Swans
 - ▶ 2005 - 4.4 million, Sydney Swans v West Coast Eagles
 - ▶ 2006 - 4.15 million, West Coast Eagles v Sydney Swans
- ▶ The 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series was the most watched finals series in the history of the AFL/VFL, with a gross cumulative audience of 18,368,305, an increase of 10.5 per cent on the total national viewership for the 2015 Toyota AFL Finals Series (16,588,991).

Congratulations to everyone involved with the Western Bulldogs under the leadership of President Peter Gordon, Chief Executive Officer Gary Kent, Director of Football Chris Grant, senior coach Luke Beveridge, club captain Robert Murphy and the captain on Grand Final day, Easton Wood, staff and players in delivering the ultimate prize in our game to a loyal and passionate supporter base.

I would like to pay a particular tribute to Peter Gordon, who is in his second term as president of the Western Bulldogs.

His first term started in 1989 after he successfully countered a planned merger with the Fitzroy Football Club which was announced by the VFL Commission in late September, 1989.

Within weeks, Peter led a campaign which raised about \$2 million to wipe out the club's debt and resumed its place in the then VFL competition.

Peter was succeeded by David Smorgon in 1997 who held the role until the end of the 2012 season when Peter returned.

The 2016 premiership was a wonderful reward for his personal commitment to and leadership of the Western Bulldogs.

It is also appropriate to recognise the gracious gesture by Luke Beveridge to present his Jock McHale Medal as the Grand Final-winning coach to Robert Murphy during the post-match presentation ceremony in recognition of Robert's leadership and distinguished career with the Bulldogs.

The Sydney Swans are also to be congratulated for another highly successful season in which the club reached the finals for the 18th time in the past 21 seasons and won the Dr Wm McClelland Trophy for finishing on top of the ladder at the end of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season by winning 17 games and after introducing seven new players at AFL level during the year.

One of those players, Callum Mills, had an outstanding first season, winning the NAB AFL Rising Star award.

The Swans are one of our benchmark clubs and another example of what can be achieved by a group of quality people working together on and off the field.

Like the Western Bulldogs, the Swans have at various times faced an uncertain future,

▼ **AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick look on as former US Vice-President Joe Biden meets umpire Matt Stevic before the round 17 clash between Carlton and the West Coast Eagles.**

including in the early 1990s when the club lost 26 matches in a row, from round nine, 1992, to round 12, 1993.

During that period, the club had just over 3000 members and drew average crowds of about 12,000 to the SCG.

Now, the Swans are the largest professional sporting club in New South Wales as measured by membership (56,523, a record set in 2016), average attendances per game (33,425), national television audiences and revenue, including corporate sponsorship headed by a 30-year partnership with QBE Insurance.

Club Chairman Andrew Pridham, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ireland, Head of Football Tom Harley, senior coach John Longmire and co-captains Jarrad McVeigh and Kieren Jack, staff and players are to be congratulated on another first-class season.

We would also like to acknowledge finance director Andrew McMaster who retired at the end of the 2016 season after being a board member for 21 years. Andrew, along with former chairman Richard Colless, played a key role in the growth and development of the Swans.

The joy on the faces of the Bulldogs fans at the MCG after the final siren was everything that is great about our game



Competitive balance

The success of the Western Bulldogs underscored the importance of key policies including the draft, salary cap and revenue sharing which have been fundamental to the success of the national competition.

We have pursued a managed competition with these policies instead of one left to free market forces so that every club has the opportunity to be successful on-field and to give their members and supporters hope.

Having a competition in which there are uncertain outcomes each week with every club capable of beating the other on any given day or night is fundamental to driving interest in our game and building attendances, club memberships and national television and digital media audiences.

While Hawthorn (four), Geelong (three) and Sydney (two) have won nine premierships between them since 2005, 15 clubs have reached the Grand Final since it expanded nationally, 12 clubs have won premierships and every club except expansion team the Gold Coast Suns has appeared in a preliminary final.

In the 20 years between 1970 and 1989 when the competition was less equalised, five clubs won premierships.

While the role of the AFL Commission is to set and maintain an environment in which all clubs can compete regardless of their financial strength or size of their supporter base, the ultimate outcome depends on quality people in the right roles in our clubs and the AFL making consistently good decisions.

New club funding arrangements adopted during 2016 by the AFL Commission with the support of the clubs for 2017 and beyond were based on the following key principles to enhance competitive balance:

- ▶ All clubs to have the capacity to pay 100 per cent of total player payments and additional service agreements;
- ▶ All clubs to have the capacity to fund a level of non-player football expenditure to be competitive on-field while maintaining overall profitability;
- ▶ To deliver financial viability and on-field competitiveness, an enhanced revenue sharing system including central and club revenues was required;
- ▶ A mechanism to control growth in non-player football spend was required.

▶ Despite the electrifying skills of Cyril Rioli, Hawthorn's bid for a fourth consecutive flag fell short.

As the national competition has expanded, we have used draft selections and salary cap allowances to introduce new clubs and assist others to consolidate.

Clearly, the decision by the AFL Commission and unanimously supported by the 16 AFL clubs to expand the competition by creating two expansion clubs, the Gold Coast Suns and GWS Giants, had a significant impact on the draft.

The concessions have not prevented, however, the Western Bulldogs developing a premiership team and clubs such as Melbourne and St Kilda showing great improvement.

For the first time in 2017, every club will have the same salary cap, which we believe will further enhance the competitive balance of our national competition.

Further information relating to club funding which is part of a broader investment plan for the game at all levels is outlined in this report by our Chairman, Mike Fitzpatrick.

Appointment of Tanya Hosch

In July 2016, we announced the appointment of Tanya Hosch to the newly created position of General Manager, Inclusion and Social Policy.

Before joining the AFL, Tanya served as Joint Campaign Director and the public face of the RECOGNISE campaign to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia's constitution.

Her role will set and drive AFL strategies and policies that promote inclusion and diversity at all levels of our game, including the implementation of the AFL's enhanced Indigenous Strategy, delivering senior support and advice to the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council, reviewing the Respect and Responsibility Policy and implementing the AFL's Gender Action Plan.

Along with her work at RECOGNISE, Tanya was also a founding Director of the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre and a driving force in the creation of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected representative body) and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute.

She is a Director of the Indigenous Land Corporation while, in her earlier career, she was involved in frontline women's support services.



We have pursued a managed competition ... so that every club has the opportunity to be successful on-field



Building the diversity of Australian Football

Australian Football has always been a game enjoyed by people of diverse and socio-economic backgrounds.

For our game to continue to attract participation, support and maintain its relevance, it needs to be more reflective of Australian society.

- ▶ The face of Australia is changing – 48 per cent of people were born overseas or have one parent born overseas;
- ▶ A significant change in the demographics of Australia is occurring with increased migration from Asia, Africa and the Middle East;
- ▶ The Australian population is growing and the shift in migration will continue and our game at all levels, including our work force, needs to become more representative of the Australian community.

That is why:

- ▶ We established an AFL Indigenous Advisory Council in 2015.
- ▶ We invest in diversity programs which are highlighted in the game and market development section of this report.

▲ **Aunty Pam Pedersen is joined by AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and young fans at the launch of Indigenous Round, named in honour of her father, Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls.**

- ▶ We have established the NAB AFL Women's competition.
- ▶ We have a commitment to build the diversity of our workforce.
- ▶ We conduct an annual Indigenous Round to celebrate the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their culture and contribution to our game. In 2016, following a recommendation from our Indigenous Advisory Council, we named the round in recognition of Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls, who played with Carlton, Fitzroy and Victoria and was a gifted boxer and professional athlete and the first Indigenous Australian to be knighted. His career achievements include being appointed Governor of South Australia.
- ▶ We run an annual Multicultural Round to celebrate the contribution of diverse communities to our game.
- ▶ We supported the St Kilda Football Club in its initiative with the Sydney Swans to stage the first Pride Game in the AFL and to build on the work established by Jason Ball and his teammates from the Yarra Glen Football Club who initiated the 2014 Community Pride Cup.

The staging of the Pride Game reinforced the message the two clubs and the AFL wanted the LGBTIQ community to feel welcome and safe at AFL games.

Our diversity programs have been fundamental to the emergence at AFL level of players from Sudan, including Majak Daw, who was rookie listed by North Melbourne in 2010 and made his debut in 2013, while Aliir Aliir (Sydney Swans), Reuben William (Brisbane Lions) and Mabior Chol (Richmond) all made their AFL debuts in 2016.

For our game to continue to attract participation, support and maintain its relevance, it needs to be more reflective of Australian society



After growing up in a refugee camp in Kenya, Aliir Aliir has become a star with the Sydney Swans.

PRIME MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS ALIIR ALIIR AT UN

▶ Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has spoken of the remarkable story of Sydney Swans defender Aliir Aliir at a United Nations conference in New York.

Addressing the Leaders Summit on Refugees at a UN General Assembly meeting convened by US president Barack Obama on Thursday, Turnbull pointed to Aliir as a shining example of the success of Australia's migrant policy.

Aliir, 22, who will front up against Geelong in Friday night's preliminary final at the MCG, grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya from the age of three after his family fled the bloody civil war in Sudan.

Aliir was born to Sudanese parents and spent the early years of his life in Kakuma

refugee camp before his family moved to Australia when he was seven.

"For Aliir, his family and 150,000 other men, women and children, Kakuma refugee camp was their home," Turnbull said in his address.

"The camp provided the bare necessities of food and shelter, but sports equipment was unimaginable. Aliir and his friends would use strips of old clothing as a football.

"He was seven when his family came to Australia. Tall, fast and agile, Aliir was a natural for Australian Rules football and once he took up the game hasn't looked back."

Aliir became the first player of Sudanese heritage taken in the National Draft, when he was selected by the Swans with pick No. 44 in 2013.

"Earlier this year I was delighted when Aliir debuted for the AFL team I support, the Sydney Swans," Turnbull said.

"Now 22, Aliir is one of the first Sudanese immigrants to play AFL and has become a role model in our multicultural nation, especially for young people in Sydney."

It is understood the Prime Minister called the Swans defender earlier in the week to learn more about his story.

Aliir made his debut against the Brisbane Lions in round six and has played 12 games this season.

He collected a career-high 21 disposals in the Swans' 36-point semi-final win over Adelaide last Saturday.

AFL Media, September, 2016



Game in China

During 2016, the AFL Commission supported a proposal by the Port Adelaide Football Club to play the first Toyota AFL Premiership Season game in China.

The match is scheduled for Sunday, May 14, 2017, between the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide.

▲ AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and Port Adelaide CEO Keith Thomas (right) are joined by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and general manager of Shanghai CRED Real Estate Stock, Gui Guojie, at the announcement of a major sponsorship agreement between Shanghai CRED and the Power.

The key principles for the CBA upon which we have broad agreement with the AFLPA and AFL clubs are:

- ▶ Best-paid group of sportspeople in Australia;
- ▶ World-class welfare programs;
- ▶ Injury protection and access to hardship resources;
- ▶ Best retirement scheme in Australian sport;
- ▶ Player support for the growth of the game – new markets, technology and the code;
- ▶ Players to uphold the values of the code.

Our objectives for determining the level of AFL player payments include:

- ▶ AFL players to be the best-rewarded group of sportspeople in Australia;
- ▶ Support for the full lifecycle of players;
- ▶ Players to share in the success of the industry;
- ▶ Players to be incentivised to continue this growth;
- ▶ Investment not be to the detriment of other key stakeholders.

That last point is critical, in my view.

When I was fortunate to be appointed in April 2014 by the AFL Commission to my current role, I made the commitment I would be accountable to the four masters of our game:

1. The fans
2. The community
3. The clubs
4. The players

We agree with the AFLPA that players should be aligned to the overall financial performance of the competition.

◀ The West Coast Eagles were among 10 clubs to set membership records in 2016, with one in 28 Australians now a member of an AFL club.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

At the time of publishing this report, discussions were continuing with the AFL Players Association to finalise a new collective bargaining agreement for the period 2017-22.

Our objective is to establish player payments and associated benefits which fairly reward AFL players and recognises they are a significant shareholder in the game.

- ▶ We recognise the important role of players in the AFL industry, as well as their emotional connection to the success of the game;
- ▶ We want to protect the AFL players' position as the best-paid group of athletes with the most opportunities in Australia – based on appropriate comparisons of wages and employment opportunities in Australian domestic sports;
- ▶ We are committed to fair reward in an affordable way across the entire cycle of a player's career, including post-career support to ensure AFL remains the career choice for talented athletes;
- ▶ We will deliver fair and equitable compensation to players through the continued operation of the AFL players' Collective Bargaining Agreement and current player payment model;
- ▶ We must achieve this while continuing to ensure the AFL industry as a whole remains sustainable through appropriate investments to support all sections of our game.



Key measures

I would like to congratulate the 18 AFL clubs for the high level of support they continued to generate in 2016, which included:

- ▶ Total attendances for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season of 6,306,336 at an average of 31,850 a game. After the first 10 rounds of the season, we had set an all-time record for crowds at that point, but crowds in the second half of the season were impacted by the on-field performance of Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Richmond, Fremantle and the Brisbane Lions.
- ▶ For the 16th successive season, AFL clubs set a record for membership of 875,197 with Adelaide, Fremantle, Geelong, the GWS Giants, Hawthorn, Melbourne, Richmond, the Sydney Swans, West Coast Eagles and Western Bulldogs all setting membership records for their respective clubs. One in 28 Australians is a member of an AFL club and our clubs have experienced record growth in 25 of the past 26 seasons.
- ▶ The average gross audience per round for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season across the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel was 4.508 million, compared with 4.466 million per round in 2015.
- ▶ The Telstra AFL Digital Network, which includes the 18 club mobile and desktop sites, the 18 club apps, *AFL.com.au* and the AFL Live app, consistently achieved the No. 1 Unique Audience metric for all single sport sites in Australia for the period February to October.

▶ Fans young and old flocked to AFL games in 2016, with an aggregate attendance of more than 6.3 million for the season.

- ▶ Importantly, total domestic participation in our game at a community level reached a record 1,404,176, up 12.55 per cent on the 2015 total of 1,247,575, and included the following elements:
 - ▶ Total female participation of 380,041 compared with 318,880 in 2015;
 - ▶ 360,648 participants in community club football made up of 14,772 teams in 2755 clubs and 230 leagues;
 - ▶ 195,719 participants in NAB AFL Auskick in 3541 Auskick centres around Australia.
- ▶ In addition, more than 132,000 participants played our game in countries around the world. This level of participation at a community level would not be possible without the commitment of about 120,000 volunteers and I wish to acknowledge and thank them for the critical role they play in our game.

Finally, I would like to thank our executive and all our staff – who collectively contributed to a very successful season. I feel fortunate to work with such a talented group who have a strong commitment to our country's only Indigenous game.

GILLON MCLACHLAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

▶ Female participation continued to grow at all levels of the game in 2016, including the umpiring ranks, with Eleni Glouftsis officiating in a NAB Challenge match.



AFL CLUBS & OPERATIONS



TRAVIS AULD
GENERAL MANAGER

Football fans remained central to the AFL's objectives in 2016 with a strong focus on continuing to improve the affordability and accessibility of our game.

Working with all clubs, the AFL strived to improve the match-day experience, keep ticket prices and the cost of food and beverages low, while cementing initiatives such as kick-to-kick and Sunday Funday.

We also worked closely with our stadium partners and broadcast partners who play a critical role in how fans engage with our game.

Other key pieces of work in 2016 centred on the purchase of Etihad Stadium and the development of an Industry Investment model in conjunction with our finance department that focuses on the four pillars of our game: clubs, players, fans and the community.

Broadcasting



The Toyota AFL Premiership Season

The 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was again a great success on television, with the Seven Network's free-to-air coverage and Foxtel/Fox Footy's subscription television platform drawing large audiences every week.

The average gross national audience across free-to-air and subscription television per home and away round was 4.508 million, compared with 4.446 million in 2015, an increase of 1.4 per cent at a time when audiences are fragmenting.

The cumulative gross national audience during the home and away season exceeded 103 million (103,697,176), up from 102.7 million (102,722,355) in 2015 – noting that one extra match was played in 2016 due to the cancelled 2015 Adelaide v Geelong match.



► Fremantle champion Matthew Pavlich, carrying children Harper and Jack, played the 353rd and final match of his glittering career in round 23.



The 10 most-watched matches of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season (national average audiences across free-to-air and subscription television) were:

1. Round 13 – North Melbourne v Hawthorn, 1.387 million
2. Round nine – Hawthorn v Sydney Swans, 1.369 million
3. Round eight – Adelaide v Geelong, 1.329 million
4. Round 10 – Sydney Swans v North Melbourne, 1.315 million
5. Round five – Hawthorn v Adelaide, 1.301 million
6. Round six – North Melbourne v Western Bulldogs, 1.241 million
7. Round two – Collingwood v Richmond, 1.229 million
8. Round five – Collingwood v Essendon, 1.225 million (Anzac Day)
9. Round 17 – Sydney Swans v Hawthorn, 1.218 million
10. Round 23 – Adelaide v West Coast, 1.216 million



The Toyota AFL Finals Series

The gross cumulative audience for the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series was 18,368,305. This marks an increase of 10.7 per cent on the total national viewership for the 2015 Toyota AFL

Finals Series (16,588,991) and makes it the highest gross cumulative audience for an AFL Finals Series in AFL/VFL history.

A major highlight of the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series was the preliminary final between the GWS Giants and the Western Bulldogs, which attracted a national average audience of 2.40 million across free-to-air and subscription television.

It was the highest audience for a match since 2008 (excluding Grand Finals) and the second highest in history (behind only the 2.47 million who watched the Geelong v Collingwood preliminary final on a Friday night in 2007).

The average audience of 543,000 viewers on subscription television was also the highest-rating AFL match on the platform of all time (noting the AFL Grand Final is not broadcast on subscription television).

The 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final was the fourth most-watched game in AFL/VFL history with a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 4.12 million (4,121,368) on the Seven Network. It was the most watched program of any kind on Australian television in 2016.

▲ The North Melbourne and Hawthorn clash in round 13 was the most-watched television match of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Foxtel/Fox Footy

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

This was in addition to the proven weekly magazine programs such as *On The Couch*, *AFL 360*, *League Teams*, *Open Mike*, *Bounce* and *The Winners Rebooted* as well as the new daily AFL news program *AFL Tonight*.

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

Significant highlights and changes to its broadcast of 2016 events included broadcasting the second half of the Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner live for the second successive year, broadcasting the announcement of the NAB AFL Rising Star winner live for the first time, as well as showcasing every selection of the NAB AFL Draft live on its main Fox Footy channel.

The network continued its support of the NAB AFL Risings Stars Program by broadcasting four live matches during the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships, in addition to the revamped NAB All Stars under-18 match at Punt Rd Oval on Grand Final eve.

The network also extended its commitment to women's football by broadcasting live women's exhibition matches in Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide throughout the season.

The network also achieved major ratings highlights on the subscription television platform during 2016, including:

- ▶ National average audience of 543,000 for the preliminary final between the GWS Giants and the Western Bulldogs was the highest-rating AFL match of all time on the platform;
- ▶ National average audience of 399,000 for the round 13 clash between North Melbourne and Hawthorn was the highest-rating premiership season match of all time on the platform.

Celebration of Football

The newly created Celebration of Football weekend between the premiership season and finals series saw large television audiences for the key events held over that period.

The 2016 *Tradingpost.com* E.J. Whitten Legends Game attracted a national average audience of 989,389 across free-to-air and subscription television, which was 30 per cent above the national average audience of the previous three E.J. Whitten Legends Games (757,063). It marked the first time that the match was broadcast nationally on free-to-air on a Friday night and simulcast on subscription television.

The national average metropolitan free-to-air audience of 600,901 was in line with the national average metropolitan free-to-air audience for Friday night matches during the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season (641,398).

The 2016 AFL Women's All Stars game between the Western Bulldogs and Melbourne was broadcast live nationally on the Seven Network and attracted a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 754,898. Compared with ratings for Seven Network Saturday night matches in the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the Women's All Stars game was 10 per cent above the national average free-to-air (metropolitan and regional) audience.

In addition, the 2016 AFL Women's All Stars game was three per cent above the national average Melbourne metropolitan free-to-air audience for Friday night AFL matches in 2016 and was the second highest rating women's sporting event for the year (excluding the Olympic Games), behind only the Australian Open women's final (1.96 million).

International Broadcasts

International AFL fans were brought closer to the game than ever before, with increased broadcast coverage of Toyota AFL Premiership Season matches, Toyota AFL Finals Series matches, the Toyota AFL Grand Final and AFL events.

AFL content was broadcast throughout the year into more than 250 territories worldwide by rights holders Australia Plus, Claro Sports, ESPN (sub-licensed to BT Sport, Super Sport and TSN), Eurosport, Fox Sports/Fox Soccer Plus, Global Eagle Entertainment, Orbit Showtime Network, Sky Sports New Zealand and TVNZ.

The AFL, in association with Port Adelaide Football Club, was also thrilled to secure an agreement with new rights holder China Central Television (CCTV), which saw one match broadcast into China during each week of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Finals Series, including the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

The AFL's digital streaming service, *watchafl.com.au*, broadcast every match of every round live internationally, ensuring fans outside Australia had the greatest possible access to the game across all media platforms.

Viewers were also treated to 30 episodes of the AFL's Toyota AFL Highlights program every week throughout the premiership season and finals series.

The program format delivered a range of entertaining content, covering AFL news and match highlights from every round of the season.

▼ The 2016 AFL Women's All Stars game at Whitten Oval was the second highest rating women's sporting event for the year, with the Bulldogs emerging victorious.



The 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final was the fourth most-watched game in AFL/VFL history with a national average audience of 4.12 million

Radio

Radio again played a significant role in taking the game to all corners of metropolitan and regional Australia in 2016.

The AFL's metropolitan radio partners are 3AW 693, Triple M, ABC Radio, 1116 SEN, FIVEaa and 6PR 882. Regional areas received AFL broadcasts via ABC Radio, K-Rock (Geelong), Gold FM (Gold Coast), Crocmedia's AFL Live, Southern Cross Austereo and the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS).

In Victoria, all nine matches each round during the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season were broadcast on radio, while every match featuring an AFL club from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales was broadcast into their respective home states.

All Toyota AFL Finals Series matches, including the Toyota AFL Grand Final, were broadcast nationally.

A gross audience of 1.086 million people per week listened to AFL matches during the radio survey periods 4-6 in 2016 (these being the three survey periods that fall during the six months of the season). This was slightly down on the gross audience of 1.152 million per week in 2015, due largely to a general downturn in radio audiences in the past year.

Through the AFL Live App and *AFL.com.au*, the AFL radio broadcast rights holders averaged a unique audience of 54,000 per match-day during the premiership season and 49,000 per match-day during the finals series.

This represented an annual growth rate of 17 per cent and 26 per cent respectively.

The AFL is looking forward to again working with Channel Seven, Foxtel and Telstra in a new broadcast rights agreement that starts in 2017 and will extend until the end of 2022. Similarly, the AFL welcomes all radio broadcast partners who have signed new agreements for the next six years, which ensures fans can listen to their team play wherever they may be listening across Australia.

▶ A gross audience of 1.086 million people a week listened to AFL matches broadcast on radio, hearing all the action such as Demon Jack Viney feeling the heat against Bulldog duo Caleb Daniel and Tom Liberatore.

Clubs

In 2016, it was the final year of the current club funding arrangements as well as a review of off-field Competitive Balance Policy.

During the year, the AFL's Club Strategy and Finance teams conducted wide-ranging consultation with clubs to review the current funding model and policy settings and develop a model for 2017 and beyond.

Key findings from this process included:

- ▶ Existing funding model is too complex;
- ▶ Club business models are all unique and need a more adaptive funding approach;
- ▶ Need for improved transparency around the rationale for funding allocations and accountability on clubs receiving higher levels of funding;
- ▶ Stronger focus on affordability and investment;
- ▶ General opposition to revenue sharing and levies on club income;
- ▶ Support for stronger cost control, including the retention and strengthening of the soft cap and luxury tax policy on non-player football department expenditure.

As a result of this process, we have developed and implemented a new funding model after approval by the AFL Commission.

Club Strategy Support

During the year, the Club Strategy team continued to work closely with clubs with the primary focus being on clubs that hold action plans with the AFL.

These clubs have higher levels of funding under the existing funding model and are required to hold an agreed plan with the AFL that identifies the key initiatives and issues these clubs must focus on in the coming 12 months. The clubs are also required to meet a set of funding conditions and reporting requirements as part of the broader accountability model.

The AFL actively monitors the financial performance of these clubs and works with club management to identify and manage any emerging financial risks.

The AFL also provides support to these clubs in the development of their plans and assistance in the achievement of the key initiatives identified, which can include:

- ▶ Strategic and business planning support;
- ▶ Analytical and strategy consulting support for key projects or transactions;
- ▶ Advice in the development or implementation of commercial plans;
- ▶ Provision of benchmarking and industry best practice information.

The Club Strategy team also works to support clubs outside the action plan model on a range of projects and initiatives, including stadium commercial arrangements, training and administration, facility developments and commercial strategy support.

Radio again played a significant role in taking the game to all corners of metropolitan and regional Australia in 2016





▲ AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan is joined by Port Adelaide's Robbie Gray and Chairman David Koch and Suns Chairman Tony Cochrane and Touk Miller at the announcement of the first premiership season game to be played in China.

- Key features of the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season include:
- ▶ Opening round to start on Thursday, March 23, between Carlton and Richmond.
 - ▶ Eight Thursday night matches across the season with two to be played at the MCG in the opening two rounds. The remaining six games will be played in round four and in five consecutive weeks from rounds 10-14 when the AFL is able to manage appropriate breaks for all competing clubs around the bye rounds.
 - ▶ The first Good Friday clash, with North Melbourne to host the Western Bulldogs at Etihad Stadium as a twilight game in round four.
 - ▶ Port Adelaide and the Gold Coast Suns to meet in the first match in Asia in round eight when they clash at the Jiangwan Sports Centre in Shanghai.
 - ▶ The Anzac Day eve game will be the only Monday night match of the year.
 - ▶ Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round to be celebrated in round 10, highlighted by the showpiece Richmond v Essendon Dreamtime at the 'G match on Saturday night.
 - ▶ Multicultural Round to be celebrated in round 19.
 - ▶ Eureka Stadium in Ballarat will host reigning premiers the Western Bulldogs against Port Adelaide in round 22 – the first premiership season match played in any regional Victorian venue apart from Geelong since 1952.
 - ▶ One match in Cairns, two in the Northern Territory, three in Canberra and seven in Tasmania.
 - ▶ All Victorian-based clubs to travel interstate on a minimum of five occasions.
 - ▶ All clubs to play at least one match at the MCG and Etihad Stadium, as part of a minimum four in Victoria.

The AFL has again utilised the 'weighted rule' in constructing the 2017 fixture to address the issue of on-field equity for all clubs. The final ladder from the previous season has been grouped into the top six teams, middle six teams and bottom six teams in order to manage the equality of double match-ups while also ensuring the venue and broadcast obligations are met.

Strategy

In the final year of the current broadcast rights deal, the Strategy team led the development of a new strategic plan for the next six years.

In addition to the business planning functions performed by the Strategy department, the team also supported a range of major strategic projects for the industry, including the development of strategic and investment plans which are outlined by AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick in his section of this report.

2017 Fixture

The 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season fixture offers something for all fans with a mix of traditional timeslots and match-ups, along with several new and exciting initiatives.

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

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

The season will continue to operate under a 23-round format, with all clubs to play 11 home and 11 away games, with a full competition bye again fixtured before the Toyota AFL Finals Series.

The season structure will have 19 rounds of nine matches, one round (round nine) of eight matches and three rounds (11-13) where six, seven and six matches respectively will be played.

The 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final will be played on Saturday, September 30.

Stadium Infrastructure

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

Etihad Stadium

On November 2, 2016, the AFL acquired the management rights of Etihad Stadium.

Simultaneously, the AFL exercised its option to acquire the freehold on which Etihad Stadium sits.

Further details are outlined by AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick in his section of this report.

Perth Stadium

The Western Australian Government is building a new multi-purpose stadium on the Burswood Peninsula, due for completion by the start of the 2018 AFL season. The new Perth Stadium will hold around 60,000 people.

The WestStadium consortium (led by Brookfield-Multiplex) is undertaking the financing, design and construction of the stadium and will also maintain many of the elements of the stadium for a period of 25 years.

VenuesLive (the operator of ANZ Stadium) was appointed by the WA Government in 2016 to operate and manage the new stadium.

A joint football working group comprising the AFL, the Fremantle and West Coast Eagles football clubs and the WA Football Commission continued to work closely with VenuesLive to develop an acceptable user agreement which will govern access to the new stadium for AFL matches and events.

Simonds Stadium

The Stage Four development of Simonds Stadium is underway, with the \$89 million project due for completion in May 2017. The first match at the newly redeveloped venue is scheduled for Friday night, May 19, and features Geelong hosting 2016 premiers the Western Bulldogs.

The development includes the demolition of the existing Brownlow and Jennings Stands and the construction of new grandstands which will hold around 6500 patrons and incorporate match-day, corporate and media facilities.

The development will also include new football department training and administration facilities for the Geelong Football Club and the Sunrise Centre incorporating rehabilitation facilities for the Geelong community.

The project is majority funded by the Victorian State Government (\$75 million), with the balance supplied by the City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Football Club and the AFL. Kane Constructions is the managing contractor on site.

Eureka Stadium

The \$21 million development of Eureka Stadium in Ballarat is well underway.

This development, which is funded by the Victorian State Government, will allow the stadium to host Western Bulldogs home matches from 2017. The first match scheduled at the venue is Western Bulldogs v Port Adelaide on August 19.

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

AFL Club Training and Administration Facilities

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

In Western Australia, Fremantle is developing a new home base in the City of Cockburn which was due for completion in February 2017, while the West Coast Eagles are moving their headquarters to Lathlain Park in the Town of Victoria Park, sharing facilities with the Perth Football Club and broader community. Work on the Eagles' new home started in late 2016.

The Gold Coast Suns are developing a new facility as part of the Gold Coast Indoor Sports Centre, which forms part of the infrastructure being developed for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. This facility is due to be opened in early 2017.

St Kilda is returning to its spiritual home at Moorabbin Reserve as part of a large redevelopment that will see the club share facilities with the local football community, including the Sandringham Dragons, Southern Football Netball League and Southern Metro Juniors Football League.

All these club projects have received one or more of federal, state or local government funding and the AFL is grateful for this support which helps make these important community projects a reality.

▼ The \$89 million Stage Four redevelopment of Geelong's Simonds Stadium is due for completion in May 2017 and is sure to get the thumbs up from Cats stars Tom Hawkins and Harry Taylor.



People

Over the past 12 months, the AFL has continued its strong focus on investing in our people and culture.

We have implemented a wide range of initiatives that have been positively embraced by our workforce of 650, which includes staff at AFL House along with staff at AFL Queensland, AFL NSW/ACT, AFL Victoria, AFL Northern Territory and AFL Tasmania.

These have included: embedding our values, staff engagement, professional development, health and wellbeing, diversity, employee benefits, recruitment and onboarding and innovation challenges.

Our aim is to bring out the best in our people so that we can deliver to our fans and the community.

Building a highly engaged team

At the AFL, we know that having a highly engaged workforce leads to strong business performance.

In October, we conducted our vibe employee survey which was a short questionnaire (a 'pulse check') to gain valuable insight to how we are tracking in the minds of employees.

Overall, we received a response rate of 98 per cent, an outstanding result exceeding the benchmark of other organisations which is typically 65-70 per cent. Overall engagement has increased and we are comparing favourably against established benchmarks.

Our people told us we have made significant progress over the past 12 months in the areas we have invested in. They believe the AFL is a better place to work than 12 months ago, are proud to work at the AFL and more satisfied with their roles than ever before.

In addition, our people feel we are more supportive of flexible working, have created a more fun and positive work environment and keep them well informed with internal communications.

Embedding our values

It has been two years since the AFL launched new values and our people have embraced them as part of the way we work and they are now embedded in everything we do. There has been significant uplift in all 12 desired behaviours as measured in the vibe pulse survey.

At the AFL we value:

- ▶ **Play to Win:** We rise to every challenge and do what we say we will do – we own the outcome. We thrive on pushing the boundaries beyond what we have done before to achieve the extraordinary for our people, fans, partners and the community.
- ▶ **Play Fair:** Respect, integrity, honesty, empathy and a great work ethic earns us the right to play.
- ▶ **Play with Passion:** We love what we do. Passion, energy, fun and perseverance is at the heart of our sport and is what drives how we work.
- ▶ **Play as One Team:** We work as one team because together we achieve better outcomes. We bring out the best in each other by embracing our diverse range of ideas, skills and backgrounds to achieve individual and shared success. We celebrate our wins and always have each other's back.

▶ Like Richmond star Dustin Martin, who took his game to another level in 2016, winning his first best and fairest, the AFL is committed to bringing out the best in its workforce to deliver to fans and the community.

A workplace where difference is valued

In 2016, the AFL made a strong commitment to improve the diversity of our workforce and promote a more inclusive culture where we fully embrace difference.

More than 500 people participated in diversity and inclusion working sessions that aimed to educate our team and get them to help create the AFL Diversity Plan which will be launched in early 2017.

With his continued role as a Victorian Male Champion of Change, AFL Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan has led initiatives to understand our challenges and opportunities within the business with a strong focus on improving the flexibility of the workforce with that being a key enabler of diversity and gender equality.

Taking care of our team

The inaugural Health and Wellbeing survey was conducted in June with three areas covered being healthy bodies, healthy minds and healthy workplaces.

The survey provided valuable insight into perceptions around physical and mental health and flexibility within the workplace.

The AFL's overall initiatives are being rolled out and supported by local strategies to target focus areas. The official launch of the program and Health and Wellbeing Calendar is planned for early 2017.

Building world-class leaders

In 2016, we also delivered the inaugural AFL Industry Executive Leadership Program, which was targeted at the 'Top 20' AFL Industry Talent with the focus of building capability for the next generation club CEOs and AFL executives.

We continued to invest significantly in developing leaders internally. More than 120 people leaders participated in a two-day 'Leadership Edge' Program.

The program focused on building personal and organisational leadership, including leading through change, inclusive leadership and unconscious bias.

More than 20 talented potential leaders participated in a two-day 'Emerging Leaders' program. The program focused on building their leadership profile, understanding their style and the role emotional intelligence has to play in effective leadership.

We continued to invest in high-performing female talent with the delivery of two AFL Industry Female Talent Programs, targeted at middle and senior female leaders to support their development and build a stronger pipeline to executive level roles.

At the AFL, we know that having
a highly engaged workforce leads
to strong business performance



FOOTBALL OPERATIONS



MARK EVANS
GENERAL MANAGER

North Melbourne champion Brent Harvey celebrated the biggest milestone in AFL/VFL history during the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season when he became the new holder of the games record.

Harvey, 38 and in his 21st season, claimed the record outright in round 19 against St Kilda at Etihad Stadium when he played his 427th match for the Kangaroos, bettering the mark set by Hawthorn's Michael Tuck between 1972-91.

Harvey pushed his final tally to 432 games as the on-field highlight of a season which also saw Fremantle champion Matthew Pavlich reach 350 games before his eventual retirement, Geelong's Corey Enright establish a games record for the competition's second-oldest club and Nick Riewoldt, Shaun Burgoyne, Drew Petrie, Scott Thompson, Sam Mitchell and Jimmy Bartel all surpass 300 games.

