

Australian Football League

# Annual Report

2017 Premiers

# 2017





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AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
121ST ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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**Cover:** The 37-year wait is over for Richmond as coach Damien Hardwick and captain Trent Cotchin raise the premiership cup; co-captains Chelsea Randall and Erin Phillips with coach Bec Goddard after the Adelaide Crows' historic NAB AFLW Grand Final win.

**Back Cover:** Richmond star Jack Riewoldt joining US band The Killers on stage at the Grand Final Premiership Party was music to the ears of Tiger fans.

◀ Jubilant Richmond fans erupt around the MCG at the final siren as the Tigers clinch their first premiership since 1980.

# 100,021

The attendance at the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final

# 3,562,254

The average national audience on the Seven Network for the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final, which was the most watched program of any kind on Australian television in 2017. This was made up by an audience of 2,714,870 in the five mainland capital cities and an audience in regional Australia of 847,384.

# 16,904,867

The gross cumulative audience on the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel for the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series.



▷ Richmond players celebrate after defeating the Adelaide Crows in the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final, breaking a 37-year premiership drought.



## 6,732,601

The total attendance for the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season which was a record, beating the previous mark of 6,525,071 set in 2011. The 2017 total was seven per cent up on the 2016 total of 6,306,336.

## 34,003

The average attendance per game for the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

## 907,561

Total membership of the 18 AFL clubs in 2017 – the first time the mark of 900,000 has been achieved and the 17th successive season in which AFL clubs have established a membership record. Club membership has grown in 26 of the past 27 years, with the exception being 2000 when the season was moved forward a month to accommodate the Sydney Olympic Games.

◀ Collingwood high-flyer Jeremy Howe leaps over Melbourne's Tom McDonald to take this Mark of the Year contender in round 12 last season.



## MAJOR AFL AWARDS



Brownlow Medal

**DUSTIN MARTIN**  
RICHMOND



Norm Smith Medal

**DUSTIN MARTIN**  
RICHMOND



Coleman Medal

**LANCE FRANKLIN**  
SYDNEY SWANS



NAB AFL Rising Star

**ANDREW McGRATH**  
ESSENDON

◀ Star Richmond midfielder Dustin Martin shows off his Brownlow Medal. He played a key role in the Tigers' premiership victory, winning the Norm Smith Medal.

MAJOR NAB AFLW AWARDS



NAB AFLW  
BEST & FAIREST

**ERIN PHILLIPS**  
ADELAIDE CROWS



NAB AFLW  
Grand Final  
Best on Ground

**ERIN PHILLIPS**  
ADELAIDE CROWS



NAB AFLW  
Leading  
Goalkicker

**DARCY VESCIO**  
CARLTON



NAB AFL  
Rising Star

**EBONY MARINOFF**  
ADELAIDE CROWS



▷ Adelaide Crows co-captain Erin Phillips was a star in the inaugural NAB AFLW season in 2017, winning the competition's best and fairest award and voted best afield in her team's premiership victory over the Brisbane Lions.

# 198,366

Total attendance for the inaugural NAB AFLW season at an average of 6840 a game

## 24,568

The lockout crowd which attended the first game of the NAB AFLW season between Carlton and Collingwood at Ikon Park.

## 5,644,093

Total cumulative audience on the Seven Network and Fox Footy for the NAB AFLW season.

## 463,364

Total female participation in Australian Football in 2017, up 22 per cent on the 2016 total of 380,041.

## 44,650

The total number of females participating in club teams, up 68 per cent on the 2016 total of 26,589. In 2017, the total number of female teams reached 1690, a 76 per cent increase on 2016.



△ The first AFLW match between Carlton and Collingwood at Ikon Park was a lockout with a crowd of 24,568 in attendance.



▽ The total number of participants in the NAB AFL Auskick program throughout Australia topped 200,000 for the first time in 2017.

**1,547,915**  
Total domestic participation in Australian Football in 2017, up 10.2 per cent on the 2016 total of 1,404,176

**371,311**  
Total number of participants in community club football in 2017 throughout Australia involving:

- ▶ 15,431 teams an increase of 659 teams on 2016
- ▶ 2913 clubs
- ▶ 237 leagues

**200,138**  
Total number of participants in the NAB AFL Auskick program in 2017 in 3416 Auskick centres around Australia – the first time the 200,000 mark has been broken.

**170,744**  
Total number of participants in various countries around the world.



# Chairman's Report

Richard Goyder  
Chairman



I want to start my first annual report as Chairman by thanking all those who have worked so hard to deliver a wonderful year for our game.

The 2017 season saw record-breaking attendances, strong broadcast results, the success of the first national women's league, growing community participation and the most competitive year of football in living memory.

The strong performance of our game in 2017 is thanks not only to the current leadership and management, but a result of long-term planning and some tough decisions over many decades.

The AFL's commitment to equalisation, national growth, strong grassroots and accessibility and affordability has taken many years of work and commitment, and in 2017 we have seen the results. Everyone associated with the AFL industry should be very proud.

## Tiger Army take the cup

After the most competitive season in our history, the Richmond Football Club took home the 2017 premiership cup.

The might and passion of the Tiger Army filled September, and while the dreams of the other seven finals contenders were dashed, it was hard not to get swept up in the joy of loyal Richmond supporters.

Congratulations to the club and the board, and in particular president Peggy O'Neal, chief executive officer Brendon Gale, coach Damien Hardwick, general manager - football Neil Balme and captain Trent Cotchin.

▷ Adelaide finished on top of the ladder to claim the McClelland Trophy for the second time and clinched a Grand Final berth with a convincing preliminary final win over the Geelong Cats.



▷ Richmond president Peggy O'Neal proudly holds aloft the 2017 premiership cup after the Tigers claimed an emotional Grand Final win, much to the delight of this fan (far right).



Despite some external pressure and questioning, the club board and management stuck together and remained committed to their path. In doing so, the leadership of the club delivered growth in membership, very strong financial results and, of course, the ultimate – a premiership cup. In a record-breaking year for the game, the Tigers' Dustin Martin polled more Brownlow Medal votes than any player in history (under the current voting system) to add to the joy of the Richmond supporters.

It was the culmination of a wonderful season for football fans.

After 198 games and 23 rounds, the eight finalists were only decided in the last game of the 2017 home and away season. Seventy-two times during the year, the lower-ranked team won the match and fans were subject to upsets and surprises every round.

Congratulations must also go to the Adelaide Crows on reaching the Grand Final. Given the tragic events of 2015, it is testament to the strength and resilience of the team that, after a wonderful season of football, they took their fans to the Grand Final.

#### Adelaide Crows' women make history

In a historic and thrilling Grand Final, the Adelaide Football Club's women's team took home the inaugural NAB AFLW premiership cup.

In front of more than 15,000 fans at Metricon Stadium on the Gold Coast, the Crows defeated the Brisbane Lions in a game to remember.

The club deserves our congratulations – chairman Rob Chapman, CEO Andrew Fagan, coach Bec Goddard and co-captains Chelsea Randall and Erin Phillips. Thanks for taking us on the incredible journey to the first AFLW premiership.

The Brisbane Lions also deserve our congratulations, and while they did not take home the cup, the impact of the women's league in Queensland is being felt across the state, with huge numbers of girls and women flocking to the game.

A full summary of the AFLW season is contained elsewhere in this Annual Report, but I want to acknowledge that the success of our first season is a result of the commitment of the team at the AFL, all of our clubs, the broadcast partners and of course the sponsors, in particular NAB.

The launch of the AFLW sent a message of equality and inclusion to the broader community, and while the first season was a great success, we know there is a lot more work to do to ensure the AFLW is strong and sustainable.

#### NAB AFLW expansion

The August and September meetings of the AFL Commission considered the issue of expansion of the AFLW competition and decided to grant two new licences in 2019 to Geelong and North Melbourne, and four licences for 2020 to the West Coast Eagles, the Gold Coast Suns, Richmond and St Kilda.

The decision was challenging for the Commission, with the desire of clubs to be involved weighed up against the needs of the fledgling national competition. Eight clubs applied for licences, with Essendon and Hawthorn missing out at this time.

The Commission has made it clear the long-term objective is to have all clubs involved in the NAB AFLW competition over time, and when the conditions are right.

▷ Following the success of the inaugural NAB AFLW season, the AFL announced two new clubs would be added to the competition in 2019 and a further four in 2020.



## Strong financial management to ensure our future

In 2015, the AFL signed a record six-year broadcast rights deal for the period 2017-22, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure the financial future of the game. We established a new investment model to guide the financial decision-making of the industry, with a commitment to ensuring financially stable clubs, well-remunerated players, a strong community base and accessibility for fans.

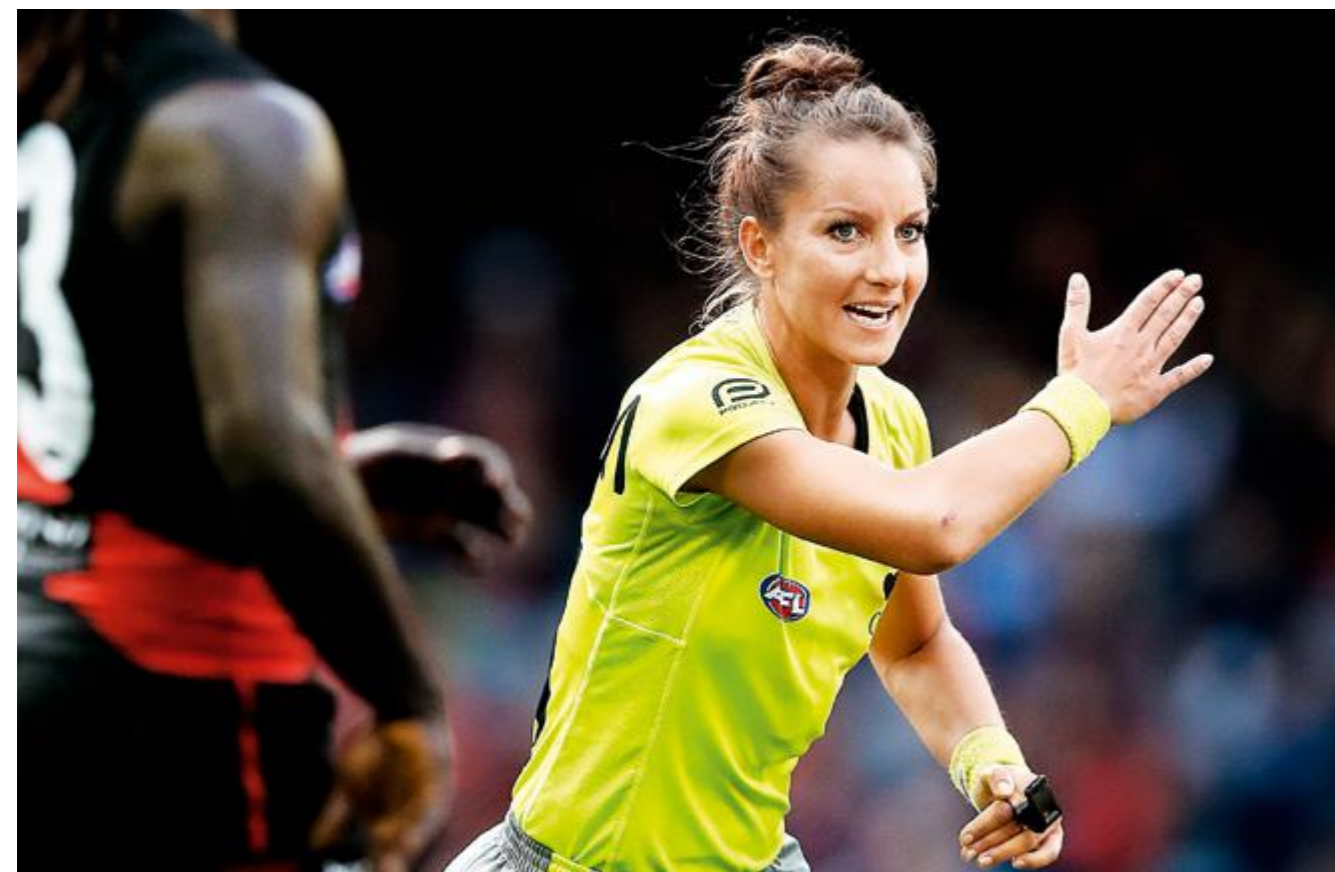
In 2017, we signed a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with our players and made significant investment decisions to build the women's game, strengthen grassroots football and keep our ticket prices affordable.