Football Operations played a central role in working with clubs to celebrate each milestone for these champions of the game, while maintaining the competition's status as the best run and most professional of Australia's sporting codes.

The Department had to effectively implement the measures announced to deal with the pre-season suspension of past and present Essendon players, operate the competition across 234 games comprising the pre-season, home and away and finals series and continue to deliver strong direction for all levels of the game below the AFL.

► Essendon's No. 1 draft choice Andrew McGrath is flanked by the Brisbane Lions' Hugh McCluggage and the GWS Giants' Tim Taranto after the 2016 NAB AFL Draft in Sydney.



AFL GAMES RECORD HISTORY

First to:

- 100 games** **Charlie Pannam** (Collingwood/Richmond)
Round 14, 1902. Retired in 1908 after 193 games.
- 194 games** **Fred Elliott** (Melbourne/Carlton)
Grand Final, 1910. Retired in 1911 after 209 games.
- 210 games** **Jock McHale** (Collingwood)
Round Nine, 1914. Retired in 1920 after 261 games.
- 262 games** **Vic Thorp** (Richmond)
Round 16, 1925. Retired in 1925 after 263 games.
- 264 games** **Gordon Coventry** (Collingwood)
Round 11, 1935. Retired in 1937 after 306 games.
- 307 games** **Jack Dyer** (Richmond)
Round 9, 1949. Retired in 1949 after 312 games.
- 313 games** **Dick Reynolds** (Essendon)
Round 14, 1950. Retired in 1951 after 320 games.
- 321 games** **Ted Whitten** (Footscray)
Round 5, 1970. Retired in 1970 after 321 games.
- 322 games** **John Nicholls** (Carlton)
Round 10, 1974. Retired in 1974 after 328 games.
- 329 games** **Kevin Murray** (Fitzroy)
Round 18, 1974. Retired in 1974 after 333 games.
- 334 games** **John Rantall** (South Melbourne/
North Melbourne/Fitzroy)
Round 6, 1980. Retired in 1980 after 336 games.
- 337 games** **Kevin Bartlett** (Richmond)
Qualifying Final, 1980. Retired in 1983 after 403 games.
- 404 games** **Michael Tuck** (Hawthorn)
Round 22, 1990. Retired in 1991 after 426 games.
- 427 games** **Brent Harvey** (North Melbourne)
Round 19, 2016. Retired in 2016 after 432 games.



Umpiring

Key interpretation changes – a tightening of deliberate out of bounds, increasing the protected area around the mark to 10m and the east-west line on the mark – provided new challenges for the umpires in 2016.

Overall, it was felt the changes had a positive impact on the game, with free kick numbers increasing slightly (two a game), boundary throw-ins decreasing by almost 20 per cent (eight a game) and more attacking play through the corridor seeing scoring increase by one goal a game.

After an initial trial in 2015, a more concerted four-umpire trial was conducted across the 18 games of the mid-season split rounds, including several umpires officiating in multiple games across the weekend. GPS results showed a significant reduction in high-intensity running, causing less fatigue when making decisions and creating a greater ability for umpires to recover week to week.

These physical benefits were universally reported by the umpires involved, with minimal changes in decisional accuracy across the 18-game sample. Further trials are set to be considered for 2017.

The score review system saw 34 decisions overturned to achieve the correct score, of which 11 were initiated by the score review official. The average time taken per review was 22.6 seconds. Out of 120 total reviews during the season, there were two confirmed score review errors, down from four in 2015.

Former AFL Umpiring Director Wayne Campbell resigned during the 2016 season to take up a senior role with the GWS Giants in their football department. Collingwood premiership player and former St Kilda captain Luke Ball stepped in to take over the position for the remainder of the season.

The AFL Development Program, managed by 300-game umpire Stuart Wenn, had its inaugural camp in Melbourne. Thirteen young umpires took part in the program, which aims to introduce developing young umpires to the skills and capabilities required to achieve successful AFL careers, as well as fast tracking them towards senior selection.

Significant progress was made with pathway umpires in 2016. Eleni Glouftis highlighted her development by officiating in a NAB Challenge game in the pre-season and former AFL player David Rodan has begun the path to become an AFL goal umpire.

▲ **Scott Jeffery** (holding the ball aloft), **Matt Stevic** and **Simon Meredith** lead the umpires out for the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

It is hoped both will create wider awareness and promote umpiring to many groups outside the game's traditional pathways, including young females involved in football and multicultural communities.

The North Melbourne Football Club received a sanction of \$50,000 for comments regarding the umpires following the round 13 match against Hawthorn at Etihad Stadium.

The AFL also took action against club senior coach Brad Scott, with a sanction of \$30,000 for the comments he made on behalf of the club at the post-match media conference at the end of the game.

The AFL took into account the apology and retraction from the club following an AFL investigation of the MatchCom recordings of the umpires' interaction with the players during the game, along with the personal formal apology and retraction from the North Melbourne coach.

Grand Final Umpires

Field

Matt Stevic, Simon Meredith, Scott Jeffery
Emergency: Justin Schmitt

Boundary

Ian Burrows, Chris Bull, Rob Haala, Michael Marantelli
Emergency: Matthew Konetschka

Goal

Adam Wojcik, Chris Appleton
Emergency: Chelsea Roffey

Milestones

Darren Wilson – retired as boundary umpire games record-holder (404 games, including 12 Grand Finals).
David Dixon – retired as goal umpire games record-holder (356 games, including six Grand Finals).

100 games

Ben Ryan (F), Matthew Tomkins (B), Dillon Tee (B), Matthew Jenkinson (B), Chris Bull (B), Chris Esler (B), Nick Wade (B), Matthew Konetschka (B)

200 games

Gerard Large (B), Mitchell Lefevre (B), Chelsea Roffey (G), Daniel Wilson (G)

300 games

Matt Stevic (F), Scott Jeffery (F), Jon Creasey (B)

400 games

Darren Wilson (B)

GPS results showed a significant reduction in high-intensity running, causing less fatigue when making decisions

◀ North Melbourne champion Brent Harvey is chaired from the field after his record-breaking 427th game in round 19 against St Kilda.





Match Review Panel

Former Essendon premiership player Jason Johnson and Adelaide/Richmond forward Chris Knights were appointed to the Match Review Panel for the 2016 season to replace Luke Ball and Brad Sewell.

The pair joined Michael Christian and Nathan Burke.

The MRP system continued to operate through 2016 with a number of key changes made the previous year:

- ▶ All offences are now categorised as fines or weeks of suspension – there is no longer any reference to base demerit points;
- ▶ The elimination of carry-over points on any offence;
- ▶ Conduct now to be graded in two categories only – intentional or careless;
- ▶ The MRP to issue fines, two- and three-game suspensions, with more serious offences referred to the Tribunal.

▲ Umpires laid 201 charges in 2016, with 99 per cent of the players accepting the prescribed penalty.

2016 MRP STATISTICS

Charges	201
Classifiable Offences	103
Tribunal hearings	5
No. of cases not sustained	1
No. of players accepting prescribed penalty	196
% of players accepting prescribed penalty	99%
No. of players suspended	30
Matches lost through suspension	50
Appeals	0
Financial sanctions (low-level offences)	72
Financial sanctions (low-level offences)	\$75,000
Fixed financial sanctions	98
Fixed financial sanctions	\$113,500
Total Financial Sanctions	\$188,500

RECENT MRP HISTORY

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Charges	137	150	128	147	159	178	236	157	183	196
Tribunal hearings	32	42	22	35	25	15	25	15	15	11
No. of cases not sustained	11	12	6	15	5	3	8	2	5	1
Appeals	4	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	0
No. of players accepting prescribed penalty	105	108	106	112	134	163	211	142	168	185
% of players accepting prescribed penalty	77%	72%	83%	76%	85%	92%	89%	90%	92%	97%
No. of players suspended	45	37	41	43	51	47	59	59	55	36
Matches lost through suspension	71	71	77	68	86	72	112	104	75	57
Fixed financial sanctions (\$)	66,900	114,800	65,700	101,700	77,300	92,600	159,850	93,550	96,350	95,000
Low-level financial sanctions (\$)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77,500
Reprimands	36	38	31	29	42	47	41	33	41	-

Essendon List Concessions

After the finding of the Court of Arbitration for Sport on January 12, 2016, the AFL enacted the following list concessions:

- ▶ Essendon Football Club was able to sign up to 10 players as Temporary Primary List players on a short-term contract for the 2016 season. The club did not retain list access rights to any of these players beyond the 2016 season.
- ▶ Essendon was able to upgrade any rookie-listed player on a similar basis as if a suspended player was on the long-term injury list.
- ▶ Melbourne, the Western Bulldogs, Port Adelaide and St Kilda were each able to upgrade any rookie-listed player on a similar basis as if the relevant suspended players were on the long-term injury list.

The AFL received submissions requesting the League reconsider its initial decision to alter the rules and allow extra primary or rookie list players to be signed by the other clubs separate to Essendon.

Upon review, it was the AFL's view that the circumstances did not call for exceptions to the rules and an exception was only made for Essendon so it could field a side to be able to compete at a basic level each week.

E.J. Whitten Legends game/ Celebration of Football

As part of the celebration of football between the end of the home and away season and the start of the finals, the Department took over the match-day operation of the annual E.J. Whitten Legends game.

▼ The AFL took over the running of the annual E.J. Whitten Legends game, helping raise and support the issue of men's health.

The E.J. Whitten Foundation works to raise the issue of men's health and the AFL was strongly supported by each of the AFL's broadcast partners – the Seven Network, Foxtel/Fox Footy and Telstra.

Net proceeds from the game were distributed to the E.J. Whitten Foundation and the AFL's charity partners, while the broadcast partners also made a direct financial contribution to the E.J. Whitten Foundation.

The AFL programmed a range of events through the period before the finals matches, seeking also to raise the profile of all state league competitions across that weekend, along with metropolitan, regional and community football.

The announcement of the 2016 Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian team and the 2016 NAB AFL Rising Star were moved into this period while all players in the finals were given the opportunity to overcome niggling injuries before the season's showpiece games.

International Rules Series

The Gaelic Athletic Association and the AFL confirmed they would play a two-match International Rules Test Series in Australia in November 2017.

Following the success of the recent one-off Tests played in Australia (Perth in November 2014) and Ireland (Dublin in November 2015), the two controlling boards had agreed the appetite was there among fans, players and coaches of both countries to return to a two-Test series, with Australia also due to return to Ireland in 2019.

The AFL and the GAA have also committed to exploring an exhibition game in the United States.



Recognition of Early Game History

The AFL Commission resolved in 2016 that it would “endorse the recognition of premierships and player statistics for the period 1870-96, subject to them being delineated between the major competitions of the VFA and VFL”.

The Commission was responding to a proposal from the Geelong Football Club that the game widen the recognition of the history of the game’s foundation clubs.

Before the VFL competition started in 1897, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Fitzroy, Geelong, Melbourne, St Kilda and South Melbourne all competed in the Victorian Football Association (VFA). The VFA was a regulated competition from 1877-96 and continued on in its own right after the eight founding clubs left to establish the VFL.

Current AFL teams Richmond, North Melbourne and Footscray (now the Western Bulldogs) also competed in the VFA before the formation of the VFL and remained there in 1897, until joining the then-VFL at later times in their respective club histories.

Advice was sought from prominent game historians to determine how the VFA premierships up to 1896, won by current-day AFL clubs, should be acknowledged, along with the wider achievements such as player records, including games played and goals kicked.

Each club will have the option to decide how it will recognise its history across VFA/VFL or SANFL/AFL (for Port Adelaide), depending on its continuous passage as a club.

▼ West Coast ruckman Nic Naitanui is helped from the ground after rupturing his ACL in round 22.



AFL Injury Survey

The 2015 AFL Injury Survey showed an increase in a number of injury areas.

Clubs on average lost 156 games for the season from players due to injury, compared with recent results of 146 games a club in 2014, 158 in 2013, 148 in 2012 and 157 in 2011.

The report’s observations stated: “Hamstring injuries continue to be the number one injury concern (with an average of 5.2 new injuries causing 19.1 games missed per team). The overall incidence and prevalence of hamstring injuries was about average against the historical data.”

Knee ACL injuries had risen to 16.7 games missed per club in 2015, up from 11.1 games a club in 2014, but below the 17.8 games in 2013.

The number of games lost to concussion in 2015 was at 4.2 games a club, as all sections of the industry – medical officers, coaches and players – moved to a more conservative treatment of concussion cases.

At the start of the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, which covered the period of this injury survey, the AFL again further updated its concussion protocols with the introduction of the use of a sideline Head Injury Assessment Form.

The form, created in conjunction with experts and club doctors, provides greater clarity for club doctors to identify symptoms or conditions that automatically exclude a player from returning to a match, such as:

- ▶ Loss of consciousness after a heavy hit or fall;
- ▶ Tonic posturing (player’s arm(s) stiffening after impact);
- ▶ An unprotected fall (where the player ‘rag-dolls’).

The form also identifies symptoms or conditions that require further assessment to clear a player of concussion before returning to a match.

Port Adelaide Concussion Sanction

The Port Adelaide Football Club received a sanction of \$20,000 in relation to the assessment and management of player Hamish Hartlett during the round 16 match against Hawthorn at Adelaide Oval.

Hartlett left the field during the second quarter after a head knock and the AFL sought an explanation as to the circumstances why he returned to the field and played out the game, after a brief period off the ground.

After receiving a written explanation from the club, speaking to club staff and examining match-day vision from the bench area, it was the AFL’s view Port Adelaide had breached AFL Regulations, with \$10,000 of this sanction suspended until the end of the 2018 season.



Father-Son and Academy Players – Draft Bidding Process

After seeking feedback from all clubs, the AFL determined clubs would no longer be able to access ‘hidden picks’ during the draft when bidding for father-son and academy players at the 2016 NAB AFL Draft.

Hidden picks meant a club could only enter the draft with the number of selections that matched the available primary list positions at that time.

If a club used multiple selections in matching a bid on a player, thereby requiring extra selections to be used to fill the available spots on its club list, the new draft selections would then be awarded to the club at the back of the draft (after the last round), so as not to impact on the selections of all other clubs.

Brisbane Lions Priority Pick

The AFL Commission awarded a priority pick to the Brisbane Lions after round one (pick 21 which was later traded to Sydney) for the 2016 NAB AFL Draft under the Special Assistance Rule.

The Commission accepted a joint recommendation from AFL General Counsel Andrew Dillon and AFL General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans that a pick be awarded to the Lions, who finished 17th on the ladder after finishing 17th and 15th in the previous two seasons.

The Commission ruled the club had met the requirements as outlined under the wording of AFL Rule 19.2 (Special Assistance), when considering the club’s age and list profile, and recent player movement in and out of the club.

▲ Magpie father-son selections Josh Daicos (left) and Callum Brown, with their famous fathers Peter and Gavin.

Northern Academies

The AFL wrote to all clubs in 2016 to re-state the rules that apply around the development of young players as part of the northern club academies operated by the GWS Giants, the Sydney Swans, the Brisbane Lions and the Gold Coast Suns.

As all clubs must assess players for potential market value at the draft, it was required to be transparent to the entire competition how a player’s match program and development plan was being structured if he was part of a club academy.

All clubs were forwarded the key points from the player rules which included:

- ▶ A player is eligible to be included in a club academy only if the player both satisfies the age requirements and lives in that club’s academy region. A player must be over 10 and under 18 in the year they are included in the club academy.
- ▶ Club academies must present an annual development plan to the AFL by January 31 each year.
- ▶ Each club academy will submit a consistent Individual Development Plan for each player that will include:
 - ▶ The match schedule for the individual player for the year (including where there is a conflict between competitions where the player will play);
 - ▶ The specific skill development focus/activities for the player;
 - ▶ Planned academy contact/meeting schedule with the player;
 - ▶ All required medical information/planning.
- ▶ All academy players will be entered into the Smarterbase system, where the Individual Development Plans will be tracked and audited.
- ▶ Any variances from the Individual Development Plans will be notified to all AFL clubs as soon as possible.



Extra Time – Grand Final

The AFL Commission approved a recommendation from General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans and the Executive that would see extra time played for all finals, including the Grand Final, in the case of scores being level at the end of normal time.

The Commission determined that for all finals, including the Grand Final, only one period of extra time would be played. If scores remain level at the end of the second half of extra time, the siren will not sound and play will continue until the next score by either team. The siren will then sound directly after the score is confirmed, signalling the end of the match.

Illicit Drug Policy

The AFL conducted competition-wide hair testing for illicit drugs in the players' holiday period.

This testing is done with the agreement of the AFL Players Association, and was part of a new Illicit Drugs Policy, informing the code regarding drug use.

The AFL Illicit Drugs Policy was changed last year, and the changes include increased intervention at all positive tests and stronger penalties, including suspensions on a second positive test.

The use of illicit drugs affects all sections of society, including AFL players, but testing results continue to indicate levels of use below the general public.

The AFL remains committed to an Illicit Drugs Policy that seeks to change behaviour and penalise players whose behaviour doesn't change.

Free Agency

A total of seven restricted free agents and 49 unrestricted free agents were eligible for Free Agency in 2016 under the rules agreed between the AFL and AFLPA in February 2010.

Restricted Free Agents

Daniel Rich (Brisbane Lions); Nathan Brown, Steele Sidebottom (Collingwood); Jack Grimes, Jack Watts (Melbourne); Ty Vickery (Richmond); Sean Dempster (St Kilda).

▲ North Melbourne star Daniel Wells was one of four players to take advantage of free agency, switching clubs to Collingwood.

Unrestricted Free Agents

Ricky Henderson, Scott Thompson, Nathan van Berlo (Adelaide Crows); Daniel Merrett (Brisbane Lions); Dennis Armfield, Kade Simpson (Carlton); Jarryd Blair, Brent Macaffer, Dane Swan, Alan Toovey (Collingwood); Courtenay Dempsey, Heath Hocking, Cale Hooker, David Myers, Tayte Pears, Brent Stanton (Essendon); Zac Clarke, Matt de Boer, Chris Mayne, Matthew Pavlich, Clancee Pearce, Aaron Sandilands (Fremantle); Jimmy Bartel, Corey Enright, Tom Lonergan (Geelong Cats); Luke Hodge, Sam Mitchell, Brendan Whitecross (Hawthorn); Neville Jetta, Jake Spencer (Melbourne); Michael Firrito, Brent Harvey, Drew Petrie, Lindsay Thomas, Daniel Wells (North Melbourne); Paul Stewart (Port Adelaide); Sam Fisher, Leigh Montagna, Nick Riewoldt (St Kilda); Kieren Jack, Ted Richards (Sydney Swans); Mitchell Brown, Sam Butler, Patrick McGinnity, Will Schofield (West Coast Eagles); Matthew Boyd, Will Minson, Dale Morris, Robert Murphy (Western Bulldogs).

Of this group, four players changed clubs in the initial NAB AFL Trade period – Nathan Brown (to St Kilda), Chris Mayne (to Collingwood), Ty Vickery (to Hawthorn) and Daniel Wells (to Collingwood).

Laws of the Game

The AFL Commission approved several changes to interpretations around the Laws of the Game for the 2016 season on the areas of dangerous tackles, the protected area around the mark and boundary line play.

Dangerous tackles – umpires were given a stricter adjudication with a lifting, slinging or rotating technique, while the MRP guidelines would now enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact.

Protected area – size of the protected area around the mark to be increased while umpires were also to be given a stricter adjudication on ruling on players engaged in a handover of who is guarding the mark.

Boundary line play – a stricter interpretation of deliberate out of bounds.

The AFL has continued to seek to spread the game out, enhance player safety, improve the umpiring of our game and consider the feedback of our fans that is received across our fan surveys.



NAB AFL Rising Stars Program

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

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

NAB AFL Rising Star Award

The Sydney Swans' Callum Mills won the 2016 NAB AFL Rising Star award.

The 19-year-old won the award with 49 votes, ahead of the Western Bulldogs' Caleb Daniel (41) and Carlton's Jacob Weir (26).

Callum Mills was presented with the Ron Evans Medal, a \$20,000 NAB Private Wealth investment portfolio and access to a dedicated personal banker, courtesy of the National Australia Bank.

2016 NAB AFL RISING STAR NOMINEES

Rd	Player	Club	Votes
1	Clayton Oliver	Melbourne	1
2	Darcy Parish	Essendon	19
3	Jacob Weir	Carlton	26
4	Caleb Daniel	Western Bulldogs	41
5	Tom Papley	Sydney Swans	
6	Blake Acres	St Kilda	
7	James Harmes	Melbourne	
8	Jacob Hopper	GWS Giants	
9	Christian Petracca	Melbourne	2
10	Darcy Byrne-Jones	Port Adelaide	
11	Connor Blakely	Fremantle	
12	Lachie Weller	Fremantle	1
13	James Sicily	Hawthorn	
14	Jade Gresham	St Kilda	2
15	Peter Wright	Gold Coast Suns	
16	Callum Mills	Sydney Swans	49
17	Orazio Fantasia	Essendon	
18	Ryan Clarke	North Melbourne	
19	Darcy Moore	Collingwood	9
20	Josh Dunkley	Western Bulldogs	
21	Oscar McDonald	Melbourne	
22	Daniel Rioli	Richmond	
23	Tom Barrass	West Coast Eagles	

▼ Callum Mills is joined by his parents Simone and Darren and girlfriend Tiffany Browne after claiming the 2016 NAB AFL Rising Star award.



The AFL remains committed to an Illicit Drugs Policy that seeks to change behaviour and penalise players whose behaviour doesn't change



2016 NAB AFL DRAFT SELECTIONS (FIRST ROUND)

No.	Player	Club	Selected by
1	Andrew McGrath	Sandringham Dragons	Essendon
2	Tim Taranto	Sandringham Dragons	GWS Giants
3	Hugh McCluggage	North Ballarat Rebels	Brisbane Lions
4	Ben Ainsworth	Gippsland Power	Gold Coast Suns
5	Will Setterfield	Sandringham Dragons/GWS Academy	GWS Giants
6	Sam Petrevski-Seton	Claremont	Carlton
7	Jack Scrimshaw	Sandringham Dragons	Gold Coast Suns
8	Griffin Logue	Swan Districts	Fremantle
9	Will Brodie	Murray Bushrangers	Gold Coast Suns
10	Jack Bowes	Cairns/Gold Coast Suns Academy	Gold Coast Suns
11	Oliver Florent	Sandringham Dragons	Sydney Swans
12	Jy Simpkin	Murray Bushrangers	North Melbourne
13	Daniel Venables	Western Jets	West Coast Eagles
14	Harry Perryman	Collingullie/GWS Academy	GWS Giants
15	Jordan Gallucci	Eastern Ranges	Adelaide
16	Todd Marshall	Murray Bushrangers	Port Adelaide
17	Jarrold Berry	North Ballarat Rebels	Brisbane Lions
18	Sam Powell-Pepper	East Perth	Port Adelaide
19	Timothy English	South Fremantle	Western Bulldogs
20	Isaac Cumming	Broken Hill/GWS Academy	GWS Giants
21	Will Hayward	North Adelaide	Sydney Swans

2016 NAB AFL DRAFTS: WHERE PLAYERS CAME FROM

	National	Rookie	Total	%
Victoria	42	19	61	49
WA	12	6	18	13
SA	4	12	16	13
NSW/ACT	9	4	13	10
Qld	6	2	8	6
NT	3	-	3	2
International	-	4	4	3
Tasmania	-	1	1	1
Total	76	48	124	

* Also note 18 Indigenous players were selected for the first time (15 per cent).

* The table above includes players nominated as Category B rookies.

NAB AFL Draft

The 2016 NAB AFL Draft was held at the Hordern Pavilion in Sydney. The event was broadcast by Fox Sports, 1116 SEN, 3AW and AFL.com.au and attracted significant media interest around Australia.

It was the second time the event has been held in Sydney.

Victorian Andrew McGrath was the first selection, recruited by Essendon from the Sandringham Dragons, Brighton JFC and Brighton Grammar.

NAB AFL Academy

Brenton Sanderson continued as head coach of the Level 1 and Level 2 squads. Both levels include a number of camps and an international tour over a 12-month period. The squads were managed by AFL Talent Football Manager Michael Ablett, with mentors Brad Johnson, Matthew Lloyd, Brad Ottens and Glen Jakovich.

The Level 2 squad again travelled to the IMG Academy in Florida in January while the Level 1 squad toured New Zealand in April.

The Level 2 team played against the Werribee VFL team in a curtain-raiser before the Richmond v Collingwood match at the MCG for the AFL Chairman's Cup and against Geelong's VFL team at Simonds Stadium.

Jarrold Berry was awarded the Ben Mitchell Medal in Level 2 while Joel Garner was awarded the Cameron Ling Medal in Level 1.

In October, the AFL welcomed Luke Power as Academy head coach, replacing Sanderson. Power is the ninth coach of the NAB AFL Academy.

The AFL thanks Sanderson for his services and wishes him well as he continues his coaching career.

NAB AFL Under-18 Championships

The NAB AFL Under-18 Championships had a significant change in format in 2016. The Division 2 championships were contested in May and a representative team – the Allies – formed to compete in Division 1 comprising players from NSW/ACT, Northern Territory, Queensland and Tasmania.

Division 1 matches were played in Adelaide, Geelong, Perth and Melbourne from June 4-29.

Vic Metro won Division 1 and NSW/ACT won Division 2.

Jack Graham (South Australia) won the Larke Medal as the Division 1 best player and Jack Bowes (Queensland) won the Harrison Medal as the Division 2 best player.

NAB AFL Under-16 Championships

The 2016 NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held in Hobart, Adelaide, Geelong, Darwin and on the Gold Coast from June 11 to July 9.

South Australia won Division 1 and Tasmania won Division 2.

The Division 1 Kevin Sheehan medallist was South Australia's Connor Rozee, while Tasmania's Tarryn Thomas was awarded the Alan McLean Medal as the best player in Division 2.

◀ The top 10 are presented to the crowd at the 2016 NAB AFL Draft.

NAB AFL Draft Combine

The 2016 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from October 6-9. The best young players from throughout the country gathered for testing and interviews with club staff.

Combines were conducted in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, with a total of 180 players tested across the different state and national combines.

International Combines

International Combines were conducted in Wellington, Los Angeles and Dublin under the direction of Michael Ablett and AFL International Talent Coordinator Tadhg Kennelly. AFL club recruiting staff attended each Combine and 74 athletes were tested. In 2016, there were 20 players listed with AFL clubs.

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ON AFL LISTS IN 2016

Primary List		
Brisbane Lions	Pearce Hanley	Ireland
Carlton	Zach Tuohy	Ireland
Hawthorn	Kurt Heatherley	New Zealand
Rookie List		
Brisbane Lions	Cian Hanley	Ireland
Carlton	Ciaran Sheehan	Ireland
Carlton	Ciaran Byrne	Ireland
Collingwood	Mason Cox	USA
Essendon	Conor McKenna	Ireland
Fremantle	Sean Hurley	Ireland
Geelong Cats	Padraig Lucey	Ireland
Hawthorn	Conor Glass	Ireland
Hawthorn	Shem Tatupu	New Zealand
Carlton	Matt Korcheck	USA
St Kilda	Jason Holmes	USA
Sydney Swans	Colin O'Riordan	Ireland
West Coast Eagles	Paddy Brophy	Ireland
International Scholarship		
Hawthorn	Siope Ngata	New Zealand
St Kilda	Joe Baker-Thomas	New Zealand
St Kilda	Barclay Miller	New Zealand
St Kilda	Giovanni Mountain-Silbery	New Zealand
Gold Coast Suns	Brandon Kaufman	USA
Port Adelaide	Shaoling Chen	China

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS



DARREN BIRCH
GENERAL MANAGER

The AFL reached significant milestones in 2016, with two New South Wales teams finishing in the top four for the first time and the highest total attendance through the opening 10 rounds of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

The season was also significant for the re-signing of two of the AFL's most important corporate partners in Toyota and National Australia Bank (NAB).

The AFL continued its focus on affordability and enhancing the fan experience at games with the price of base general admission tickets remaining unchanged from the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

For the first time, the AFL introduced a national \$35 entry level ticket for the first two weeks of the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series, supporting the increased total finals series attendance of 7.6 per cent on 2015.

For the 25th time in 26 years, club membership set a record with a total of 875,197, representing a 4.67 per cent increase on 2015. Thirteen of the 18 clubs recorded a growth in club membership numbers.

Toyota, AFL's premier partner of 12 years, extended its long-term partnership until at least the end of 2019, ranking it among the biggest sponsorship deals in Australian sport.

New signings were made with the AFL appointing the Cotton On Group as the official apparel partner and New Era as the official headwear partner of the 2017 NAB AFL Women's competition.

Continuing on the foundations laid over the past two years, the Marketing and Research Insights team continued to place the fans at the forefront of key campaigns, highlighting the impact the collective game has on Australian society.

► As well as being the AFL's premier partner, Toyota provides support at other levels, including sponsoring the Adelaide Crows since the club's inception.



Events And Hospitality

Match-Day Functions

Throughout the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series and 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final, nearly 20,000 corporate guests were entertained at AFL events at venues such as the MCG and its surrounds, Domain Stadium, ANZ Stadium, the SCG, Spotless Stadium, Crown Palladium and the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull MP, Federal Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten MP, AFL Legends Bob Skilton, Ron Barassi, Kevin Bartlett, Kevin Murray, John Nicholls, Peter Hudson and Leigh Matthews, Gold Logie winner Waleed Aly, Melbourne Cup-winning jockey Michelle Payne and internationally renowned actors Chris and Liam Hemsworth were among the guests who attended the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final Day Official Function.

Major Events

Major events during 2016 included the Toyota AFL Premiership Season Launch, the Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner and the AFL Women's Industry Lunch.

Other key events included the NAB AFL Rising Star Award function, the Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian Awards, the Charles Brownlow Medal and the NAB AFL Draft in Sydney.

▼ Australian actor and Western Bulldogs fan Chris Hemsworth was among the guests at the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota AFL Grand Final Week Events

The Foxtel Footy Festival and Toyota AFL Grand Final Live Site continued in its new location outside the MCG in Yarra Park in 2016, attracting more than 350,000 fans to the site over its four days. Running from the Wednesday to Saturday in Grand Final Week, the event was a celebration of all things football with children's activities and player and celebrity appearances and also allowed AFL corporate partners to showcase their products and services.

The Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade was the biggest in history, attracting an estimated 170,000 people along the route.

The Parade provided an opportunity for Western Bulldogs and Sydney Swans fans to see their players and coaches on the eve of the Grand Final.

The 2016 September Club experience provided a first-class service and atmosphere to guests, with the AFL's exclusive partner and hospitality precinct again the place to be on Toyota AFL Grand Final Day. About 2000 corporate and broadcast partners, key industry stakeholders and VIPs enjoyed the best hospitality experience the AFL has to offer before and after the big match.

The Centre Square precinct at Birrarung Marr saw 3000 guests treated to a high-quality hospitality experience, as well as enjoying reserved seating at the Toyota AFL Grand Final. One of Australia's most enduring rock bands, The Black Sorrows, entertained guests at the Final Siren post-game party.

A new event - The Ultimate - saw 100 guests experience an amazing day of great food and wine at Nobu restaurant, followed by an up-close look at the Grand Final teams running out on to the ground near the team races and then watch the match from some of the best seats in the house.

The 2016 Virgin Australia Grand Final Pre-Game Show saw Australian acts Vance Joy and The Living End perform, along with international superstar Sting. Mike Brady performed during the retiring players' motorcade with a special rendition of his hit song *One Day in October*. Linda and Vika Bull performed the Australian national anthem.

Following the biggest match of the year, the Virgin Australia Premiership Party saw Vance Joy and The Living End return to the stage during the free concert on the MCG which was enjoyed by a crowd of more than 20,000 fans and included the presentation of the Western Bulldogs premiership team.



Brian Lake and Adam Cooney joined the retiring champions' lap of honour on Grand Final day.

Corporate Partners

In 2016, the AFL enjoyed corporate partnerships with global and domestic leading brands and renewed four major partners in Toyota, National Australia Bank, Coca-Cola and Gatorade.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following corporate partners in 2016:

Toyota Motor Corporation Australia

The 2016 season marked Toyota Australia's 13th year as the Premier Partner of the AFL and kicked off with support of the AFL Season Launch broadcast live on Fox Footy. An important element to the Season Launch was an exclusive breakfast held for Toyota fleet clients and attended by all 18 AFL club captains.

Toyota's leverage of their AFL partnership spans a wide array of activations and initiatives, including:

- ▶ Toyota Legendary Moments, which in 2016 recreated the famous mark from the 2005 Toyota AFL Grand Final by 'Leaping' Leo Barry and the teaser campaign which featured a cameo from AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and AFL historian Col Hutchinson.
- ▶ The Toyota Good for Footy Raffle which was launched by Luke Hodge and Jarryd Roughead and over the year involved 297 clubs from around Australia raising \$574,305. This initiative supported grassroots clubs and raised much-needed funds to support the wider sporting community.
- ▶ Engaging fans via AFL Media platforms Facebook and Twitter with 'Oh What a Feeling' moments. There were more than 1000 posts across social media with more than four million OWAF match highlights across AFL platforms and 34 million OWAF video views across Facebook and Twitter.
- ▶ The Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade was an enormous success, attracting thousands of fans who cheered on the teams as they made their way to the Live Site at Yarra Park.

PREMIER PARTNER



MAJOR PARTNERS



OFFICIAL PARTNERS



- ▶ The Toyota AFL Live Site, within the Foxtel Footy Festival, gave 270,000 fans the chance to take on fun footy activities, meet their AFL heroes and score great giveaways.
- ▶ On Grand Final Day, Toyota Premiership Cup Ambassador Michael O'Loughlin led a procession of retiring greats on to the MCG for The Legends Lap of Honour – giving fans one last chance to say goodbye to some of their favourite footy champions.

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola worked closely with the AFL to maximise available assets throughout the 2016 season.

To celebrate the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season launch, Coca-Cola and the AFL worked on a successful promotion across Caltex stores nationally that saw winners treated to the ultimate money-can't-buy AFL experience with their chosen team.

At the back end of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, Coca-Cola utilised its AFL partnership to expose a current focus brand for its Australian operations – Lift Hard Hitting Lemon.

Building awareness of the revamped product was achieved by sampling activity at three AFL matches in three states. There were also activations in the Foxtel Footy Festival and Grand Final Parade, which included a strong-man challenge for fans to win a seat in a Lift-branded Toyota Hilux during the AFL Grand Final Parade.

Leading into Grand Final Day, Coca-Cola conducted a national trade conference in Melbourne, taking advantage of the buzz in the city during AFL Grand Final week, culminating in a Grand Final Day function. A select group of lucky customers had the opportunity to walk on to the MCG to watch the teams warm up.

President and Chief Operating Officer of the Coca-Cola Company James Quincey attended the AFL's official match function for the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final, along with John Murphy (President Asia Pacific Group), Roberto Mercade (President South Pacific Business Unit) and Alison Watkins (Group Managing Director, Coca-Cola Amatil).

▶ Carlton United Breweries supported the promotion on Grand Final day which involved supporters attempting to beat the LED signage Clydesdales in a race around the MCG.

Carlton United Breweries

The Carlton Draught Friday Front Bar show continued in 2016 and highlighted the way CUB engages football fans around the country.

Friday Front Bar has become a staple within the AFL community and in 2016 received on average 18,061 video views weekly and across AFL social platforms received 40,721 video views a week.