### 2017 Financial Result

The key financial highlights for the AFL:

- ▶ Revenue increased by \$133.6 million to \$650.6 million due to an increase in broadcasting revenue from the new broadcast rights deal for the 2017-22 financial years.
- ▶ Expenditure increased by \$5.3 million to \$192 million due to expenditure related to the AFL's women's competition.
- ▶ The operating surplus before grants and distributions increased by 39 per cent to \$460.2 million.
- ▶ The AFL provided grants and distributions of \$411.4 million in 2017, primarily comprised of the following:
  - ▶ \$304.6 million to AFL clubs
  - ▶ \$44.2 million of game development grants

▽ Eleni Glouftsis created history in 2017 by becoming the first female field umpire to officiate in an AFL Premiership Season match.



- ▶ \$37 million to the AFLPA
- ▶ \$24.1 million to the development and improvement of facilities and grounds
- ▶ \$1.5 million to corporate and social responsibility initiatives
- ▶ After these grants and distributions, the AFL's net profit increased by \$66.6 million in 2017 to \$48.8 million which was in line with the 2017 budget.

## Player Agreement

In June 2017, we signed a six-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFLPA which ensured the players shared in the success of the game.

Signed by myself and Matthew Pavlich, the president of the Players Association, the new agreement delivered significant increases in player payments as well as a major investment in retirement, education, development and wellbeing programs.

The CBA also recognises the contribution players make to the football industry, with a share of defined forecast revenue streams and mechanisms to tie further benefits to the success of the industry.

I am very proud of this agreement with our players and believe it is genuinely a win-win for the industry, rewarding our players as major stakeholders and recognising that they play the toughest, fastest and most spectacular game in the world.

△ AFLPA president Matthew Pavlich and AFL Commission Chairman Richard Goyder signed off on a new six-year Collective Bargaining Agreement in June 2017 ensuring players would share in the success of the game.



## Six-year agreement signed

**This was the official press release on June 20, 2017, announcing the historic AFL and AFLPA agreement:**

AFL chairman Richard Goyder and AFLPA president Matthew Pavlich today signed a six-year agreement covering total player payment levels, increases to player salaries, the Player Retirement Scheme and injury and hardship support, together with a significant increase to player education, development and wellbeing programs.

The new agreement recognises the significant contribution the AFL players make to the football industry with a share of defined forecast revenue streams and mechanisms that tie further benefits to the success of the industry.

Goyder said the agreement delivered within the investment model established by the AFL Commission and was a win for all the key pillars of the AFL's strategy – players, clubs, fans and the grassroots of the game.

"This is a great outcome for our industry, delivering certainty and stability, respecting our players, and allowing the AFL to invest in the future," he said.

"Our players play the toughest, fastest and most spectacular game in the world, and this agreement rewards their role.

"We are very proud to work in partnership with our players to protect and grow the game, and I thank the Association for their strong advocacy on behalf of their members, and their commitment to the whole game."

AFLPA CEO Paul Marsh said the new CBA will benefit players of the past, present and future, and incentivises them to work with the AFL to grow the game over the next six years.

"This CBA rewards the players for the role they've played, and continue to play, in making our game great. It also ensures the industry is primed to grow grassroots football, maintain 18 strong clubs and continue to deliver an incredible product for fans," he said.

"The players' guiding principle through this negotiation was partnership and we're thrilled to secure a deal that reflects this.

"The AFLPA is committed to working with the AFL, AFL clubs, players and other football stakeholders to drive growth and strengthen the AFL industry's position as the most successful professional sport in Australia."

Pavlich said this negotiation was driven by the players and the final result was testament to their desire to be recognised as a genuine partner in the game.

"The players gave the PA 10 key priorities to achieve in the new CBA and we've been able to generate outcomes in all of them. The fact that players overwhelmingly voted for the deal highlights the unity demonstrated by players throughout the negotiation," he said.

"This CBA will leave a legacy that the current players should be proud of."

Further detail concerning the CBA is included elsewhere in this report.



## Strong clubs

The key objective in 2017 was to embed the new club funding model and Competitive Balance Policy, and to work in partnership with all clubs to improve the industry's financial strength.

The financial health of our 18 clubs improved considerably over the past 12 months. Almost all clubs reported a cash surplus and the consolidated debt held by the clubs reduced by close to \$10 million year-on-year. Reducing club debt is a major focus throughout the current broadcast cycle.

We will continue to work with the clubs to implement measures to control cost growth while allowing them the ability to grow and re-invest or improve the strength of their balance sheet.

## Grassroots football

The elite level of the game is dependent on the health of the grassroots and I am very pleased to report that 2017 saw an increase in overall participation by around 10 per cent, with increases in every state and territory.

Of particular note, the decision by the AFL to fast-track the national women's competition has resulted in a huge increase in girls and women playing the game, and female participation now represents 30 per cent of all participation. We saw a staggering 1690 new female teams created in 2017.

We also had more than 200,000 boys and girls participate in the NAB AFL Auskick program, an increase of two per cent from 2016, and increases in community football at all levels.

We cannot take these increases for granted and the Commission and the AFL Executive remain committed to investing in the community level of the game.

*The elite level of the game is dependent on the health of the grassroots*

△ A generation of champions featured in the retiring players' lap of honour of the MCG on Grand Final Day.

## Football milestones

The past year saw a generation of champions play their last game, with the retirements of Nick Riewoldt, Sam Mitchell, Matt Priddis, Robert Murphy, Steve Johnson, Matthew Boyd, Andrew Mackie, Drew Petrie, Scott Thompson, Leigh Montagna, Jobe Watson, Josh Gibson and James Kelly.

Congratulations to them and all others who retired from the game, and we thank you for your service.

We also congratulate Brendon Goddard, Luke Hodge, Gary Ablett jnr and Jarrad McVeigh who all reached the significant milestone of 300 senior games in 2017.



## New Commissioner

In April, the AFL Commission accepted a recommendation from the Nominations Committee to appoint Robin Bishop to the Commission.

The Nominations Committee was chaired by myself as AFL Chairman and included Richmond FC president Peggy O'Neal and Port Adelaide FC chairman David Koch.

Mr Bishop was the standout candidate for the Commission and brings substantial financial and investment experience to the AFL.

Growing and protecting the game requires strong financial management and investment and the football community will be well served by Mr Bishop's experience and counsel.

Until he retired in 2016, Mr Bishop was on the Macquarie Group Management Committee and Head of Macquarie Capital Australia and New Zealand, overseeing the region's largest and most active investment banking team of more than 300 staff.

One of Australia's leading investment bankers, Mr Bishop has advised on some of Australia's most significant mergers and acquisition and equity capital markets transactions across a range of sectors and markets. Among his many transactions, he advised the AFL on its \$2.5 billion broadcast rights agreement.

Mr Bishop holds a Bachelor of Commerce, a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a Bachelor of Arts, all from the University of Melbourne. He is non-executive director of the Burnet Institute for Medical Research and a member of the Australian Takeovers Panel. Mr Bishop and his family are all passionate Essendon fans.

▷ Inaugural Adelaide Crows chairman Bob Hammond is presented with the John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award by AFL Commission Chairman Richard Goyder.



## John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award

The John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award was introduced by the AFL Commission in 2012 to recognise people who have made outstanding contributions to the game in more than one field.

The inaugural award was presented to Lou Richards in 2014 and to Dr Allen Aylett in 2015. Both gave extraordinary service to our game.

In 2017, the Commission named former AFL Commissioner and inaugural Adelaide Football Club chairman Bob Hammond as the winner of the John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bob has had a substantial career in our game, as player, coach and administrator.

He played 247 games for North Adelaide and Norwood between 1960 and 1975, winning three SANFL premierships, then went on to coach Norwood to two premierships. He coached the Sydney Swans in 1984 and was the South Australian coach in 1983.

Bob also excelled in administration, as a board member for Norwood from 1981-90, inaugural chairman of the Adelaide Football Club from 1991-2000, then AFL Commissioner from 2001-11. Bob is a SA Football Hall of Fame member, a Life Member of the Adelaide Football Club, a Life Member of the AFL and an Australian Football Hall of Fame member in the category of administrator.

Clearly, he is a worthy winner after a lifetime of service to our game.

◁ The 2017 AFL National Female Diversity Championships drew teams from all states and territories to Byron Bay last October.

*(Bob Hammond) is a worthy winner (of the John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award) after a lifetime of service to our game*

## AFL Role in Community

The AFL understands our role in the life of many individuals and communities, and indeed in the social fabric of our nation.

The Commission strongly believes that sport has a positive psychological, physical and social benefit and we remain committed to being a sport where everyone can belong and participate.

All our clubs are committed to programs or activities that deliver social benefits beyond our core business. This involves substantial commitments of money and time by our clubs through their Corporate Social Responsibility programs, foundations and charity work, to simple actions by many of our players in reaching out to fans and members suffering hardship.

In 2017, the AFL took broader stances on important social issues that align with our commitment to inclusion and community leadership, including supporting the Yes campaign for marriage equality, refreshing our Respect and Responsibility policy and our continued advocacy against racism on and off the field.

We also understand that we have a responsibility to work with governments, the community and our partners to minimise the potential harm of gambling and wagering, and in particular, it is the Commission's preferred social position that we reduce and, if possible, eliminate the reliance of our clubs on poker machine revenue.

▽ Former tennis champion and passionate Crows supporter Lleyton Hewitt was among the sports stars to take the plunge in the Big Freeze at the 'G at the Queen's Birthday Monday clash.

In 2017, AFL General Manager, Infrastructure, Major Projects and Investment Ray Gunston began a project to understand the current status of poker machine operations in our clubs, to look at the regulatory environment, and has undertaken an assessment of the future direction for AFL clubs and electronic gaming machines.

Our relationship with our supporters and the broader Australian community requires us to be the best corporate citizen we can be and we will continue to work on those issues that impact on our fans, our players and our football community.

## Partnerships delivering for the game

I would like to thank all our major partners for their role in the success of 2017.

Our broadcast and media partners – the Seven Network, Foxtel, Fox Sports, News Corp, Telstra – and all our radio partners who took our game to millions and millions of Australians, we thank you for your ongoing support.

My thanks also to our corporate partners, including NAB, CUB, Virgin Australia, Coca-Cola, CrownBet and many others who ensure our game remains strong.

In particular, I want to thank Toyota, our long-term premier partner, and outgoing President David Buttner, with whom the AFL has enjoyed a long and positive relationship.



I would also like to recognise that the West Australian Government has invested in a wonderful new stadium that will benefit the WA community, our sport and our clubs and the broader sport and entertainment industry. The new stadium will prove itself to the WA public very quickly in 2018 and we recognise and appreciate the role of the Government in making this major investment on behalf of Western Australia.

## The Commission, club and AFL administrations

I want to thank all of the AFL administration, led by our Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan, and the administrations of our 18 clubs for the 2017 year.

It has been very successful on many levels – record attendance, record membership, most competitive season ever, a great start for the NAB AFLW, strong financial results and growth at the community level.