The popular Carlton Draught Grand Final Front Bar in Yarra Park was extended in 2016 to allow for more fans to enjoy CUB's hospitality on Grand Final Day.

Almost 2800 guests enjoyed the private hospitality environment with tickets given away through an exclusive partnership with Triple M.

CUB also gave three lucky mates the chance to watch the season decider live – to win they had to beat the LED signage Clydesdales in a race around the ground.



National Australia Bank

The 2016 NAB Challenge continued an emphasis on taking pre-season matches to the community, with 27 matches scheduled over four weeks in 21 regional and metropolitan venues across the country.

A total of 191,614 fans attended the 26 matches (one game was abandoned due to weather). The average number of attendees per regional game was 7249, up 8.6 per cent year on 2015. Fans tuned into Fox Footy in high numbers, with the total cumulative TV audience achieving 3,053,349 viewers, an increase of 70 per cent, and the average audience per match was 117,437, an increase of 37.6 per cent.

NAB AFL Auskick continued to be the benchmark for introductory sporting programs in Australia and saw strong growth again in 2016, up 6.9 per cent to 195,719. It was the third consecutive year of the NAB AFL Auskick Free-Kick initiative and more than \$55,000 was provided to Auskick centres.

The 2016 NAB AFL Rising Star function held at Crown Palladium saw Callum Mills from the Sydney Swans named the winner. Mills received the Ron Evans Medal, a \$20,000 personal investment folio and a dedicated personal banker, courtesy of NAB.

The NAB AFL Academy continued to attract interest. The new 2016-17 intake was announced and there was anniversary activity to celebrate the 20th intake of players into the program.

The NAB Youth Girls All Stars Match was played as the curtain-raiser to the AFL Women's All Stars Match at VU Whitten Oval.

The 2016 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from Thursday, October 6, to Sunday, October 9.

There was no shortage of interest in the 2016 NAB AFL Trade Period. AFL.com.au provided coverage across all platforms, while NAB AFL Trade Radio covered the trade period extensively.

NAB's involvement in 2016 culminated in the NAB AFL Draft in Sydney where Essendon selected Sandringham Dragons speedster Andrew McGrath as the No. 1 pick.

The 2016 NAB Challenge continued an emphasis on taking pre-season matches to the community

Gatorade

In a first for an AFL player, Collingwood captain and Gatorade ambassador Scott Pendlebury featured alongside Usain Bolt and Serena Williams in a television commercial which ran during the Australian summer period.

The Gatorade Match Day Moments program ran throughout the year and encouraged and rewarded clubs for correct utilisation of Gatorade equipment and products in match-day and training environments. In addition to the strong branding via the use of equipment on the field of play in 2016, Gatorade also secured signage rights for interchange benches at several AFL venues around the country.

Gatorade maintained four ambassadors in 2016, with Gary Ablett, Dan Hannebery, Luke Parker and Pendlebury engaged to drive the promotion of the partnership and provide links to teams within the key states of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

The ambassadors featured in a campaign (television commercial, product labels, point of sale and promotions) for the new 'Strawberry Fierce' flavour. Parker and Hannebery also featured in a content series to support Gatorade's new Liquid Concentrate product.

▶ Essendon coach John Worsfold presents No. 1 draft pick Andrew McGrath with his new jumper.

▶ Western Bulldogs star Marcus Bontempelli tips a Gatorade bucket over premiership coach Luke Beveridge.



Virgin Australia

The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia, the AFL's official airline since 2011, continued to grow in 2016.

The 2016 Virgin Australia Grand Final entertainment saw Sting, Vance Joy and The Living End take to the stage to perform during the Virgin Australia Pre-Game Show with Vance Joy and The Living End returning to the stage to perform to 20,000 fans during the Virgin Australia Premiership Party. In a first for the AFL, Vance Joy and The Living End were announced during a Twitter Blue Room Q&A session, with AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan providing the news directly to the fans.

The Virgin Australia AFL Grand Final Party was back again in 2016 and saw more than 600 guests come together at Melbourne's Luminare venue.

Virgin Australia was the naming rights partner of the All-Australian Awards for the third year. The Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian Awards were attended by 250 VIP guests and provided Virgin Australia with a great platform for brand integration with a dedicated hub on afl.com.au and the 'Pick Your Best 22' competition. Engagement with fans was again at the forefront of the night, when a co-branded Twitter Blue Room was run with newly selected Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian players.

To coincide with the Toyota AFL Finals Series, Virgin Australia launched a new advertising

► **Sting entertained the crowd before the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final.**

campaign Show Your Colours, which showcased a shared value and corporate responsibility to tackle prejudice head on. In the powerful campaign, Virgin Australia aimed to challenge perceptions of how people are viewed, removing the barrier of prejudice or race and showing people as AFL fans, sharing a common passion and purpose.

The AFL's innovative travel platform, AFL Travel, continued to enable AFL fans to experience the best of the away game destinations and enjoy match tickets, Lounge access and match-day guarantee.

CrownBet

After the successful first year of the partnership in 2015, CrownBet continued its support of the life-changing Round One Tipping Competition, Pick a Winner Show, The Crownlow and integrated live odds into the AFL Match Centre. New initiatives such as the AFL Kings competition and the largest activation within the Grand Final Live Site - The Tower of Torp - were rolled out.

Through its partnership with the AFL, CrownBet supports a number of the AFL's community projects including Freeze MND (Motor Neurone Disease) and the Children's Cancer Foundation. With CrownBet's significant support, the Children's Cancer Foundation's annual event, The Million Dollar Lunch, raised \$1.719 million in 2016.

▼ **The Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade attracted thousands of fans who cheered on the teams as they made their way to the Live Site at Yarra Park.**





Attendances

A total of 6,306,336 people attended the 198 games of the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

With both NSW teams finishing in the top four for the first time since the GWS Giants joined the competition in 2012, the highest total attendance in NSW and ACT was achieved with a total of 503,343, an average of 22,879 a match. The highest total attendance in Tasmania was also achieved during the 2016 season, with 104,243 people attending across the seven games held in the state.

The on-field improvement of the Western Bulldogs, North Melbourne and St Kilda contributed to attendances at Etihad Stadium increasing seven per cent from the previous year. The increase was highlighted by the round 12 match between St Kilda and Carlton, which drew an attendance of 47,945, the biggest crowd for the venue since 2013.

The growth of these clubs and venues was offset by a 9.2 per cent decrease at the Gabba, six per cent at the MCG and 6.5 per cent at Metricon Stadium.

The Giants' on-field improvement was reflected through their home match attendances, which saw a crowd of 21,541 for their derby match against the Sydney Swans in round 12 making it the highest premiership season attendance at Spotless Stadium. The Giants' match against Richmond in round 19 at Manuka Oval in Canberra saw the record attendance for an AFL match at the ground with 14,974.

In 2016, the highest total attendance through the opening 10 rounds was recorded with an average of 309,382 people attending each round. Significant milestones were reached during these rounds, with round one being the fourth-highest opening round on record with 359,939 attendees and round five being the fifth-highest with 365,437 attendees. The average attendance each round during the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was 274,189 (31,850 a game).

▲ Despite missing the finals, Richmond fans showed their passion in 2016, with an average of 41,146 attending the Tigers' games, ranked third in the AFL.

Across the nine matches of the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series, crowds were up 7.6 per cent on 2015, with a combined total of 558,342. This was the seventh-highest cumulative total since the introduction of the final eight and the highest for a season where less than five finals were hosted at the MCG.

Across all AFL matches, the NAB Challenge pre-season matches, the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the Toyota AFL Finals Series, crowds had a cumulative total of 7,056,292.

The Western Bulldogs recorded the biggest increase in home game attendances, averaging 30,703 attendees in 2016, compared with 23,479 the previous season. This represented a year-on-year increase of 30.8 per cent.

Melbourne recorded the second-highest growth rate in 2016, with an increase of 24.8 per cent in home game attendances compared with 2015.

The top five clubs in terms of average attendance per home game during the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season were:

- ▶ Adelaide Crows 46,784
- ▶ Collingwood 46,188
- ▶ Richmond 41,146
- ▶ Port Adelaide 39,332
- ▶ Hawthorn 36,815

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

	2016	2015	Variance	%
NAB Challenge	191,614	207,489	-15,875	-7.7%
Premiership Season	6,306,336	6,351,578	-45,242	-0.7%
Finals Series	558,342	519,008	39,334	7.6%
Totals	7,056,292	7,078,075	-21,783	-0.3%

ATTENDANCE BY VENUE

Venue	2016 Games	Attendance	Average	2015 Games	Attendance	Average	% Variance
Adelaide Oval	22	947,282	43,058	21	937,090	44,623	-3.5%
ANZ Stadium	-	-	-	3	88,706	29,569	-
Aurora Stadium	4	57,297	14,324	4	55,402	13,851	3.4%
Blundstone Arena	3	46,946	15,649	3	43,901	14,634	6.9%
Cazalys Stadium	1	8,509	8,509	1	9,449	9,449	-9.9%
Domain Stadium	22	748,022	34,001	22	794,167	36,099	-5.8%
Etihad Stadium	46	1,389,976	30,217	46	1,302,648	28,318	6.7%
Gabba	11	187,816	17,074	11	206,911	18,810	-9.2%
Manuka Oval	3	38,658	12,886	3	30,395	10,132	27.2%
MCG	46	2,088,695	45,406	45	2,174,807	48,329	-6.0%
Metricon Stadium	11	127,168	11,561	11	135,966	12,361	-6.5%
SCG	11	367,679	33,425	8	258,029	32,254	3.6%
Simonds Stadium	8	187,973	23,497	8	196,987	24,623	-4.6%
Spotless Stadium	8	97,006	12,126	8	88,256	11,032	9.9%
TIO Stadium	1	8,163	8,163	1	11,873	11,873	-31.2%
TIO Traeger Park	1	5,146	5,146	1	4,866	4,866	5.8%
Westpac Stadium	-	-	-	1	12,125	12,125	-
Totals	198	6,306,336	31,850	197	6,351,578	32,242	-1.2%

HOME GAME ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

Venue	2016	Average	2015	Average	% Variance
Adelaide Crows	514,629	46,784	464,870	46,487	0.6%
Brisbane Lions	187,816	17,074	206,911	18,810	-9.2%
Carlton	389,242	35,386	423,018	38,456	-8.0%
Collingwood	508,066	46,188	519,844	47,259	-2.3%
Essendon	371,015	33,729	467,552	42,505	-20.6%
Fremantle	345,575	31,416	398,307	36,210	-13.2%
Geelong Cats	335,490	30,499	325,403	29,582	3.1%
Gold Coast Suns	127,168	11,561	135,966	12,361	-6.5%
GWS Giants	135,664	12,333	118,651	10,786	14.3%
Hawthorn	404,957	36,814	424,884	38,626	-4.7%
Melbourne	345,490	31,408	276,802	25,164	24.8%
North Melbourne	309,881	28,171	282,417	25,674	9.7%
Port Adelaide	432,653	39,332	472,220	42,929	-8.4%
Richmond	452,609	41,146	548,642	49,877	-17.5%
St Kilda	338,219	30,747	285,232	25,930	18.6%
Sydney Swans	367,679	33,425	346,735	31,521	6.0%
West Coast Eagles	402,447	36,586	395,860	35,987	1.7%
Western Bulldogs	337,736	30,703	258,264	23,479	30.8%
Totals	6,306,336	31,850	6,351,578	32,246	-1.2%

Ticketing

In 2016, the AFL continued its focus on affordability, with the base general admission ticket price remaining the same as 2014.

The year also saw the introduction of a national \$35 entry level ticket for weeks one and two of the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series. In some instances, the price cut to entry level tickets provided the lowest price for a finals ticket for up to 15 years. The entry level reserved seat category for preliminary finals matches was also lowered to \$65 across all venues.

The price of tickets in some categories for the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final increased, however, the entry level reserved seat price of \$180 and the premium category price of \$399 remained frozen at 2013 levels.

Club Membership

The combined AFL club membership tally hit record numbers for the 25th time in the past 26 years, rising by 4.67 per cent to a total of 875,197.

Geelong, the GWS Giants, St Kilda and the Sydney Swans all recorded double-digit growth and all but five clubs – the Brisbane Lions, Collingwood, Essendon, the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide – recorded increases on their 2016 membership figures.

St Kilda led the way in membership growth with a 16.07 per cent rise, with the Sydney Swans second with a 15.74 per cent increase to 56,523 members.

Hawthorn is the largest-supported club in the competition with a total membership of 75,351, overtaking Collingwood and heading a list of 11 clubs exceeding 50,000 members – up from eight in 2015. Eleven clubs tallied record membership totals, down from 12 in 2015.

AFL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Club (* Record)	2015	2016	VAR #	VAR %
Adelaide Crows*	52,920	54,307	1,387	2.62%
Brisbane Lions	25,408	23,286	-2,122	-8.35%
Carlton	47,305	50,130	2,825	5.97%
Collingwood	75,037	74,643	-394	-0.53%
Essendon	60,818	57,494	-3,324	-5.47%
Fremantle*	51,433	51,889	456	0.89%
Geelong Cats*	44,312	50,571	6,259	14.12%
Gold Coast Suns	13,643	12,854	-789	-5.78%
GWS Giants*	13,480	15,312	1,832	13.59%
Hawthorn*	72,924	75,351	2,427	3.33%
Melbourne*	35,953	39,146	3,193	8.88%
North Melbourne*	41,012	45,014	4,002	9.76%
Port Adelaide	54,057	53,743	-314	-0.58%
Richmond*	70,809	72,278	1,469	2.07%
St Kilda	32,746	38,009	5,263	16.07%
Sydney Swans*	48,836	56,523	7,687	15.74%
West Coast Eagles*	60,221	65,188	4,967	8.25%
Western Bulldogs*	35,222	39,459	4,237	12.03%
Totals	836,136	875,197	39,061	4.67%

▼ St Kilda's Josh Bruce engages with the Saints' faithful after a match.



Consumer Products

The Consumer Products program continued to perform strongly in 2016, achieving budget with key growth in categories such as memorabilia and collectables, gifts and novelty items. Club anniversaries and player milestones assisted in incremental growth, including the West Coast Eagles' 30th anniversary celebrations and Brent Harvey's 427th record-breaking game.

The launch of the #TrueColours marketing campaign saw the AFL, the 18 clubs and eight on-field licencees work collaboratively on a season-long activation to encourage fans to attend games and support their teams by wearing club colours.

The Western Bulldogs successfully capitalised on their merchandise sales in the lead-up to and the weeks following the club's Grand Final win. With record-breaking sales in the 96 hours post the Grand Final, the premiership product sales surpassed all expectations, particularly with memorabilia products.

After two-and-a-half years since its inception, ShopAFL continued to grow annual online sales, with multi-club transactions contributing significantly to the growth. The total number of orders via ShopAFL saw an uplift of nine per cent, with the total units of products bought up 18 per cent. Visits to the site have also continued to grow with unique visits up eight per cent and total visits up five per cent.

▲ Bulldogs young and old enjoyed a season to savour in 2016, with membership rising to a record 39,459 as the club landed its second premiership.

The merchandise operations model at Etihad Stadium continued to perform successfully throughout 2016, with total sales up 33 per cent on 2015.

The AFL Consumer Products department, together with Infinite Retail, worked alongside the clubs to ensure the merchandise offering and fan experience were enhanced.

The integration and presence of 'away' club merchandise at matches was a huge success, with 60 per cent of games being attended by both clubs.

The number of AFL Stores has grown to 13, in addition to their ecommerce site.

In 2016, new stores opened in three major Victorian shopping centres – Doncaster, Highpoint and Chadstone.

Highpoint Shopping Centre achieved the highest two-week sales period on record by an AFL Store leading into and after the Grand Final (September 23 to October 8).

St Kilda led the way in membership growth with a 16.07 per cent rise, with the Sydney Swans second with a 15.74 per cent increase



Marketing

Continuing on from the foundations laid in 2014 and 2015, the AFL's 2016 marketing strategy focused on fans and their contribution to the game by placing them at the forefront of a number of key campaigns.

Starting in February, the AFL launched a new website – *play.afl* – which provides one online location to house all participation programs, making playing our game easier and more accessible than ever before. This was also the first use of a Top Level Domain (.afl) by the AFL and the first sport to do so in Australia.

The AFL Season Launch campaign stepped back in time to highlight the one constant at all matches throughout history – the fans – with a continuation of the 'You make the Game' campaign.

The Sunday Funday campaign continued to be a key plank in efforts to attract families and in 2016 expanded into South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

Since the start of Sunday Funday in 2014, junior general admission ticket sales in Melbourne have increased by 127 per cent and overall kids' attendances are significantly higher.

The Marketing Department also played a significant role in the AFL's themed rounds. With Indigenous Round renamed to honour Sir Doug Nicholls in 2016, Sir Doug Nicholls' life was highlighted through a series of short films, produced by celebrated filmmaker Pete Dickson and was viewed by more than one million people across the AFL's digital platforms.

▲ The marketing strategy in 2016 revolved around placing supporters at the forefront of several key campaigns.

▶ Kids and women form an important part of the AFL's plans in growing the game, particularly in NSW and Queensland.

Multicultural Round celebrated the depth of diversity seen within Australian Football and national marketing initiatives were integrated into club campaigns.

To build anticipation in the lead-up to the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series, the 'Feel the Finals Effect' campaign was rolled out across a wide range of channels, highlighted by more than 7.8 million views of club-content pieces via Facebook.

Research

In 2016, the AFL's in-house research team undertook more than 50 projects in order to provide the code, clubs and internal departments with critical information to inform their decisions. Key projects around women, kids, NSW and Queensland have helped shape the strategy to grow the game through those audiences and markets.

The Marketing Department also played a significant role in the AFL's themed rounds





NAB AFL WOMEN'S



SIMON LETHLEAN
GENERAL MANAGER

Women and girls have been playing football for more than 100 years and have always been integral to our game as supporters, administrators, umpires, coaches and volunteers. Over the past five years, the number of women and girls playing football has doubled, led by record growth in youth girls football and an increasing appetite for an elite national competition.

Women and girls represent 27 per cent of total football participation across all competitions and programs, with the number of female teams taking the field for the first time totalling more than 900 in the past two years.

On the back of this growth and acknowledging the importance of creating a destination for an emerging talent pathway in female football, the AFL Commission supported a proposal to bring forward the inaugural NAB AFL Women's competition to 2017.

Exhibition matches over the past three years between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs, and six other teams in 2016, showcased the remarkable skill and ferocity of women's football and highlighted the interest from football fans and the general public.

The 2016 Exhibition Match Series culminated in an All-Stars match between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs during the Celebration of Football.

The match was broadcast live nationally on the Seven Network, attracting a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 754,898, and saw more than 5000 fans watch the game at Victoria University Whitten Oval.



► Darcy Vescio and Brianna Davey (Carlton), Melissa Hickey and Daisy Pearce (Melbourne), Katie Brennan and Ellie Blackburn (Western Bulldogs) and Moana Hope and Emma King (Collingwood) at the announcement of the AFLW's marquee players.



▲ AFLW stars such as Collingwood's Moana Hope are helping establish the NAB AFL Women's competition.

Priority signings/rookies

In addition to marquee players, each club had the opportunity to recruit players as priority signings, working with the AFL to ensure that players with existing relationships with AFL clubs were able to be retained while further talent was spread across the eight clubs.

Clubs were also allowed to select two eligible rookies, who had not been registered with a football club for three years prior. The rule saw several talented athletes from other sports recruited by AFL clubs, most notably WNBA player and Olympic Games silver medallist Erin Phillips and Commonwealth Games javelin gold medallist Kim Mickle.

NAB AFL Women's Draft

A total of 145 players were selected in the historic NAB AFL Women's Draft on October 12 with star midfielder Nicola Barr becoming the first player drafted, with the GWS Giants selecting her with pick No. 1.

The draft was State-based, meaning the Giants' picks came from within a NSW talent pool, with Adelaide (SA/NT), Brisbane (Qld) and Fremantle (WA) also drawing from their States.

To finalise lists, clubs had a fortnight to sign any undrafted players which was one final mechanism that provided opportunities for players to move States if they wished to take up an available list spot.

It's hoped the establishment of a national AFL Women's competition will provide a platform to inspire young girls to reach for the stars and another avenue for fans of Australian Football to enjoy.

The AFL acknowledges the contribution and persistence of countless pioneering individuals, who have long driven the growth in women's football.

Clubs announcement

On June 15, history was made with AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick announcing the clubs to be granted a licence to compete in the inaugural season of the NAB AFL Women's competition.

The Adelaide Crows, the Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Fremantle, the GWS Giants, Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs were named as the eight teams to take part in 2017.

The Geelong Cats, North Melbourne, Richmond, St Kilda and the West Coast Eagles were each granted provisional licences, with the AFL to work with them to ensure their involvement in an expanded competition at the earliest possible opportunity.

Marquee players

A key step in establishing club lists was the signing of two marquee players per team who would help be the face of NAB AFL Women's.

Not only was the appointment of marquee players necessary to aid clubs in establishing a women's brand, but also to ensure the country's best talent was spread evenly across the eight teams.

The 16 players were the first women to be listed by AFL clubs, with eight West Australians, seven Victorians and one Queenslander among the marquee signings.

- Adelaide Crows:** Kellie Gibson, Chelsea Randall
- Brisbane Lions:** Sabrina Frederick-Traub, Tayla Harris
- Carlton:** Brianna Davey, Darcy Vescio
- Collingwood:** Moana Hope, Emma King
- Fremantle:** Kiara Bowers, Kara Donnellan
- GWS Giants:** Renee Forth, Emma Swanson
- Melbourne:** Melissa Hickey, Daisy Pearce
- Western Bulldogs:** Ellie Blackburn, Katie Brennan

The establishment of a national AFL Women's competition will provide a platform to inspire young girls to reach for the stars

Agreeing to terms

Following the finalisation of each club list, the AFL and AFLPA reached an agreement on the remuneration and benefits package NAB AFL Women's players will receive in the 2017 and 2018 seasons.

In 2017, marquee players will receive a financial package of \$27,000 (inclusive of \$10,000 for their marketing and ambassadorial role), the priority players \$12,000 and the remaining listed players \$8500 for the seven-match (plus Grand Final) season.

The packages will increase to \$27,946, \$12,846 and \$9276 respectively in 2018.

In addition to the package, the NAB AFL Women's players will receive:

- ▶ Football boots and runners;
- ▶ Travel allowance when playing interstate;
- ▶ Income protection insurance;
- ▶ Coverage for out-of-pocket medical expenses for the 52 weeks post-contract;
- ▶ An allowance to pay for a carer when travelling interstate in cases where a player has a child under 12 months.

The AFL's direct financial commitment to player salaries totals \$2.275 million for the 2017 eight-week season before increasing to \$2.454 million in 2018.

NAB AFL Women's players agreed to be engaged with their club for nine hours per week during the pre-season training block (eight weeks) and nine hours plus match-days during the eight-week season, to help minimise distraction to their current employment and study commitments. They will also complete 20 hours of appearances under this agreement.

▼ AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and NAB Group CEO Andrew Thorburn join players and Auskickers at the announcement of NAB as the naming rights sponsor of the AFLW competition.

NAB sponsorship

NAB's enduring 14-year partnership with the AFL continued in 2016 with NAB becoming the naming right's partner of the AFL Women's competition.

NAB's support of the start-up venture is seen as a crucial step in building a sustainable model that will provide an elite women's competition for the long term.

When announcing the extension to the partnership with the AFL, NAB Group CEO Andrew Thorburn said he was proud to be supporting both men's and women's football.

"At NAB, we value diversity and we believe in equality. I am invested in building a culture that supports women to achieve their goals; women at NAB, our customers and in the community more broadly," he said.

"That's why we are backing the AFL Women's competition. It gives footy fans, especially young girls and boys, inspirational role models to help nurture their passion for the game.

"We don't just sponsor football, we grow it, and we want to make it a better game for all Australians."

It gives footy fans, especially young girls and boys, inspirational role models to help nurture their passion for the game





Cotton On

The AFL announced the Cotton On Group as the official apparel partner and New Era as the official headwear partner for the inaugural NAB AFL Women's competition in November.

The Cotton On Group's partnership with the AFL will be brought to life through its high-performance sportswear category COAR.

Developed in partnership with a working group of AFLW star players, including Daisy Pearce, Lauren Arnell and Aasta O'Connor, the COAR apparel has been created by women for women, with the fit specifically designed to complement the female form and enhance player performance.

Cotton On Group Chief Executive Peter Johnson says the AFL is an elite sporting code but is also a leader in the community and a powerful force for change.

"We are extremely proud and excited to be working with the NAB AFL Women's competition to develop contemporary, innovative, technical apparel for the players and supporters of the new competition," he said.

"At the Cotton On Group, 77 per cent of our 20,000 team members around the globe are women, while a similar percentage of our customers are women and young girls, so the decision to support this competition was a simple one for us."

Internationally renowned sports brand New Era joins the inaugural NAB AFL Women's competition as the official headwear partner in 2017.

New Era is the leader in its field and boasts long-standing partnerships with the major sports leagues around the globe.

▲ AFLW players Rachael Killian, Jasmine Anderson, Nicola Barr, Lauren Arnell and Kate McCarthy pose in their new training apparel at the Cotton On launch in November.



W logo

The AFL unveiled a bold new logo to celebrate female players and the excitement they will create on and off the field.

The creation of the AFL 'W' was designed to help fans see and experience the game from a new perspective.

Developed in consultation with the AFL Women's Advisory Group, the 'W' logo pays tribute to the heritage of the AFL logo as well as integrating the four iconic goalposts and goalsquare in a contemporary design that is energetic, with a youthful and more inclusive colour palette.

The official logo and name were launched across Instagram in September. As part of this launch, eight profile videos were created and eight marquee players were able to meet and learn from the Global Chief Operating Officer of Instagram, Marine Levine, in a special event.

The creation of the AFL 'W' was designed to help fans see and experience the game from a new perspective

Rules

The AFL Commission approved key rule changes for the inaugural 2017 NAB AFL Women's competition.

These rules include:

- ▶ 16-a-side with six players on the bench;
- ▶ Size 4 footballs;
- ▶ 15-minute quarters plus time-on after goals or major injuries.

All other rules will be in line with the laws of Australian Football with consideration still to be given to the application of an interchange cap following further consultation with clubs and coaches.

2016 Exhibition Series

The Women's Exhibition Game series was expanded in 2016 to provide more opportunities to a wider talent pool in preparation for the 2017 NAB AFL Women's competition.

Most matches were played as double-headers to AFL games with three matches being broadcast.

▼ Premiership cup ambassador Susan Alberti with club captains (from left) Daisy Pearce, Kara Donnellan, Lauren Arnell, Chelsea Randall, Emma Zielke, Stephanie Chiocci, Amanda Farrugia and Katie Brennan at the NAB AFLW competition launch.

Date	Game	Venue
March 6	Melbourne 3.3 (21) def. by Western Bulldogs 6.5 (41)	Craigieburn
April 2	SA Blue 5.4 (34) def. SA Red 5.2 (32)	Adelaide Oval
April 9	West Coast Eagles 13.10 (88) def. Fremantle 3.5 (23)	Domain Stadium
April 9	Sydney 9.8 (62) def. Greater Western Sydney 5.3 (33)	SCG
April 10	Northern Territory 13.11 (89) def. Tasmania 7.11 (53)	Peanut Reserve, St Kilda
April 16	Brisbane Lions 5.8 (38) def. Gold Coast Suns 3.6 (24)	Gabba
May 22	Melbourne 14.7 (91) def. Brisbane Lions 3.2 (20)	MCG
June 5	South Australia 4.3 (27) def. NSW/ACT 3.7 (25)	Adelaide Oval
June 5	Western Bulldogs 8.5 (53) def. Western Australia 5.10 (40)	Etihad Stadium
Sept 3	Western Bulldogs 14.7 (90) def. Melbourne 7.9 (51)	Victoria University Whitten Oval





Victoria overpowered Western Australia in the Division 1 Grand Final of the 2016 AFL Youth Girls Championships at the MCG.

Game Development

Talent search

In an attempt to attract athletes who were not playing football, a female talent search campaign was held throughout Australia in early 2016.

More than 400 women and girls went through traditional AFL combine tests in all capital cities, led by high-profile women's players Daisy Pearce and Aasta O'Connor.

Athletes were subject to the following tests – standing and running vertical jumps, agility, 20m sprint and the shuttle run (beep test).

Participants then had an opportunity to demonstrate their skills, including kicking, marking and handballing as well as a game play component that tested their decision-making, spatial awareness and appetite to compete.

Such was the success of the talent search campaign, 10 players found their way on to AFLW lists while more than 100 joined State Academy programs across the country.

Youth Girls National Championships

A key driver in the growth of women's football has been the talent programs created at Youth Girls level, which culminates in the AFL Youth Girls Championships each year.

The 2016 championships took place in Melbourne, with nine teams competing, including the all-indigenous Woomearas team, playing across two divisions.

NSW/ACT won the Division 2 title after defeating South Australia, while Victoria overpowered Western Australia in the Division 1 grand final, which was played as a curtain-raiser to Hawthorn v Richmond at the MCG.

2016 Youth Girls National Championships award winners

Pool A

Championships fairest and best: Courtney Hodder (WA)

NAB leading goalscorer: Brooke Struylaart (Vic Metro – 13 goals)

All-Australian field umpire: Jack Spencer (Vic)

All-Australian boundary umpire: Kyle Hoystead (Qld)

All-Australian goal umpire: Liam McDonald (SA)

NAB MVP Qld: Ruby Blair

NAB MVP Vic Country: Isabella Ayre

NAB MVP Vic Metro: Jordyn Allen

Pool B

Championships fairest and best: Allyce Parker (NSW/ACT)

NAB leading goalscorer: Kate Stanton (NSW/ACT – 12 goals)

NAB MVP NT: Allana Coombes

NAB MVP NSW/ACT: Kate Stanton

NAB MVP SA: Anna Hatchard

NAB MVP Woomearas: Felicia Swan (WA)



PHOTO: JULIE COOPER, UN COUGARS

AFGHAN REFUGEE FINDS PASSION IN AFL

► Ten-year-old Afghan refugee Zimra Hussain is tearing up football fields across south-east Queensland, her hijab flying in the wind.

Zimra and her family are part of the Hazara, a group heavily persecuted in Afghanistan by the Taliban.

They arrived in Australia in 2014.

She played her first game of football less than a year ago, as a new resident of Toowoomba on the state's Darling Downs.

Now she is a self-confessed footy fanatic, breaking down cultural barriers and misconceptions.

"It's my passion – it's an Australian game and I want to be part of Australia," she said.

"They thought it was a little bit weird, me playing in a hijab.

"I said it's part of my culture and they were like, 'are you hot in it?'

"And it was like, 'no, I'm not', so they're used to it now."

She is known as the 'Afghani Axe' and is one of dozens of refugee children in Toowoomba who have been drafted into an Aussie Rules program to help their integration into the community.

Looking for community connection, Church pastor Ross Savill started the initiative after he noticed hundreds of new arrivals struggling to integrate.

"I think a lot of these kids and families were just looking for something where they could connect with the broader community," he said.

"I think it's broken down barriers both ways.

"If you take Zimra for example, people watch this little girl run on to the field with a hijab on and they watch her play

and enjoy the game, and they get to know her and her family.

"I think all sorts of things happen when we get to know people as people, not as labels or as what we think they are."

The program has had remarkable success and is now formally supported and encouraged by the AFL.

AFL regional manager Keith Webb saw more advantages for the progression of the game.

"We've got a lot of these refugee kids coming through that are naturally built for the game," he said.

"They're tall, athletic, move well.

"We've got quite a few of the boys and girls that are taking the next step through our representative pathways, getting identified by talent spotters, really trailblazing in that side of the game."

Although still young, Zimra has been picked for representative duties and the AFL predicts a long and successful future.

"She's obviously very talented, she's someone who just lives and breathes the game," Webb said.

For the young girl, it is a future Zimra never could have dreamed of, though her sights are now firmly set.

"I want to play in my future and I want to be professional," she said.

"My favourite team is the Adelaide Crows – I like them because of Eddie Betts.

"He's like a magician and my hero. I want to be just like him.

"I just have to keep working hard – and I will."

ALLYSON HORN
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GAME & MARKET DEVELOPMENT



SIMON LETHLEAN
GENERAL MANAGER



The number of people playing Australian Football increased to record levels in 2016, with total participation growing by 12.5 per cent, reaching 1,404,176.

Positive growth across every State and Territory saw participation grow nationally, up from 1,247,575 in 2015.

An additional 2,348,872 people were engaged through school or community-based clinics and promotions, while total international participation reached 132,890.

Women's and youth girls football was again a standout for growth in 2016, with 354 new community club teams taking to the field, increasing the total number of female-only community club teams to 983.

Women and girls represent 27 per cent of total football participation across all competitions and programs.

The number of males playing our game also rose in 2016, as did total community football participation (up 7.3 per cent).

The growth resulted in a five per cent increase in the total number of football teams across all competitions.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the Australian Sports Commission and NAB for their support and, of course, our tireless volunteers who devote their time to growing and developing our game at all levels.

► Ten-year-old Zimra Hussain is one of dozens of refugee children in Toowoomba using Australian Football to help their integration into the community. See story previous page. Photo: Julie Cooper, Uni Cougars



NAB AFL Auskick

The NAB AFL Auskick program continued to introduce Australian Football to our youngest participants and their families in 2016. A total of 195,719 children participated in the program at 3541 centres around the country, representing growth of seven per cent from 2015.

In addition, more than 23,500 NAB AFL Auskick participants had the opportunity to play at an official AFL venue on game-day as part of the half-time program.

The value of NAB AFL Auskick is in the sequentially developed coaching and match program that allows boys and girls to learn about the game in a fun and safe family environment. The AFL is thankful to our many volunteers and community members who coordinate their local centres each week throughout the season. It is through their passion and commitment that NAB AFL Auskick continues to thrive.

Each year the AFL, our program partner NAB and State/Territory football bodies recognise the outstanding accomplishments and contribution of coordinators who have excelled in their role through special recognition awards.

During the first weekend of the Toyota AFL Finals Series, nine remarkable NAB AFL Auskick volunteers – Richard and Alison Fyffe, Launceston, Tasmania; Kylie Rix and Steve Gardiner, Emu Plains/Glenmore Park JAFC, NSW/ACT; Gayle Munkley, Sandgate Hawks JAFC, Queensland; Lee Waters, Brighton Primary School, South Australia; Michelle Whitehead, Melton, Victoria; Sam Typuszak, Our Lady Sacred Heart, Alice Springs, Northern Territory; Russel Granland, Whitford JFC, Western Australia – were rewarded by the AFL and NAB with a trip to Melbourne.

Our 22 NAB AFL Auskicker of the Year nominees also took centre stage during Grand Final week. The nominees attended a dinner at the MCG, walked in the parade, played on the MCG at half-time and presented the premiership medallions.

The AFL would like to thank all the centre coordinators, coaches, volunteers, participants and families who make the program what it is, and also acknowledge our program partner the National Australia Bank for the tremendous support it provides. Through support of the NAB AFL Auskick program, NAB continues to Footify Australia – genuinely growing the game at a grassroots level and supporting tomorrow's stars.

▲ With more than 195,000 participants, the NAB AFL Auskick program continues to grow the game at grassroots level and support the stars of tomorrow.

Schools

School football remains a critical component of our participation strategy, with the aim of providing opportunities for primary and secondary school students across Australia to play Australian Football.