I want to thank all club boards, chairs and presidents. Being on the board of a football club is time-consuming and demanding, not only for the person involved but for their partners and families. Clubs need strong, independent and skilled people from all sections of our society – business, community and the professions – and the commitment of our boards should not be underestimated.

△ The 2017 AFL Commission (from left) – Andrew Newbold, Kim Williams, Jason Ball, Richard Goyder (Chairman), Gillon McLachlan (Chief Executive Officer), Robin Bishop, Simone Wilkie, Paul Bassat and Gabrielle Trainor.

I would like to particularly thank Bob Sharpless, who has retired as the Brisbane Lions chairman this year, and we wish you well in your future endeavours.

Thank you also to the members of the AFL Commission – Andrew Newbold, Jason Ball, Kim Williams, Paul Bassat, Gabrielle Trainor, Simone Wilkie, Robin Bishop and Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan for their commitment and hard work in 2017.

Finally, thank you to the more than 200,000 volunteers who, in 2017, played their part to keep our game strong. Without you, our game would not survive.

And lastly, to our fans. This year you attended, joined and watched the game in record numbers and we thank you for your ongoing support and passion for the game.

Richard Goyder, AO  
Chairman

*Clubs need strong, independent and skilled people from all sections of our society*



# CEO's Report

**Gillon McLachlan**  
Chief Executive Officer



The positive impact of a competition which consistently delivers uncertain match-day outcomes was clearly evident during a record-breaking 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

This competitive balance is driven by key policies including the salary cap, the soft cap on non-player football department spending, the draft and revenue sharing of competition funds generated by the AFL, including broadcast rights, corporate sponsorship, finals, consumer products and AFL membership.

The 2017 season was highlighted by:

- ▶ 27 matches with a margin of four points or less, beating the previous record of 25 set in 1928;
- ▶ 31 matches with a margin of six points or less, compared with 25 in 2016;
- ▶ 45 matches with a margin of 10 points or less, compared with 38 in 2016;
- ▶ 68 upsets during the season where the favoured team did not win;
- ▶ Winning margins were also down 18 per cent when compared with 2016.

Heading into round 23, the final eight was not determined until the 198th and final game of the season between the West Coast Eagles and Adelaide.

With such a competitive season, AFL clubs, with the support of the AFL, established an all-time attendance record for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season of 6,732,601, beating the previous highest of 6,525,071 set in 2011.

The record for a single round was also established when 400,401 people attended the opening weekend of the season. During 2017, there were 11 rounds attended by more than 300,000 supporters, equalling the record established in 2011.

▶ St Kilda champion Nick Riewoldt is chaired off by his cousin Jack Riewoldt and teammate Josh Bruce after playing his final AFL game in round 23 last season.





Melbourne, the GWS Giants and the Sydney Swans reached their highest home and away attendances, while 12 clubs increased their home game average crowds from 2016 – Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Fremantle, Geelong Cats, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, Melbourne, Richmond, St Kilda, Western Bulldogs and West Coast Eagles.

In addition, AFL clubs set a record for membership with a total of 907,561 members signing up for 2017, with 10 clubs breaking their all-time records – Adelaide Crows, Essendon, Geelong Cats, GWS Giants, Hawthorn, Melbourne, Richmond, St Kilda, Sydney Swans and Western Bulldogs.

The level of interest in our game was also reflected in television audiences with the Toyota AFL Grand Final between Richmond and the Adelaide Crows on the Seven Network being the most watched program of any kind on Australian television in 2017 with a national average audience of 3,562,254.

The premiership season remained the most watched competition on television, attracting an average aggregate audience on the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel of 4,449,465 a week.

△ Twelve clubs, including the West Coast Eagles, increased their home game average crowds from 2016.

These positive outcomes were made possible by strong collaboration between AFL clubs and the AFL in support of the key policies driving competitive balance which reinforced our belief that interest in the game is maximised when members and supporters believe their club has a chance to win on any day or night.

### Financial performance

Our competitive balance policies, including club funding arrangements and the soft cap on non-player football department expenditure, along with strong financial management by the clubs is also showing positive results with an improvement in club profitability and a reduction in club debt.

*AFL clubs set a record for membership with a total of 907,561 members signing up for 2017, with 10 clubs breaking their all-time records*

### Richmond's premiership

After the Western Bulldogs broke a 62-year premiership drought in 2016, Richmond won its first flag in 37 years by downing the Adelaide Crows in the Toyota AFL Grand Final. It was Richmond's first Grand Final appearance since 1982.

It was a remarkable achievement by Richmond to come from 13th in 2016 to win the premiership a year later, which means that since the competition expanded nationally from 1987, every club except the Gold Coast Suns and GWS Giants have reached the Grand Final.

In that time, 13 different clubs have won premierships – Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Geelong Cats, Hawthorn, North Melbourne, Port Adelaide, Richmond, Sydney Swans, Western Bulldogs and West Coast Eagles – while from 1967-86, only five clubs won premierships (Richmond, Carlton, Hawthorn, North Melbourne and Essendon).

Richmond is a good example of a club with quality people in the right roles working to a well thought-out plan, a stable environment and the resolve to stay the course and resist external noise which it experienced in 2016.

The size and passion of the club's supporter base was highlighted by three crowds of more than 94,000 attending their three finals at the MCG, culminating in more than 100,000 attending the Grand Final.

▽ The inaugural season of the NAB AFLW competition was a huge success, providing an opportunity for female athletes to play at the highest level of Australian Football.

### NAB AFLW competition

The inaugural season of the NAB AFLW competition exceeded all expectations.

To be at Ikon Park, Carlton, for the first game of the competition between Carlton and Collingwood and to see the response from the supporters of both clubs, which produced a lockout crowd of more than 24,000 people, was one of the highlights of my time in football.

Female football has been played at a state and community level throughout Australia for more than 100 years, but our decision to establish a national AFLW competition now provides the same opportunity for female athletes to play our game at the highest level.

The AFL Commission's decision to establish the AFLW competition was a generational one and it will take appropriate investment, development and time during the next 10-20 years to fully develop.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved with the eight inaugural clubs – the Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Fremantle, GWS Giants, Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs – for their contribution to such a successful opening season highlighted by:

- ▶ Total attendance for the competition of 198,366 at an average of 6840 a game;
- ▶ Total cumulative audience on the Seven Network and Fox Footy Channel of 5,644,093 for AFLW matches.



▷ Erin Phillips celebrates with her children Blake and Brooklyn after the Crows' AFLW premiership victory. Phillips capped off a sensational year by being judged best afield in the Grand Final, to go with her AFLPA MVP, club best and fairest award and competition best and fairest award.



## Erin Phillips & Dustin Martin

While ours is a team game, I would like to highlight the exceptional individual performances of Adelaide Crows co-captain Erin Phillips and Richmond's Dustin Martin in 2017.

Both had the distinction of winning their respective competition fairest and best player awards, were judged best afield in the NAB AFLW Grand Final and Toyota AFL Grand Final respectively, won the AFLPA MVP awards and won their club best and fairest awards.

Erin's efforts were extraordinary when you consider she last played our game 18 years ago before forging a highly successful basketball career representing Australia and playing in the WNBA where she was a member of two championship teams.

▷ Richmond's Dustin Martin had an unforgettable 2017 season, winning the Brownlow, Norm Smith and premiership medals and the Tigers' best and fairest award.



## Head of Women's Football

In November, 2017, we announced the appointment of Nicole Livingstone as the new Head of Women's Football.

A three-time Olympic swimmer, respected sports administrator and commentator, Nicole is responsible for growing and managing the NAB AFL Women's competition and female football participation.

She has served sport at the highest level, on the board of the Australian Olympic Committee, as a Director of Swimming Australia, Deputy Chair of VicHealth and Chair of the Victorian Institute of Sport while also having extensive experience as a sports broadcaster.

▽ New Head of Women's Football Nicole Livingstone with Brisbane Lions star Sabrina Frederick-Traub.

*The AFL Commission's decision to establish the AFLW competition was a generational one*





## Economic impact of Australian Football

Australian Football is one of the major sports in Australia and is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry according to an annual study conducted by Street Ryan and Associates on behalf of the AFL. The 2017 study found that Australian Football is:

- ▶ Australia's premier spectator sport, attracting 15.83 million spectators in 2017.
- ▶ Australia's major football code in terms of regular participation with 1,547,915 participants.
- ▶ An industry sector which supports 7852 full-time equivalent jobs (excluding players and umpires).
- ▶ An industry sector which generated \$6.45 billion in financial contribution to the Australian economy in 2017.

### Football Participation

- ▶ Total Australian Football participation (in competitions and programs) in 2017 was 1,547,915; comprising 371,311 club competition participants, 300,567 school competition participants, 200,138 Auskick participants, 25,406 participants in AFL 9s, 636,539 in school programs and 13,954 in club programs.
- ▶ Australian Football is the most national football code, evidenced by growth in participation in the non-traditional states of New South Wales and Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, which accommodate 32 per cent of all participation (compared with 17 per cent in 2000). As a consequence, the states of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are the homes of 62 per cent of players (down from 74 per cent in 2000).
- ▶ There were 15,827,586 spectators at Australian Football matches in 2017. Of the total attendances, 48.6 per cent were at AFL matches (including the new AFLW competition).

### Employment

- ▶ An estimated 205,836 Australian Football volunteers contributed 16.4 million working hours in 2017, worth the equivalent of \$336 million in labour effort.
- ▶ Australian Football peak bodies, leagues, associations and clubs employed 18,163 people in 2017 (excluding players and umpires)
  - ▶ 30 per cent full-time
  - ▶ 23 per cent part-time
  - ▶ 47 per cent casualThis represented 7852 full-time equivalent jobs.

### Additional Impacts

- ▶ The 18 AFL clubs made an estimated economic contribution of \$2.594 billion in 2017. The contribution included:
  - ▶ \$1434.5 million from club, player and member expenditure;
  - ▶ \$608.4 million from spectators, volunteers and other supporters;
  - ▶ \$551.1 million from business and multiplier effects.

▶ Essendon pair Zach Merrett and Joe Daniher celebrate a goal during the Bombers' victory over Collingwood on Anzac Day at the MCG.

▽ Hosting games for Fremantle and the West Coast Eagles provides a financial boon for Perth, contributing a net economic value of \$59.7 million to the city in 2017.

- ▶ Australian Football organisations collected and paid an estimated \$580 million in taxes during 2017 comprising:
  - ▶ \$489.2 million for taxes collected on behalf of the Commonwealth Government (including net GST \$117.1 million and PAYG for employees \$372.1 million);
  - ▶ \$90.7 million for direct taxes (payroll tax, bank taxes, FBT, rates, statutory charges and other taxes).
- ▶ There were a large number of "interstate" AFL matches staged in 2017. Interstate matches are those in which at least one of the teams playing in the host city is from another state. The estimated net-economic contribution from domestic tourism tied to interstate AFL matches in 2017 to the host cities was \$524.7 million.
- ▶ AFL matches in 2017 contributed to an estimated 351,080 domestic air tickets and 823,327 bed nights in commercial accommodation, for interstate and intrastate spectators attending the games.
- ▶ Of the \$6.45 billion in total economic contribution, the grassroots football contribution (including community clubs, regional and metropolitan leagues, state leagues and community participation programs) in 2017 was 44.5 per cent, or \$2.871 billion.

*Australian Football is among the largest individual business sectors within the sports and recreation industry*





## Perth Stadium

In December, 2017, we concluded negotiations with the West Australian Government for a user agreement for Fremantle and the West Coast Eagles to play their home games at the \$1.6 billion Optus Stadium from the 2018 season.

The user agreement also includes arrangements for Toyota AFL Finals Series matches to be played at the venue which will be a spectacular addition to the major stadia that host AFL matches.