The continued growth in participation has been due to a number of initiatives, programs and resources designed specifically to improve our presence in the classroom and the school physical education/sport program. A total of 806,363 students participated in either interschool competitions or school-based programs, an overall increase of 14.2 per cent.

Inter-School Primary and Secondary School Competitions (Male & Female)

In 2016, there were 270,337 students competing in inter-school football competitions – on the following page are a selection of winners of various school football competitions.

Other Highlights

- ▶ Intra-school AFL programs continued to grow, with 536,026 students participating.
- ▶ More than 25,000 children were introduced to Australian Football through the AFL Sporting Schools Program, an initiative established and funded by the Australian Sports Commission to help engage primary school-aged children in sporting activities.
- ▶ The Woolworths AFL School Ambassador program provided training and offered the necessary support for teachers who strongly promote Australian Football. Fifteen teachers, among the 5500 who were involved in the program, were named 2016 Woolworths AFL School Ambassadors of the Year for their outstanding service to the game.
- ▶ More than 2000 teachers attended specific AFL Professional Development or information sessions and seminars, with the AFL assisting in covering the teacher relief costs for those who attended.
- ▶ The Woolworths AFL Schools Grants Scheme provided schools with the opportunity to apply for subsidies to buy major capital items such as permanent goalposts, goalpost padding, playing guernseys and sports kits. In 2016, financial assistance saw:
 - ▶ 35 schools buy permanent goalposts;
 - ▶ 35 schools buy sets of goalpost padding;
 - ▶ 70 schools buy match jumpers sets;
 - ▶ 45 schools buy AFL 9s kits.

INTER-SCHOOL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

Competition	School	State
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Shield Boys Div 1	St Joseph's College, Geelong	VIC
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Shield Boys Div 2	Aquinas College	VIC
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Girls Competition Div 1	Ballarat Grammar	VIC
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Girls Competition Div 2	Sacred Heart, Geelong	VIC
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Country Cup	Central Vic/AFL Goldfields – Ballarat High AFL Gippsland – Catholic College Sale AFL Goulburn Murray & North East Border – St Mary's of the Angels, Nathalia Northern Victoria – McKillop College, Swan Hill Western District – Monivae College	VIC
AFLVIC <i>Herald Sun</i> Country Shield	Ballarat Clarendon College	VIC
All-Abilities State Final	Southern Special Schools Sports Association	VIC
Mt Franklin Cup	Tiwi College	NT
Pink Power Cup	Wulagi Primary School	NT
Primary School Challenge – Darwin	Nightcliff Primary School	NT
Primary School Competition – Palmerston	Bakewell Primary School	NT
Alice Springs Secondary Schools Youth Competition	St Phillip's College	NT
Schoolboys REDIMED Cup – Cable Division	Darling Range Sports College	WA
Schoolboys REDIMED Cup – Jakovich Division	La Salle College	WA
Eagles Schoolboys Cup	Comet Bay College	WA
Freo Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – Moore Division	Kolbe Catholic College	WA
Freo Dockers Schoolgirls Cup – White Division	Darling Range Sports Centre	WA
PSA – Alcock Cup	Hale School/Scotch College	WA
SASFA Premiers Cup	Flagstaff Hill Primary School	SA
SAAS Messenger Shield	Sacred Heart College	SA
Statewide Open Boys A Schools Knockout Cup	Sacred Heart College	SA
Open Girls Knockout Competition	Tenison Woods College	SA
AFL Queensland Schools Cup	Ambrose Treacy College (Primary Male State Champions) Morayfield East State School (Primary Female State Champions) Helensvale State High School (Junior Male State Champions) Miami High School (Junior Female State Champions) Palm Beach Currumbin State High School (Senior Male State Champions) Mountain Creek State High School (Senior Female State Champions)	QLD
Paul Kelly Cup – Boys	Trinity Anglican College, Thurgoona	NSW/ACT
Paul Kelly Cup – Girls	Lavington East Public School	NSW/ACT
Open Boys – State Cup	Mater Dei, Wagga Wagga	NSW/ACT
Open Girls – State Cup	Billabong High School, Culcairn	NSW/ACT
Open Independent Schools Competition	St Ignatius College, Riverview	NSW/ACT
Southern High Schools and Tassie Hawks Cup	St Virgil's College	TAS
NWJFU North West Tasmania	Latrobe High School	TAS
NHSSA Northern Tasmania competition	Kings Meadow High School	TAS

Total Participation

1,404,176

+12.6%

Growth

2m+

Promotional experiences delivered in communities and schools

751k

Participated in programs

653k

Participated in competitions

132,890

Participated in programs and competitions outside Australia

NAB AFL Auskick

195,719

Participants

3541

Auskick centres

+7%

Growth in participants

Club Football

360,648

Participants

14,772

Teams

230

Community leagues

2680

Clubs

+7.3%

Growth in participants

School Football

270,337

Participants In School Competitions

536,026

Participants In School-Based Programs

+14.2%

Total School Growth

Diversity & Inclusion

68,163

Indigenous participants

117,982

Multicultural participants

Coaches & Umpires

30,908

Accredited coaches

14,228

Accredited umpires

Social Football

22,004

Participants In AFL 9s competitions

380,041

Female program and competition participants

27%

of all participation

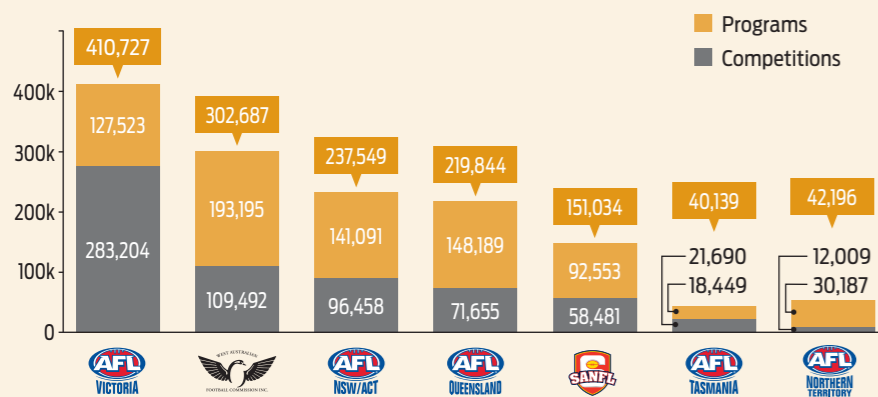
983

Dedicated female football teams

+56%

Growth in teams

Participation By State & Territory



Coaching Development

The AFL Census shows that about 31,000 active coaches were delivering football programs to participants in all segments of the game in 2016.

Accreditation Courses

Strong attendance at AFL coach accreditation courses continues to ensure there is an adequate supply of accredited coaches to meet needs and support growth of the game.

More than 7500 coaches participated in courses in 2016 – 7160 at Level 1, 368 at Level 2 and 50 at Level 3. There are 13 coaches in the two-year Level 4 program. There were 1521 coaches who were reaccruited.

Since 2001, the AFL, in partnership with the AFL Players Association, has been conducting a specific Level 2 coaching course for experienced and recently retired players who are interested in coaching. A number of courses were also conducted in AFL clubs during 2016 and an increasing number of AFL players are also participating in the State-run Level 2 courses.

The AFL/AFLPA course attracted 41 participants, with the following AFL clubs also hosting courses – Essendon (nine participants), Melbourne (20 participants) and North Melbourne (24 participants).

An exceptionally well-qualified group of applicants resulted in two AFL High Performance Coaching Courses being conducted in Melbourne in October (26 participants) and December (24 participants). The second segment of these courses was planned for January 2017.

The AFL Level 4 Senior Coach Course continued with four new participants starting the course in 2016. The first group of Level 4 coaches graduated from the two-year program in December 2016. Two coaches from the Level 4 program are now AFL senior coaches – Simon Goodwin (Melbourne) and Brendon Bolton (Carlton).

▲ Carlton's Brendon Bolton is one of two graduates of the Level 4 Senior Coach Program to advance to senior AFL coaching ranks.

AFL Online Coaching Courses

The AFL Online Junior (2300 participants) and AFL Online Youth and Senior (2600 participants) Coaching Courses continued to be in high demand.

International Courses

AFL International affiliates continued to be active in coach development in 2016, with Level 1 courses in Europe, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the US.

Related Courses

Club Coaching Coordinator and Talent Identification Courses were conducted in various States during the year.

AFL National Coaching Conference

The 2016 AFL National Coaching Conference (14th edition) was conducted at Domain Stadium, Perth, from February 5-7, with West Coast Eagles coach Adam Simpson delivering the keynote address.

More than 400 coaches attended the conference, completing a wide-ranging number of workshops and education sessions.

The 2017 conference will be conducted at the MCG, Melbourne, in February 2017.

The AFL Census shows that about 31,000 active coaches were delivering programs to participants in all segments of the game in 2016

AFL Diversity Coaching Academy

An AFL Diversity Coaching Academy was conducted during the AFL National Diversity Championships in Townsville in April (male) and Shepparton in September (female).

This included daily coach education sessions and ongoing coach mentoring throughout the championships from experienced mentor coaches including Brian Royal and Ron Watt (AFLCA).

The program continued at the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships for the coaches of the Flying Boomerangs and the World Team.

AFL Female Coaching Forum

Coaches of female football from around Australia gathered at the MCG on November 13 for the inaugural AFL Female Coaching Forum. The forum was opened by AFL Commissioner, Major General Simone Wilkie AO, and was supported by a group of experienced keynote presenters who have been pioneers of coaching females in football and other fields, including Fremantle Dockers women's senior coach Michelle Cowan, St Kilda development coach Peta Searle and Netball Australia's wellbeing manager Angie Bain.

Coaching Support, Resources and AFL Community Website

Ongoing post accreditation support for accredited coaches is provided through the coaching section of the AFL Community Website. New articles and practice activities are regularly published and promoted through the regular AFL community newsletters sent to more than 80,000 recipients. A major focus of resource development and distribution during 2016 was on injury-prevention programs, including concussion management.

AFL Coaching Ambassadors

AFL Coaching Ambassadors and course mentors Stan Alves and David Parkin continued in their long-term roles in AFL coaching and development projects throughout the year. This included invaluable roles mentoring coaches and particularly as facilitators and mentors at the AFL High Performance Course. Coaching consultants Neil Barras, Brendan Mason and David Wheadon also regularly assisted in coaching development programs around Australia.

Coach Recognition Awards

Coach award functions were conducted by AFL State affiliates to recognise coaches and their passion and commitment to their players, clubs and the game at all levels.

► AFL 9s is the ideal way to introduce new participants to the game or re-engage lapsed participants.

AFL Coaches Association – Appearances Program

The partnership between the AFL and the AFL Coaches Association continued in 2016, with association members conducting about 1000 appearances to help grow the game.

The AFL and the AFLCA cooperate and work closely on a range of coaching development and other issues of mutual interest. The AFL greatly appreciates the efforts of the association, its staff including CEO Mark Brayshaw and operational staff Greg Hutchison, Ron Watt and Melissa Murphy and its individual coach members for their ongoing support of AFL coach development programs and initiatives.

Social Football Programs

McDonald's AFL 9s

It was the fifth season of the McDonald's AFL 9s format, a social, non-contact, modified version of the game which is an ideal way to introduce new participants and re-engage lapsed participants.

With the support of State affiliates, more than 22,000 people participated in competitions across Australia.

Partnering with McDonald's as the official sponsor provided great support for AFL9s and helped raise awareness for the format. The game was showcased to more than 800,000 people at half-time of one match each round throughout the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Events in 2016 included the inaugural AFL9s Classic in Sydney along with the annual Byron Bay Carnival, the Domain Stadium Tournament in Perth and other corporate and community carnival events across the country.



AFL Active

AFL Active is a group-training program that is broken into four quarters of physical activity where participants train for some of the physical attributes required to play AFL. However, the activities do not require any kicking, marking or handballing.

In 2016, the AFL and AFL Victoria partnered with VicHealth's Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport initiative to use the AFL Active Program to create new opportunities for female participation in physical activity across Victoria.

An additional 78 trainers were accredited in 2016, resulting in a total of 114 across the state.

The AFL and AFLCA cooperate and work closely on a range of coaching development and other issues of mutual interest





Supporting Community and Second Tier Football



AFL National Inclusion Carnival

The AFL's National Inclusion Carnival brought together representative teams of footballers with intellectual disabilities from across the country to participate in a week-long round-robin carnival in August.

The event was hosted by AFL Victoria and supported by the Victorian Government.

This was the third time the national carnival had been staged with Victoria Metro taking out the Peter Ryan Cup for the second year running against South Australia.

Games were played in great spirit, with each team showing wonderful support to each other throughout the carnival. At the end of the carnival, an All-Australian side was selected.

AFL Community Club Improvement Program

The AFL Club Improvement Program was introduced in 2015 to assist community clubs to audit their off-field operations and identify areas for improvement, including strategic planning, culture, volunteer management, connection to community, communication, finance, governance, policy, risk management, commercial fundraising/sponsorship, facilities and event delivery.

The program is based on the Australian Sports Commission's Club Health Check and assists clubs in the formulation of an action plan to improve key areas by linking to support resources.

In 2016:

- ▶ 743 clubs used the online assessment (640 complete);
- ▶ 21 clubs demonstrated outstanding club administration and achieved gold quality club accreditation;
- ▶ 125 clubs demonstrated good club administration and received quality club accreditation;
- ▶ The remaining clubs now have the opportunity to work with their local Region/Development Manager to achieve the minimum quality club status.

Some 421 community clubs are accredited as quality clubs and a further 32 are gold quality clubs.

AFL Community website

With more than 1.3 million page views in 2016, the AFL Community website (aflcommunity.com.au) continues to provide up-to-date information, training and advice for 70,000 coaches, umpires, players, club administrators and schools.

◀ The Bulldogs were a big hit with pupils from Pleasant Street Primary School during their Community Camp clinic at Ballarat's City Oval.

The AFL Community website provides:

- ▶ Distribution of fortnightly editions of the AFL Community Development Newsletter;
- ▶ Online learning courses for coaches, umpires and club administrators;
- ▶ Teachers with access to an array of innovative resources via the AFL Learning Management System (LMS) that they can use to enhance education outcomes and help engage students in unique and meaningful ways;
- ▶ A locator system for new players, umpires and volunteers to find a club or umpiring group.

Australia Post AFL Community Camps

The Australia Post AFL Community Camps saw more than 750 AFL players take the game to metropolitan, regional and rural communities across Australia.

AFL players carried out training sessions and visited schools, local football clubs, nursing homes and hospitals, as well as supporting fundraising events to connect individuals and communities and, importantly, ensure Australia's game and its players are accessible to fans around the nation.

Key outcomes from the 2016 Australia Post AFL Community Camps included:

- ▶ 823 primary and secondary schools visited;
- ▶ 147,102 school students visited;
- ▶ 4913 students visited at junior clubs;
- ▶ 4136 superclinic participants;
- ▶ 2600 people visited in aged care/hospitals;
- ▶ \$66,070 raised during local community functions.

FOOTY IS FOR EVERYONE

▶ In 2016, the AFL was thrilled to enter into a landmark partnership with Deakin University, through a donation by Moose Toys, to provide great opportunities for people with a disability to engage with our game.

The AFL is determined to lead the way when it comes to inclusion, ensuring our game is accessible to everyone regardless of their race, religion or background. Importantly it should cater for people of all abilities regardless of the challenges they face, whether they be physical or intellectual.

Through the partnership with Deakin University, the AFL will work to improve the opportunities for children with developmental challenges to engage with sport through NAB AFL Auskick.

The ALLPlay project will help better understand the benefits of specifically designed programs and resources that cater for children with a disability and

provide research on the role sport can play in the lives of those youngsters with a disability.

A key part of the project was the appointment of a full-time AFL resource whose focus is on improving existing football offerings for children with a disability and liaising with Deakin University to make sure the creation of new resources reflect the research outcomes.

In 2016, the AFL also entered into a partnership with Disability Sport Australia to help develop the sport of Wheelchair Australian Football.

Importantly, the sport also allows people with a disability to compete alongside their able-bodied friends, ensuring it is truly a game for everyone.

The partnership will see Disability Sport Australia and the AFL work together to expand and promote the game.

In 2016, 534,000 participants self-registered online via the National Registration System, an increase from 384,000 in 2015

Volunteers

In 2016, the AFL introduced a Volunteers Round as part of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season in May to coincide with the National Volunteers Week.

Free tickets to games in Victoria were offered to CFA volunteers and various other online and offline activations were implemented.

In September throughout Toyota AFL Grand Final week, seven State/Territory Volunteer of the Year award winners and a National Multicultural Ambassador of the year and their partners/guests were flown to Melbourne to enjoy various Grand Final festivities. Highlights from this initiative included:

- ▶ Attending the 2016 Toyota AFL Grand Final;
- ▶ Walking in the Grand Final Parade;
- ▶ Being recognised by Victoria Governor Linda Dessau AM at an official Volunteers Thank You Breakfast.

▼ The AFL Community Club Improvement Program assists clubs to improve their off-field operations, including volunteer management.

Footyweb

The AFL's Footyweb system continues to provide a high-quality service for competition management, data repository and a network of community league and club websites.

In 2016, the AFL introduced the new Matchday Paperwork App and Schedules products for community leagues. We had 17 community leagues implement the Matchday Paperwork App and 35 community leagues implement Schedules, with uptake across both products expected to increase significantly over the coming seasons.

A National Registration System was introduced for participants in 2014 and the past 12 months saw continued uptake and growth. In 2016, 534,000 participants self-registered online via the National Registration System, an increase from 384,000 in 2015.

2016 key stats:

- ▶ 613,606 registered participants (534,000 self-registered online);
- ▶ 131,000 online payments processed;
- ▶ 112,975 online transfers and permits processed;
- ▶ \$24.5 million processed through the payment gateway.



North East Australian Football League

The North East Australian Football League (NEAFL) continued to grow as an elite second-tier competition across the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland. The competition was contested between 10 teams, comprising six state league clubs and four AFL clubs.

Key features/highlights of 2016 were:

- ▶ 18 players drafted, including four mature-aged;
- ▶ 46 former NEAFL players on AFL club lists;
- ▶ 23 ex-NEAFL umpires with AFL contracts;
- ▶ Continued popularity of NEAFL App (featuring live Champion Data stats) with more than 11,000 downloads;
- ▶ Social media followers across all platforms grew to 20,000;
- ▶ A total of 55 matches were live streamed with an average 1375 views a game;
- ▶ One match each round was replayed on NITV on Tuesday evenings;
- ▶ Matthew Payne won the MVP award for the second time;
- ▶ A total of 99 home and away matches, plus five finals, including 23 matches as curtain-raisers to AFL games and three regional games.

The season culminated in another exciting finals series. The Grand Final was contested between the GWS Giants and Sydney Swans in front of a strong crowd at Blacktown International Sports Park. In a tight match, the Giants won by four points – this is the third successive season where the Grand Final has been decided by under one goal.

▲ The GWS Giants stood tall in the NEAFL Grand Final, downing the Sydney Swans by four points in a thriller.
PHOTO: MATT CORBY, NEAFL

Facilities

Season 2016 marked the end of the second five-year period for the AFL's Facility Development Reserve.

- ▶ During the past five years, the AFL made contributions to community facilities of \$16.5 million and this helped more than 350 clubs from all areas of Australia.
- ▶ Project values for the five-year period were \$247 million and for 2016 the values were almost \$100 million, which represents a great investment in our game for community clubs.
- ▶ The AFL and all States/Territories worked to have State facility plans consistent with the national plan submitted to the AFL Commission for its support in funding allocations for the next six years in line with the AFL funding cycle.
- ▶ The AFL moved in partnership with Inside Edge Sports Consultants and the states to have an online facility audit system which will provide up-to-date information on all our 3000-plus locations to aid in the planning of our future needs. This facility audit system is complimented by a participant mapping service to help all regional staff engage with councils and other partners.
- ▶ The AFL continues to explore the best use of synthetic surfaces for our game and together with our licensed manufacturers to continue to develop the best products. In 2016, Carlisle Park in Cranbourne and Mill Park Lakes Recreation Reserve had full synthetic ovals installed. Several other ovals are being planned in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Research is being undertaken at the venues by Federation University to consider the player response to the surfaces.
- ▶ The AFL continues to manage the preferred standard of amenities for our game and provide that information to clubs and especially council as plans are made for future developments. This has especially applied to the need to plan for suitable female amenities at our venues.



Community Engagement — Indigenous

The AFL Indigenous Programs continue to deliver talent from all across Australia, giving young Indigenous people the chance to shine on the national stage.

Thirteen of the 21 Indigenous players selected in the 2016 NAB AFL Draft period were involved in AFL programs, while eight graduates of the Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs were selected by AFL clubs in the 2016 NAB AFL Draft.

Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round and Dreamtime at the 'G

The AFL launched the 2016 Toyota AFL Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round in Sydney, celebrating the first time the AFL had renamed a round in honour of an individual.

Sir Doug Nicholls was born on Cumeragunja mission in New South Wales in 1906; he played football for Fitzroy before becoming a pastor and pioneer for reconciliation in Australia. He then went on to become the first Indigenous person to be knighted and hold the position of Governor of South Australia.

The AFL and AFL clubs continued their partnership with Recognise to promote the campaign to recognise Indigenous Australians in the Constitution. The focal point of the round was again the Dreamtime at the 'G game between Essendon and Richmond.

▲ Rio Tinto CEO Andrew Harding and AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan with participants of the Rio Tinto Footy Means Business program, which assists young Indigenous men in employment and football development.

National KickStart Championships

The National KickStart Championships were held in Townsville in April with more than 150 under-15 Indigenous players representing their State or Territory in a five-day football carnival.

Each team selected the best 25 Indigenous players from their State camps based on football ability, leadership qualities, school attendance and community involvement.

Players also participated in off-field engagement and educational sessions focused on topics such as identity, pathway to excellence and reaching individual and team goals.

The KickStart Championships are also the pathway to the Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs.

Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs Leadership Program

At the end of the annual AFL KickStart Championships, 25 Indigenous players were selected to participate in the Flying Boomerangs Leadership Program.

The program is focused on three key objectives: football development, leadership and strengthening cultural identity.

It provides exposure and tools to fast-track players' development and transition into the mainstream talent pathway.

The Boomerangs participated in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, competing against the World Team in a two-game series.

The squad came together in November for a high-performance training, cultural and leadership camp in China where they visited landmarks such as the Great Wall of China and Tiananmen Square and had the opportunity to train with AFL club Port Adelaide.

Rio Tinto Footy Means Business

Each year, in partnership with Rio Tinto, the AFL selects 50 young Indigenous men aged 18-24 from all over Australia to participate in an employment and football development program. The squad came together in Darwin in March and in Melbourne in May to coincide with Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round.

During the program, participants were exposed to the routine of a professional AFL player, including high-performance testing, training and conditioning. The young men are also introduced to potential career opportunities with Rio Tinto and other AFL corporate partners. Rio Tinto was announced as the principal partner to all Indigenous programs for the next four years.

National Female KickStart

The National Female KickStart Championships engaged more than 100 Indigenous females aged 14-16 from across the country.

The championships, held in Shepparton, included education sessions on topics such as pathway to excellence and identity. Twenty-five of the best-performing participants will represent the Woomeras team in the NAB AFLW Under-18 National Championships in May 2017.

▼ The Flying Boomerangs took to the field against a World team in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships on the Gold Coast.

Woomeras

The AFL Woomeras Program is a national female Indigenous development program. The program symbolises strength and power – launching the girls into their futures using football to engage and empower. The Woomeras competed for the third time in the 2016 Youth Girls National Championships and participated in a leadership camp in Melbourne. The Woomeras program enables participants to be in an environment where they can work on their football skills, personal development and leadership.

Indigenous Coaching Academy

The AFL, in conjunction with the AFL Coaches Association, developed an Indigenous Coaching Academy in 2014 to fast-track and further develop Indigenous coaches in the AFL system. In 2016, the Academy featured 15 Indigenous coaches who were engaged in education sessions delivered by the AFLCA and Brian Royal at the Diversity Championships and the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships respectively. Participants completed Level 2 Coaching Accreditation and spent a week at an AFL club.



Community Engagement — Multicultural

Multicultural Round

The 2016 Toyota AFL Multicultural Round was held during round 16 of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season to acknowledge and celebrate our game's cultural diversity.

The theme 'Many Cultures, One Game' highlighted the community engagement initiatives being undertaken by the Australian Football industry and acknowledged the increasing number of players from culturally diverse backgrounds who make up AFL player lists. The feature of the round included the first Multicultural Festival in Western Sydney, bilingual ground markings, in-language broadcasting and translated Sherrin match footballs.

Australia Post Multicultural Schools Program

The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program continued to grow in 2016, with 211 schools and more than 20,000 students engaged nationally.

More than 12,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse community backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time.

Australia Post AFL Multicultural Player Ambassadors

The AFL and Australia Post Multicultural Ambassadors are part of the Australia Post Community Inclusion Partnership. The 2016 Ambassadors included Nic Naitanui, Bachar Houli, Adam Saad, Tom Nicholls, David Zaharakis, Paul Puopolo, Alipate Carlile, Stephen Coniglio, Lin Jong, Jason Johannisen, Tom Hawkins, Aliir Aliir, Jimmy Toumpas, Tendai Mzungu and Dayne Zorko. Darcy Vescio and Sabrina Frederick-Traub became the first AFL Women's players represented as Australia Post AFL Multicultural Player Ambassadors.

The ambassadors work with multicultural communities, schools, community football clubs, government and multicultural organisations on specific multicultural projects and support the AFL's multicultural strategy.



▲ The 2016 AFL Multicultural Round saw commentators broadcast matches in seven different community languages.

► With more than 200 schools and 20,000 students participating, the Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program continues to grow.

Australia Post AFL Multicultural Community Ambassadors

The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador Program reached a record high in 2016, with more than 260 community leaders from a range of cultural backgrounds joining the program.

The program aims to connect AFL representatives with their particular communities and promote AFL as a vehicle for engagement and inclusion.

The program also provides community leaders with an official platform to become involved in the introduction and coordination of AFL-related activities in their communities, as well as opportunities for professional development.

Australia Post All Nations Cup

In 2016, six multicultural teams representing all States and Territories competed in the All Nations Cup held in Townsville. To be eligible for the All Nations Cup squad, players must have been born overseas and come from a non-English speaking background. The best-performing multicultural players from across all teams were selected for the World Team that participated in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, competing against the Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs in a two-game series.

Australia Post Female All Nations Cup

The National Female All Nations Championships engaged more than 100 multicultural females aged 14-16 from across the country.

The championships, held in Shepparton, included education sessions on topics such as pathway to excellence and identity. Twenty-five of the best-performing participants will represent the first Medleys team in the NAB AFLW Under-18 National Championships in May 2017. The Medleys program is a pathway to the mainstream talent Academy and AFL Women's competition.



More than 12,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse community backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time



Bachar Houli Program

Developed by the Australia Post AFL Multicultural Program and Richmond player Bachar Houli, the program provides Islamic-based schools and students with an opportunity to play Australian Football. The program is supported by the Federal Government and comprises the following:

- ▶ Bachar Houli Cup
 - ▶ The Bachar Houli Cup gives Islamic schools the opportunity to play Australian Football against other schools in a friendly, fun and safe environment.
 - ▶ In 2016, the Bachar Houli Cup was held in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Western Australia, with the aim of encouraging Islamic students to make the transition from school football into community clubs and provides an opportunity to be selected into the Bachar Houli Leadership Academy.

▲ Richmond star Bachar Houli congratulates an Australian International Academy student on his team's Grand Final win in the Bachar Houli Cup at Punt Rd Oval.

- ▶ Bachar Houli Leadership Academy
 - ▶ A high-performance football talent camp for emerging junior players from an Islamic background who are aged 14-17. The Academy aims to fast-track the participants' football development and provides genuine pathways for them to pursue football at an elite level.
 - ▶ In 2016, the five-day camp was held in Melbourne during the Toyota AFL Grand Final Week and involved mentoring from Bachar Houli as well as education and leadership sessions encouraging participants to engage in their local communities and promote cultural and social inclusion. The Bachar Houli Academy hosted seven State trials to select the best 25 participants from around the country.
 - ▶ Muhammad Saad was awarded the Bachar Houli Medal, presented to the academy member who displays leadership on and off the field.

Around The Regions

Western Australia

- ▶ Total participation in Western Australia grew by 34.6 per cent to 302,687 in 2016, highlighted by a 5.2 per cent increase in NAB AFL Auskick.
- ▶ Club football participation grew by 7.7 per cent to more than 67,000, including strong growth in female competitions.
- ▶ Peel Thunder won its maiden WAFL premiership, defeating Subiaco by 23 points at Subiaco Oval.
- ▶ The WAFL State team defeated Tasmania by a record 134 points at Steel Blue Oval in July.
- ▶ WA's under-15 Indigenous Kickstart team finished undefeated National Diversity Champions in Shepparton, Victoria.

South Australia

- ▶ Australian Football participants in South Australia increased by six per cent in 2016 to a total of 151,034. This included an increase in female participation of 13.5 per cent.
- ▶ After a three per cent increase in 2015, NAB AFL Auskick participation numbers increased by 14.5 per cent in 2016 as the overall tally pushed through the 9000 barrier for the first time.
- ▶ The SANFL announced a senior women's competition would run parallel to the AFLW competition in early 2017, with four clubs – Glenelg, Norwood, North Adelaide and West Adelaide – fielding teams.
- ▶ The SANFL established a Female Umpiring Academy to attract and develop females into all three umpiring disciplines. This comes on the back of establishing a Multicultural Umpiring Academy in 2015.

▼ South Australia won its fourth NAB AFL Under-16 championships title in the past seven years.



Victoria

- ▶ Total participation in Victoria grew by seven per cent to reach 410,727. Included in this is a nine per cent increase in club participation.
- ▶ Club football grew by eight per cent, with 1107 clubs fielding 6033 teams across 74 community leagues.
- ▶ Of the 160,294 club footballers, 6439 participants were born overseas, while there are 160 multicultural and Indigenous VFL/TAC Cup players.
- ▶ Female club participants continued to rise, with 100 new teams established, growing at a rate of 41 per cent. There are now 355 dedicated female teams in place.
- ▶ Season 2016 saw Swisse Wellness come on board as the major naming rights partner of the inaugural Swisse VFL Women's competition, which produced 93 players for the 2017 AFLW competition.
- ▶ The Community Club Sustainability Program (CCSP) became a reality with the implementation of the Player Points System (PPS) and later in the year the release of the 2017 Player Payments Framework (PPF).
- ▶ Fifty facilities projects were funded via grants of \$932,000 that will result in more than \$14m of total development.

NSW/ACT

- ▶ Total participation in 2016 grew by 10.4 per cent to 237,549.
- ▶ Female participation grew by 23 per cent to 85,919; five times the number of women who participated in 2010.
- ▶ Participation in NAB AFL Auskick grew by 18.2 per cent. There are now more Auskick participants in NSW/ACT than any other state.
- ▶ AFL 9s participation increased 12.2 per cent in 2016. Sydney was also host to the inaugural McDonald's AFL 9s Classic where more than 100 teams competed for more than \$50,000 in cash prizes in November.
- ▶ There was significant growth in the AFL Independent Schools Competition in Sydney, with 41 teams participating across 13 schools.
- ▶ More than \$9 million of AFL-related facility upgrades started in 2016. These projects ranged from numerous \$20,000-\$30,000 change room upgrades to multi-million dollar ground rebuilds.



▲ Queensland took out the National Female Diversity Championships title in Shepparton, downing Victoria in the Grand Final.

Tasmania

- ▶ The number of Tasmanians playing football reached a record 40,139, highlighted by enormous growth in female club participation.
- ▶ In early 2016, Rob Auld started as AFL Tasmania CEO, with Jackson Hills (TFC State Manager) and Carl Saunder (TSL State Manager) also joining the organisation.
- ▶ The Tasmanian Football Foundation was launched in November, which will see new funding programs created to unite and grow all levels of the game across Tasmania.
- ▶ Four Tasmanians were selected in the inaugural NAB AFL Women's Draft.
- ▶ AFL Tasmania partnered with North Melbourne to establish a Next Generation Academy in Tasmania to grow and develop all levels of the game.
- ▶ AFL Tasmania announced five teams – Burnie, Clarence, Glenorchy, Kingborough Tigers and Launceston – will contest the 2017 Tasmanian Women's Premier League season.

The number of Tasmanians playing football reached a record 40,139, highlighted by enormous growth in female club participation

Queensland

- ▶ Total participation rose seven per cent to 219,844, with a 16.87 per cent increase in competition participants across club, school, and AFL 9s.
- ▶ AFL Queensland celebrated 150 years of Australian Football in Queensland.
- ▶ AFL Queensland delivered \$55 million worth of infrastructure upgrades and secured \$10.6 million in grant funding for clubs.
- ▶ The introduction of the AFLQ Schools Cup saw 419 teams (male and female) competing across divisions.
- ▶ Eight Queenslanders were selected by AFL clubs via the national and rookie drafts.
- ▶ Twenty-two Queenslanders were drafted by the Brisbane Lions women's team with a further Queensland selection by Adelaide.
- ▶ AFL Queensland partnered with MDA and Study Brisbane to offer 10 NAB AFL Auskick casual positions to five refugees and five international students during term four.
- ▶ Queensland hosted the 2016 School Sport Australia Combined AFL Championships (Sunshine Coast), the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships (Gold Coast) and the National Diversity Championships (Townsville).
- ▶ The successful restructure of SEQ male football, with the highlight being a move from geographical-based competitions to a divisional structure featuring promotion and relegation.
- ▶ The successful staging of tournament football for women, with 'Flash Foxy' attracting 200 participants to the Gold Coast. The modified-rule format made the game more accessible to new players, as well as emerging community clubs.

Northern Territory

- ▶ Total participation grew by 10.3 per cent to 42,196, led by female participation which increased by 133 per cent to 13,295.
- ▶ AFL NT and the Adelaide Football Club entered a joint venture to field a team for the AFLW competition. Nine NT State Academy players were drafted to the team for the inaugural year.
- ▶ NT Thunder played NEAFL finals for the third successive year.
- ▶ NT Thunder players were drawn from across the NT, including the remote regions of Lajamanu, Tenant Creek, Katherine and Croker Island. Players with Indigenous heritage made up more than 60 per cent of the team.
- ▶ 2015 NEAFL premiership coach Xavier Clarke was recruited by Richmond as a development coach.
- ▶ 230 students from remote regions participated in the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre one-week education program based on the AFL values.
- ▶ AFL NT remote projects had 10 staff engaged in eight regions across the Northern Territory. AFL NT remote staff worked closely with schools to use football as a vehicle to improve attendance. They have also facilitated community football competitions and carnivals.