The 60,000-seat venue is the final component since 1990 to provide world-class facilities for club members and supporters, players, the media and corporate partners.

Stadium developments include the construction of Adelaide Oval, the rebuild of the MCG, the construction of Etihad Stadium, redevelopments of the SCG, GMHBA Stadium at Geelong, Spotless Stadium at Sydney Olympic Park, UNSW Canberra Oval, Blundstone Arena (Hobart) and University of Tasmania Stadium (Launceston) in addition to the construction of Metricon Stadium on the Gold Coast.

More than \$3 billion has been invested in the development of these AFL venues.

△ Optus Stadium in Perth will be a spectacular addition to the major stadia which host AFL matches from the 2018 season.

▷ Gold Coast Suns ruckman Jarrod Witts wins a hit-out against Port Adelaide during the first game for premiership points in China.

▽ Port Adelaide and the Gold Coast Suns broke new ground when they played in Shanghai last May.

## Game in China

For the first time, we played a game for premiership points outside Australia and New Zealand when Port Adelaide met the Gold Coast Suns on May 14 in China.

We believe the game was a great success as it was played before a sell-out crowd of more than 10,000 based on capacity restrictions on the venue. More than 30 per cent of attendees were from the local Chinese community, while the game attracted a peak television audience in China of 4.482 million people and an average national audience on the Seven Network in Australia of 578,000.

Given the success of this initiative, a second game between Port Adelaide and Gold Coast has been scheduled for Adelaide Arena at Jiangwan Stadium on Saturday, May 19, 2018.

I would like to congratulate Port Adelaide for driving this initiative, led by Chairman David Koch and Chief Executive Officer Keith Thomas. This was fundamental to the success of the game as was the work of all AFL staff involved in delivering the project.



## Game development, community facilities

In 2017, the AFL provided \$44.2 million in grants to the various state and territory bodies for the continued development of the game at a community level throughout Australia.

Total domestic participation increased by 10.2 per cent to 1,547,915 in 2017 compared with 1,404,176 in 2016.

Total female participation in 2017 reached 463,364, up 22 per cent on the 2016 total of 380,041.

While other participation details are included elsewhere in this report, in addition to game development grants, we also provide funding to support the development of facilities at a community level throughout Australia.

To the best of our knowledge, we are one of very few national sporting bodies that contribute direct funding to community facility development in partnership with government and local football bodies at all levels.

For the period 2012-16, the AFL provided \$14.8 million from the facility development reserve to support the construction of community facilities with a total project cost of more than \$253 million in the various states and territories.

In 2017, more than \$3.6 million was allocated to community facility projects with a total value of more than \$82 million.

△ The AFL executive team in 2017: (back row from left) Andrew Dillon, Travis Auld, Gillon McLachlan, Steve Hocking, Darren Birch, Ray Gunston; (front) Kylie Rogers, Walter Lee, Elizabeth Lukin, Sarah Fair, Tony Peek, Tanya Hosch.

Gillon McLachlan  
Chief Executive Officer

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank our executive team and all staff for their efforts in 2017.

While we faced some challenges, overall the past year was very rewarding with the game at all levels in a very healthy position and with a strong foundation on which to continue to build into the future.

*Overall the past year was very rewarding with the game at all levels in a very healthy position and with a strong foundation on which to build into the future*

# Strong Clubs

We aim to deliver strong and financially viable clubs across the competition, with any team having the ability to win on any given day.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ 18 strong and financially viable clubs for fans
- ▷ Any team can win on any given day, close games, exciting finishes
- ▷ Every club has its own unique vibrant identity

▷ The brilliance of 2016 Brownlow medallist Patrick Dangerfield helped propel Geelong to a second consecutive preliminary final appearance in 2017.





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 reflective 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.

▽ West Coast Brownlow medallist Matt Priddis was one of many champions to bow out of the game last season.

- ▶ 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 unsustainable cost growth by strengthening the soft cap on non-player football department spending and holding the level of the cap.

Through the support of the 18 AFL clubs, having an independent Commission is the key to making far-reaching decisions on behalf of all of the competition including financial decisions on behalf of the various stakeholders in our game. It has allowed our game to grow and invest and make the right decisions for the future.

New funding arrangements with AFL clubs and a new Competitive Balance Policy, along with a new CBA with the players have all been 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 fund increased costs to clubs flowing from the Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2017-22, including increases in player payments, additional services agreements and allowances;

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

## Club shared services

The AFL is one of the leaders in Australian sport in delivering systems, solutions, enhancements and innovation via supporting platforms and technology for the AFL industry. Our aim is to provide technology, operational support and strategic guidance for membership, ticketing, attendance, retail programs, digital media and financial services.

More than 75 staff across Consumer Club Services, AFL Media and the AFL finance department deliver daily support to clubs, AFL and corporate membership, community football and other key industry clients.

Functions provided by the AFL to clubs are:

- ▶ Membership management
- ▶ Financial management
- ▶ Platform and technology development
- ▶ Product support and training
- ▶ Licensing account and category management
- ▶ E-commerce and retail marketing
- ▶ Ticketing operations and sales analysis
- ▶ Ticket pricing platform and support
- ▶ CRM and marketing/communications campaign management
- ▶ Data reporting and analytics
- ▶ App and website development
- ▶ Digital content, articles and videos
- ▶ Digital membership and ad sales

△ The improvement of youngsters such as dashing defender Jayden Hunt pushed Melbourne to within a hair's breadth of a finals berth last season.

## Club funding model and long-term investment plan

The AFL Commission believes the broadcast and digital media rights agreements secured 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 General Manager, Infrastructure, Major Projects and Investment, Ray Gunston, consulted widely across the industry over a two-year period to develop a financial model that delivers security and sustainability, not for the next six years, but for the next 20 years.

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.



▷ Brisbane Lions midfielder Dayne Zorko had a superb 2017, winning his third consecutive best and fairest award, being selected as an All-Australian for the first time and rewarded with an International Rules Series debut for Australia.

## Competitive balance

Richmond's premierships success in 2017 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 the Sydney Swans (two) have won nine premierships between them since 2005, 16 clubs have reached the Grand Final since it expanded nationally, 13 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 by the AFL Commission, with the support of the clubs, 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;
- ▶ An enhanced club funding model that recognises the structural differences in club business models and tailors funding to meet those differences;
- ▶ Introduction of a mechanism to control growth in non-player football spend.

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.

However, the concessions have not prevented Richmond developing a premierships team and clubs such as Melbourne and St Kilda showing great improvement.

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

▽ A clutch goal by veteran Shaun Burgoyne late in the last quarter helped Hawthorn to a memorable six-point win over the Sydney Swans in round 10.





#### AFL club training and administration facilities

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

In Western Australia, Fremantle completed a new home base in the City of Cockburn in February 2017, while the West Coast Eagles are moving their headquarters to Lathlain Park in the Town of Victoria, sharing facilities with the Perth Football Club and broader community. West Coast's project is in the construction phase.

The Gold Coast Suns completed a new \$22 million training and administration 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 was completed in 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, the Southern Football Netball League and the Southern Metro Juniors Football League.

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

△ Gold Coast's new \$22 million training and administration facility will help get the best out of stars such as Touk Miller.

◁ Despite the brilliance of Marcus Bontempelli, the Bulldogs were unable to repeat their premiership heroics of 2016.

▷ St Kilda star Jack Steven celebrates a goal against North Melbourne in round 22 at Etihad Stadium.



*The AFL is grateful for this (funding) support which helps make these important community projects a reality*

# Spectacular Game

To have the most talented players (men and women), playing in the best stadia across the country, in games that are well officiated and delivering competitions of the highest integrity.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ Most talented and best-paid players
- ▷ Well officiated and exciting to watch for fans
- ▷ Played in the best stadia with the best at-game experience
- ▷ Renowned for integrity and reputation
- ▷ Elite women's competition

▷ The ruck contest remains one of the most spectacular aspects of Australian Football, as Lion Sabrina Frederick-Traub and Docker Gemma Houghton demonstrate.





◀ North Melbourne veteran Shaun Higgins produced the best form of his career in 2017, winning his first best and fairest award.

▶ Western Bulldogs stalwart Robert Murphy returned from knee surgery to reach the 300-game milestone before announcing his retirement at the end of the season.

## Historic AFL and AFLPA agreement signed

In June, AFL Commission chairman Richard Goyder and AFLPA president Matthew Pavlich signed a six-year agreement covering total player payment levels, increases to player salaries, the Player Retirement Scheme and injury and hardship support, together with a significant increase to player education, development and wellbeing programs.

The new agreement recognises the significant contribution AFL players make to the football industry with a share of defined forecast revenue streams and mechanisms that tie further benefits to the success of the industry.

## Summary of the Agreement

### Player payments

- ▶ TPP increased by 20 per cent in 2017 to \$12.45m per club (\$224m in total), with increases of 1.2 per cent, 1.3 per cent, two per cent, two per cent and two per cent in years 2018-22.
- ▶ Players receive 28 per cent of forecast-defined football revenue and benefit from a review mechanism that captures a share of additional AFL and club revenue.
- ▶ Players are entitled to receive 28 per cent of AFL revenues and 11.2 per cent of club revenues above forecasts.
- ▶ The agreed model excludes certain revenues and contemplates margins and affordability. Exclusions to the model include bequests, donations, government grants, non-football revenues and AFLW revenue.
- ▶ The minimum rookie payment increased to \$71,500 in 2017, while the base payment for a first-round draft pick rose to \$88,200 in 2017.

### Increased investment in Education, Development, Wellbeing and Retirement

- ▶ An extra \$6m of funding into player retirement accounts over the six years.
- ▶ Increased funding over the agreement to \$13 million for player development and a new industry-wide structure for delivery.
- ▶ Modernised injury payments model, guaranteed funding of \$250,000 annually for concussion research and improved travel and accommodation conditions.
- ▶ Past players will benefit from the establishment of a Lifetime Health Care program that will provide assistance with the costs of joint-related and dental procedures stemming from their football careers.
- ▶ Category A rookie-listed players will be eligible to play senior football from 2018.

### Free Agency

- ▶ Players no longer need to be restricted free agents before becoming unrestricted.
- ▶ Other free agency qualification periods remain as is – eight years restricted (if in top 25 per cent of paid players at club) and 10 years unrestricted.
- ▶ Also, at least one additional free agency provision to be adopted by October 2017, from:
  - ▶ Free agency for life;
  - ▶ Free agency portability;
  - ▶ Restricted free agency at four years for any players under median salary;
  - ▶ Other such change proposed by AFL and agreed to by AFLPA.

### Other

- ▶ Improved travel, accommodation and leave conditions;
- ▶ Eight Grand Final tickets for participating players;
- ▶ Emergency player payments.







## Stadium infrastructure

Having high-quality and state-of-the-art facilities that cater for the game's loyal, passionate supporters is a key priority for the AFL. The AFL continues to work with all levels of government to progress major stadium projects across Australia.

### Perth Stadium

The West Australian Government completed the development of a new multi-purpose stadium on the Burswood Peninsula in late 2017. Named Optus Stadium, it will hold around 60,000 fans in AFL mode. The stadium is complemented by a new train station and a new bridge across the Swan River to East Perth which is due for completion in mid-2018.

The stadium hosted its first major sporting event, a one-day cricket international between Australia and England, on January 28, 2018. The stadium has received universal praise from players, media and spectators alike and the AFL was delighted to have played its first match at the new venue on February 10, 2018, between AFLW teams Fremantle and Collingwood. The first AFL premierships season match at Optus Stadium will be played on March 25 when the West Coast Eagles host the Sydney Swans.

The WestStadium consortium (led by Brookfield-Multiplex) undertook the financing, design and construction of the stadium and will also maintain many of the elements of it 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.

△ The Geelong Cats hosted their first match at the newly redeveloped GMHBA Stadium against the Western Bulldogs in May 2017.

A joint football working group comprising the AFL and the Fremantle and West Coast Eagles football clubs undertook an extensive negotiation over a number of years with the WA Government and later with VenuesLive and was pleased to sign a 50-year stadium user agreement in mid-2017. This agreement was complemented by a separate agreement negotiated between the West Australian Football Commission (with the AFL's assistance) and WA Government which provided certainty of funding to the WAFC in return for moving all AFL matches from Subiaco Oval to Optus Stadium and handing back the lease of Subiaco Oval to the City of Subiaco.

### GMHBA Stadium

The \$89 million stage four development of GMHBA Stadium at Geelong was completed in May 2017. The first match at the newly redeveloped venue saw the Geelong Cats hosting 2016 premiers the Western Bulldogs.

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

*The stadium is complemented by a new train station and a new bridge across the Swan River to East Perth, which is due for completion in mid-2018*

new football department training and administration facilities for the Geelong Football Club and Sunrise Centre incorporating rehabilitation facilities for the Geelong community.

The project was majority funded by the Victorian Government (\$75 million), with the balance being supplied by the City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Football Club and the AFL.

### Eureka Stadium

The construction of the \$21 million development of Eureka Stadium in Ballarat was completed in July 2017. This development was funded by the Victorian Government. The first match at the venue featured the Western Bulldogs and Port Adelaide. It was the first time an AFL premierships season match had been played in Victoria outside Melbourne or Geelong since 1952.

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

*It was the first time an AFL premierships season match had been played in Victoria outside Melbourne or Geelong since 1952*

▷ The Western Bulldogs hosted Port Adelaide in round 22 in front of a near-capacity crowd at the revamped Eureka Stadium in Ballarat.





## The AFL Women's revolution

If any proof was needed that the inaugural year of the 2017 NAB AFL Women's competition was a success, one wouldn't need to look further than its round one attendance figures.

The opening game lockout at Ikon Park, as 44 women wearing the colours of traditional rivals Carlton and Collingwood ran on to the ground and began to write their own futures, said it all.

Just as their male counterparts did 120 years earlier at the very same venue.

Almost 25,000 fans piled into Ikon Park with a lockout declared during the first quarter and thousands of fans spilling outside the stadium's gates.

That was just game one. Over the opening weekend's first four games, close to 1.7 million viewers tuned into national TV and more than 50,000 fans marched into suburban grounds.

The momentum started well before round one. The 2016 All Stars women's game between the Western Bulldogs and Melbourne in September had an average of 746,000 national viewers.

There were eight teams in the inaugural AFLW season - Carlton, Collingwood, Adelaide, Greater Western Sydney, Western Bulldogs, Fremantle, Melbourne and Brisbane Lions - seven rounds, matches played across seven states and territories

△ The AFLW matches attracted huge crowds throughout Australia in 2017, including this game between the Adelaide Crows and the Brisbane Lions at Norwood Oval.

▷ Western Bulldogs star Ellie Blackburn celebrates a goal against the Dockers in the opening round of the AFLW at Whitten Oval last year.

and a Grand Final that saw the Crows defeat the Lions by six points in a match which drew more than 15,000 fans.

As all the women who played for one of the eight foundation clubs across the season can attest, one of the incredible successes of the women's game has been the explosion of participation at the community level - in all states.

In the past 12 months, there have been 500-plus new community female club teams nationally. In the past two years, female club participation has tripled.

The national league sent a clear message to girls and women that this is your game and your place. The AFL will work as hard as it can to ensure that message of inclusion is matched by appropriate facilities and a clear talent pathway.

It is also important to specifically acknowledge that the success of the first year has been 100 years in the making, and built on the commitment of many women over many decades - volunteers, administrators, players, umpires, coaches and advocates at the community level.

Women playing football is not a new concept. In 2015, the AFL celebrated the centenary of female players and historical records are scattered with stories of all-women teams dating back as far as the early 1900s.

The 2017 launch of AFLW has changed the football landscape forever, paving the way for a new generation of players.



## Football Operations

The AFL Football Operations Department was given the responsibility of implementing the NAB AFLW competition, which meant running an elite national women's competition for the first time alongside the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

The inaugural season, which featured eight clubs, saw the Adelaide Crows win the first AFLW premiership, overcoming the Brisbane Lions at Metricon Stadium, and Crows co-captain Erin Phillips confirmed as the standout player, winning best-on-ground honours in the Grand Final and the competition's maiden best and fairest medal.

The AFLW will grow to 14 teams by 2020 with the addition of North Melbourne and the Geelong Cats (in 2019) and West Coast, Richmond, St Kilda and the Gold Coast Suns (in 2020), while the competition has provided the impetus for thousands of women and girls to take up the game across the country, driving a significant increase in participation numbers at all levels.

Football Operations played a central role to ensure the women's and men's competitions would be the best run and most professional of Australia's sporting codes, with the priority to ensure all sides in both leagues were able to consider themselves a chance to achieve success.

The AFL competition, which boasted record attendance figures in 2017, continued to deliver remarkable on-field equity with a total of 27 games decided by four points or less, the most in a single season and eclipsing the previous marks of 25 (in 1928), 22 (2005), 21 (2006) and 20 (1999, 2002 and 2010).

Since the turn of the century, the Brisbane Lions (2001) and Port Adelaide (2004) have won maiden premierships as part of the AFL national competition, while five other clubs – the Sydney Swans (72 years, 2005), Geelong Cats (44 years, 2007), Collingwood (20 years, 2010), Western Bulldogs (62 years, 2016) and Richmond (37 years, 2017) – have ended long periods without success, giving hope to all supporters that their club can rise to ultimate success.

For both competitions, the AFL continued to review how matches would remain exciting and compelling to watch and play and showcased the full range of skills from all our players in both leagues.

After a detailed post-season review, it was determined the bounce at the start of quarters and after each goal would remain as part of the AFL premiership season, while the AFLW competition would see the introduction of a free kick paid against a team where a kick or handball goes out of bounds without the ball being touched by an opposition player.

Incoming General Manager Football Operations Steve Hocking also implemented a number of key changes to the AFL's Match Review Panel system after a detailed post-season review.

*The AFL competition, which boasted record attendances in 2017, continued to deliver remarkable on-field equity*



△ After a year out of the game, Paddy Ryder made a stunning return in 2017, winning the Power's best and fairest award and earning All-Australian honours.

### Match Review Panel

The AFL Commission approved a number of changes to the MRP system, after a detailed review at the end of the 2017 season. General Manager Football Operations Steve Hocking said it was his view that, since its introduction more than a decade ago, the MRP had greatly simplified the game's overall judicial process but it was highlighted through the 2017 season that there was regular public uncertainty surrounding the rationale for key decisions.

Alongside consistency of decision-making and the rationale for decisions, and the fine quantum for some offences, the disincentive to challenge any charge at the Tribunal and the application of a bad record were consistently the major areas of club, player and media discussion.

As such, it was determined the following key changes were to come into force for 2018:

- ▶ Move to a single decision-maker model or Match Review Officer, instead of using a panel of former players;
- ▶ The trial of expedited outcomes in 2018 by adjudicating Thursday and Friday matches within 24 hours;

- ▶ Increase to the quantum of low-level financial sanctions and remove the third low-level offence equating to a one-match suspension, replacing it with a larger fine;
- ▶ Remove the one-match discount for an early plea, and replace it with a \$10,000 club cost in the event the charge is unsuccessfully challenged;
- ▶ Remove the automatic bad record loading but retain the discretion of the MRO to refer any incident to the Tribunal on account of poor player record (where it can be considered in the final sanction);
- ▶ Retain the current threshold for Brownlow Medal ineligibility, whereby a one-match suspension rules a player out of the award (a financial sanction only for a player means he remains eligible for the medal);
- ▶ Clarify that 'exemplary record' refers to matches played at AFL/state league level only;
- ▶ Modify the Table of Offences such that the sanction for direct referrals is specified to be at least three matches;
- ▶ Amend staging to a financial sanction for a first offence under the same criteria as other fixed financial sanctions;

▽ The GWS Giants' Stephanie Walker is tackled by Docker Taylah Angel in round three of the AFLW at Blacktown International Sportsspark.



- ▶ Appeals of Tribunal determinations be limited to the player/person who is the subject of the charge and the AFL GMFO;
- ▶ Retain the current system for umpire match-day reports but do not compel their attendance at Tribunal hearings;
- ▶ Continue to utilise 'misconduct' or 'attempt to strike' to financially sanction strikes to the head with negligible force.

As such, low-level offences would now incur increasing financial sanctions, rising from \$1500 (first offence) and \$2500 (second offence) to \$3000 and \$5000, but the AFL had removed the previous instance where a player would face a one-game suspension at the third offence. A player would now face an increased \$8000 sanction at the third offence as a deterrent.

The focus of the review was to retain the strong parts of the system that allow players to accept a penalty for pleading guilty to an offence, but ensuring too that players will face increased sanctions for continued low-level offences, that are not deserving of missing matches.

Clubs will also have a greater opportunity to contest cases at the Tribunal and a bad record will not be automatically considered as part of a player's history, but could be considered as part of a final sanction.

In 2017, Brownlow medallist and former Geelong premiership player Jimmy Bartel and ex-Carlton defender Michael Jamison joined Nathan Burke, Michael Christian and Jason Johnson as panellists on the Match Review Panel. The MRP/Tribunal system continued to operate in the 2017 season with two key changes made from the previous year:

### Jumper punches/Strikes to the head

- ▶ Selected jumper punches and strikes to the head that have insufficient force to constitute a low impact offence were processed as a fixed financial sanction under attempt to strike.

### Melees

- ▶ The MRP had the ability to recommend a sanction to clubs under Regulations 18 for large melees or multiple breaches in a single season;
- ▶ The current independent bad records for engaging in a melee and wrestling charges were merged to further deter repeat offenders.



### The Bounce

A review of the bounce was undertaken throughout the 2017 season, with a decision made by the AFL Commission in November to retain it as part of the game and endorse recommendations to mitigate the issues identified by the review:

- ▶ Greater investment in injury prevention and management for elite level umpires;
- ▶ The increased availability of mental skills and welfare consultants for elite level umpires;
- ▶ The implementation of a structured bounce coaching and development program for pathway umpires;
- ▶ An assessment of bounce technique modification to minimise the risk of injuries for pathway and elite-level umpires.

AFL Commission Chairman Richard Goyder reinforced the commitment to further provide umpires' development and training, saying the bounce was "uniquely engrained in the fabric of our game". The use of the bounce in AFL matches will remain as per the 2017 season with a bounce to be used at the start of each quarter and after each goal, with the ball to be thrown up around the ground for stoppages.



### 2017 MRP STATISTICS

Charges	160
Classifiable Offences	123
Tribunal Hearings	5
Number of cases not sustained	1
Number of players accepting prescribed penalty	157
% of players accepting prescribed penalty	98%
Number of players suspended	38
Matches lost through suspension	66
Appeals	1
Financial sanctions (Low-Level Offences)	80
Financial sanctions (Low-Level Offences)	\$89,000
Reprimands	-
Fixed financial sanctions	37
Fixed financial sanctions	\$75,500
<b>Total financial sanctions</b>	<b>\$164,500</b>

△ Carlton's Bianca Jakobsson handballs clear of the Bulldogs' Bailey Hunt in round five of the AFLW at Ikon Park.

▶ The bounce will remain, with AFL Commission Chairman Richard Goyder describing it as "uniquely engrained in the fabric of our game".

◁ Sydney Swans spearhead Lance Franklin had another excellent season, winning his fourth Coleman Medal.