International

- ▶ Participation totalled more than 130,000 in programs and competitions, with another 35,000 attending promotional activities.
- ▶ The partnership between the AFL and Port Adelaide FC continues to support the development of the game in China (southern and Shanghai regions).
- ▶ The AFL Asia National Championships were held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in October with a record 520 players (including 70 local players) from 18 teams and for the first time included a women's exhibition match between Vietnam and the Rest of Asia.
- ▶ The 19th annual USAFL Nationals were held in Sarasota, Florida, in October, with 33 men's teams across four divisions and eight women's teams across two divisions.
- ▶ The AFL partnered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Pacific Sports Partnership (PSP) program to increase participation, build capacity, promote health and gender equity outcomes and contribute to Australian public diplomacy objectives in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Nauru, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.
- ▶ The South Pacific was again represented at the Queensland Under-16 State Championships in May.
- ▶ More than 100 South Pacific coaches received Level 1 accreditation throughout the year and the Nauru Stars were champions at the Oceania Cup held in December for under-15 boys.
- ▶ A new legal entity and local board was established in PNG to focus on football development at the junior levels.
- ▶ A modified version of Australian Football (AFL Xpress) played on a rectangular field with fewer players was trialled. VFL clubs the Northern Blues and Coburg took part in the trial at Etihad Stadium.
- ▶ AFL Europe ran a range of events, including the Fitzpatrick Cup (for universities); Champions League (nine-a-side tournament for league premiers from 22 countries); the eighth annual Anzac Cup between Australia and France in Villers-Bretonneux, followed by the dawn service; European Championships (18-a-side international tournament held in London); and EuroCup (nine-a-side international tournament held in Lisbon, Portugal).
- ▶ Auskick was introduced to the sporting community in Malta in partnership with DFAT, the local Australian High Commission and staff along with Sport Malta.
- ▶ The Western Crows were crowned premiers in the inaugural AFLNZ senior premiership, which runs from February to April in Auckland.
- ▶ Live free-to-air AFL games were televised each week in NZ through a broadcasting partnership with TVNZ.

MESSAGE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION



▶ The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) congratulates our National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) on their achievements this year. In particular, we congratulate all of our athletes who represented Australia in the Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games. You did so with great distinction. The country is proud of your commitment and dedication, and the manner in which you conducted yourself throughout the campaigns.

In the aftermath of the Games, the Board of the ASC has re-committed to the core principles of Australia's Winning Edge, the ASC's 10-year plan for high-performance sport introduced in 2012. The key principles are: high aspirations for achievement; evidence-based funding decisions; sports owning their own high-performance programs; and a strong emphasis on improved leadership and governance.

We are confident these principles serve the long-term interests of the sporting sector.

We will also use the experience of the last four years to seek to improve implementation of Winning Edge in ways that will benefit the sector.

The ASC is equally committed to increasing community participation in sport, particularly among our children and youth. We have been pleased this year to see our flagship participation program Sporting Schools reach more than 4300 schools in partnership with NSOs.

Innovations by the ASC this year included the release of our Integrity Guidelines for Directors and Leaders of Sporting Organisations, which provides directors with comprehensive and practical guidance for the first time on anti-doping, sport science and medicine, illicit drugs, match-fixing, child protection and member protection – vital issues for maintaining trust and respect in the sporting sector.

We also staged our inaugural Athlete and Coaches Forum, giving Australia's elite athletes and coaches the opportunity to share their experiences and enhance their leadership capabilities.

And we were delighted to see fruits of our efforts to improve female opportunity in sports, with improved elite and participation opportunities in women's sport, better media exposure, outstanding new commercial deals and an increase in female representation at NSO board level from 27 per cent to 39 per cent across the top 23 NSOs.

Looking ahead, ASC priorities include:

- ▶ Further institutional and governance reform in sport, with an emphasis on increased national integration and alignment;
- ▶ Increased funding for sport, including new non-government sources of funding;
- ▶ Further embedding sport in schools' educational programs;
- ▶ Improved national coordination of sports infrastructure spending;
- ▶ Improved use of data and technology in sports.

Reforms like this are often hard to achieve but have profound long-term benefits. The evermore competitive environment in world sport on display in Rio highlights the critical importance of further reform if Australia is to maintain its proud reputation and traditions as a sporting nation.

It is appropriate to use this opportunity to recognise and thank the efforts of the ASC's outgoing CEO Simon Hollingsworth, who has led the Commission capably and with considerable effect for the past five years.

The ASC thanks all of our sector partners for your effort and contribution to Australian sport. We look forward to continued success and progress together.

JOHN WYLIE AM
CHAIR – AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



AFL IN COMMUNITY



ELIZABETH LUKIN
GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS

Connection to your club, support of your team, feeling part of a broader community – this is the great benefit of sport in the lives of everyday fans. In the life of our nation, sport can and does play a role in promoting social inclusion, physical and mental health and respect for difference and diversity.

For as long as the game and clubs have existed, Australian Football has been involved in building community connections off the field.

Australian Football's popularity and reach helps connect people from different social and cultural backgrounds and can create links between people regardless of where they live, their gender, sexuality or religious beliefs.

Some of the social issues we have historically been involved in are now core business for the AFL – our commitment to Indigenous Australia, our stance against racism and a broader commitment to diversity in our game.

Outside these issues, the AFL is called on to support many causes, organisations and campaigns and

▲ St Kilda and the Sydney Swans have thrown their support behind the Pride Match to promote inclusiveness of the LGBTI community.

our 18 clubs all have strong partnerships and social commitments across a range of issues.

To bring clarity to our social responsibilities, the AFL Commission this year signed off on a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy to assist us in directing our decisions and commitments. Our CSR strategy is underpinned by the following values:

- ▶ Progressive – we are committed to taking on real issues that matter to our game and that promote social cohesion;
- ▶ Fair – everyone should have a chance to play, to shine, to achieve their best;
- ▶ Accountable – our commitment to community must be able to be measured and have substance.

The strategy commits the AFL nationally to three key issues:

- ▶ Gender equality;
- ▶ Empowerment of young people through sporting engagement;
- ▶ Mental health.

The AFL has partnerships with the following organisations to achieve our objectives:

AFL SportsReady

AFL SportsReady continues to work closely with the AFL industry to support the educational and employment development of AFL players and the industry more broadly.

In 2016, all AFL clubs participated in AFL SportsReady programs, with more than 170 players studying either a Certificate 3, 4 or diploma qualification with AFL SportsReady. A further 30 players participated in the Next Goal Program, which provides players with 20-day work placements, helping and preparing them for life after football.

The AFL has partnered with AFL SportsReady to offer a unique traineeship opportunity as part of the Bachar Houli Employment Program to help assist Muslim young people make the step into employment. The Federal Government provided funding support for 10 traineeships for Muslim young people to work across the AFL industry to gain critical work experience and job skills.

A total of 25 AFL SportsReady trainees were selected in the 2016 NAB AFL Draft, including 18 trainees selected in the first AFL Women's competition.

It proved to be another successful year for AFL SportsReady overall, kick-starting the careers of more than 700 young people, including more than 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Each year more and more trainees are being offered full-time employment or utilising the skills and experience as a pathway to our university partners following the completion of their traineeships.

The AFL SportsReady Cultural Awareness Training has expanded nationally – tripling in size – helping Australian businesses become more culturally aware.

It was our largest year in history and we look forward to breaking that record again in 2017.

Ladder

Ladder was established almost 10 years ago by three AFL players to support young people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness get their lives back on track and create better futures for themselves.

As the official charity partner of the AFL Players Association and a national partner of the AFL, Ladder strives to tackle youth homelessness in Australia with an estimated 44,000 young people being homeless in Australia on any given night.

AFL players donate \$25 from every match fee to Ladder, contributing more than \$217,000 annually. Past and present AFL players also support Ladder as staff, volunteers, ambassadors and mentors.

It was a ground-breaking year for Ladder, which worked with more than 300 young people nationally, a 21 per cent increase on the previous year. The total hours worked with young people increased by 30 per cent.

Ladder expanded further into regional Victoria, starting programs in Bendigo and Warrnambool, and launched a new early-intervention program in Western Sydney. The AFL will support Ladder in the NSW program, which will work with young people exiting out-of-home care.

Ladder was the official charity partner of the AFL Toyota Finals Series, as well as the AFL's community partner for the NAB All Stars matches. This provided an opportunity to engage with players and raise awareness and funds for the programs.

The AFL continued to provide considerable financial and back office support, including finance and IT, and supported Ladder to harness the AFL industry's profile, knowledge and networks to help young people in need.

▼ Jill Lindsay
Scholarship winner
Chelsea Randall
(left) with AFL
Commissioner
Gabrielle Trainor at
the AFL Women's
Industry Lunch.



Our Watch

Our Watch was established to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children.

Along with Netball Australia, the NRL and Rugby Australia, the AFL has committed to working with Our Watch towards an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence.

As part of a three-year project, the AFL has released a leadership statement which sets out how through public advocacy, organisational development, leadership, education and training, we will actively advance gender equality to prevent violence against women in our organisations and sporting communities.

The AFL will also continue the delivery of respectful relationships education across the AFL industry, including 18 AFL clubs, 50 State League clubs and numerous community clubs.

Cape York House

AFL Cape York House is a not-for profit organisation that aims to provide educational, employment and training opportunities for young Indigenous men from some of Far North Queensland's most remote communities in a culturally appropriate, safe and secure residential environment, ensuring every student has the opportunity to reach their potential.

AFL Cape York House is funded under the Federal and State Indigenous Housing Partnership program and supported by Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Indigenous Schooling Support, Education Queensland and the AFL.

In 2016, six graduates went on to study at universities across the country, with two young men studying on the Gold Coast and joining the Gold Coast Suns Academy as part of the AFL Club Next Generation Academy program.

The nurturing environment at AFL Cape York House encourages the success and leadership of its students. The purpose-built facility manages students on a day-to-day basis, focusing on the three pillars of education, wellbeing and careers.

AFL Cape York Program Manager Rick Hanlon was awarded with an Order of Australia Medal in the 2017 Australia Day Honours. Rick has dedicated nearly 20 years of his life to promoting AFL in North Queensland and in doing so has provided young people of the region with education and career opportunity through sport.

Rick is a man of great passion and vision and his work, along with that of his team in transforming the lives of Indigenous students, has been inspirational. The AFL is proud to partner with and support the efforts of the dedicated team at AFL Cape York House.

Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre

Harnessing the power of AFL football in the Northern Territory, the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre aims to provide young Indigenous Territorians the same opportunities in life as their non-Indigenous peers, with a focus well beyond football.

The MLLLC program includes a residential component at the centre where students participate in AFL games, umpiring and coaching sessions and complete an education program which focuses on the AFL values, healthy lifestyles, road safety, first aid and educational opportunities.

Opportunities and exposure for remote children to learn about AFL talent pathways is highlighted and the students' fitness levels are measured and recorded during their stay at the centre.

A key focus of the program is to highlight the importance of education and the need for children to complete secondary schooling. The program simulates a short-term boarding house experience and includes visits to and engagement in classes at local boarding schools. Four children have enrolled and more than 10 students have expressed a strong interest in attending boarding school following their MLLLC camps in 2016.

The MLLLC residential programs are facilitated by our team of Remote Development Managers (RDMs) who staff the AFL Northern Territory's nationally significant outcome-based remote football programs based in 10 communities across the Northern Territory.

RDMs use football as a vehicle to increase school attendance (where 80 per cent is a minimum requirement for engagement in programs) and improve behaviour.

In 2016, the MLLLC trialled a 15-week Community Leadership education program to extend the impact of the MLLLC residential program. This program will be further developed and implemented in 2017.

In 2016, 240 children from 11 communities were engaged in the one-week leadership residential component at the centre, exceeding our KPI by 20 participants. The communities involved in the program included Tiwi Islands, Maningrida, Elcho Island, Gove (Millingimbi), Groote Eylandt, Ngukurr, Minyerrri Borroloola, Wadeye, Lajamanu, Hermannsburg and Canteen Creek.

The AFL has committed to working with Our Watch towards an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence



Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award

The 2016 Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award was presented to Jimmy Bartel for his work in raising awareness of domestic violence.

The Geelong champion completed a season-long campaign which included growing a beard for 200 days to highlight the issue and raise funds to support victims of domestic violence.

Bartel's #FaceUPToDV campaign raised money for The Luke Batty Foundation and Bethany, a Geelong-based family service organisation.

The Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award is presented to one of the four finalists on Brownlow Medal night, with the winner receiving \$20,000 from the AFL and \$20,000 from the Jim Stynes Foundation to be donated to a chosen charity or community program.

▲ Geelong's Jimmy Bartel was presented with the 2016 Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award by Matisse Stynes, daughter of the late Melbourne champion.

Jim Stynes Scholarship

The AFL and the Reach Foundation established the Jim Stynes scholarship fund in 2011 in honour of the former Melbourne Football Club president and Brownlow medallist, the late Jim Stynes.

As part of a partnership with the AFL, the Federal Government has provided \$3 million to establish the scholarship fund to help disadvantaged people pursue their sporting dreams and reach their potential.

The scholarships recognise Jim Stynes' contribution as an outstanding footballer, administrator, philanthropist, charity worker and writer.

In 2016, the AFL and Reach awarded 37 individual scholarships with a value of up to \$10,000 and 14 project scholarships nationally.



Supporting our clubs

The AFL supports a range of initiatives through our key partners and 18 AFL clubs who are all active in raising awareness of important issues and raising much-needed funds for worthy causes.

One of the major events that the AFL supported in 2016 was the round 21 Pride Match between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans.

After supporting the Community Pride Cup over the past two seasons, the two clubs and the AFL sought to promote inclusiveness and show the LGBTI Community they are welcome in our game at a national level.

Both clubs included rainbow elements on their playing uniforms and helped start a discussion about the barriers members of the LGBTI community face when it comes to participating in sport.

Other major initiatives the AFL supported in 2016 were the White Ribbon Match hosted by the Western Bulldogs, the Big Freeze at the 'G to raise funds for the MND Foundation and Melbourne's Pink Lady match to support the Breast Cancer Australia Network.

Jill Lindsay Scholarship

Chelsea Randall was awarded the 2016 Jill Lindsay Scholarship at the AFL Women's Industry Lunch in Melbourne. Randall is the East Pilbara Regional Manager at Swan Districts Football Club.

The Jill Lindsay Scholarship is awarded annually to the female graduate with the most potential to become an industry leader from the AFL SportsReady program. The scholarship is named in honour of the AFL's longest-serving employee, Jill Lindsay, who lost her battle with cancer in 2011.

After starting as a receptionist at Swan Districts, Randall has since completed various roles and now delivers female football programs that provide opportunities for girls to play football in remote and regional communities. Despite her busy schedule, Randall has also started a Bachelor of Education and has ambitions to assume a female football high-performance role.

▲ The Children's Cancer Foundation's Million Dollar Lunch at Crown Palladium in 2016 raised more than \$1.7 million.

► Former Geelong captain Cameron Ling takes part in the Big Freeze at the 'G, which raised funds for the MND Foundation.

Graeme Samuel Scholarship

Jennifer Watt was awarded the 2016 Graeme Samuel Scholarship by the AFL Commission. Watt is Melbourne Football Club's General Manager of Marketing and Communications.

The scholarship is named in honour of long-serving Commissioner Graeme Samuel. A foundation Commissioner, Samuel played a significant role in the strategic direction of the AFL competition and Australian Football generally.

As the 2016 recipient of the scholarship, Watt received \$20,000 to contribute towards future study or professional development.

After starting as the Membership Coordinator with the Demons in 2003, Watt has performed the role of General Manager of Marketing and Communications for the past seven years and established herself in the football industry as a highly respected administrator.

Children's Cancer Foundation Lunch

The AFL was again proud to support the Children's Cancer Foundation's Million Dollar Lunch in 2016, one of Melbourne's premier charity events.

The lunch raised more than \$1.7 million to support children living with cancer, lifting the total funds raised since the lunch was first held in 2005 to about \$15 million.

AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan has been the patron of the Children's Cancer Foundation since 2014, supporting the valuable work they do in assisting families and contributing to research projects.

The AFL's support of the Million Dollar Lunch helps minimise the costs of holding a world-class event and enables the vast majority of funds raised to go directly to help children living with cancer.



LEGAL & INTEGRITY



ANDREW DILLON
AFL GENERAL COUNSEL

The purchase of Etihad Stadium, the renewal of key partnership agreements, the negotiation and drafting of the new radio broadcast agreements and the creation of the AFL security function were the major projects completed by the Legal and Integrity Department in 2016.

The department continued to manage all aspects of the competition's integrity and provide legal services and commercial advice to all departments across the AFL and AFL state bodies, as well as working with AFL clubs, the AFL Players' Association and the AFL Umpires' Association.

It also assisted in the creation of the NAB AFL Women's competition, including the preparation of a remuneration agreement and playing contract, the broadcast rights and the addition of new corporate partners.

The team also supported clubs in the renewal of club stadium agreements and their development of training and administration centres.

Radio Rights

In September 2016, the AFL reached an agreement with its commercial radio broadcast partners for the next six years, covering the period 2017-22.

The radio broadcast rights agreements will see increased coverage of the Sydney Swans/GWS Giants into New South Wales and the Brisbane Lions/Gold Coast Suns into Queensland, including regional areas, along with renewed agreements with long-time partners who have broadcast nationally and into specific state markets in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

► Games involving the Sydney Swans and GWS Giants will be given more coverage after new agreements with radio broadcast partners were struck in 2016.





The AFL's non-commercial agreements with ABC Radio and the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) are still being concluded.

Under the new agreements, all previous coverage by existing partners will be continued, while Magic 882 will broadcast all Brisbane Lions and Gold Coast Suns premiership matches into Brisbane, Triple M Brisbane will broadcast all Brisbane Lions premiership matches into Brisbane, 92.5 GoldFM will broadcast all Gold Coast Suns premiership matches into the Gold Coast, 2UE will broadcast all Sydney Swans and GWS Giants premiership matches into Sydney and Triple M Sydney will broadcast one Swans or Giants match per round into Sydney, plus a Saturday night match each week.

Crocmmedia and Triple M have each expanded their coverage of radio station broadcasts into regional Australia.

In summary:

- ▶ Nine matches per round during the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and all matches in the Toyota AFL Finals Series will be broadcast into Victoria;
- ▶ Increased regional coverage via Crocmmedia and Southern Cross Austereo;
- ▶ Every match featuring an AFL club from Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales to be broadcast into their respective states;
- ▶ All Toyota AFL Finals Series matches (including the Toyota AFL Grand Final) to be broadcast nationally.

▲ Trent Cotchin and Sam Mitchell are joined by AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick after being presented with their 2012 Brownlow Medals at a ceremony in December.

WADA appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport

In January 2016, the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled that the appeal filed by the World Anti-Doping Authority against the decision of the AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal concerning 34 current or former Essendon players was upheld. Details of the ruling, sanctions imposed and the lists concessions that were determined by the AFL for the 2016 season were outlined in the 2015 Annual Report.

Essendon players appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport

On October 12, the AFL was notified that the appeal lodged by past and present Essendon players with the Swiss Federal Tribunal against the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling was not successful.

The AFL accepted and acknowledged the Tribunal's ruling and announced that the AFL Commission would consider the matter of the Brownlow Medal, which was won by Jobe Watson for the 2012 season, on November 15 in Melbourne.

2012 Brownlow Medal decision

The AFL Commission met on November 15 and ruled on the 2012 Brownlow Medal.

The Commission noted that Jobe Watson had previously announced he would hand back the Brownlow Medal, to honour the history of the award.

The AFL Commission ruled Watson was not eligible for the 2012 Brownlow Medal and that, in accordance with AFL Regulations, the medal be awarded to Trent Cotchin and Sam Mitchell who had tied for second in 2012.

Mitchell and Cotchin were presented with their medals at a ceremony in Melbourne on December 13.

AFL Anti-Doping Appeals Board

On November 28, the AFL Anti-Doping Appeals Board dismissed the appeal against a life ban from Stephen Dank.

The Appeals Board noted Dank's lack of cooperation and communication and his failure to attend the hearing without meeting the conditions outlined for a further adjournment.

AFL Security Function

The AFL started its security function in 2016 in response to increasing security risks in Australia and abroad. The long-term objective of the AFL Security Function is to deliver overarching leadership and control, accountability, appropriate investment and successful partnerships within the security framework of the industry. In 2016, AFL safety officers attended all 207 matches to ensure appropriate standards of security were being met.

AFL Rule violations

Under the AFL Rules for conduct prejudicial to the interests of the AFL, Rule 2.3 (Conduct Unbecoming), GWS Giants-listed player Lachlan Whitfield and former officials of the GWS Giants, Graeme Allan and Craig Lambert, received the followings sanctions.

- ▶ Whitfield – six-month suspension.
- ▶ Allan – 12-month suspension.
- ▶ Lambert – 12-month suspension.

The suspensions started from November 12, 2016.

The GWS Giants were charged under AFL Rule 2.3: '... conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the interests or reputation of the AFL or to bring the game of football into disrepute'.

This charge was laid following an investigation involving Whitfield, Allan and Lambert.

A sub-committee of the AFL Commission, comprising Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick, Jason Ball and Paul Bassat, met on December 22 and heard submissions from the club and from counsel assisting the AFL.

The sub-committee upheld the charge.

The sub-committee found that the club is responsible for the actions of senior employees and was comfortably satisfied that Allan and Lambert were senior employees.

- ▶ The sub-committee found that the club's board, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer had no knowledge of the offending conduct and the club's governance in relation to this matter could not be criticised.
- ▶ The sub-committee gave credit to the establishment and operation of the club's Integrity Committee and its prompt reaction once it became aware of the original complaint.

Taking into account the seriousness of the matter, but also the mitigating factors in favour of the club, the sub-committee sanctioned the club, imposing a penalty of a \$100,000 fine and 1000 draft points.

▼ AFL Commission Chairman Mike Fitzpatrick and CEO Gillon McLachlan face the media after the Commission's meeting in November.



The AFL reached an agreement with its commercial radio broadcast partners for the next six years, covering the period 2017-22



2016 NAB AFL Draft

The 2016 NAB AFL Draft was conducted on the same basis as 2015, including Father-Son and Academy player bidding.

After seeking feedback from all clubs, the AFL determined clubs would no longer be able to access 'hidden picks' during the draft when bidding for Father-Son and Academy players at the 2016 NAB AFL Draft.

Hidden picks meant a club could only enter the draft with the number of selections that matched the available primary list positions at that time.

If a club used multiple selections in matching a bid on a player, thereby requiring extra selections to be used to fill the available spots on its list, the new draft selections would then be awarded to the club at the back of the draft (after the last round), so as not to impact on the selections of all other clubs.

▲ North Melbourne officials discuss their next move at the 2016 NAB AFL Draft.

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

- ▶ Declan Watson (Brisbane Lions Academy) selected by North Melbourne with selection 34.
- ▶ Josh Williams (Gold Coast Academy) selected by North Melbourne with selection 36.
- ▶ Koby Mutch (GWS Academy) selected by Essendon with selection 42.
- ▶ Harrison Macreadie (GWS Academy) selected by Carlton with selection 47.
- ▶ Ryan Garthwaite (Brisbane Lions Academy) selected by Richmond with selection 72.

Three players were selected directly by their Academy or Father-Son clubs:

- ▶ Lachie Tiziani (GWS Academy) selection 54.
- ▶ Josh Daicos (Collingwood Father-Son) selection 57.
- ▶ Jake Waterman (West Coast Eagles Father-Son) selection 77.

FATHER-SON AND ACADEMY PLAYERS SELECTED BY MATCHING BID

Name	Player Category	Bid Team	Match Team	Bid	Points Value	Selections Matched	Selections Received
Will Setterfield	Academy	Carlton	GWS Giants	5	1503	15, 37	5, 65
Jack Bowes	Academy	Sydney Swans	Gold Coast Suns	10	1116	11	10
Harry Perryman	Academy	Adelaide Crows	GWS Giants	14	928	38, 44, 51	14, 57, 96
Isaac Cumming	Academy	Sydney Swans	GWS Giants	20	715	52, 54, 55, 56	20, 57, 95, 96
Callum Brown	Father-Son	North Melbourne	Collingwood	35	325	44	35
Jacob Allison	Academy	St Kilda	Brisbane Lions	55	10	72	55
Brad Scheer	Academy	Geelong Cats	Gold Coast Suns	67	0	91	67

Free Agency

Under the rules agreed between the AFL and the AFLPA in February 2010, seven restricted free agents and 49 unrestricted free agents were eligible under the rules during the 2016 season to consider their future career options.

Restricted Free Agents

- ▶ Brisbane Lions – Daniel Rich
- ▶ Collingwood – Nathan Brown, Steele Sidebottom
- ▶ Melbourne – Jack Grimes, Jack Watts
- ▶ Richmond – Ty Vickery
- ▶ St Kilda – Sean Dempster

Unrestricted Free Agents

- ▶ Adelaide Crows – Ricky Henderson, Scott Thompson, Nathan van Berlo
- ▶ Brisbane Lions – Daniel Merrett
- ▶ Carlton – Dennis Armfield, Kade Simpson
- ▶ Collingwood – Jarryd Blair, Brent Macaffer, Dane Swan, Alan Toovey
- ▶ Essendon – Courtenay Dempsey, Heath Hocking, Cale Hooker, David Myers, Tayte Pears, Brent Stanton
- ▶ Fremantle – Zac Clarke, Matt de Boer, Chris Mayne, Matthew Pavlich, Clancee Pearce, Aaron Sandilands
- ▶ Geelong Cats – Jimmy Bartel, Corey Enright, Tom Lonergan
- ▶ Hawthorn – Luke Hodge, Sam Mitchell, Brendan Whitecross
- ▶ Melbourne – Neville Jetta, Jake Spencer
- ▶ North Melbourne – Michael Firrito, Brent Harvey, Drew Petrie, Lindsay Thomas, Daniel Wells
- ▶ Port Adelaide – Paul Stewart
- ▶ St Kilda – Sam Fisher, Leigh Montagna, Nick Riewoldt
- ▶ Sydney Swans – Kieren Jack, Ted Richards
- ▶ West Coast Eagles – Mitchell Brown, Sam Butler, Patrick McGinness, Will Schofield
- ▶ Western Bulldogs – Matthew Boyd, Will Minson, Dale Morris, Robert Murphy

▼ Former Docker Michael Barlow switched to the Gold Coast Suns under Free Agency Rules.

Free Agents Exercising Their Rights

Four players elected to exercise their free agent rights as restricted and unrestricted free agents and change clubs for the 2017 season:

- ▶ Nathan Brown (Collingwood to St Kilda)
- ▶ Ty Vickery (Richmond to Hawthorn)
- ▶ Chris Mayne (Fremantle to Collingwood)
- ▶ Daniel Wells (North Melbourne to Collingwood)

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

- ▶ Michael Barlow (Fremantle to Gold Coast Suns)
- ▶ Ricky Henderson (Adelaide to Hawthorn)
- ▶ Matt Dea (Essendon to Essendon)
- ▶ Josh Green (Brisbane Lions to Essendon)
- ▶ James Kelly (Essendon to Essendon)

FREE AGENCY MOVEMENT

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Restricted	2	2	1	4	4
Unrestricted	2	2	4	3	6
Delisted	5	4	7	8	4
Total	9	8	12	15	14



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

Exchange Period

A total of 34 players and 113 draft selections (of which 19 were future selections and 30 were on-traded) were traded during the AFL Exchange Period.

The following players were traded:

- ▶ Jack Frost (Collingwood) to Brisbane Lions
- ▶ Caleb Marchbank (GWS Giants), Rhys Palmer (GWS Giants), Jarrod Pickett (GWS Giants), Billie Smedts (Geelong Cats) to Carlton
- ▶ Lynden Dunn (Melbourne), Will Hoskin-Elliott (GWS Giants) to Collingwood
- ▶ James Stewart (GWS Giants) to Essendon
- ▶ Joel Hamling (Western Bulldogs), Bradley Hill (Hawthorn), Shane Kersten (Geelong Cats), Cam McCarthy (GWS Giants) to Fremantle
- ▶ Aaron Black (North Melbourne), Zach Tuohy (Carlton) to Geelong Cats
- ▶ Pearce Hanley (Brisbane Lions), Jarryd Lyons (Adelaide Crows), Jarrod Witts (Collingwood) to Gold Coast Suns
- ▶ Brett Deledio (Richmond) to GWS Giants
- ▶ Tom Mitchell (Sydney Swans), Jaeger O'Meara (Gold Coast Suns) to Hawthorn
- ▶ Michael Hibberd (Essendon), Jordan Lewis (Hawthorn), Pat McKenna (GWS Giants) to Melbourne
- ▶ Paul Ahern (GWS Giants), Nathan Hrovat (Western Bulldogs), Marley Williams (Collingwood) to North Melbourne
- ▶ Josh Caddy (Geelong Cats), Toby Nankervis (Sydney Swans), Dion Prestia (Gold Coast Suns) to Richmond
- ▶ Jack Steele (GWS Giants), Koby Stevens (Western Bulldogs) to St Kilda
- ▶ Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Nathan Vardy (Geelong Cats) to West Coast Eagles
- ▶ Travis Cloke (Collingwood) to Western Bulldogs

Rookies

In addition to 70 first-time drafted players being selected at the NAB AFL Draft, 20 rookies were promoted by clubs to the Primary List and 50 players were selected at the Rookie Draft (of which 34 were first-time drafted). A total of 42 rookies were retained on the Rookie List by clubs.

PLAYER MOVEMENT SUMMARY

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Delisted/Retired	99	75	85	99	75
Exchanged/Traded					
Trades	43	42	19	27	28
Players	34	40	24	28	29
Selections	113	103	40	38	41
On-Trades	30	32	12	7	16
Promoted Rookies	20	14	22	23	24
National Draft	77/96	70/89	76/87	62/74	70/83
First Drafted	76	68	76	62	68
Pre-Season Draft	0/10	0/12	1/12	1/12	8/15
Rookie Draft	50/55	64/72	64/76	54/69	44/65
First Drafted	34	43	45	39	32
Retained Rookies	42	42	36	37	50

2016 TPP Summary

The Total Player Payment limit per club increased three per cent in 2016, from \$181.3 million to \$186.6 million, while gross player payments increased at a lower rate to the three per cent increase in Total Player Payments, up by 2.1 per cent from \$200.2 million in 2015 to \$204.3 million.

The Additional Services limit per club for the provision of marketing services by players increased by three per cent from \$992,000 to \$1,022,000 and the amount spent on these services by clubs increased by 1.9 per cent, from \$18.64 million in 2015 to \$18.99 million.

In addition to these amounts, players earned \$1.68 million from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of clubs.

Taking into account the \$204.3 million in gross player payments, \$18.99 million in additional services agreements and \$1.68 million from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of the clubs, the total earned by players in 2016 was \$224.97 million, an increase of two per cent on the 2015 total of \$220.54 million.

The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2016 was \$308,836, an increase of 2.2 per cent over 2015.

One club was sanctioned during 2016 for breaching the AFL Player List rules:

- ▶ The Gold Coast Suns were sanctioned \$5000 for breaching the List Lodgement Rules by failing to lodge forms relating to list changes. Gold Coast fully co-operated in the matter and this and other mitigating factors, including that the breach was an administrative error, not intentional and the club's good record were taken into account regarding the sanction.

2006-2016 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS

Earnings	2006 Played	2007 Played	2008 Played	2009 Played	2010 Played	2011 Played	2011 Listed	2012 Played	2012 Listed	2013 Played	2013 Listed	2014 Played	2014 Listed	2015 Played	2015 Listed	2016 Played	2016 Listed
\$0 - \$60,000	34	24	10	9	9	9	31	1	21	0	9	0	2	0	1	0	0
\$60,001 - \$100,000	99	92	90	80	67	75	114	71	120	48	109	33	90	17	65	21	70
\$100,001 - \$200,000	198	177	168	156	153	180	186	187	199	203	213	177	198	163	188	162	185
\$200,001 - \$300,000	109	134	142	151	158	162	166	166	170	148	156	136	147	143	153	121	131
\$300,001 - \$400,000	57	60	77	85	91	92	94	103	104	114	115	125	128	124	131	137	148
\$400,001 - \$500,000	30	35	39	37	45	53	53	58	60	64	64	75	76	84	85	87	89
\$500,001 - \$600,000	10	13	18	16	9	17	20	25	25	22	22	31	32	44	44	35	40
\$600,001 - \$700,000	7	5	3	6	8	10	10	11	12	19	19	26	26	18	21	22	23
\$700,001 - \$800,000	0	3	5	3	2	3	3	4	4	10	10	10	10	21	21	15	18
\$800,001 - \$900,000	4	2	-	2	2	4	4	1	1	7	7	6	6	3	3	5	5
\$900,001 - \$1,000,000	1	-	-	2	4	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	3
\$1,000,001 - \$1,100,000	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	4	4	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2
\$1,100,001 - \$1,200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	2
\$1,200,001 +	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	4	4	3	3	-	-	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	549	546	554	547	548	608	684	636	725	640	729	623	719	623	718	614	718

NB: Details listed under heading "Played" relates only to Primary listed Players who participated in at least one senior match during the season.

Details listed under heading "Listed" includes all Primary Listed Players
Earnings are Total Player Earnings including ASA's.

2006-2016 AFL TOTAL PLAYER EARNINGS

	2006 \$	2007 \$	2008 \$	2009 \$	2010 \$	2011 \$	2012 \$	2013 \$	2014 \$	2015 \$	2016 \$	Movement % 2015-2016
GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS ("GPP")	114,215,259	121,340,818	128,847,606	134,146,837	136,698,418	153,699,344	173,717,042	181,560,623	188,944,174	200,199,169	204,305,032	2.05%
Deductions:												
Finals/Relocation & Living & other Allowances	1,816,889	2,242,291	2,137,838	1,891,522	2,130,159	2,060,463	2,044,477	2,274,355	2,060,850	2,069,108	2,285,343	10.45%
Cost of Living and Expansion Allowances	1,175,574	680,488	728,263	753,988	779,100	804,825	1,722,326	1,791,219	3,047,944	2,357,048	1,691,090	-28.25%
Veterans' allowance	5,014,770	5,137,978	4,843,849	4,814,190	4,614,162	5,361,045	6,239,064	7,886,536	6,560,023	6,959,232	6,611,661	-4.99%
Other deductions	941,007	2,082,388	2,379,364	2,561,369	2,296,275	3,921,152	4,663,352	4,303,195	4,032,375	4,790,648	4,334,399	-9.52%
Underspend from Previous Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,841,576	764,531	-58.48%
Total deductions	8,948,240	10,143,145	10,089,314	10,021,069	9,819,696	12,147,485	14,669,219	16,255,304	15,701,193	18,017,612	15,687,024	-12.94%
PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS DEDUCTIONS	105,267,019	111,197,673	118,758,292	124,125,768	126,878,722	141,686,376	159,047,825	165,305,319	173,242,981	182,181,452	188,618,008	3.53%
Injury Allowance	4,836,000	4,936,629	5,684,600	6,403,200	5,572,800	3,107,594	2,551,693	2,060,007	1,597,906	2,609,871	3,452,129	32.27%
GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS INJURY ALLOWANCE	100,431,019	106,261,044	113,073,692	117,722,568	121,305,922	138,578,782	156,496,132	163,245,312	171,645,075	179,571,581	185,165,879	3.12%
TPP LIMIT	103,564,992	111,100,000	118,900,000	123,100,000	127,200,000	139,612,500	158,172,750	164,499,660	173,382,660	181,284,120	186,641,640	2.96%
Gross Player Payments less Injury Allowance	100,431,019	106,261,044	113,073,692	117,722,568	121,305,922	138,578,782	156,496,132	163,245,312	171,645,075	179,571,581	185,165,879	3.12%
Margin/(Excess)	3,133,973	4,838,956	5,826,308	5,377,432	5,894,078	1,033,718	1,676,618	1,254,348	1,737,585	1,712,539	1,475,761	-13.83%
Additional Services Agreements (ASA's)	6,579,394	6,725,773	7,440,463	7,692,843	8,128,960	9,191,723	10,398,625	13,874,676	16,237,924	18,638,497	19,257,040	3.32%
Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASA's)**	Listed \$192,962	Listed \$203,280	Listed \$213,953	Listed \$221,482	Listed \$226,165	Listed \$237,388	Listed \$251,559	Listed \$265,179	Listed \$283,029	Listed \$302,104	Listed \$309,208	2.35%
	Played \$208,104	Played \$218,560	Played \$233,281	Played \$241,436	Played \$249,239	Played \$253,795	Played \$272,074	Played \$288,212	Played \$306,841	Played \$324,643	Played \$329,210	1.41%

** Average Gross Player Earnings ("AGPE")

The AGPE is a result of the payments (GPP plus ASA's) made to Primary Listed and Pre-Season Nominated Rookies only (grouped as "Primary Listed").

Played figure is the AGPE for those Primary Listed players who played games divided by number of Primary Listed players who played

Listed figure is the AGPE divided by the number of Primary Listed players

Underspend from Previous Years was introduced for Season 2015

AFL MEDIA



PETER CAMPBELL
GENERAL MANAGER

The 2016 season again demonstrated AFL Media's commitment to serve an ever-increasing digitally connected and conversant supporter base.

It was also the final year of the previous Digital Rights Agreement before our new agreement with Telstra starts in January 2017.

While the fundamentals of the new agreement will ostensibly roll forward to the new six-year term, there has already been significant investment from Telstra and the AFL in new and enhanced digital capabilities for clubs and supporters that will roll out in early 2017.

Telstra and the AFL will implement a major change in the Content Management System (CMS) that underpins the operating platform for the entire AFL digital suite of products – the AFL website and AFL Live App, as well as the club apps and club websites.

Coupled with the full implementation of a new Video Management System that has been rolled out to all sites, these changes will see improved functionality for our end users as well as those who operate and drive the content creation for the sites.

Additionally, and following a worldwide information and search process in early 2016, Telstra and the AFL will release new apps for mobile devices (phones and tablets) in time for the start of the 2017 season.

The worldwide search ensured we selected the best app development and operating systems in line with world's best practice.

► AFL Media continues to provide fans with a comprehensive coverage of the game and its stars, such as Gold Coast Sun Tom Lynch.



While the existing apps have had more than 5.8 million downloads since they launched (4.7 million in 2015), our imperative to offer supporters the best opportunities to consume AFL content via the best sports apps on the market has resulted in us choosing two new suppliers.

Yinzcam has been chosen to supply apps tailored to a club environment. With a history of providing world-class apps to teams and franchises in the NBA and NFL, Yinzcam is ideally suited to support our clubs in a completely refreshed and personalised manner that suits each club's objectives and personality.

Pulse Live has been chosen to supply the AFL Live App. Pulse Live has successfully run league apps for the ICC Cricket World Cup, the English Premier League and the Women's Tennis Association. It brings significant expertise in supporting the objectives for a League body app, which in conjunction with Telstra's objectives and expertise, will provide an enhanced platform for which supporters can engage and consume.

These three major changes have involved significant due diligence and extracting key learnings from other sports and markets in which they operate so that we can adapt and maintain our market leadership in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Another significant investment from Telstra in 2016 was the manner in which live streaming of matches was made available via the AFL Live App to our supporters.

While maintaining the retail price points at the same level as 2015, Telstra mobile customers using the AFL Live App were offered live streaming of all matches throughout 2016 at no charge.

This saw peak subscriber numbers to the service increase by more than 100 per cent from 2015. In addition, total live match streaming increased by more than 74 per cent from 2015 to more than 185 million minutes in 2016 (an increase of more than 79 million minutes).

Consumption metrics across the AFL digital suite of products had a continued growth trajectory from previous years.

Aggregate video views (not including live streaming minutes) grew by 11 per cent to more than 135 million. The aggregate monthly unique audience across the full year grew by five per cent.

Coming off an already high base, the five per cent growth was significant in a year when the Olympic Games were also held in the middle of the AFL home and away season.

And in Grand Final week, the AFL Network achieved its highest weekly unique visitor number when we reached more than five million unique



▲ The AFL Digital Network consistently achieved the No. 1 unique audience metric for single sport sites from February to October.

people across desktop, mobile browser and apps – a significant milestone in our short history.

An important industry reporting metric was further enhanced in 2016 allowing for comparative digital industry traffic to be standardised. While the Nielsen Unique Audience metric has been available for browser-based traffic comparisons for some time, in 2016 this was enhanced to include app traffic.

The Nielsen Unique Audience number seeks to de-duplicate the number of individual users across a brand's various digital sites and record them as a single unique audience figure – irrespective of if they have used app and/or browser sites across desktop, smartphone and tablets.

The AFL Digital Network consistently achieved the No. 1 Unique Audience metric for all single sport sites for the period February to October. In March and September 2016, we achieved a Unique Audience peak figure of 3.9 million individuals for the respective months.

While there is no comparative that can be made against 2015 with this reach figure, our positioning in the sport and sports news categories places the AFL as a clear market leader for the in-season period.

Social media continues to be an area of rapid change and opportunity.

Our social media team has continued to explore various access points to amplify our content, engage with supporters and provide a valuable marketing and promotional tool for the AFL, the competition and our corporate and commercial partners.

We achieved growth of 30 per cent in social media followers for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to more than two million. Importantly though, engagement rather than just "followers" was up markedly.

While there has been much commentary about how video is counted and viewed via social media in recent times, AFL Media takes a conservative approach to attribution of these video views so that our measure reflects more than just three-second auto-plays.

AFL Media only attributes video views via social media that is 'click to play' and/or auto-play longer than 20 seconds.

In another technological change opportunity, the AFL and Telstra also participated in our first foray into virtual reality. In an arrangement with Telstra and Samsung, the AFL produced 12 virtual reality pieces during the Toyota AFL Finals Series and surrounding events, such as the Grand Final Parade and Brownlow Medal. Each of these have been made available inside a 'virtual supporter lounge'.

While there are many differing views as to virtual reality, it is AFL Media's view we should continue to evaluate and trial new techniques and distribution channels such as virtual reality, particularly if they are supported by great partners, to determine how they might fit within our current or future distribution plans as well as supporter engagement and consumption.

However, it is not just continued development and focus on serving existing fans via the AFL Network that had a focus in 2016. The development and implementation of *afl.com.au/womens* (the AFL women's football hub) has also had a significant positive impact for the provision of news, information, match information, videos and imagery of the women's exhibition matches played during 2016 and information surrounding the NAB AFL Women's competition in 2017.

The vigour and enthusiasm with which all AFL Media and AFL clubs' media staff embraced this opportunity has afforded us the ability to incorporate women's football news within its own hub, as well as provisioning this same information within the broader AFL digital sites.

With the ability to live stream all matches in the 2017 NAB AFLW competition, establish a match centre within the hub and continue to expand and devote editorial and video coverage about the matches and women's football, we will have the platform to expand on this exciting development for the benefit of all supporters.

2016 Key Metrics

- ▶ Aggregate video streams (excluding AFL Live Pass streaming of live matches) of 135 million, up 11 per cent on 2015;
- ▶ Aggregate monthly unique visitors up five per cent;
- ▶ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Weibo) up 30 per cent to more than two million followers;
- ▶ Total number of downloads of the AFL Live App and club apps totalling more than 5.8 million (up 1.1 million);
- ▶ Cumulative streaming minutes of live matches via the AFL Live App of 185 million minutes (up 79 million minutes) and peak concurrent Live Pass subscribers up 100 per cent on 2015;
- ▶ International Digital Rights revenue via our partner Brave Bison (formerly Rightster International) grew by more than 20 per cent.

While our KPI metrics are our key points of quantitative measure for the year, of equal importance is:

- ▶ the quality of content we produce and provide;
- ▶ our commercial and operational partnerships with clubs;
- ▶ the quality of support for the AFL industry and our valued corporate and commercial partners;
- ▶ our role in continuing to provide an avenue for the heritage and history of the game to be made available.

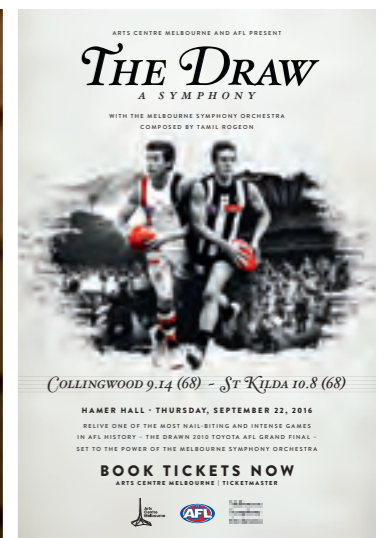
There were several highlights for the video production team, including a piece hosted by Magda Szubanski and commissioned by the St Kilda Football Club to help celebrate the Pride Match.

Based on the journey of St Kilda Team of the Century star Nicky Winmar and son Tynan, the documentary focused on Nicky and Tynan and their relationship.

It was a poignant piece that our production team was very proud of.

Equally challenging was the editing and audio production required to synch a specially commissioned

▼ Among AFL Media's video productions were a documentary featuring former Saints star Nicky Winmar and son Tynan (below), commissioned by St Kilda to celebrate the Pride Match, and *The Draw – A Symphony* (below right).



In Grand Final week, the AFL Network achieved its highest weekly unique visitor number when we reached more than five million



live orchestral performance from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra at Hamer Hall in September for the 2010 drawn Grand Final between Collingwood and St Kilda. A truly unique (and ambitious) project, it received a standing ovation.

The coincidence of this 18-month project was the decision by the AFL Commission to ensure the 2010 AFL Grand Final would be the last to be played under the draw scenario and served to remind us the emotion of that match for the players, officials and supporters of both teams.

Following on from this one-off production was a documentary screened on the Seven Network in Grand Final week from AFL Media's acclaimed producer/director Peter Dickson of *The Final Draw* – a unique behind-the-scenes look at what transpired leading up to, during and after the 2010 Grand Final.

With tremendous co-operation from the Collingwood and St Kilda football clubs, with wonderful never-before-seen interviews and factual re-counts of the day, it perfectly detailed a memorable Grand Final.

Our combined printed products, led by the *AFL Record* and including the *AFL Season Guide*, *AFL Record for Kids*, *Great Footy Decades* and the *Premiership Magazine*, sustained their year-on-year circulation figures.

The *AFL Record* editorial, photographic, design and commercial teams continue to ensure the quality and commercial performance of the product is maintained. The *AFL Record* will enter its 106th year of publication in 2017.

The quality of imagery from AFL Media's photography team, coupled with the design team,

▲ AFL Media's combined printed products sustained their circulation figures in 2016.

▶ With brilliant photos such as this of Bomber star Joe Daniher's soaring mark against Melbourne, AFL Media's photography team ensures quality images of the game are celebrated and cherished by fans.

ensure that images from our game are celebrated and cherished. The same attention to detail is applied by our editing, video production and audio production teams to ensure the game's legacy of imagery, sounds and video will be forever available to celebrate as it is for supporters to consume today via their digital devices.

Our editorial team had an equally rewarding year. Called back into work early to deal with the news of the Court of Arbitration of Sport's decision in early January, right through to the unbelievably hectic last two hours of the NAB AFL Trade Period (when we had a record number of concurrent users on the sites), the editorial team has covered all aspects of the game thoroughly, with clarity and passion.

The volume and quality of this team's output can be measured not only in the traffic and consumption metrics, but also by their attitude and pride in their profession.

The support AFL Media receives from our corporate and advertising partners reflects the engagement our commercial teams undertake with our valued partners.

Combining and streamlining our services and media teams with the AFL's Commercial Operations team has led to a better outcome across the industry and ensured the services work and digital/print media placement, coupled with strong supporter engagement and use of the digital platforms and printed products, has lifted the quality and quantity of commercial and advertising projects for our club and commercial partners.

All the teams within AFL Media have contributed to the whole range of the AFL's digital platforms for which the AFL is well positioned as the landscape continues to evolve and expand.

The demands of any ever-changing device universe and availability requirement from supporters necessitates that we remain abreast of the changing options for supporters to consume AFL content and participate where it is commercially and functionally possible to do so.

The support and input from the club network into our strong traffic and engagement metrics is a testament to their equal level of commitment, contribution and care as it is from the staff and contributors of AFL Media who work passionately to ensure our supporters are the best served of any sport in Australia.



The game's legacy of imagery, sounds and video will be forever available to celebrate

AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

The Western Bulldogs had waited more than six decades to grasp the premiership cup again and for their supporters it was a moment to savour. When the final siren heralded a 22-point win to Luke Beveridge's men in the Toyota AFL Grand Final, the MCG was awash with tears of joy as the longest premiership drought in AFL/VFL history came to an end.

The Dogs have earned a reputation for being the honest battlers from Melbourne's western suburbs and they had to do it the hard way to win their second premiership.

They won two interstate finals – a first for a Victorian club – and became the first team to win the flag from seventh spot since the final eight was introduced in 1994.

It was the Swans' second Grand Final loss in three years. As in 2014, they finished on top of the ladder to win the McClelland Trophy, but came up short on the big day.

The Swans dominated the All-Australian team with five representatives, including Lance Franklin, who was runner-up in the Coleman Medal behind West Coast's Josh Kennedy.

Patrick Dangerfield made the All-Australian team for the fourth time and capped off a brilliant first season with Geelong by taking out the Brownlow Medal.

Several AFL greats hung up the boots, notably games record-holder Brent Harvey, Fremantle champion Matthew Pavlich and Brownlow medallists Dane Swan, Jimmy Bartel and Adam Cooney.

The game mourned the passing of several former champions, including Geelong Brownlow medallist Paul Couch, dual Richmond premiership star Bill Barrot and North Melbourne stalwart Laurie Dwyer.

► Eagle star Josh Kennedy enjoyed an outstanding season, winning his second consecutive Coleman Medal and All-Australian selection.





The Premiers

It was a day for the true red, white and blue believers. After decades of heartache, which included seven consecutive preliminary final defeats, the Western Bulldogs ended a 62-year drought to win only their second AFL/VFL premiership.

The Bulldogs created history in becoming the first team to win the flag from seventh spot since the final eight was introduced in 1994.

To achieve the feat, the Dogs had to win finals in Perth and Sydney, a first for a Victorian club, on top of victories over reigning three-time premier Hawthorn and finally the Sydney Swans.

Jason Johannisen was a worthy Norm Smith medallist, providing a constant source of attack with his speed and penetration off half-back. He finished with 33 disposals, a game-high nine inside 50s and seven rebound 50s.

Johannisen appeared to have capped off an excellent game by kicking the winning goal 20 minutes into the final quarter from 50m on the run, but the ball was ruled touched after a video review.

It was left to Tom Boyd to seal victory with a goal from inside the centre square, much to the delight of delirious Dogs fans.

Boyd, who helped lift the Bulldogs into their first Grand Final since 1961 with his performance in the preliminary final against Greater Western Sydney after No. 1 ruckman Jordan Roughead sustained an eye injury, played the game of his life in the premiership decider.

Boyd kicked 3.2, took eight marks (six contested) and won 14 hit-outs.

Liam Picken starred during the finals campaign and his Grand Final performance revived memories of his father, former Magpie Billy, taking a spectacular team-lifting mark early in the final quarter.

The Bulldog harassed the Swans defence with his constant pressure, finishing with 25 disposals and three goals straight.

Sydney midfielder Josh Kennedy was on track for the Norm Smith Medal after an enormous first half.

While he wasn't as effective in the second half, he still finished with a game-high 34 disposals and three goals.

When key midfielder Dan Hannebery injured his left knee early in the last quarter, it was always going to be tough for the Swans to win.

For the Dogs, the drought was finally over.

2016 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL

Western Bulldogs	2.0	7.1	9.7	13.11 (89)
Sydney Swans	1.2	7.3	8.5	10.7 (67)

BEST: Western Bulldogs – Johannisen, Picken, T. Boyd, Macrae, M. Boyd, Dahlhaus. **Sydney Swans** – Kennedy, Mitchell, Rampe, Heeney, Jones, Hannebery.

GOALS: Western Bulldogs – T. Boyd 3, Dickson 3, Picken 3, Cordy, McLean, C. Smith, Stringer. **Sydney Swans** – Kennedy 3, Mitchell 2, Parker, Smith, Rohan, Franklin, Hewett.

Umpires: M. Stevic, S. Meredith, S. Jeffery

Crowd: 99,981 at the MCG

TEAMS AS SELECTED

Western Bulldogs v Sydney Swans

F	Tory Dickson	Tom Boyd	Clay Smith
B	Jake Lloyd	Heath Grundy	Nick Smith
HF	Josh Dunkley	Zaine Cordy	Jake Stringer
HB	Zak Jones	Jeremy Laidler	Dane Rampe
C	Lachie Hunter	Marcus Bontempelli	Liam Picken
C	Kieren Jack	Josh Kennedy	Jarrad McVeigh
HB	Fletcher Roberts	Dale Morris	Easton Wood
HF	Gary Rohan	Lance Franklin	Luke Parker
B	Jason Johannisen	Joel Hamling	Matthew Boyd
F	Tom Papley	Kurt Tippett	Ben McGlynn
Foll	Jordan Roughead	Luke Dahlhaus	Tom Liberatore
Foll	Sam Naismith	Dan Hannebery	Isaac Heeney
I/C	Jack Macrae, Toby McLean, Shane Biggs, Caleb Daniel		
Em	Matt Suckling, Tom Campbell, Lin Jong		
Coach	Luke Beveridge		
I/C	Tom Mitchell, Callum Mills, George Hewett, Xavier Richards		
Em	Harry Cunningham, Harry Marsh, Toby Nankervis		
Coach	John Longmire		



Norm Smith Medal

When Jason Johannisen seriously injured his right hamstring in round four, he could not have imagined he would be standing with the Norm Smith Medal draped around his neck 168 days later.

Johannisen missed nine games with the injury before making a triumphant return against the Sydney Swans in round 15, when he kicked the winning goal in the dying seconds.

Born in South Africa, Johannisen switched to Australian Football as an 11-year-old when he was convinced to join training at his cousin's junior club, Willetton, in Perth.

Johannisen has no regrets. "It's been an amazing ride and I just love being a part of it," he said after accepting his medal.

Like most of his teammates, Johannisen has thrived under the tutelage of coach Luke Beveridge, who has encouraged him to use his pace and flair to initiate attacks and break up the opposition.

Johannisen was pivotal to the Bulldogs' lead-up to the Grand Final, but he reserved his best performance for the premiership decider, finishing with the impressive statistics of 33 disposals, a game-high nine inside 50s and seven rebound 50s.

Late in the game, Johannisen appeared to deliver the killer blow to the Swans' hopes with a 50m goal. But it was overturned on review, with video showing the ball was touched by Dane Rampe millimetres before it crossed the line.

NORM SMITH MEDAL VOTING

Michael Voss	3 J. Johannisen (WB), 2 L. Picken (WB), SEN 1116, chairman
Wayne Carey	3 T. Boyd (WB), 2 L. Picken (WB), Channel Seven
Jay Clark	3 J. Kennedy (Syd), 2 J. Johannisen (WB), <i>Herald Sun</i>
Brad Johnson	3 J. Johannisen (WB), 2 J. Kennedy (Syd), Fox Footy
Emma Quayle	3 T. Boyd (WB), 2 J. Johannisen (WB), <i>The Age</i>
Totals	10 J. Johannisen (WB), 8 J. Kennedy (Syd), 7 T. Boyd (WB), 5 L. Picken (WB)



Jock McHale Medal

When Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge handed over his Jock McHale Medal to injured skipper Robert Murphy at the post-match presentation ceremony last year, there was hardly a dry eye among the crowd of 99,981.

Beveridge's selfless act was lauded as one of the great moments in Australian sporting history and was recognised by the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, which presented him with its Spirit Of Sport award 12 days after the Bulldogs' drought-breaking triumph.

This underlined Beveridge's humility and class, but beneath those qualities lies a coach with excellent man-management skills and a supreme confidence in his methods and plans.

The results speak for themselves. Before last year's success with the Bulldogs, he had been involved in seven Grand Finals for six wins since 2006.

There were three as senior coach of St Bedes/Mentone in the Victorian Amateur Football Association, one as a development coach at Collingwood under Mick Malthouse and two with Hawthorn as a defensive coach under Alastair Clarkson.

While his 118-game career with Melbourne, the Bulldogs and St Kilda hardly reached great heights, Beveridge clearly has the ability to help others reach their potential, encouraging players to play to their strengths with flair, freedom and passion.

In just under two years at Whitten Oval, Beveridge transformed a club in disarray after he took over from Brendan McCartney into a premiership combination.

Before Beveridge's first season in 2015, skipper Ryan Griffen had departed to join Greater Western Sydney and experienced pair Shaun Higgins and Adam Cooney also left.

Beveridge knew he had plenty of talent at his disposal, including some of the best youngsters in the competition and a sprinkling of seasoned veterans.

Soon it became obvious Beveridge's message was resonating with the Bulldogs as they played in finals in his first season.

While there were numerous injury setbacks last year, the Dogs entered the finals series with an air of confidence.

His plans revolved around players using quick hands to escape traffic, keeping the ball inside 50 and maintaining extreme pressure on the opposition.

Beveridge displayed enormous faith in his players and they repaid him with the biggest prize in football.



Brownlow Medal

Patrick Dangerfield capped off a wonderful first season with Geelong by becoming the club's seventh Brownlow medallist. Dangerfield, who spent eight years with Adelaide before deciding to return home to be closer to his family in Victoria after the 2015 season, broke several records in winning the League's highest individual honour. He amassed a record 35 votes, surpassing Magpie Dane Swan's winning tally of 34 in 2011. Dangerfield polled in 15 games to set a new mark and matched the record nine best-on-ground performances jointly held by 1994 winner Greg Williams and Nat Fyfe in 2015. His three-vote games were in round one (v Hawthorn), round three (v Brisbane Lions), round six (v the Gold Coast Suns), round seven (v Melbourne), round 12 (v North Melbourne), round 13 (v the Western Bulldogs), round 17 (v Fremantle), round 19 (v the Western Bulldogs) and round 23 (v Melbourne). His winning margin was only one shy of the record held by Richmond ruckman Roy Wright, who won by 10 votes in 1954. He became the first player since former Cat Gary Ablett jnr in 2009 to be voted the game's best player by umpires, players and coaches, winning the AFL Players Association MVP and the AFL Coaches Association Player of the Year.

BROWNLOW MEDAL

	Votes	3	2	1	Games
Patrick Dangerfield (Geel)	35	9	2	0	22
Luke Parker (Syd)	26	6	4	0	22
Dustin Martin (Rich)	25	6	2	3	22
Rory Sloane* (Adel)	24	5	4	1	21
Adam Treloar (Coll)	21	4	3	3	22
Dan Hannebery (Syd)	21	4	3	3	22
Andrew Gaff (WCE)	21	6	1	1	21
Lachie Neale (Frem)	20	5	1	3	22
Marcus Bontempelli (WB)	20	5	2	1	22
Zach Merrett (Ess)	19	3	5	0	22

*Ineligible

Coleman Medal

West Coast's Josh Kennedy became the first player in more than a decade to win successive Coleman medals. Former Saint Fraser Gehrig was the last to achieve the feat, winning in 2004-05. Kennedy kicked 80.36 in the home and away season, giving him an impressive conversion rate of 69 per cent. His goal tally was five more than he kicked in winning his first Coleman Medal in 2015. The Eagles spearhead had another remarkably consistent season. He played in all of the club's matches and scored at least one goal in each of them. He scored multiple goals in 19 of the 22 home and away matches, as well as two goals in the elimination final defeat against eventual premiers the Western Bulldogs. The West Coast vice-captain's best effort was in the opening round against the Brisbane Lions at Domain Stadium when he booted 8.2. He kicked bags of seven twice, against Port Adelaide in round nine and Fremantle in round 20, and five-goal hauls on five occasions.

COLEMAN MEDAL

	Home & Away			Including Finals				
	G	B	Gms	G	B	%	Av. Gms	
Josh Kennedy (WCE)	80	36	22	82	37	69	3.6	23
Lance Franklin (Syd)	74	49	22	81	54	60	3.1	26
Eddie Betts (Adel)	66	30	22	75	31	71	3.1	24
Tom Lynch (GCS)	66	34	22	66	34	66	3.0	22
Josh Jenkins (Adel)	60	26	22	62	29	68	2.6	24
Tom Hawkins (Geel)	52	30	21	55	31	64	2.4	23
Jeremy Cameron (GWS)	49	20	18	53	25	68	2.7	20
Jack Gunston (Haw)	48	31	22	51	33	61	2.1	24
Jack Riewoldt (Rich)	48	34	22	48	34	59	2.2	22
Tim Membrey (St K)	44	18	17	44	18	71	2.6	17
Cyril Rioli (Haw)	44	11	19	47	13	78	2.2	21

McClelland Trophy

After losing almost 1000 games of experience from 2015, the Sydney Swans defied the critics to win their second McClelland Trophy in three years. The Swans recorded one more victory than they did in 2015 and were one of three teams to finish with 17 wins. Underlining the closeness of the season, three teams (Greater Western Sydney, Adelaide and West Coast) finished with 16 wins, and eventual premiers the Western Bulldogs were seventh on 15 victories. In the first 21 rounds, Sydney sat atop the ladder only once – at the end of round three after its win over cross-town rivals the GWS Giants – until its narrow victory over North Melbourne in round 22 at Blundstone Arena shot it back to the top.

As an indication of the Swans' consistency, four of their five losses were by 10 points or less, and three of them, against Richmond, the Western Bulldogs and Hawthorn, were single-figure defeats that came in the dying seconds. Sydney's season was bookended by big wins against popular Victorian clubs at the SCG – by 80 points over Collingwood in round one and 113 points against Richmond in round 23. The victory over the Tigers was the Swans' sixth in a row leading into the finals series, which culminated in another Grand Final appearance before going down to the Bulldogs in the premiership decider.

2016 TOYOTA AFL PREMIERSHIP SEASON LADDER

	P	W	L	D	For G	For B	For Pts	Against G	Against B	Against Pts	%	Mtch pts	Home W	Home L	Away W	Away L	Form W/L	Scores High	Scores Low	Av margin W	Av margin L	W < 7pts	L < 7pts	Pls used	Rnd 23 2015	1st Yr Players	Qtrs Won	4th Qtrs W
1 Sydney Swans	22	17	5	0	326	265	2221	208	221	1469	151.19	68	9	2	8	3	6W	164	63	47	12	2	3	34	4	7	60	13
2 Geelong Cats	22	17	5	0	325	285	2235	227	192	1554	143.82	68	10	1	7	4	7W	168	60	45	19	1	1	33	10	2	56	19
3 Hawthorn	22	17	5	0	312	262	2134	263	222	1800	118.56	68	10	1	7	4	1W	151	55	29	34	5	0	36	3	7	47	15
4 GWS Giants	22	16	6	0	351	274	2380	240	223	1663	143.11	64	9	2	7	4	2W	158	68	50	15	0	2	35	11	3	63	15
5 Adelaide Crows	22	16	6	0	363	305	2483	260	235	1795	138.33	64	9	2	7	4	1L	177	55	50	18	0	1	29	7	3	57	13
6 West Coast Eagles	22	16	6	0	323	243	2181	240	238	1678	129.98	64	10	1	6	5	4W	166	49	43	30	2	0	35	2	2	55	12
7 Western Bulldogs	22	15	7	0	268	249	1857	237	187	1609	115.41	60	8	3	7	4	1L	123	43	27	23	3	1	39	6	4	45	11
8 North Melbourne	22	12	10	0	284	252	1956	264	275	1859	105.22	48	7	4	5	6	4L	136	47	29	25	1	0	34	8	2	45	11
9 St Kilda	22	12	10	0	286	237	1953	300	241	2041	95.69	48	7	4	5	6	2W	161	29	31	47	1	1	35	14	3	40	8
10 Port Adelaide	22	10	12	0	300	255	2055	275	289	1939	105.98	40	4	7	6	5	1W	173	33	50	32	0	2	37	9	6	45	12
11 Melbourne	22	10	12	0	286	228	1944	288	263	1991	97.64	40	7	4	3	8	2L	160	31	35	33	2	2	37	13	5	42	12
12 Collingwood	22	9	13	0	276	254	1910	294	234	1998	95.60	36	6	5	3	8	1L	143	53	39	34	1	2	39	12	6	38	7
13 Richmond	22	8	14	0	247	231	1713	314	271	2155	79.49	32	6	5	2	9	3L	117	23	22	44	1	2	41	5	8	35	9
14 Carlton	22	7	15	0	224	224	1568	287	256	1978	79.27	28	5	6	2	9	1L	104	41	16	34	2	2	35	18	3	29	10
15 Gold Coast Suns	22	6	16	0	258	230	1778	328	305	2273	78.22	24	5	6	1	10	5L	139	41	38	45	0	2	40	16	6	32	6
16 Fremantle Dockers	22	4	18	0	227	212	1574	306	283	2119	74.28	16	3	8	1	10	1W	147	37	49	41	0	1	38	1	3	24	7
17 Brisbane Lions	22	3	19	0	254	246	1770	429	298	2872	61.63	12	2	9	1	10	2L	128	39	18	60	1	1	40	17	9	17	6
18 Essendon	22	3	19	0	200	237	1437	350	256	2356	60.99	12	3	8	0	11	1W	103	34	14	50	1	0	39	15	6	31	5



Virgin Australia All-Australian team

Minor premier Sydney dominated the 2016 Virgin Australia All-Australian team with five representatives.

Swans midfielder Josh Kennedy earned his third All-Australian selection and was picked in the centre. Alongside him on a wing was teammate Dan Hannebery.

Defender Dane Rampe was selected for the first time in a back pocket and midfielder Luke Parker was one of four players on the interchange bench.

Lance Franklin, who finished second in the Coleman Medal behind West Coast's Josh Kennedy, was named at centre half-forward.

Kennedy was picked at full-forward, with Adelaide's Eddie Betts and Gold Coast's Tom Lynch alongside him.

Betts and Lynch, who was selected for the first time, kicked 66 goals apiece in their 22 home and away games.

Another debutant selected was star Crow Rory Sloane, who was on the other wing alongside Swans duo Kennedy and Hannebery.

Sloane was vice-captain to Geelong's Joel Selwood, who was named skipper for the third time after also earning the honour in 2013 and 2014. Only Wayne Carey (four) has led the team on more occasions.

Brownlow medallist Patrick Dangerfield was named ruck-rover to partner his Geelong captain Selwood and Melbourne ruckman Max Gawn.

The back six included newcomers Rampe and Eagle Jeremy McGovern.

In the key defensive posts were Tiger Alex Rance and Crow Daniel Talia. Alongside Talia at half-back were veterans Heath Shaw (Greater Western Sydney) and Corey Enright (Geelong).

Giant Toby Greene and Hawthorn star Cyril Rioli were picked on the half-forward flanks.

Joining Parker on the bench were Western Bulldogs premiership pair Marcus Bontempelli and Matthew Boyd and Richmond's Dustin Martin.

Adelaide and Geelong each had three representatives in the team. GWS, Richmond, West Coast and the Western Bulldogs

had two, with the Gold Coast Suns, Hawthorn and Melbourne having one apiece.

Eight clubs – the Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Fremantle, North Melbourne, Port Adelaide and St Kilda – did not have a representative.

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

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

B	Dane Rampe Sydney Swans	Alex Rance Richmond	Jeremy McGovern West Coast Eagles
HB:	Heath Shaw GWS Giants	Daniel Talia Adelaide Crows	Corey Enright Geelong Cats
C:	Dan Hannebery Sydney Swans	Josh Kennedy Sydney Swans	Rory Sloane (vc) Adelaide Crows
HF:	Toby Greene GWS Giants	Lance Franklin Sydney Swans	Cyril Rioli Hawthorn
F:	Eddie Betts Adelaide Crows	Josh Kennedy West Coast Eagles	Tom Lynch Gold Coast Suns
R:	Max Gawn Melbourne	Patrick Dangerfield Geelong Cats	Joel Selwood (c) Geelong Cats
I/C	Marcus Bontempelli Western Bulldogs	Matthew Boyd Western Bulldogs	Dustin Martin Richmond
			Luke Parker Sydney Swans
Coach	Luke Beveridge Western Bulldogs		
Umpire	Matt Stevic		



Mark & Goal of the Year

Adelaide Crows small forward Eddie Betts made it two in a row in the \$10,000 Coates Hire Goal of the Year award.

Betts kicked his winning goal in the Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round (round 10) against Greater Western Sydney at Adelaide Oval.

The All-Australian small forward scrambled to win possession near the boundary early in the third quarter, then curled it around for a superb snap on his right boot.

Betts won ahead of fellow finalists Shaun Atley (North Melbourne, round 11) and Lance Franklin (Sydney Swans, round nine).

It was the third time he had won the Goal of the Year award, with his other victories being in 2006 and 2015.

North Melbourne ruckman/forward Majak Daw won the \$10,000 Woolworths Mark of the Year award.

Daw flew high over Magpie Jonathon Marsh for a spectacular grab at half-back during the third quarter of the round 18 match at Etihad Stadium.

The Kangaroo won ahead of fellow finalists Joe Daniher (Essendon, round 16) and Rory Lobb (Greater Western Sydney, round 11).

At the end of the home and away season, the All-Australian selection committee picked the best three marks and goals from 28 contenders – the 23 weekly winners, along with five others decided by the AFL Media expert selectors.

The best three in the two categories were based on a 5-4-3-2-1 vote given by each selection committee member. Both awards were decided by a public vote.

Betts and Daw were presented with their awards at the Brownlow Medal count at Melbourne's Crown Palladium.





Australian Football Hall of Fame

Six players were inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2016 to recognise their contribution to the game. The late Maurice Rioli, the first indigenous player in 1982 to win the Norm Smith Medal, was inducted along with SANFL star Paul Bagshaw (seven premierships with Sturt), WAFL star Ray Sorrell (dual Sandover medallist with East Fremantle), 1959 Brownlow Medallist Verdun Howell and two modern-day multiple AFL premiership winners, the Brisbane Lions' Nigel Lappin and the Adelaide Crows' Ben Hart. The Hall of Fame was established in 1996 with 136 inductees and serves to recognise players, coaches, umpires, administrators and media

representatives who have made an outstanding contribution to Australian Football. The Hall of Fame committee can select and enshrine up to six Hall of Fame members each year. Since 1996, the addition of a further 133 inductees has increased the Hall of Fame to 269. Among this number are 26 Legends (there is a restriction that no more than 10 per cent of inductees may be Legends). The 2016 Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee was Mike Fitzpatrick (chairman), Patrick Clifton (secretary), Dennis Cometti, Col Hutchinson (statistics and history consultant), Jim Main, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin and Michelangelo Rucci.



The 2016 Hall of Fame inductees (back from left) Paul Bagshaw, Ben Hart, Nigel Lappin and Dean Rioli (nephew of Maurice Rioli); (front) Ray Sorrell, Verdun Howell and Gavin Rioli (son of Maurice Rioli).