### MRP RECENT HISTORY

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Charges</b>	137	150	128	147	159	178	236	157	183	196	201
<b>Tribunal hearings</b>	32	42	22	35	25	15	25	15	15	11	5
<b>Cases not sustained</b>	11	12	6	15	35	3	8	2	5	1	1
<b>Appeals</b>	4	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
<b>Accepted penalties</b>	105	108	106	112	134	163	211	142	168	185	196
<b>% Accepting penalty</b>	77%	72%	83%	76%	85%	92%	89%	90%	92%	97%	99%
<b>Suspensions</b>	45	37	41	43	51	47	59	59	55	36	30
<b>Matches lost</b>	71	71	77	68	86	72	112	104	75	57	50
<b>Fixed financial sanctions</b>	\$66,900	\$114,800	\$65,700	\$101,700	\$77,300	\$92,600	\$159,850	\$93,550	\$96,350	\$95,000	\$89,000
<b>Low-level fixed financial sanctions</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$77,500	\$75,500
<b>Reprimands</b>	36	38	31	29	42	47	41	33	41	-	-

## Umpiring

The AFL's umpiring department saw a significant rise in participation numbers through 2017, with a seven per cent increase in national umpiring numbers. Female participation grew by a significant 13 per cent and South Australia's Eleni Glouftsis made history by becoming the first female field umpire to officiate an AFL home and away match. Following her debut in round nine, Glouftsis umpired a further four games during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Former Richmond, Port Adelaide and Melbourne player David Rodan also made his debut as a goal umpire in round 16, officiating four games in all.

The total number of score reviews rose to 150 in 2017. Of these, 28 decisions were overturned with 11 overturns initiated by the score review system, averaging 23 seconds per review.

Following trials in 2015 and 2016, games played during the bye-round period were officiated by four field umpires. GPS results showed a slight reduction in high-intensity running, down from 14.1km to 13.7km. Results also showed a small reduction in the number of decisions made per game, 38.7 down from 39.9, while ball-ups increased marginally from 25 to 25.2 per game.

In November 2017, the AFL made the decision to keep the bounce. In conjunction with this, the AFL will invest more in the management, development and training of umpires.



△ Simon Meredith, Matt Stevic and Shaun Ryan were rewarded for fine seasons by officiating in the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

◁ Simon Meredith reached a major milestone when he umpired his 300th game last season.

### Grand Final umpires

**Field:** Matt Stevic, Simon Meredith, Shaun Ryan  
**Emergency:** Brett Rosebury

**Boundary:** Robert Haala, Mitchell Lefevre, Matthew Konetschka, Damien Cusack  
**Emergency:** Brett Dagleish

**Goal:** Luke Walker, Adam Wojcik  
**Emergency:** Matthew Dervan

### Milestones

**100 games**  
Brett Rogers (goal), Shaun Apted (goal), Graham Bergroth (boundary), Brendan Hosking (field), Robert Taylor (boundary), Andrew Mitchell (field)

**200 games**  
Chris Gordon (boundary), Chris Kamolins (field), Christopher Roberts (boundary), Troy Pannell (field), Steven Axon (goal)

**300 games**  
Aaron Deckys (boundary), Simon Meredith (field), Robert Haala (boundary), Matthew Nicholls (field)

**450 games**  
Shane McInerney (field)

### All-Australian field umpire

Matt Stevic

### AFL Injury Survey

The 2016 AFL Injury Survey showed a decrease in incidence and recurrence in a number of key injury areas. Matches lost due to hip and groin injuries continues a downward trend, while the incidence of calf strains continues to fall following record high numbers in 2013. Recurrence rates have also fallen to four per cent, suggesting improved understanding and management of these injuries.

The incidence rate of calf strains has fallen slightly to 2.3 new injuries per club, however, the prevalence rate increased with 7.5 matches missed in 2016. Hamstring strains continue to be the leading cause of most matches missed per year (19.7 games per club). The incidence rate of 5.2 new injuries per club has remained relatively stable along with the recurrence rate of 15 per cent.

Knee ACL injuries have fallen from 16.7 games missed per club in 2015 to 12.9 in 2016 with general knee injuries making up a total of 33.5 games missed, down from 37.4. Matches missed due to medical illness has risen significantly to 6.8 with the report's observations stating: "This may reflect a more conservative approach to medical illness in players, combined with a year where a number of players had serious medical conditions (including thyroid disease, cancer, etc) causing multiple matches to be missed."

A more conservative approach to the management of concussion saw 2.3 new injuries causing 5.6 missed matches per club. The incidence rate of concussion was 6.3 per 1000 player hours with the six-year concussion rate at 6.7 new injuries per club per season.

On the issue of concussion, the report states: "The figures are consistent with an expansion of the match-day diagnostic criteria for concussion, and a focus on a more conservative approach to management. These figures are not unexpected and reflect the ongoing efforts to improve concussion management in football, and are consistent with current research and international opinion."

### AFLW Pregnancy and Parental Management Travel Policy

The AFL released its AFLW Pregnancy and Parental Management Travel Policy in the lead-up to the 2018 AFLW season, outlining the support provided to players in the NAB AFL Women's competition who are pregnant, breastfeeding or the carer of a child.

It prohibits any actions that may amount to discrimination against these players.

#### Its purpose was:

1. To set guidelines for players' continued participation in the NAB AFL Women's competition during pregnancy.
2. To provide, so far as possible, a safe and inclusive environment for all participants, where all players can participate in the NAB AFL Women's competition at the highest level.
3. To provide guidelines for players, clubs and AFL personnel in relation to support available to a player who is pregnant, breastfeeding or the carer of a child.

▽ Collingwood and Melbourne players battle for possession under lights in round two of the AFLW at Ikon Park last season.

### Player Rules Breaches

The Sydney Swans Football Club and two of its players were sanctioned in 2017 due to inadvertent administrative failures to record required information during the 2016 AFL Finals Series.

At no stage did the Swans fail to adhere to WADA rules and all treatments used by their players were WADA approved.

The sanction against the club was a fine of \$20,000, with \$10,000 suspended, for failing to keep and maintain a complete, accurate and up-to-date Register of Controlled Treatments in the AFL's Controlled Treatments Register.

In this case, the AFL noted that the club doctor maintained his own thorough medical records of treatments legitimately provided to players. However, clubs must also maintain such records on the Controlled Treatments Register database to enable the AFL to proactively monitor industry trends and target test players as required.

Luke Parker and Lance Franklin were both fined \$5000 for failing to complete the required paperwork to record all treatments used by or administered to them on doping control forms at the time of providing a sample. This is not a breach of the WADA Code but is a breach of the AFL's Treatment Rules, which go above and beyond the WADA Code.

The AFL Treatment Rules were introduced in 2013 to go above and beyond the WADA Code and ensure the AFL can effectively monitor football-related supplements and medications provided to AFL players.

Separately, Melbourne player Jake Melksham was fined \$10,000 for a breach of the AFL Rules.

The AFL conducted an investigation in relation to betting activity occurring on accounts belonging to Melksham. The betting activity did not relate to the AFL, but he was found to have provided misleading evidence to the AFL's investigators. In determining the sanction, the AFL took into account Melksham's guilty plea, remorse and his work to assist the AFL in future education programs for other players.





△ Collingwood's Steele Sidebottom handballs as he is tackled during the round three match against the Sydney Swans at the SCG.

## Laws of the Game

The AFL Commission approved a number of matters around the Laws of the Game that were implemented for the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season:

- ▶ Only nominated ruckmen were able to compete at a contest for a throw-in or ball-up, with players no longer permitted to contest a ruck contest as a third man up;
- ▶ A stricter interpretation of deliberate rushed behinds;
- ▶ The interpretation of where a player draws high contact was simplified.

The Football Department's recommendations to the Commission were guided by widespread industry consultation with clubs, the AFLPA, AFL Coaches Association, AFL Medical Officers, key industry groups and fan research, along with meeting with current AFL coaches to discuss the laws.

The key detail on each point was:

- ▶ **Third Man Up:** Analysis of third-man up contests had shown there was no discernible advantage to the game when this tactic was used and the change also supported the recruitment of tall players and protected them against injury.
- ▶ **Deliberate Rushed Behinds:** Under the amended rule, a field umpire shall give consideration to whether the player had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball/the distance of the player from the goal or behind line/the degree of pressure being applied to the player.
- ▶ **High Tackle – Players Drawing High Contact:** The first assessment for the umpire will continue to be whether the tackle was applied in an appropriate manner and umpires will be asked to call play on when a tackle is assessed as reasonable (no swinging arm or contact being incidental) and the player with the ball is responsible for the high contact.

## Club Academy Zone – Player Access Rights

The AFL Commission endorsed a recommendation [from the AFL Executive to amend the GWS Giants' Academy's access to players in the Albury/Murray region. The Commission also accepted a recommendation to limit the number of elite-level players accessible to a club from its zone in any particular year, placing a cap on the amount of benefit a club can derive from Academy-developed players.

The changes were endorsed to address the issue of an Academy becoming stronger over time and the impact this may have on equalisation, particularly in cases where a zone may be producing multiple "top end" players in any one year.

It was determined the Albury/Murray region would remain allocated to the Giants but transition to a Next Generation Academy (NGA) Zone. This would see the Giants have priority access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural players who are eligible under the NGA framework and target their development programs at 11-15-year-old boys and girls in the Albury/Murray region. The Albury/Murray region covers Albury and NSW towns along the Murray River to the South Australian border.

In regard to draft access to players at the NAB AFL Draft, the Commission accepted a recommendation that:

- ▶ For a team in the top four – limit of one player may be matched from a bid in the top 20 selections under the bidding system, with no limit thereafter;
- ▶ For a team finishing 5-8 – limit of two players matched from a bid in the top 20 selections, with no limit thereafter;
- ▶ For a team outside the top eight – no limit.

## Level Four Coaching Program

In 2017, seven coaches completed the Level Four Coach program, the highest accreditation for potential AFL coaches within the game. They were: John Barker (Carlton), Stuart Dew (Sydney Swans), Simon Goodwin (Melbourne), Robert Harvey (Collingwood), Adam Kingsley (St Kilda), Simon Lloyd (Geelong Cats) and Matthew Nicks (Port Adelaide). Drawing from the experience of mentors including Neale Daniher, John Buchanan, Lisa Alexander and Ric Charlesworth, the aspiring coaches were encouraged to look outside their club to consider various scenarios and how they would deal with these situations. Mentors spent time in the club and attending match-days to assess the performance of the coach in their work roles, with a final assessment involving a two-hour interview with a panel comprising of the club's CEO and president and coaching experts from AFL and non-AFL environments.



△ A jubilant Jeremy Cameron is embraced by teammates Steve Johnson (left) and Nathan Wilson after the Giants' narrow win against Richmond at Spotless Stadium in round nine.

*The changes were endorsed to address the issue of an Academy becoming stronger over time and the impact this may have on equalisation*



### NAB AFLW State of Origin

The NAB AFL Women's State of Origin match was held at Etihad Stadium on September 2. A squad of Victorian-born players took on an Allies team made up of players born in other states. Victoria won 17.11 (113) to 2.4 (16).

△ The Victorian team celebrates after its crushing win over the Allies in the NAB AFL Women's State of Origin match at Etihad Stadium in September.

### E.J. Whitten Legends Game

As part of the celebration of football between the end of the home and away season and the start of the finals, the AFL programmed a range of events, as well as raising the profile of all state league competitions across that weekend, along with metropolitan, regional and community football.

The AFL, with the support of its broadcast partners the Seven Network, Foxtel/Fox Footy and Telstra, partnered with the E.J. Whitten Foundation to host the annual Chemist Warehouse E.J. Whitten Legends Game supporting prostate cancer for men's health.