Paul Bagshaw

Born: August 22, 1946
Playing career: 1964-80 (Sturt)
Games: 360
Goals: 258

Dubbed 'Mr Magic', Bagshaw delighted Sturt fans with his exquisite deeds for a club-record 360 SANFL games between 1964-80. A match-winning ruck-rover who could star in key positions, he was a prototype for the modern footballer – versatile, strong, athletic, could take big marks, go on long, weaving runs and kick miraculous goals. Bagshaw played in seven premiership teams, including two as captain, and represented South Australia on 14 occasions. He made his debut at 17 and finished runner-up in the club award in his first two seasons before winning it at 19. He won five best and fairests, three of them during Sturt's remarkable run of five consecutive premierships from 1966-70. Late in his career, Bagshaw went forward and in 1978 led the SANFL goalkicking with 78. One of the most memorable goals of his career was in the 1973 qualifying final against North Adelaide at Adelaide Oval when he nailed a 45m checkside shot from the boundary in his jock-strap after his shorts had been ripped off. A member of Sturt's Team of the Century and South Australia's Football Hall of Fame, Bagshaw was approached by several Melbourne clubs but never considered leaving the Double Blues or the family farm at McLaren Flat.



Ben Hart

Born: July 9, 1974
Playing career: 1990-2007 (North Adelaide 1990-91, 2007; Adelaide 1992-2006)
Games: 332 (NA 21; Adel 311)
Goals: 49 (NA 4; Adel 45)

Hart was a key player in Adelaide's premierships in 1997-98. The defender was named among the Crows' best in six of their eight finals in that period, including both Grand Finals. As a youngster, Hart modelled himself on Melbourne great Robbie Flower. After making his SANFL debut in a 1990 final for North Adelaide, he was picked up by the newly formed Crows as a zone selection. The youngest Adelaide player to make his debut (17 years and 257 days in 1992), he took on some of the game's greatest full-forwards, including Tony Lockett, Jason Dunstall and Gary Ablett. He won All-Australian selection in his first two seasons and was rewarded again in 1999 and 2002 – in those last two years he also won the club's best and fairest. In 2006, Hart became the first Crow to reach 300 games. He remains the only man in AFL/VFL history to have played every game in his first season and at least 20 matches in each of his first 12 seasons. Hart is a member of the Crows' and South Australian football halls of fame. After his retirement, he was an assistant coach at Adelaide and Collingwood.



Verdun Howell

Born: June 16, 1937
Playing career: 1952-68 (City South 1952-57; St Kilda 1958-68)
Games: 226 (CS 67; St K 159)
Goals: 59 (St K)

Howell joined St Kilda as a promising forward but quickly developed into one of the great full-backs in League history. An excellent mark and kick, he was renowned for his attacking flair from the last line of defence. He played in two premierships with Tasmanian club City South before being lured across Bass Strait in 1958. The following year he finished in a tie for the Brownlow Medal with Bob Skilton, but the South Melbourne champion won the medal on a countback. He received his Brownlow retrospectively in 1989. He also won St Kilda's best and fairest in 1959. Howell returned to the forward line in 1965 and in 1966 was vice-captain of the breakthrough St Kilda premiership team. To be a part of that team, he had to endure pain after breaking his jaw two weeks earlier and playing with it wired during the finals. He represented Victoria on nine occasions, is a member of the St Kilda and Tasmanian Sports halls of fame and an icon of the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame. He coached the Richmond reserves to the 1971 premiership before moving to Western Australia, where he coached Claremont for three seasons. He still lives in WA.



Nigel Lappin

Born: June 21, 1976
Playing career: 1994-2008 (Brisbane Lions)
Games: 279
Goals: 174

Lappin was a key member of the powerful Brisbane Lions combination that won three consecutive premierships between 2001-03. He was part of the Lions' 'Fab Four' alongside fellow midfielders Michael Voss, Jason Akermanis and Simon Black, which became one of the most highly regarded midfield combinations in the game's history. Lappin is best remembered for his courageous effort in the 2003 premiership, when he carried broken ribs into the game yet played his role in the triumph over Collingwood. After the match, he was promptly taken to hospital to repair a punctured lung. Lappin grew up in Chiltern, Victoria, and football was in his blood from early in his life, playing with his cousins Matthew (ex-Saint and Blue) and Jason (former Western Bulldogs rookie). He was drafted to the Brisbane Bears in 1993 and became a member of the Brisbane Lions' inaugural team following the merger with Fitzroy at the end of 1996. He was a four-time All-Australian, won the club best and fairest in 2004 and was Lions co-captain in 2007-08. He represented Victoria three times and played two games for Australia in the International Rules Series. Since retiring as a player, he has been a member of Geelong's coaching staff.



Maurice Rioli

Born: September 1, 1957
Playing career: 1975-90 (South Fremantle 1975-81, 1988-90; Richmond 1982-87)
Games: 286 (SF 168; Rich 118)
Goals: 213 (SF 133; Rich 80)

Rioli was a trailblazer for Tiwi Islanders during six seasons with Richmond in the VFL. The midfielder was pure class, possessed a penetrating left boot and was ahead of his time with his ability to tackle opponents with intent. Rioli was the first member of a losing team to win a Norm Smith Medal in 1982 and was adjudged best-afield in his previous two Grand Finals – the 1980 and 1981 WAFL deciders with South Fremantle. Rioli won best and fairest awards in his first two seasons at Punt Rd (1982-83) and was runner-up in the 1983 Brownlow Medal. He captained Western Australia and represented the state in 13 games, as well as playing seven matches for the Northern Territory. He was selected in three All-Australian teams and the Indigenous Team of the Century. He represented Australia in six games over two International Rules series and was South Fremantle captain for two seasons. He is a member of three other halls of fame – South Fremantle, West Australian Football and NT Football. Rioli, who became a politician after his football career ended, died suddenly at 53 on Christmas Day in 2010 and was given a state funeral in the Northern Territory.



Ray Sorrell

Born: January 1, 1938
Playing career: 1956-67 (East Fremantle 1956-63, 1966-67; South Fremantle 1964-65)
Games: 178 (EF 155; SF 23)
Goals: 63 (EF 55; SF 8)

Sorrell played in a golden era of West Australian football and was a key member of East Fremantle's powerful combination. He suffered a bad leg injury in a motorbike accident in 1957 after his first season with East Fremantle and initially feared he would not play again. Sporting what became trademark knee strapping, he returned the next season and forged a magnificent career. The clever centremen, a fine mark and a beautiful left-foot kick, was a dual Sandover medallist and a two-time All-Australian. He is also a dual East Fremantle best and fairest winner and two-time Simpson medallist. Sorrell trained with South Melbourne in 1960, but returned to WA after failing to win a clearance. In the 1961 carnival in Brisbane, Sorrell played a critical role in WA's upset victory over raging favourite Victoria by nine points to win the national title. He represented WA in 18 games and was state captain in 1963. He was captain-coach of South Fremantle for two seasons before returning to the Sharks as a player in 1966. He is a member of the East Fremantle and West Australian football halls of fame, East Fremantle's Team of the Century and Fremantle's Team of Legends.

LIFE MEMBERS

**Gary Ablett jr**

The son of Geelong great Gary Ablett snr has carved out an impressive career of

his own. He has won two Brownlow Medals (2009, 2013) and played in two premiership teams with the Cats. After eight seasons with Geelong, he moved north in 2011 to the newly formed Gold Coast, where he became the Suns' captain – a position he held for the past six years. He won best and fairest awards in the Cats' premiership years of 2007 and 2009, as well as his first three seasons with Gold Coast. He is an eight-time All-Australian – once as captain and three times as vice-captain.

**John Birt**

Birt was a star rover for Essendon in the 1950s and '60s, playing in two premiership

teams under the great John Coleman. Recruited from Ballarat, he played 193 games and kicked 303 goals between 1957-67 and won the best and fairest three times. He left Essendon at the end of 1967 and joined SANFL club West Torrens as captain-coach for three seasons, winning two best and fairest awards. He returned to Essendon in 1971 for one season as coach before becoming an assistant at Footscray for five seasons. Birt represented Victoria on 11 occasions and South Australia twice. He later became a respected administrator at Collingwood, Fitzroy and the Brisbane Lions.

**Matthew Boyd**

Recruited from Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, Boyd has

been a Western Bulldogs stalwart over 14 seasons. After playing most of his career in the midfield, he has been reinvented as an attacking half-back under Luke Beveridge, winning his third All-Australian honour last season. Starred in the Bulldogs' finals campaign last year, culminating in his key role in the club's drought-breaking premiership victory. He has won the best and fairest award three times and was captain for three seasons. Represented Australia in four International Rules games against Ireland in 2008 and 2010. He has decided to play on in 2017.

**Ross Glendinning**

Glendinning was a versatile key-position player who was a star in two states. After

playing 56 games with WAFL club East Perth, he joined North Melbourne in 1978. He played 190 games and kicked 214 goals for the Roos, winning the Brownlow Medal in 1983 and two best and fairest awards. He returned to his home state in 1987 to become the first captain of the West Coast Eagles, leading them into their first finals campaign before retiring in 1988. He represented Victoria and WA, played three International Rules games for Australia and was a five-time All-Australian. Glendinning was inducted into the Australian Football and WAFL halls of fame and is a member of the North Melbourne and East Perth teams of the century. The medal awarded to the best player in the Western Derby between the Eagles and the Dockers is named in his honour.

**Luke Hodge**

The top pick in the 2001 AFL National Draft has become one of Hawthorn's all-time

greats. Hailing from Colac in Victoria's Western District, the four-time premiership star is one of only three players to be a dual Norm Smith medallist, in 2008 and 2014. He was captain of the Hawks' three premierships between 2013-15. He is a three-time All-Australian, being named captain in 2010. He has won the Hawthorn best and fairest twice (2005, 2010), finished second once and third twice. Represented Australia in four International Rules matches, winning the Jim Stynes Medal in 2014. He is due to play his 300th game in 2017.

**Dean Margetts**

The sports administrator was recruited from the WAFL to the AFL

panel in 2002, umpiring 12 matches in his debut season. Umpired in the under-18 championships and the WAFL Grand Final in 2000. Has umpired in 11 finals, including last year's second qualifying final between Geelong and Hawthorn, and officiated in 13 games in 2016. He has umpired 277 premiership and 36 pre-season games.

**Jarrad McVeigh**

Recruited from Pennant Hills/ NSW-ACT under-18s, McVeigh has been

one of the Swans' most successful home-grown products. He comes from a strong football background, with his older brother Mark playing 232 games with Essendon. McVeigh has served Sydney mainly as a midfielder, although he has spent plenty of time in defence in the past few seasons. He has been co-captain since 2011, leading the Swans to their fifth premiership in 2012. He won the best and fairest award in 2008 and 2013 and was named All-Australian in 2013. Represented Australia in three International Rules games against Ireland.

**Simon Meredith**

The IT consultant was recruited from the VAFA and officiated

in the under-18 championships in 1999 and the 2001 VFL reserves Grand Final. Umpired the 2003 VFL senior Grand Final and was named the 2003 VFL Umpire of the Year. Made his AFL senior debut in 2004 and has officiated in 24 finals and four Grand Finals. Umpired in 28 games last year, including the Grand Final, taking his premiership games total to 288. He has also officiated in 32 pre-season games.

**Leigh Montagna**

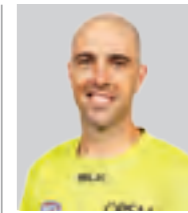
The talented Montagna has been an important component of

St Kilda's line-up for the past decade in the midfield and more recently in defence. It took the former Northern Knight a while to establish himself at senior level, playing only 30 games in his first four seasons, but he became a key member of the successful Saints teams under Ross Lyon with his trademark speed and ability to accumulate plenty of possessions. He finished second in the best and fairest twice and third on three occasions. He has been named in the All-Australian team twice and represented Australia in International Rules on six occasions.

**Sam Mostyn**

Sam Mostyn became the first woman to be appointed to the AFL Commission in

2005, serving until last year. She has been a strong advocate for the AFL's Respect and Responsibility, Indigenous and multicultural programs and the growth of the participation of women across the game. Her expertise has encompassed a range of areas, including business, corporate and government affairs, human resources, business development, legal affairs, social inclusion and the arts. She has been a powerful advocate for the importance of people from diverse backgrounds being involved in Australian Football. Her advocacy for the participation of women and girls playing at all levels and in the workforce in the AFL and across clubs and states was a significant factor in the development of a national women's league.

**Mathew Nicholls**

The leadership consultant started with the Diamond Valley Football League before

joining the VFL panel in 1999. Umpired in the under-18 championships in 2000 and the VFL Grand Final in 2002. Recruited to the AFL panel in 2003, he officiated in 27 games in 2016, including three finals. Was named All-Australian umpire in 2013 and has umpired in two Grand Finals, in 2013 and 2014. He has officiated in 280 premiership and 35 pre-season games.

JACK TITUS AWARD

**Les Bailey**

Bailey's contribution to Geelong has spanned more

than 40 years in several volunteer roles. After initially applying for a job as team manager of the under-19s in 1971, he took on the role as team manager of the reserves side. He did that until taking on the senior role in 1983, a job he performed until 2011. A Cats life member since 1989, he would leave work at 4.30pm at least twice, sometimes three times, a week for training and still enjoys being involved with the club. Over his time at Geelong, his favourite three Cats are Gary Ablett snr, Gary Ablett jnr and Garry Hocking. Bailey, 75, has been married to Marie for 54 years and they have three children.



Collingwood's Dane Swan was one of three Brownlow medallists to retire in 2016.

Retirees

The glittering career of North Melbourne champion Brent Harvey came to an end in 2016, but not before he broke Hawthorn great Michael Tuck's long-standing AFL/VFL games record.

Harvey finished on a remarkable 432 games, six ahead of Tuck. The diminutive Kangaroo played in the 1999 premiership team, won the best and fairest on five occasions, was a four-time All-Australian, equal second in the Brownlow Medal in 2007 and captain between 2009-11.

Two of Harvey's teammates at North Melbourne, Nick Dal Santo and Michael Firrito, also hung up the boots.

Dal Santo was a three-time All-Australian who played 260 games for St Kilda between 2002-13 before playing his final three seasons with the Roos. He finished second in the Brownlow in 2011 and third in 2005.

Firrito was a stalwart in defence in 275 games between 2003-16.

Matthew Pavlich donned the Dockers' colours for the last time, kicking his 700th goal in his 353rd and final game against eventual premiers the Western Bulldogs at Domain Stadium.

The six-time All-Australian won his club best and fairest award a record six times and the club goalkicking on a record eight occasions.

Triple premiership players Corey Enright and Jimmy Bartel bowed out after playing pivotal roles in Geelong's golden era in the past decade.

Enright made the All-Australian team for a sixth time last season. The defender won the club best and fairest twice – both in premiership years (2009, 2011) – and broke Ian Nankervis' Geelong games record of 325 in 2016.

Bartel, a two-time All-Australian, won the Brownlow in 2007 and the Norm Smith Medal in 2011.

The Cats veteran was the third Brownlow medallist to retire last year, with Magpie Dane Swan and Bomber Adam Cooney also calling it quits.

Swan won the medal in 2011 and Cooney in 2008 while playing with the Western Bulldogs.

Swan was a member of Collingwood's 2010 premiership team, won the best and fairest on three occasions and was a five-time All-Australian.

Thirty-seven players boasting more than 100 games' experience finished their careers during or after the season.

DEPARTING PLAYERS (MORE THAN 100 GAMES)

Player	Club/s	Gms	Gls
Brent Harvey	North Melbourne	432	518
Matthew Pavlich	Fremantle	353	700
Corey Enright	Geelong Cats	332	66
Nick Dal Santo	St Kilda/North Melbourne	322	156
Jimmy Bartel	Geelong Cats	305	202
Michael Firrito	North Melbourne	275	29
Ted Richards	Essendon/Sydney Swans	261	34
Dane Swan	Collingwood	258	211
Adam Cooney	Western Bulldogs/Essendon	250	202
Sam Fisher	St Kilda	228	22
Troy Chaplin	Port Adelaide/Richmond	215	15
Jed Adcock	Brisbane Lions/Western Bulldogs	213	60
Nick Malceski	Sydney Swans/Gold Coast Suns	210	75
Farren Ray	Western Bulldogs/St Kilda/North Melbourne	209	59
Nathan van Berlo	Adelaide Crows	205	68
Andrew Walker	Carlton	202	139
Daniel Merrett	Brisbane Lions	200	70
Mathew Stokes	Geelong Cats/Essendon	200	209
Ryan Crowley	Fremantle/Essendon	196	118
Jay Schulz	Richmond/Port Adelaide	194	333
Will Minson	Western Bulldogs	191	81
Ben McGlynn	Hawthorn/Sydney Swans	171	195
Alipate Carlile	Port Adelaide	167	5
Mark Jamar	Melbourne/Essendon	160	59
Alan Toovey	Collingwood	159	9
James Gwilt	St Kilda/Essendon	152	25
Michael Jamison	Carlton	150	2
Courtenay Dempsey	Essendon	133	35
Andrejs Everitt	Western Bulldogs/Sydney Swans/Carlton	131	93
Chris Dawes	Collingwood/Melbourne	121	130
Xavier Ellis	Hawthorn/West Coast Eagles	120	37
Robin Nahas	Richmond/North Melbourne	117	135
Mitch Clark	Brisbane Lions/Melbourne/Geelong Cats	106	111
James Polkinghorne	Brisbane Lions/Essendon	101	54
Paul Stewart	Port Adelaide	101	33
Jack Grimes	Melbourne	100	11
Clancee Pearce	Fremantle	100	36

OBITUARIES

Ken Judge

Judge, who made his mark at four AFL clubs, died of cancer in Perth on his 58th birthday on January 15, 2016. After starting his senior career with WAFL club East Fremantle, Judge went on to play with Hawthorn (72 games and 158 goals from 1983-86) and the Brisbane Bears (17 games and 18 goals from 1987-88). He later turned his hand to coaching and was an assistant coach and reserves coach at Carlton in the 1990s and in 1996 returned to Hawthorn as senior coach until 1999. In 2000-01, he was coach of the West Coast Eagles. Judge played in Hawthorn's 1983 premiership side and was a member of the losing 1984 and 1985 Grand Final teams. For many years, Judge was a football commentator, based in Perth, for the ABC.

Jack Pimm

Pimm was the oldest-living AFL/VFL player when he died, aged 95, on February 27, 2016. He is also remembered as a World War II hero and winner of the Military Cross. The former Collingwood forward had his career interrupted in the war years when his active service included stints in New Guinea and Bougainville. He was awarded the Military Cross for his "inspired and gallant" service in Bougainville. Pimm, a Collingwood life member, played 58 games (including three finals) and kicked 113 goals in two stints – 1940 and 1946-50. He was born in Avoca, in country Victoria, moved to Wattle Glen when 10 and played his early football with Melbourne High School and Diamond Creek.

Tom Simpson

Simpson, who played 124 games for Richmond, died on February 29, 2016, aged 82. Simpson made his name on the wing and played from 1956-63, before assisting the Tigers as a recruiting officer in the 1970s and '80s. Simpson first attracted VFL scouts when he played with East Ballarat. He was second in Richmond's best and fairest in 1959 and third in 1958 and was a member of the Tigers' only night premiership side in 1962. He was awarded life membership in 1963. He returned to East Ballarat in 1964 as captain and coach and landed a premiership in his first season. Simpson later coached North Ballarat to a flag in 1970, returned to again coach East Ballarat in 1980 and from 1982-83 coached Springbank.

Paul Couch

Geelong's 1989 Brownlow medallist died suddenly of a heart attack, aged 51, on March 5 while on a bike ride on the Great Ocean Road near Apollo Bay. Couch was one of Geelong's greats – a three-time club champion (1986, 1989, 1995) and All-Australian (1989, 1991, 1995). He missed playing in a premiership side, but played in 18 finals, four of them Grand Finals – in 1989, 1992, 1994 and 1995. Couch played 259 games and kicked 203 goals from 1985-97 and was selected in Geelong's Team of the Century. It was a huge night when the country boy from Boggy Creek (via Warrnambool) won the Brownlow Medal in 1989 by two votes. AFL chief executive Gillon McLachlan described Couch as a "bubbly, infectious figure; a champion of our game". Geelong CEO Brian Cook said: "Paul was an icon of the Geelong FC and a friend to all who knew him." About 1500 mourners attended a memorial service for Couch on March 15 at Geelong's Simonds Stadium. At the end of the service, they walked a lap of the ground as a final goodbye to the popular Cat.

Ivan Rohrt

Rohrt, who led Carlton's off-field strategy during sometimes controversial times, died on March 10, 2016, aged 95. Rohrt served Carlton over many years as a committeeman and from 1975-77 as president. He followed the more-outspoken George Harris into the presidency chair, and when Rohrt left, Harris returned to his former position.

Frank Tuck

One of Collingwood's most reliable but unlucky defenders, Tuck died at Corowa, NSW, on July 1, 2016, aged 84. The Magpies won two premierships in the 1950s and Tuck would have played in both, but for misfortune. He wasn't in the 1953 team because of suspension (for striking Footscray forward Jack Collins) and missed captaining the 1958 side when he was injured in the second semi-final. A Collingwood life member, Tuck played in the losing 1952, 1955 and 1956 Grand Finals. He was destined not to play in a Magpie premiership team, yet remains a club luminary, one of its greatest backmen in a 131-game career from 1950-59. He was recruited from the Victorian country town of Strathmerton and after his League career did much to foster country football in the north-central and north-east of Victoria.

Billy Williams

Williams, one of South Melbourne's greatest rovers, died aged 90 on July 8, 2016. Williams is remembered as one of the top-line 'old school' Swans, coming from Melbourne suburban club Spotswood and going all the way to selection in the club's Team of the Century and Hall of Fame. Williams played 124 games and kicked 180 goals in his VFL career that spanned from 1945 to 1951. He won the best and fairest in 1946, 1947 and 1950 and twice led the club goalkicking. He missed playing in a premiership side with the Swans, but the 20th game of his rookie season was the infamous 1945 'Bloodbath' Grand Final. Williams became captain-coach of VFA club Williamstown in 1952.

Frank Johnson

Johnson, who came out of retirement to play League football with South Melbourne, died on July 9, 2016, aged 84. Some say Johnson is Port Melbourne’s most famous player – a ruckman who resisted offers from the Swans and headed for country football after his VFA days. Finally, on his return to Melbourne in 1960, after a two-year stint as captain-coach of South Warrnambool, he donned the South guernsey at the age of 27. In his first season, he showed his class by winning the best and fairest. Previously, at Port from 1950-57, he gave his all in 165 games (he was also coach in 1956-57), won five best and fairests, was a premiership player in 1953 (he played in eight consecutive Grand Final teams), was named captain of the club’s Team of the Century, was an All-Australian in 1953 and 1956 and won the Liston Trophy in 1952 as the VFA’s best and fairest player. In 2007, he was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

Rod Vernon

Vernon, a former Fitzroy ruckman, died on July 8, 2016, aged 82. Vernon, who started at East Brunswick YCW and worked his way up through the Fitzroy thirds, played 119 games and kicked 72 goals from 1954-63. He was a Fitzroy life member.

Neil Ferguson

Ferguson, a product of Melbourne High School, died on July 14, 2016, aged 70. A ruckman/forward, he played 82 games and kicked 50 goals with Hawthorn from 1964-70. He headed to Western Australia and from 1971-75 played 86 games and kicked 32 goals with East Fremantle. He played in East’s premiership team in 1974. In 1977, he made another move and played a season (16 games) with Claremont.

Ted Langridge

Langridge, a local Richmond boy and remembered in Victoria and South Australia as a clever goalkicking rover, died on July 27, 2016, aged 79. Langridge came out of the Richmond Citizens club and played the first of his 94 games in 1955. He was smart near goal (he kicked five goals in a game six times) and three times won the club goalkicking award with a career tally of 149. He was a member of the reserves premiership side in 1955 and the club’s only night premiership team in 1962. In 1963, Langridge played the first of three seasons with Sturt in SA, where he added a further 54 games and 80 goals. Langridge became a football commentator in SA.

Brian Roberts

Roberts, one of Richmond’s and football’s biggest characters, died on August 6, 2016, aged 70. Known as the ‘Whale’, he was remembered on many fronts – as a man of great height and bulk, as a colourful Melbourne publican and as a well-travelled player who had the rare distinction of playing state football for South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria. His football journey started at SA country club Millicent in the early 1960s and from there he played 57 games for South Adelaide (1965-67), 57 for East Fremantle (1968-70), 77 for Richmond (1971-74) and 15 for South Melbourne (1975). Roberts was a member of the Tigers’ 1973-74 premiership sides and played in the losing 1972 Grand Final team. In 1975, he was a central figure (along with Richmond teammates Graham Teasdale and Francis Jackson) in a much-publicised swap, with the trio heading to South Melbourne and South’s John Pitura to the Tigers.

Des Calverley

One of the AFL/VFL’s oldest players, Calverley died aged 96 on August 10, 2016. He was recruited by Fitzroy from the Victorian country town of Leitchville and played 52 games from 1940-46. After two games in 1946, he moved mid-year to Richmond where he had 12 more games before the season’s end. Overall, he played 18 games for the Tigers for a career total of 70. Calverley’s brother Bruce also played for Fitzroy and was a member of the club’s 1944 premiership side. Des’ sons Graham (10 games) and Ray (21) also played for Fitzroy.

Ken Goddard

One of Hawthorn’s most decorated servants, Goddard died on August 21, 2016, aged 89. He was a trainer for 45 years – assistant trainer from 1962-69, head trainer from 1970-98 and assistant trainer again from 1999-2007. He was the first person who had not been a player, coach or president to receive life membership at the Hawks. He was inducted into the Hawthorn Hall of Fame, was a life member of the AFL/VFLTrainers Association and in 1997 won the AFL Jack Titus award for his services to football. He was associated with nine premierships.

Neville Crowe

Crowe, who died on September 2, 2016, aged 79, was one of Richmond’s most esteemed figures on and off the field. His contribution was immense – captain, star ruckman, specialist coach, president, life member, a club Hall of Famer and, in the early 1990s, a backbone of the Tigers’ ‘Save Our Skins’ campaign. At that point, Richmond experienced severe financial problems and faced an uncertain future. Crowe played 151 games from 1957-67, was captain from 1963-67, best and fairest in 1963, 1964 and 1966, a state player nine times and All-Australian in 1966. His biggest disappointment came in 1967 when Richmond reached the finals for the first time since 1947. Crowe was captain, but missed playing in the premiership side after being suspended in the second semi-final. He did not play for the Tigers again. But his leadership at the club was not over and he served as president from 1987-93.

Graeme Mackenzie

Mackenzie, one of Fitzroy’s finest defenders, died on September 16, 2016, aged 81. Mackenzie did his early schooling in Melbourne, but is best remembered as the farmer who came from Edenhope, in far-west Victoria, to play with the Lions. He had earlier signed with Collingwood, but a letter from Fitzroy captain and coach Bill Stephen convinced him to try his luck at the Brunswick St Oval. He played 95 games from 1956-62 and was selected for Victoria in 1961, but had to withdraw because of a leg injury. He later became captain-coach of North Albury and was then connected with clubs closer to home, including Naracoorte, Edenhope and Kybybolite.

Max Walker

Walker, who died from multiple myeloma on September 28, 2016, aged 68, is best remembered as one of Australian cricket’s highest-profile and much-loved characters. But he also made his mark on the football arena. A fast-medium bowler with an ungainly action (hence his nickname ‘Tangles’), Walker played 34 Tests and took 138 wickets; as a footballer he played 85 games for Melbourne in the ruck from 1967-72. Legendary coach Norm Smith was in his last year as coach of Melbourne when Walker, from Tasmania’s Friends School, joined the Demons. He was a steady, rather than brilliant footballer, but when he turned his full attention to cricket, his image as a happy-go-lucky, knockabout sportsman with expert bowling skills began to sky-rocket. Walker also played seven World Series Cricket Super Tests (28 wickets) and 17 one-day internationals (20 wickets). In 1972, he became one of only four men to play VFL football and Test cricket in the same year, joining Keith Miller, Laurie Nash and George Tribe. Walker was the author of several sports books and became a well-known face on television, including *World of Sport* (Channel Seven) and *Wide World of Sports* (Channel Nine) and was named a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to cricket as a player and commentator on TV and radio.

Laurie Dwyer

Dwyer, one of North Melbourne’s greats, died on October 17, 2016, aged 77. An outstanding wingman known as ‘Twinkle Toes’ – a throwback to his ballroom dancing prowess – he played 201 games from 1956-58, 1960-64 and 1966-70. His class is underlined by his three placings in the Brownlow Medal – second in 1961 and 1967 and third in 1960 – and his two Syd Barker Medals as North’s best and fairest in 1961 and 1967. Dwyer was selected on the wing in the Roos’ Team of the Century, was a club life member, represented Victoria three times and received the AFL’s Jack Titus award in 1999 for his services to the game. He was inducted into North’s Hall of Fame in 2009 and elevated to Legend in 2012. Dwyer’s father Leo also played for the Roos, as did sons Anthony and David. When North won its first premiership in 1975, Dwyer played his part as the runner. Dwyer also worked for the Sydney Swans as a recruiting officer.

Trevor Johnson

Ruckman/defender Johnson, who died on November 10, 2016, aged 81, was very much part of Melbourne’s golden era of the 1950s and early 1960s. Johnson, recruited to the Demons from Epping in Melbourne’s north, played in the 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1960 premiership teams and was also a member of the losing 1958 Grand Final side. He played 118 games from 1955-62 and is also remembered as the player who provided the shoulders for Footscray rover Merv Hobbs to take one of the all-time great marks in the 1961 preliminary final. When Johnson left Melbourne, he returned to Epping for more premiership success, was then playing coach of Port Fairy and after that was back at Melbourne as coach of its under-19s. He later moved to WA and developed a substantial mushroom farming business.

Bill Barrot

“Inspirational”, “explosive”, “dynamic” – that’s how Richmond champion Dick Clay described his teammate Barrot, who died of heart failure on November 29, 2016, aged 72. Barrot was at his brilliant best racing out of the centre of the MCG and booting long drop kicks to the teeth of goal. He played 120 games from 1961-70, was best-on-ground in Richmond’s drought-breaking premiership in 1967 and among the best when the Tigers won again in 1969. Barrot was selected in the centre in Richmond’s Team of the last Century, he was in Richmond’s Hall of Fame, a Jack Dyer medallist as club champion in 1965 and a club life member. By 1971, Barrot was in St Kilda colours – the result of a sensational swap with champion Saint Ian Stewart. Barrot played just two games for St Kilda, quickly moved to Carlton for another 12 games and after his League career was associated with Oakleigh in the VFA and West Torrens in the SANFL.

Harvey Stevens

Stevens, a member of Footscray’s historic first premiership team in 1954, died on December 15, 2016, aged 86. Stevens played at full-forward for Collingwood in the 1952 Grand Final – which the Magpies lost to Geelong – and by 1953 he was in the Footscray colours after five seasons and 54 games with the Magpies. He won the best and fairest with the Bulldogs in his first season. Then came the premiership a season later in 1954 – a resounding win over Melbourne. Stevens had five seasons at Footscray, played 72 games and was captain for part of the 1957 season. Stevens’ father Arthur played 64 games for Footscray and his grandsons are Adelaide’s Daniel Talia and Sydney’s Michael Talia.

Ed Biggs

The AFL acknowledged the passing of Biggs who worked for more than 40 years in football administration at various levels. He died on December 23, 2016, after a short illness. Biggs started his involvement in community football in the early 1970s and later became foundation president of the Victorian Metropolitan Football League (1981-83). In 1975, he was appointed assistant to the general manager of the National Football League of Australia (NFL) and was executive officer and later general manager of the NFL from 1978-95. Between 1995-2000, Biggs was general manager of the Australian Football Foundation. From 2000-06, he worked for the AFL in game development.

FINANCIAL REPORT



RAY GUNSTON
GENERAL MANAGER,
FINANCE, CORPORATE & MAJOR PROJECTS

AFL Consolidated Financial Results

The AFL reported a net deficit of \$17.8 million in 2016, compared with a \$2.5 million net surplus in 2015, a reduction of \$20.3 million from 2015.

Key take-outs for the year were:

- ▶ Revenue increased by \$11 million or two per cent;
- ▶ Operating expenditure increased by \$18.8 million or 11 per cent which, in addition to revenue-related increases of \$6.4 million, also includes expenditure on important strategic initiatives such as the acquisition of Etihad Stadium and the launch of the AFL Women's competition, as well as legal costs in respect of Essendon Football Club matters;
- ▶ This net deficit arises from the following:
 - ▶ Recognising as an expense an amount of \$11 million of new market funding that was carried on the AFL's Balance Sheet but which was not able to be recouped within the period;
 - ▶ Recognising as an expense an amount of \$5.5 million of club future fund distributions made during 2012 to 2016 that was carried on the AFL's Balance Sheet but which was not able to be recouped within the period;
 - ▶ \$2.5 million of non-operating items incurred during the year, comprised of net interest and depreciation.

On an operating basis, excluding the \$19 million of adjustments above, the AFL made a \$1.2 million operating surplus.

The consolidated result, which includes all of the AFL's controlled state subsidiaries, produced a net deficit of \$15.5 million, with all state subsidiaries and related entities recording operating surpluses.

▶ Skipper Scott Pendlebury and fellow midfielder Taylor Adams enjoyed the Magpies' one-point win in a round two thriller against Richmond.





▲ Veteran broadcaster Dennis Cometti, who retired at the end of the 2016 season, will be a familiar face missing when the new Broadcast Rights Agreement kicks off in 2017.

AFL Industry Investment Model: 2017 And Beyond

In 2015, the AFL finalised the 2017-22 Broadcast Rights Agreement with the Seven Network, News Corporation and Telstra, which will deliver the AFL revenues of \$2.508 billion over the next six years.

Pursuant to the Broadcast Rights deal, it was determined the future AFL financial model must be designed to sustain the AFL industry for 20 years, not just the six years of the new rights deal.

This model was determined as an “Investment Model”, not a “Distribution Model” – based on justified investment spend levels to sustain and grow the game, not on an entitlement basis. It is an investment model, not a spend model.

In the last quarter of 2015, the AFL started extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the AFL industry to start the construction of this “Investment Model”, with investment to be determined in a concurrent and interactive manner across our key pillars:

- ▶ Clubs
- ▶ Players
- ▶ Infrastructure
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Competition
- ▶ Fans

The operation of the Investment Model has seen the following initiatives:

- ▶ The development of a more simplified and responsive Club Funding Model based on a more flexible and sophisticated analysis of relative structural inequalities in revenues and cost to determine club funding requirements.

AFL Clubs' Financial Results

In the 2016 financial year, 11 of the 18 AFL clubs recorded an operating loss – this compares with 10 in 2015.

It was the final year of the 2012-16 Broadcast Rights Agreement, which introduced a number of financially significant outcomes for clubs during this five-year period.

- ▶ The establishment of a Club Future Fund, which allocated, disequally, \$143 million to clubs. This amount of disequal funding was increased by a further \$38 million in 2015 to provide additional assistance to those clubs that required financial assistance in 2015 and 2016. This distribution amount broadly reflects structural inequalities between the clubs.
- ▶ The introduction of a “revenue sharing” requirement in 2015 for 10 clubs to transfer \$3.6 million to the remainder of the competition.
- ▶ The introduction of the football department ‘Soft Cap’ in 2015, which prescribed an upper limit on non-player football department expenditure that required a tax paid by clubs should they exceed the amount of the limit. The Soft Cap limit was \$9.3 million in 2015 and \$9.6 million in 2016.
- ▶ A revised gate levy policy that was adjusted in 2014 to provide further support to those clubs that require significant financial assistance as a result of structural disadvantages.

The structural disadvantages or inequalities between clubs include, inter alia, unfavourable commercial arrangements at stadia, the financial impact of the fixture and limited reliance on investment in profitable non-core revenue-generating businesses.