The highly popular Legends Game brings together a collection of some of the AFL's greatest retired champions to take the field under the banners of Victoria and the All Stars. The event builds on the traditional State of Origin matches which Ted Whitten snr played in, loved and created such brilliant contests within.

The annual match started back in 1995 at Whitten Oval, before outgrowing that venue and moving to its home at Etihad Stadium, where it has been since 2003.

The foundation honours the legacy of E.J. Whitten, who died after a long and public battle with prostate cancer in 1995.

▷ Collingwood skipper Scott Pendlebury played in the first Test of the 2017 International Rules Series before a finger injury forced him to miss the second Test in Perth.

### International Rules Series

Australia regained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy after a 2-0 victory over the visiting Irish side in the 2017 International Rules Series, played in Adelaide and Perth in November.

Under the guidance of Geelong Cats premiership coach Chris Scott, who was supported by Fremantle coach Ross Lyon and North Melbourne coach Brad Scott, Australia won the first Test by 10 points and completed a clean sweep with a three-point victory in the second Test a week later. Fremantle skipper Nat Fyfe won the Jim Stynes Medal as Australia's player of the series.

The Australian squad was:

**Shaun Burgoyne** (Hawthorn, captain), **Eddie Betts** (Adelaide Crows), **Ben Brown** (North Melbourne), **Travis Boak** (Port Adelaide), **Patrick Dangerfield** (Geelong Cats), **Nat Fyfe** (Fremantle), **Jack Gunston** (Hawthorn), **Brendon Goddard** (Essendon), **Michael Hibberd** (Melbourne), **Shaun Higgins** (North Melbourne), **Neville Jetta** (Melbourne), **Rory Laird** (Adelaide Crows), **Zach Merrett** (Essendon), **Scott Pendlebury** (Collingwood), **Paddy Ryder** (Port Adelaide), **Joel Selwood** (Geelong Cats), **Luke Shuey** (West Coast Eagles), **Kade Simpson** (Carlton), **Rory Sloane** (Adelaide Crows), **Robbie Tarrant** (North Melbourne), **Chad Wingard** (Port Adelaide), **Dayne Zorko** (Brisbane Lions).

**First Test – Adelaide**  
Australia 2.13.12 (63)  
Ireland 1.13.8 (53)

**Second Test – Perth**  
Australia 0.15.8 (53)  
Ireland 2.10.6 (48)



## Exchange Period

A total of 25 players and 87 draft selections (of which 34 were future selections and 14 were on-traded) were traded during the AFL Exchange Period.

The following players were traded:

- ▶ **Bryce Gibbs** (Carlton), **Sam Gibson** (North Melbourne) to Adelaide Crows
- ▶ **Charlie Cameron** (Adelaide Crows), **Luke Hodge** (Hawthorn) to Brisbane Lions
- ▶ **Darcy Lang** (Geelong Cats), **Matthew Kennedy** (GWS Giants), **Matthew Lobbe** (Port Adelaide) to Carlton
- ▶ **Sam Murray** (Sydney Swans) to Collingwood
- ▶ **Adam Saad** (Gold Coast Suns), **Devon Smith** (GWS Giants), **Jake Stringer** (Western Bulldogs) to Essendon
- ▶ **Brandon Matera** (Gold Coast Suns), **Nathan Wilson** (GWS Giants) to Fremantle
- ▶ **Gary Ablett** (Gold Coast Suns) to Geelong Cats
- ▶ **Aaron Young** (Port Adelaide), **Harrison Wigg** (Adelaide Crows), **Lachie Weller** (Fremantle) to Gold Coast Suns
- ▶ **Jarman Impey** (Port Adelaide) to Hawthorn
- ▶ **Harley Balic** (Fremantle), **Jake Lever** (Adelaide Crows) to Melbourne
- ▶ **Jack Watts** (Melbourne) to Port Adelaide
- ▶ **Logan Austin** (Port Adelaide) to St Kilda
- ▶ **Brendon Ah Chee** (Gold Coast Suns) to West Coast Eagles
- ▶ **Hayden Crozier** (Fremantle), **Josh Schache** (Brisbane Lions) to Western Bulldogs

## Rookies

In addition to 75 first-time drafted players being selected at the NAB AFL Draft, 11 rookies were promoted by clubs to the Primary List and 36 players were selected at the Rookie Draft (of which 20 were first-time drafted). A total of 57 rookies were retained on the Rookie List by clubs.

## PLAYER MOVEMENT SUMMARY

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
<b>Delisted/Retired</b>	103	99	75	85	99	75
<b>Exchanged/Traded</b>						
Trades	31	43	42	19	27	28
Players	25	34	40	24	28	29
Selections	87	113	103	40	38	41
On-Trades	14	30	32	12	7	16
<b>Promoted Rookies</b>	11	20	14	22	23	24
<b>National Draft</b>	78/96	77/96	70/89	76/87	62/74	70/83
First Drafted	75	76	68	76	62	68
<b>Pre-Season Draft</b>	1/11	0/10	0/12	1/12	1/12	8/15
<b>Rookie Draft</b>	36/42	50/55	64/72	64/76	54/69	44/65
First Drafted	23	34	43	45	39	32
<b>Retained Rookies</b>	54	42	42	36	37	50

## 2017 TPP Summary

The Total Player Payment limit per club increased 20 per cent in 2017, from \$186.6 million in 2016 to \$224 million, while gross player payments increased at a lower rate to the 20 per cent increase in Total Player Payments, up by 13.2 per cent from \$204.3 million in 2016 to \$231.4 million.

The Additional Services limit per club for the provision of marketing services by players increased by 3.85 per cent from \$1,022,000 to \$1,061,347 and the amount spent on these services by clubs increased by 3.16 per cent, from \$19.25 million in 2016 to \$19.86 million.

In addition to these amounts, players earned \$1.80 million from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of clubs.

Taking into account the \$231.4 million in gross player payments, \$19.86 million in additional services agreements and \$1.80 million from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of the clubs, the total earned by players in 2017 was \$253.06 million, an increase of 12.49 per cent on the 2016 total of \$224.97 million.

The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2017 was \$352,470, an increase of 13.99 per cent over 2016.

One club was sanctioned during 2017 for breaching the AFL Player List rules:

- ▶ The Brisbane Lions were sanctioned \$10,000 for breaching the Total Player Payment lodgement rules through an administrative error. A total of \$5000 of the sanction was suspended until October 31, 2018.

The fact that the Brisbane Lions advised the AFL of all the required information, implemented improved administrative procedures and fully co-operated were all taken into account regarding the penalty.

## AFL Security Function

The AFL has increased its security function 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 2017, AFL safety officers attended all 207 matches to ensure appropriate standards of security were being met.

In August 2017, the AFL promoted former Victoria Police Detective Tony Keane as Head of Integrity and Security.

*The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2017 was \$352,470*

## 2007-2017 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS

Earnings	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	2017 Played	2017 Listed
\$0-\$60,000	10	9	9	9	31	1	21	0	9	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
\$60,001-\$100,000	90	80	67	75	114	71	120	48	109	33	90	17	65	21	70	9	38
\$100,001-\$200,000	168	156	153	180	186	187	199	203	213	177	198	163	188	162	185	112	152
\$200,001-\$300,000	142	151	158	162	166	166	170	148	156	136	147	143	153	121	131	130	140
\$300,001-\$400,000	77	85	91	92	94	103	104	114	115	125	128	124	131	137	148	137	148
\$400,001-\$500,000	39	37	45	53	53	58	60	64	64	75	76	84	85	87	89	87	89
\$500,001-\$600,000	18	16	9	17	20	25	25	22	22	31	32	44	44	35	40	52	53
\$600,001-\$700,000	3	6	8	10	10	11	12	19	19	26	26	18	21	22	23	34	34
\$700,001-\$800,000	5	3	2	3	3	4	4	10	10	10	10	21	21	15	18	23	23
\$800,001-\$900,000	-	2	2	4	4	1	1	7	7	6	6	3	3	5	5	9	9
\$900,001-\$1,000,000	-	2	4	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	3	10	11
\$1,000,001-\$1,100,000	1	-	-	1	1	4	4	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4
\$1,100,001-\$1,200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3
\$1,200,001+	1	-	-	1	1	4	4	3	3	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>707</b>

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 ASAs.

## 2007-2017 AFL TOTAL PLAYER EARNINGS

	2008 \$	2009 \$	2010 \$	2011 \$	2012 \$	2013 \$	2014 \$	2015 \$	2016 \$	2017 \$	Movement % 2016-2017
<b>GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS (GPP)</b>	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	231,354,739	13.24%
<b>Deductions:</b>											
Finals/Relocation & Living & other Allowances	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	3,016,111	31.98%
Cost of Living and Expansion Allowances	728,263	753,988	779,100	804,825	1,722,326	1,791,219	3,047,944	2,357,048	1,691,090	0	-100.00%
Veterans' allowance	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	348,027	-94.74%
Other deductions	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	1,883,819	-56.54%
Underspend from Previous Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,841,576	764,531	919,286	20.24%
<b>Total deductions</b>	<b>10,089,314</b>	<b>10,021,069</b>	<b>9,819,696</b>	<b>12,147,485</b>	<b>14,669,219</b>	<b>16,255,304</b>	<b>15,701,193</b>	<b>18,017,612</b>	<b>15,687,024</b>	<b>6,167,244</b>	<b>-60.69%</b>
<b>PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS DEDUCTIONS</b>	<b>118,758,292</b>	<b>124,125,768</b>	<b>126,878,722</b>	<b>141,686,376</b>	<b>159,047,825</b>	<b>165,305,319</b>	<b>173,242,981</b>	<b>182,181,452</b>	<b>188,618,008</b>	<b>225,187,495</b>	<b>19.39%</b>
<b>Injury Allowance</b>	<b>5,684,600</b>	<b>6,403,200</b>	<b>5,572,800</b>	<b>3,107,594</b>	<b>2,551,693</b>	<b>2,060,007</b>	<b>1,597,906</b>	<b>2,609,871</b>	<b>3,452,129</b>	<b>3,002,107</b>	<b>-13.04%</b>
<b>GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS INJURY ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>113,073,692</b>	<b>117,722,568</b>	<b>121,305,922</b>	<b>138,578,782</b>	<b>156,496,132</b>	<b>163,245,312</b>	<b>171,645,075</b>	<b>179,571,581</b>	<b>185,165,879</b>	<b>222,185,388</b>	<b>19.99%</b>
<b>TPP LIMIT</b>	<b>118,900,000</b>	<b>123,100,000</b>	<b>127,200,000</b>	<b>139,612,500</b>	<b>158,172,750</b>	<b>164,499,660</b>	<b>173,382,660</b>	<b>181,284,120</b>	<b>186,641,640</b>	<b>224,010,504</b>	<b>20.02%</b>
Gross Player Payments less Injury Allowance	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	222,185,388	19.99%
Margin/(Excess)	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	1,825,116	23.67%
Additional Services Agreements (ASAs)	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	19,864,805	3.16%
Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASAs)**	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	Listed \$352,470	13.99%
	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	Played \$379,697	15.31%

Underspend from Previous Years was introduced for Season 2015 \*\* Average Gross Player Earnings (AGPE). The AGPE is a result of the payments (GPP plus ASAs) 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.





△ The top 10 in the 2017 NAB AFL Draft: (from left) Cameron Rayner (Brisbane Lions), Andrew Brayshaw (Fremantle), Paddy Dow (Carlton), Luke Davies-Uniacke (North Melbourne), Adam Cerra (Fremantle), Jaidyn Stephenson (Collingwood), Hunter Clark (St Kilda), Nick Coffield (St Kilda), Aaron Naughton (Western Bulldogs), Lochie O'Brien (Carlton).