In addition, there were also a number of significant off-field issues that impacted club profitability during this period, most notably Essendon, where a number of players were excluded from competing during the 2016 season as a result of the ruling of the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

These issues have also worked to contribute to this unprofitable operating position for many clubs towards the end of the media rights cycle, as occurred in the previous media rights cycle.

- ▶ Ongoing discussions with the players to put in place a new Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- ▶ The implementation of investment decision-making processes within the AFL's operations to ensure value adding and justified spending on infrastructure, community football, the AFL competition and fans.
- ▶ The establishment of a Capital Reserve to provide a Balance Sheet that contains a buffer to the increased financial risks of the industry and to position the AFL for the next media rights deal.
- ▶ The acquisition of Etihad Stadium, fully funded through a corporate bank debt facility.

The 2017-22 Broadcast Rights Agreement must be seen as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set up the financial future of the AFL industry. Decisions made must be undertaken to ensure a sustainable long-term positive legacy is established for the industry.

2016 PAYMENTS TO CLUBS

Club	Base	Bonus	Other	Total
Adelaide Crows	8,188,488	1,200,000	1,165,077	10,553,565
Brisbane Lions	8,188,488	1,200,000	8,144,434	17,532,922
Carlton	8,188,488	1,200,000	2,219,454	11,607,942
Collingwood	8,188,488	1,200,000	1,916,201	11,304,689
Essendon	8,188,488	1,200,000	2,526,227	11,914,715
Fremantle Dockers	8,188,488	1,200,000	1,174,819	10,563,307
Geelong Cats	8,188,488	1,200,000	1,398,995	10,787,483
Gold Coast Suns	8,188,488	1,200,000	7,806,106	17,194,594
GWS Giants	8,188,488	1,200,000	12,159,886	21,548,374
Hawthorn	8,188,488	1,200,000	2,226,195	11,614,683
Melbourne	8,188,488	1,200,000	5,410,964	14,799,452
North Melbourne	8,188,488	1,200,000	5,633,815	15,022,303
Port Adelaide	8,188,488	1,200,000	3,818,177	13,206,665
Richmond	8,188,488	1,200,000	2,970,437	12,358,925
St Kilda	8,188,488	1,200,000	9,178,101	18,566,589
Sydney Swans	8,188,488	1,200,000	3,100,469	12,488,957
West Coast Eagles	8,188,488	1,200,000	2,314,752	11,703,240
Western Bulldogs	8,188,488	1,200,000	8,221,693	17,610,181
Accounting Adjustment			5,500,822	5,500,822
Total	147,392,784	21,600,000	86,886,627	255,879,411

▼ The AFL made payments totalling \$255.87 million to clubs in 2016.

Payments To AFL Clubs

The AFL makes a number of distributions and payments to AFL clubs. These payments included the following in 2016:

- ▶ A base distribution to all clubs which totalled \$147.4 million, an increase of \$5.4 million;
- ▶ A bonus distribution of \$1.2 million to each club;
- ▶ Other payments to clubs included equal and disequal financial assistance, prize money, distribution of the AFL's signage rights at Etihad Stadium and promotional funding to help clubs develop the game around Australia.



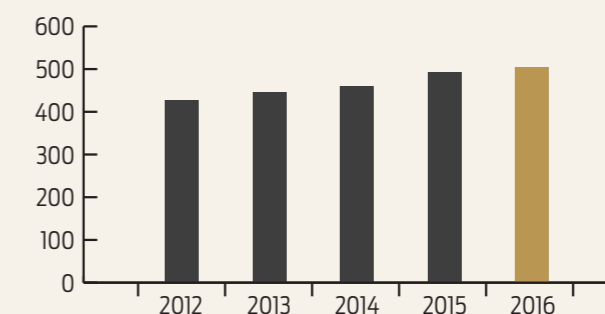
The 2017-22 Broadcast Rights Agreement must be seen as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set up the financial future of the AFL

THE AFL 2007-2016

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Profit & Loss (\$ mill)										
Revenue	284.794	302.139	303.450	335.862	343.017	428.623	446.505	460.529	494.093	505.348
Operating Expenses	81.047	94.666	89.885	105.420	109.348	129.559	136.032	141.528	155.141	174.183
Interest Expense	1.272	0.028	0.022	0.059	0.131	3.429	0.65	0.919	0.658	0.652
Operating Surplus	202.475	207.445	213.543	230.383	233.538	295.635	309.823	318.082	338.294	330.513
Payments to Clubs	125.488	131.752	135.808	141.978	158.866	200.251	209.152	218.309	245.151	255.879
Payments to AFLPA	12.131	12.518	13.897	14.491	21.992	21.986	21.692	22.680	30.547	22.270
Game Development Grants	25.852	25.871	27.305	29.129	30.750	36.520	37.292	38.904	39.398	41.696
Ground Improvements	4.951	5.095	5.014	4.547	5.065	6.025	6.071	6.389	6.851	7.031
AFL Foundation	0.231	0.255	0.300	0.300	0.161	0.150	0.329	0.842	1.272	1.277
Facilities Development	4.665	8.655	13.735	9.524	6.720	7.731	5.890	7.306	5.308	3.608
Strategic Partnership	1.198	0.877	1.502	1.848	1.915	1.645	1.237	1.228	0.525	-
New Markets	1.618	2.967	13.349	23.738	31.683	14.594	11.553	9.887	6.700	16.528
Net Profit/(Loss) before Transfers (to)/from Reserves	26.341	19.455	2.633	4.828	(23.614)	6.733	16.607	12.537	2.542	(17.777)
Facilities Development Reserve	(4.535)	0.314	6.333	2.123	(0.682)	1.731	0.190	0.990	-	-
Strategic Partnership Reserve	0.198	(0.123)	0.502	0.848	0.915	-	-	-	0.525	-
New Markets Reserve	(0.382)	(0.033)	0.415	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Future Fund Reserve	(16.400)	(17.245)	(17.409)	(18.431)	(19.874)	-	-	-	-	-
Movement in Retained Earnings	5.222	2.368	(7.526)	(10.632)	(43.255)	8.464	16.797	13.527	3.067	(17.777)
Balance Sheet (\$ mill)										
Total Assets	124.581	152.073	151.640	155.967	185.294	138.331	151.003	161.654	182.628	183.043
Total Liabilities	40.325	48.361	45.295	44.798	97.741	44.044	40.109	38.223	56.655	74.847
Net Assets	84.256	103.712	106.345	111.169	87.553	94.287	110.894	123.431	125.973	108.196
TPP & Club Distribution Statistics (\$ mill)										
Total Player Payments (TPP)	111.100	118.900	123.100	127.200	139.613	158.173	164.500	173.383	181.284	186.642
TPP per Club	6.944	7.431	7.694	7.950	8.213	8.787	9.139	9.632	10.071	10.369
Base Distribution per Club	4.913	5.411	5.673	5.930	6.182	6.757	7.196	7.514	7.890	8.188
Base Distribution as a % of TPP	70.8%	72.8%	73.7%	74.6%	75.3%	76.9%	78.7%	78.0%	78.3%	79.0%
Attendance Statistics (mill)										
Home & Away Season Attendance	6.476	6.511	6.371	6.496	6.525	6.239	6.368	6.385	6.352	6.306
Finals Series Attendance	0.574	0.572	0.615	0.651	0.615	0.540	0.558	0.570	0.519	0.558
Total Premiership Season Attendance	7.050	7.083	6.986	7.147	7.140	6.779	6.926	6.955	6.871	6.865
Pre-Season Attendance	0.244	0.240	0.283	0.227	0.256	0.298	0.267	0.136	0.207	0.191
Total Attendance	7.294	7.323	7.269	7.375	7.396	7.077	7.193	7.090	7.078	7.055
Membership Statistics										
Total of Club Members	532,697	574,091	586,748	614,251	699,684	707,621	756,717	804,480	836,136	875,197
No. of Clubs in the AFL	16	16	16	16	17	18	18	18	18	18
Average No. of Members per Club	33,294	35,881	36,672	38,391	41,158	39,312	42,040	44,693	46,452	48,622
Total AFL Members	46,871	49,150	51,013	53,959	55,216	56,595	56,513	56,510	54,983	54,808

Revenue

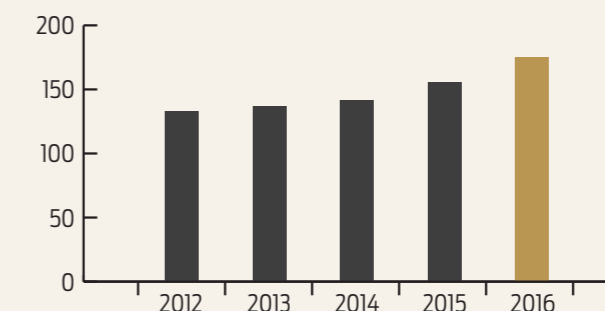
Up 2%
to \$505 million



Revenue increased by \$11.3 million with the major movements comprising:
 ▶ Broadcasting and Media Revenues up \$8 million.
 ▶ Commercial Operations Revenues up \$5 million.

Expenditure

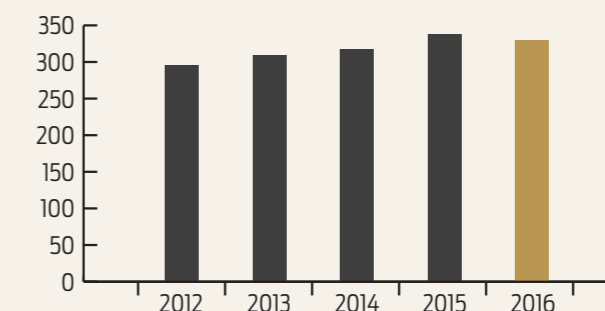
Up 12%
to \$175 million



Expenditure increased by \$19 million with major movements predominantly due to revenue-related expenditure increases, Etihad Stadium acquisition and AFLW establishment costs.

Operating Surplus

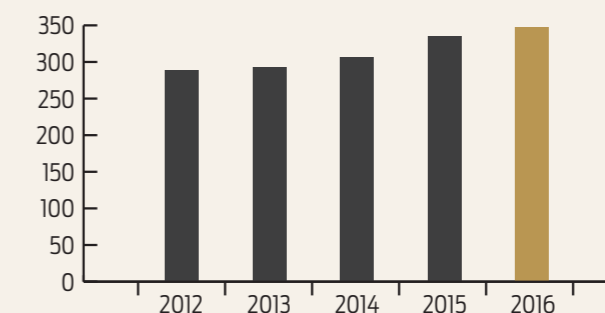
Down 2%
to \$331 million



The AFL's Operating Surplus decreased by \$7.8 million to \$331 million.

Distributions

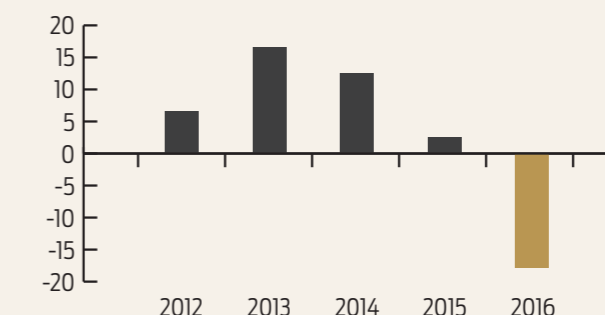
Up 4%
to \$348 million



Distributions increased by \$12.5 million in the following areas:
 ▶ Expensing of additional club payments capitalised through 2012-16 totalling \$16.5 million.
 ▶ Payments to clubs up \$5 million.
 ▶ AFLPA distribution down \$8 million (2015 included the 2012-16 CBA adjustment payments)

Net Loss

\$17.8m



The AFL's Net Profit decreased by \$20.3 million in 2016 as a result of the increased distributions detailed above.

CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT

31 OCTOBER 2016
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES

Directors' Report

The Directors present their report together with the financial report of the Australian Football League ("the Company") and Consolidated Entity, being the Company and its controlled entities, for the year ended 31 October 2016 and the auditor's report thereon.

Directors

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

Mr M C Fitzpatrick
Chairman – Appointed Commissioner 2003, Chairman from March 2007, Chairman of Remuneration Committee, Member of Audit and Risk Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Engineering (Hons.) (University of Western Australia); Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) (Oxford University, UK)
Experience: Chairman, Pacific Current Group Limited; Director, Infrastructure Capital Group Pty Ltd; Director, Carnegie Ltd; Director, Creswick Quartz Ltd; Director, Latam Autos Ltd; Chairman, Australian Sports Commission 1995-1998; Founder and Managing Director, Hastings Funds Management Ltd, 1994-2005; Former Director, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; Former Director, Rio Tinto Limited/Plc; Player, Subiaco Football Club 1970-1974; Player, Carlton Football Club 1975-1983; Director, Carlton Football Club 1989-1995; Life Member, Carlton Football Club

Mr G A McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer – Appointed 5th June 2014
Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce (University of Adelaide); Bachelor of Law (Hons.) (University of Melbourne)
Experience: AFL General Manager Commercial Operations 2003-2006; AFL General Manager Broadcasting & Major Projects 2006-2008; AFL Chief Operating Officer 2008-2012; AFL Deputy CEO 2012-2014; Patron, Children's Cancer Foundation

Mr C D Langford
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 1999 – Resigned 17th March 2016; Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Architecture (University of Melbourne)
Experience: Director, Newmark Capital Pty Ltd; Director, Panorama Capital Pty Ltd; Former CEO Retail Projects, Mirvac Group; Player, Hawthorn Football Club 1980-1997; Member, AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission 1998-2004; Life Member, Hawthorn Football Club

Ms S J Mostyn
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 2005 – Resigned 17th March 2016; Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Australian University); Bachelor of Law (Australian University)
Experience: Chair, Citigroup Pty Limited; Chair, Carriage Works Australia; President, Australian Council for International Development; President, Australian Volunteers International; Director, Australia Council for the Arts; Director, Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd; Director, Transurban Holdings Ltd; Director, Cover-More Insurance Services Pty Ltd; Director, Mirvac; Director, GO Foundation; Director, ClimateWorks Australia

Mr R J Goyder, AO
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 21st November 2011; Member of Audit and Risk Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce (University of Western Australia)
Experience: Chair, JDRF Australia; Director, Wesfarmers Ltd; Director, Gresham Partners Holdings Ltd; Director, Business Council of Australia; Director, UWA Business School Advisory Board; Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

Mr P M Bassat
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 20th February 2012; Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Law (University of Melbourne); Bachelor of Commerce (University of Melbourne)
Experience: Co-founder and former CEO, SEEK Ltd 1997-2011; Director, Square Peg Capital Pty Ltd; Director, Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation; Director, Wesfarmers Ltd; Director, Wego Pte Ltd; Director, AFL SportsReady Pty Ltd; Director, PropertyGuru Pte Ltd; Director, Innovation and Science Australia; Advisory Board Member, Evans & Partners Global Disruption Fund; Member, Mount Scopus College Foundation

Mr K L Williams, AM
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 4th March 2014
Qualifications: Bachelor of Music (The University of Sydney); Honorary Doctorate of Letters (Macquarie University)
Experience: Chair, NSW State Library Foundation; Chair, Copyright Agency; Chair, Vidcorp; Chair, Mojo Power Holdings Pty Ltd; Chair, The Cranlana Programme; Director, Myer Family Investments; Director, Myer Foundation; Director, Australian Music Foundation; Director, Executive Channel International; Director, Australian National Academy of Music; Board Member, University of Western Sydney Foundation; Board Member, Australian Grape and Wine Authority; Trustee, Thomson Reuters

Mr J A Ball
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 25th March 2015; Member of Audit and Risk Committee
Qualifications: Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors
Experience: Senior Relationship Manager, Macquarie Equities (Macquarie Group); Player, West Coast Eagles Football Club 1992-1999; Player, Sydney Swans Football Club 2000-2005; Director, Sydney Swans Football Club 2007-2015

Major General S L Wilkie, AO
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 25th March 2015; Member of Remuneration Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Human Resource Management (University of New England); Graduate Diploma of Telecommunications Systems Management (Swinburne University of Technology); Graduate Diploma of Strategic Studies (Deakin University); Master of Defence Studies (University of Canberra); Advanced Management Program (Harvard Business School)
Experience: Head of ADF Joint Enablers & Commander, Australian Defence College; Chief of Staff to the Chief of Army; National Commander ADF commitment in Afghanistan; Director General Training; Officer of the Order of Australia; Member of the Order of Australia; Awarded a Bronze Star (United States) for service in Iraq; Awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service in Afghanistan; Patron, ADF Women's Australian Rules Association; Chair, ADF Sports Council

Mr P A Newbold
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 17th March 2016; Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee
Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Monash University); Bachelor of Economics (Monash University)
Experience: Director, Bryson Funds Management Ltd; Director, SEDA; Director, Supra Capital Limited; Director, Methodist Ladies College; President, Hawthorn Football Club 2012-2016; Life Member, Hawthorn Football Club 2016

Ms G M Trainor
Non-Executive Commissioner – Appointed 17th March 2016
Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Melbourne University); Master of Arts in Cultural & Creative Practice (Western Sydney University); Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors
Experience: Chair, National Film & Sound Archive Infrastructure Australia; Chair, Barnardos Australia; Director, Infrastructure Australia; Director, Aurora Education Foundation; Director, Western Sydney University Foundation; Director, Western Sydney University; Director, Whitlam Institute; Director, Clarius Limited; Director, Business Events Sydney; Director, ANZ One Path Life Ltd; Director, Cape York Partnership Limited; Director, Gabrielle Trainor & Associates Pty Ltd; Director, Temple Pty Ltd; Member, Audit Committee, Office of Sport (NSW); Member, Audit Committee, Venues NSW

Directors' Meetings

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

Director	Directors' Meetings		Audit and Risk Committee Meetings		Remuneration Committee Meetings	
	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held *	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held *	No. of Meetings attended	No. of Meetings held *
Mr M C Fitzpatrick	10	10	3	3	1	1
Mr G McLachlan	10	10	-	-	-	-
Mr C D Langford	3	4	2	2	-	-
Ms S J Mostyn	3	4	-	-	1	1
Mr R J Goyder, AO	9	10	3	3	-	-
Mr P M Bassat	10	10	-	-	1	1
Mr K L Williams, AM	10	10	-	-	-	-
Mr J A Ball	10	10	1	1	-	-
Major Gen S L Wilkie, AO	10	10	-	-	-	-
Mr P A Newbold	7	7	1	1	-	-
Ms G M Trainor	7	7	-	-	-	-

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

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

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

As well as the above meetings, the Directors also attended numerous other meetings including meetings with the Presidents of all Australian Football League (AFL) Clubs.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the Consolidated Entity during the course of the financial year have been to promote, control, manage and encourage Australian Rules Football.

There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Consolidated Entity during the year.

Objectives

The major objectives of the Company include the following:

- i. To manage the AFL competition to ensure that it remains the most exciting in Australian Sport.
- ii. To build a stronger relationship with the supporters at all levels of the game.
- iii. To help ensure that AFL Clubs are financially secure and competitive.
- iv. To provide the best possible benefits for AFL players and to drive the next generation of elite athletes to choose our game.

Strategy and Performance

The Company's strategy is to promote the AFL brand throughout Australia and to a limited extent outside Australia. Key Performance Indicators such as attendances at AFL games, television ratings, digital consumption and participant numbers are used to measure the Company's performance against this strategy.

Review and Results of Operations

The operating loss of the Consolidated Entity was \$15.5 million, compared with an operating profit of \$3.6 million in 2015.

State of Affairs

In the opinion of the Directors, there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity that occurred during the financial year under review not otherwise disclosed in this report or the consolidated financial statements.

Events Subsequent to Balance Date

On 2 November 2016, the Company took 100% ownership of the management rights of Etihad Stadium through the purchase of the Stadium Operations Limited (SOL) Group of Companies, for a total consideration of \$200m. The Company entered into Debt Facility Agreements for \$280m to fund this acquisition and to meet ongoing working capital requirements of the Consolidated Entity.

The Company contemporaneously exercised its Option Agreement to purchase the freehold title to Etihad Stadium and take an assignment of the Docklands Authority rights under the Fixtures and Fittings Option and Development Agreement Indemnities (see notes 10 and 25 of the annual report).

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

Likely Developments

The Directors do not anticipate any major changes in the basis of operations of the Consolidated Entity and the future results of those operations in subsequent financial years. However, a new Broadcast Rights deal has been negotiated and contracted for the 2017-2022 financial years. The new Broadcast Rights deal has increased by a material amount on the previous deal from 2012-2016 and forms a major part of the investment-based industry funding model to be implemented from 2017 onwards.

Insurance Premiums

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

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

Directors' Benefits

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

Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 307C of The Corporations Act 2001

The Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration is set out on Page 151 and forms part of the Directors' report for the year ended 31 October 2016.

Parent Entity Financial Statements

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

Rounding Off

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

Dated at Melbourne this 9th day of February 2017.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:

MR M C FITZPATRICK
CHAIRMAN

MR G A MCLACHLAN
DIRECTOR

Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 307C of The Corporations Act 2001

To: the directors of Australian Football League.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit for the financial year ended 31 October 2016 there has been:

- i. No contravention of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- ii. No contravention of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

KPMG

MAURICE BISETTO
PARTNER

Melbourne, 9th February 2017

Statements Of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 October 2016

	Note	Consolidated		The Company	
		2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Revenue	3	569,856	558,674	516,991	506,026
Net financing income		378	564	302	243
Expenses from operating activities		(585,016)	(555,099)	(535,070)	(503,727)
Profit/(loss) from operating activities before related income tax expense		(14,782)	4,139	(17,777)	2,542
Income tax expense relating to operating activities		(673)	(491)	-	-
Profit/(loss) for the year		(15,455)	3,648	(17,777)	2,542
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		(15,455)	3,648	(17,777)	2,542
Profit/(loss) attributable to:					
Owners of the Company		(16,256)	3,003	(17,777)	2,542
Non-controlling interests		801	645	-	-
Profit/(loss) for the year		(15,455)	3,648	(17,777)	2,542
Total comprehensive income attributable to:					
Owners of the Company		(16,256)	3,003	(17,777)	2,542
Non-controlling interests		801	645	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		(15,455)	3,648	(17,777)	2,542

The Statements of Profit & Loss and other comprehensive income are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 154 to 155.

Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

The consolidated operating loss in 2016 was \$15.5 million which compared with an operating profit of \$3.6 million in 2015.

Consolidated revenue increased by \$11.2 million to \$569.9 million. There were two main areas of revenue which contributed to this movement:

- ▶ An increase in broadcasting and AFL media revenues totalling \$7.6 million;
- ▶ An increase in commercial operations revenue totalling \$3.5 million.

Consolidated expenditure increased by \$29.9 million to \$585.0 million. The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ An increase in distributions to clubs totalling \$10.7 million;
- ▶ An increase in new markets expenditure totalling \$9.8 million;
- ▶ An increase in game development expenditure totalling \$7.4 million;
- ▶ An increase in finance & administration & other expenditure totalling \$5.4 million primarily due to costs associated with the acquisition process of Etihad Stadium and legal costs in respect of Essendon Football Club matters;
- ▶ An increase in commercial operations expenditure totalling \$2.7 million;
- ▶ An increase in football operations expenditure totalling \$1.4 million;
- ▶ A decrease in distributions to the AFL Players Association totalling \$8.3 million primarily due to a one-off expense of \$8.1 million in 2015 relating to adjustment payments under the 2012-2016 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Statements Of Changes In Equity

For the year ended 31 October 2016

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Total equity at the beginning of the year	140,206	136,558	125,973	123,431
Other member contributions	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(15,455)	3,648	(17,777)	2,542
Total equity at the end of the year	124,751	140,206	108,196	125,973
Equity attributable to:				
Owners of the Company	121,181	137,437	108,196	125,973
Non-controlling interests	3,570	2,769	-	-
Total equity at the end of the year	124,751	140,206	108,196	125,973

The Statements of Changes in Equity are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 154 to 155.

Statements of Financial Position

As At 31 October 2016

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	86,821	82,156	78,854	69,994
Trade and other receivables	55,873	44,168	50,961	39,835
Inventories	136	171	-	-
Other assets	3,328	20,449	1,891	19,597
Total current assets	146,158	146,944	131,706	129,426
Trade and other receivables	3,608	4,408	3,608	4,408
Property, plant and equipment	20,114	20,408	13,979	14,294
Other assets	33,798	34,500	33,750	34,500
Total non-current assets	57,520	59,316	51,337	53,202
Total assets	203,678	206,260	183,043	182,628
Liabilities				
Trade and other payables	47,365	44,343	53,173	44,038
Deferred income	19,254	5,110	15,295	1,859
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	7	-	-	-
Provisions	10,531	9,896	5,266	4,591
Total current liabilities	77,157	59,349	73,734	50,488
Trade and other payables	-	5,074	-	5,074
Deferred income	-	150	-	150
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	38	-	-	-
Provisions	1,732	1,481	1,113	943
Total non-current liabilities	1,770	6,705	1,113	6,167
Total liabilities	78,927	66,054	74,847	56,655
Net assets	124,751	140,206	108,196	125,973
Equity				
Member contributions	21	21	-	-
Reserves	89,359	89,359	89,359	89,359
Retained earnings	31,801	48,057	18,837	36,614
Total equity attributable to equity holders of the Company	121,181	137,437	108,196	125,973
Non-controlling interest	3,570	2,769	-	-
Total equity	124,751	140,206	108,196	125,973

The Statements of Financial Position are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 154 to 155.

Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Financial Position

The consolidated entity's total assets decreased by \$2.6 million to \$203.7 million.

The movement in total assets principally comprised:

- ▶ An increase in current trade and other receivables totalling \$10.9 million;
- ▶ An increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$4.7 million;
- ▶ A decrease in other assets totalling \$17.8 million;
- ▶ A decrease in non-current trade and other receivables totalling \$0.8 million.

The consolidated entity's total liabilities increased by \$12.9 million to \$78.9 million.

The movement in total liabilities principally comprised:

- ▶ An increase in deferred income totalling \$14.0 million;
- ▶ A decrease in trade and other payables totalling \$2.1 million.

Statements of Cash Flows

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities				
Cash receipts in the course of operations	598,803	585,318	540,896	526,344
Cash payments in the course of operations	(590,662)	(562,315)	(529,872)	(507,604)
Net cash from operating activities	8,141	23,003	11,024	18,740
Cash flows from investing activities				
Interest received	1,034	1,238	954	901
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(3,848)	(6,342)	(2,466)	(1,295)
Net cash used in investing activities	(2,814)	(5,104)	(1,512)	(394)
Cash flows from financing activities				
Interest paid	(656)	(674)	(652)	(658)
Payment of finance lease liabilities	(6)	-	-	-
Net cash used in financing activities	(662)	(674)	(652)	(658)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	4,665	17,225	8,860	17,688
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	82,156	64,931	69,994	52,306
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	86,821	82,156	78,854	69,994

The Statements of Cash Flows are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 154 to 155.

Discussion and analysis of the Statements of Cash Flows

There was a net increase in cash holdings of the consolidated entity during the year totalling \$4.7 million.

The major movements in cash during the year included the following:

- ▶ Funds provided by the operating activities for the year totalling \$8.1 million;
- ▶ Purchases of property, plant and equipment totalling \$3.8 million;
- ▶ Net interest received totalling \$0.4 million.

Notes to the Concise Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2016

1. Basis of Preparation of the Concise Financial Report

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

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

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

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

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

The concise financial report is presented in Australian dollars.

2. Segment Reporting

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

3. Revenue

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Revenue from Operating Activities				
Broadcasting & AFL Media	264,154	256,602	264,154	256,602
Commercial Operations	185,978	182,520	185,978	182,520
Football Operations	4,654	4,974	4,654	4,974
Game Development	10,571	9,954	10,571	9,954
Other Revenue	77,499	77,624	24,634	24,976
Contra Advertising Revenue	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
	569,856	558,674	516,991	506,026

4. Contingent Liabilities

- i. The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players' Association Inc. for a period of five years commencing on 1 November 2011 whereby the Company has an obligation to assume liability for all amounts due to players of a Club where the Club has lost its licence to compete in the AFL Competition and is suspended from or loses its right to representation in the League. The amounts payable in these circumstances will be offset by any amounts payable to the players in respect of future employment as a player.
- ii. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Carlton Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- iii. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$5.4 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- iv. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$3.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- v. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the St Kilda Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$6.75 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- vi. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Footscray Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$5.35 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- vii. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Brisbane Bears-Fitzroy Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$8.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- viii. The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$10.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2018.
- ix. The Company has entered into an agreement with Bank SA whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Port Adelaide Football Club Limited to Bank SA to a maximum of \$5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 May 2019.
- x. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFC Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$1.41 million (Transactional Facilities). This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xi. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFC Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$1.59 million (Corporate Markets Loan). This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xii. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Western Sydney Football Club Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.66 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.

- xiii. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.35 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xiv. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Queensland Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.10 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xv. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.15 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xvi. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the AFL Northern Territory Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.15 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.
- xvii. The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of Football Tasmania Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$0.03 million. This guarantee expires on 30 November 2017.

5. Events Subsequent to Balance Date

On 2 November 2016, the AFL acquired the management rights for Etihad Stadium through the purchase of the Stadium Operations Limited (SOL) Group of Companies. As settlement occurred after balance sheet date it is not included in the result or financial position of the AFL to 31 October 2016.

Etihad Stadium is a leading multi-purpose sports and entertainment stadium in Australia with a capacity of 55,000 and is the only stadium in the southern hemisphere with a fully retractable roof. The Stadium hosts over 75 major sporting and entertainment event per annum, with its major hirer being the AFL.

The AFL took 100% ownership of the management rights for a consideration of \$200m and exercised its option to purchase the freehold from Urban Renewal Authority Victoria (Places Victoria) (previously Docklands Authority). The AFL entered into Debt Facility Agreements with National Australia Bank Limited (NAB) and Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) totalling \$280m, to fund the cash consideration and to meet ongoing working capital requirements of the Consolidated Entity, drawing \$200m of the Debt Facilities. At acquisition date the SOL Group reflected net assets, excluding amounts attributable to the AFL, of \$78m with a Purchase Price Allocation to be undertaken to determine the fair value of identifiable assets and liabilities.

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

Director's Declaration

In the opinion of the directors of the Australian Football League, the accompanying concise financial report of the Consolidated Entity, comprising the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended 31 October 2016, set out on pages 151 to 155:

- a. Has been derived from or is consistent with the full financial report for the financial year; and
- b. Complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

Dated at Melbourne this 9th day of February 2017.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors:

MR M C FITZPATRICK
CHAIRMAN

MR G A MCLACHLAN
DIRECTOR



Independent auditor's report to the members of the Australian Football League

Report on the concise financial report

We have audited the accompanying concise financial report of the Consolidated Entity comprising the Australian Football League ("the Company") and the entities it controlled at the year's end or from time to time during the financial year which comprises the statements of financial position as at 31 October 2016, the statements of profit and loss and other comprehensive income, statements of changes in equity and statements of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes 1 to 5 derived from the audited financial report of the Consolidated Entity for the year ended 31 October 2016 and the discussion and analysis. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards and accordingly, reading the concise financial report is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report.

Directors' responsibility for the concise financial report

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

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standards ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Standards. We have conducted an independent audit, in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of the Australian Football League for the year ended 31 October 2016. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial report in our report dated 9 February 2017. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free of material misstatement.

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

the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

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

Independence

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

Auditor's opinion

In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis, of the Australian Football League and its controlled entities for the year ended 31 October 2016 complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

KPMG

MAURICE BISETTO
PARTNER

Melbourne, 9th February 2017

◀ Young Carlton star Patrick Cripps was the AFL's leading clearance player in 2016, averaging almost 17 contested possessions a game.

Committees and Advisors

AFL Audit Committee

Andrew Newbold (Chair), Mike Fitzpatrick, Jason Ball, Richard Goyder.

AFL Remuneration Committee

Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Paul Bassat, Sarah Fair, Richard Goyder.

AFL Nominations Committee

Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Richard Goyder, Peggy O'Neal, David Koch.

AFL Executive Committee

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

AFL Indigenous Advisory Council

Paul Briggs (Chair), Peter Yu (Deputy Chair), Xavier Clarke, Tanya Denning-Orman, Jason Glanville, Tanya Hosch, Jason Mifsud, Professor Helen Milroy, Tony Peek, Gabrielle Trainor, Kim Williams

AFL Football Operations Sub-Committee

General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (Chair), Luke Ball, Patrick Clifton, Simon Gorr, Emily Groves, Patrick Keane, Jennie Loughnan, Ben Lowe, Tom McCoy, Tessie McManus, Michael Poulton, Scott Taylor, Vicki Lloyd (secretary).

AFL Tribunal

David Jones (Chair), Ross Howie (Deputy Chair), Stewart Loewe, David Pittman, Richard Loveridge, Hamish McIntosh, Wayne Henwood, Michael Sexton, Shane Wakelin, Paul Williams, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

AFL Laws Of The Game Committee

General Manager Football Operations Mark Evans (Chair), Brett Burton, Wayne Campbell, Michael Christian, Neil Craig, Chris Fagan, Tom Harley, Chris Judd, Hayden Kennedy, Leigh Matthews, Jack Riewoldt, Jack Trengove, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

Appeals Board

Peter O'Callaghan QC (Chair), Brian Collis QC (Deputy Chair), Brian Bourke, Michael Green, Stephen Jurica, John Schultz, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

Match Review Panel

Nathan Burke, Michael Christian, Jason Johnson, Chris Knights, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

AFL Grievance Tribunal

Professor Geoffrey Giudice AO (Chair), Murray Kellam AO (Deputy Chair), David Maddocks, Michael Moncrieff, Kevin Power.

AFL Legal Counsel

Jeff Gleeson QC, Nick Pane QC, Andrew Woods, Renee Enbom.

Virgin Australia All-Australian and NAB AFL Rising Star Selectors

Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Mark Evans, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson, Kevin Sheehan (NAB AFL Rising Star only), Warren Tredrea, Tom McCoy (secretary).

Australian Football Hall Of Fame Selection Committee

Mike Fitzpatrick (Chair), Dennis Cometti, Jim Main, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin, Michelangelo Rucci, Col Hutchinson (statistics & history consultant), Patrick Clifton (secretary).

AFL Research Board

Michael Poulton (Chair), Mark Brayshaw, Matt Finnis, Brett Johnson, Dr Peter Harcourt, Briana Harvey, Dr Michael Makdissi, Assoc Prof Colin McLeod, David Rath, Dr Anthony Schache, Lawrie Woodman, John Worsfold, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

AFL Concussion Working Group

Dr Peter Harcourt (Chair), Simon Clarke, Assoc Prof Gavin Davis, Mark Evans, Elizabeth Lukin, Clay Mackinnon, Dr David Maddocks, Dr Michael Makdissi, Prof Paul McCrory, Brett Murphy, David Parkin, Dr Anik Shawdon, Dr Harry Unglik, Lawrie Woodman, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

AFL Medical Directors

Dr Peter Harcourt, Dr Harry Unglik.

AFL SportsReady Ltd Board

The Hon Steve Bracks AC (Chair), Jenny Samms (Deputy Chair), James Montgomery (Chief Executive Officer), Paul Bassat, Andrew Blair AM, Jude Donnelly, Steve Drummy, David Huggins, Paul Marsh, Marilyn Morgan.

Back Cover: A sea of adoring Bulldogs fans parted to greet their premiership heroes after the 2016 Grand Final.

► Despite the high-flying exploits of exciting small forward Michael Walters, the Dockers missed the finals for the first time under coach Ross Lyon.