### 2017 NAB AFL DRAFT SELECTIONS (FIRST ROUND)

No.	Player	Club	Selected by
1	Cameron Rayner	Western Jets	Brisbane Lions
2	Andrew Brayshaw	Sandringham Dragons	Fremantle
3	Paddy Dow	Bendigo Pioneers	Carlton
4	Luke Davies-Uniacke	Dandenong Stingrays	North Melbourne
5	Adam Cerra	Eastern Ranges	Fremantle
6	Jaidyn Stephenson	Eastern Ranges	Collingwood
7	Hunter Clark	Dandenong Stingrays	St Kilda
8	Nick Coffield	Northern Knights	St Kilda
9	Aaron Naughton	Peel Thunder	Western Bulldogs
10	Lochie O'Brien	Bendigo Pioneers	Carlton
11	Aiden Bonar	Dandenong Stingrays	GWS Giants
12	Darcy Fogarty	Lucindale	Adelaide Crows
13	Jarrold Brander	Bendigo Pioneers	West Coast Eagles
14	Matthew Ling	Geelong Flacons	Sydney Swans
15	Zac Bailey	Norwood	Brisbane Lions
16	Ed Richards	Oakleigh Chargers	Western Bulldogs
17	Jack Higgins	Oakleigh Chargers	Richmond
18	Brandon Starcevich	East Perth	Brisbane Lions
19	Wil Powell	Claremont	Gold Coast Suns
20	Callum Coleman-Jones	Sturt	Richmond
21	Oscar Allen	West Perth	West Coast Eagles

### 2017 NAB AFL DRAFTS: WHERE PLAYERS CAME FROM

	National	Rookie	Total	%
Victoria	43	9	52	51
Western Australia	14	5	19	18.6
South Australia	8	4	12	11.8
NSW/ACT	3	3	6	5.9
Queensland	5	2	7	6.9
Northern Territory	1	1	2	1.9
Tasmania	1	-	1	1
International	-	3	3	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>102</b>	

## 2017 NAB AFL Draft

The 2017 NAB AFL Draft was conducted on the same basis as 2016, including Father-Son and Academy player bidding. Patrick Naish (Richmond) and Tyler Brown (Collingwood) were chosen after their selections were matched during the National Draft. Academy player Connor Ballenden (Brisbane Lions) was also selected after his bid was matched.

A further four players were selected directly by their Academy club:

- ▶ **Brayden Crossley** (Gold Coast Suns Academy) selection 52
- ▶ **Jack Payne** (Brisbane Lions Academy) selection 54
- ▶ **Connor Nutting** (Gold Coast Suns Academy) selection 55
- ▶ **Nick Shipley** (GWS Giants Academy) selection 64

## Free Agency

Under the rules agreed between the AFL and the AFLPA in February 2010, 12 restricted free agents and 48 unrestricted free agents were eligible under the rules during the 2017 season to consider their future career options.

### Restricted Free Agents

- ▶ **Brisbane Lions** – Tom Rockliff
- ▶ **Essendon** – David Zaharakis
- ▶ **Fremantle** – Nat Fyfe, Hayden Ballantyne
- ▶ **Geelong Cats** – Steven Motlop
- ▶ **Hawthorn** – Luke Breust, Josh Gibson
- ▶ **North Melbourne** – Scott Thompson
- ▶ **Port Adelaide** – Jackson Trengove
- ▶ **Richmond** – Dustin Martin
- ▶ **Sydney Swans** – Sam Reid
- ▶ **West Coast Eagles** – Eric Mackenzie



◀ Tom Rockliff will play for Port Adelaide in 2018 after the restricted free agent decided to leave the Brisbane Lions at the end of the 2017 season.

### FREE AGENCY MOVEMENT

	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Restricted	3	2	2	1	4
Unrestricted	0	2	2	4	3
Delisted	5	5	4	7	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

### Unrestricted Free Agents

- ▶ **Adelaide Crows** – Andy Otten, Scott Thompson
- ▶ **Brisbane Lions** – Ryan Harwood, Claye Beams
- ▶ **Carlton** – Matthew Kreuzer, Kade Simpson, Levi Casboul, Simon White, Dennis Armfield
- ▶ **Collingwood** – Ben Sinclair, Tyson Goldsack, Josh Thomas, Lachlan Keffe
- ▶ **Essendon** – Jobe Watson, Brent Stanton, Heath Hocking, Ben Howlett
- ▶ **Fremantle** – David Mundy, Michael Johnson, Aaron Sandilands, Garrick Ibbotson, Nick Suban, Zac Clarke
- ▶ **Geelong Cats** – Andrew Mackie, Tom Lonergan, Daniel Menzel, Josh Cowan
- ▶ **Hawthorn** – Luke Hodge, Taylor Duryea, Ryan Schoenmakers, Shaun Burgoyne
- ▶ **Melbourne** – Jack Trengove, Jake Spencer
- ▶ **North Melbourne** – Lachlan Hansen
- ▶ **Port Adelaide** – Jasper Pittard, Justin Westhoff
- ▶ **St Kilda** – Nick Riewoldt, Leigh Montagna, Sean Dempster, Sam Gilbert
- ▶ **Sydney Swans** – Jarrad McVeigh
- ▶ **West Coast Eagles** – Matt Priddis, Mark LeCras, Sam Butler
- ▶ **Western Bulldogs** – Robert Murphy, Liam Picken, Matthew Boyd, Dale Morris

### Free Agents Exercising Their Rights

Three players elected to exercise their free agent rights as restricted free agents and change clubs for the 2018 season:

- ▶ **Steven Motlop** (Geelong Cats to Port Adelaide)
- ▶ **Tom Rockliff** (Brisbane Lions to Port Adelaide)
- ▶ **Jackson Trengove** (Port Adelaide to Western Bulldogs)

A further five delisted players took advantage of the Free Agency Rules allowing them to move to the club of their choice:

- ▶ **Lachlan Keffe** (Collingwood to GWS Giants)
- ▶ **Trent McKenzie** (Gold Coast Suns to Port Adelaide)
- ▶ **Alex Morgan** (Essendon to North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Aaron Mullett** (North Melbourne to Carlton)
- ▶ **Jack Trengove** (Melbourne to Port Adelaide)

### FATHER-SON AND ACADEMY PLAYER BIDDING

Name	Player Category	Bid Team	Match Team	Bid	Points Value to Match	Selections Matched	Selections Received
<b>Patrick Naish</b>	Father-Son	St Kilda	Richmond	34	345	53,55	34,64
<b>Connor Ballenden</b>	Academy	Fremantle	Brisbane Lions	43	181	45	43
<b>Tyler Brown</b>	Father-Son	Port Adelaide	Collingwood	50	76	55	50



## NAB AFL Rising Stars Program

The NAB AFL Rising Star program identifies and recognises young players, proving a pathway to the elite competition. 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

Andrew McGrath, the No. 1 selection in the 2016 NAB AFL Draft, won the 2017 NAB AFL Rising Star award. The 18-year-old Essendon defender/midfielder won the award with 51 votes, ahead of Hawthorn's Ryan Burton (41) and Port Adelaide's Sam Powell-Pepper (35).

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

▶ Ryan Burton provided plenty of drive from defence for Hawthorn last season, finishing runner-up in the NAB AFL Rising Star award.



▽ Essendon's Andrew McGrath had an outstanding debut season, culminating in becoming only the second Bomber to win the Ron Evans Medal.

### NAB AFL RISING STAR

Rd	Player	Junior Club	AFL Club	Votes
1	Sam Powell-Pepper	Mt Hawthorn	Port Adelaide	35
2	Ryan Burton	PHOS Camden	Hawthorn	41
3	Brandan Parfitt	Nightcliff	Geelong Cats	
4	Andrew McGrath	East Brighton	Essendon	51
5	Eric Hipwood	Caloundra	Brisbane Lions	6
6	Caleb Marchbank	Benalla	Carlton	
7	Sam Petrevski-Seton	Halls Creek	Carlton	3
8	Tim Taranto	Mordialloc-Braeside	GWS Giants	
9	Tom Phillips	Beverley Hills	Collingwood	1
10	Wayne Milera	Ingle Farm	Adelaide Crows	
11	Daniel Butler	Lake Wendouree	Richmond	
12	David Cuninghame	Canterbury	Carlton	
13	Jack Silvagni	Greythorn	Carlton	
14	Hugh McCluggage	Allansford	Brisbane Lions	
15	Blake Hardwick	Beverley Hills	Hawthorn	
16	Charlie Curnow	Torquay	Carlton	27
17	Alex Witherden	Barwon Heads	Brisbane Lions	
18	Lewis Melican	Birregurra	Sydney Swans	1
19	Jason Castagna	Warrandyte	Richmond	
20	Luke Ryan	Maribyrnong Park	Fremantle	
21	Dan Houston	Greythorn	Port Adelaide	
22	Ben Ainsworth	Morwell	Gold Coast Suns	
23	Will Hayward	Walkerville	Sydney Swans	



## NAB AFL Women's Academy

The inaugural intake of 33 players received a NAB AFL Women's Academy scholarship and came together for accelerated personal development camps held within Australia over a 12-month period.

The Women's Academy was managed by AFL Women's female talent operations manager Aasta O'Connor and involved mentors Renee Forth, Kiara Bowers and Ahmed Saad.

The intake included two squads – Level 1 (players who are 16) and Level 2 (players eligible to be drafted).

The squads were selected by AFL and state talent managers following the 2016 AFL Women's Under-18 Championships.

Academy players had access to:

- ▶ Training with AFL clubs;
- ▶ High-performance training camps in January and April;
- ▶ Athlete management systems;
- ▶ Expert AFL coaches, sports science and sports medicine staff.

▶ The NAB AFL Women's Academy enabled players to develop their skills in personal development camps over a 12-month period.



## NAB AFL Academy

In 2017, the NAB AFL Academy celebrated its 20th year.

Luke Power started as Academy national head coach with an expanded role that oversees both the men's and women's Academy programs.

The squads were managed by National Talent Football Manager Michael Ablett, while Brad Johnson, Peter Sumich and Brent Harvey were assistant coaches.

The Level 1 and 2 squads come together for accelerated AFL football and personal development camps held in Australia and overseas over a 12-month period.

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

The Level 2 squad played a series of AFL curtain-raisers during the year.

Darcy Fogarty was awarded the Ben Mitchell Medal in Level 2 while Sam Walsh was awarded the Cameron Ling Medal in Level 1.

▽ In its 20th year, the NAB AFL Academy assembled the best young male footballers in the country to train and play together.

*The Level 1 and 2 squads come together for accelerated AFL football and personal development camps*



# Revenue/ Investment

To deliver a strong economy across the industry via discipline and efficiency measures, allowing us to reinvest into our players, clubs, fans, stadia and community.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ Strong industry economy
- ▷ Cost discipline and efficiency
- ▷ Revenue reinvestment back to players, clubs, fans and the community and investment in stadium and media for future growth

▷ It was the thrill of a lifetime for 22 young NAB AFL Auskickers on Grand Final day when they presented the premiership medallions to the triumphant Richmond players.





△ The Toyota AFL Live Site outside the MCG on Grand Final day featured free activities and the chance to watch the game on the big screen.

The major competition revenue streams generated by the AFL included broadcasting rights, corporate sponsorship, the Toyota AFL Finals Series, consumer products, AFL membership, the AFL Premiership Club, major events, match-day functions and the AFL event office, which is the primary destination for Toyota AFL Grand Final Day ticket and event experiences.

AFL Membership attained strong results in 2017, achieving a total of 55,557 members. This represented a slight increase of 0.5 per cent on 2016.

AFL Membership is made up of 30,922 Gold/Full members, 20,895 Silver members, 3339 Absentee members and 401 Bronze members.

With 47,443 members nominating a club of support, AFL Membership accounts for 5.23 per cent of total club member access.

In addition, the financial policies established by the AFL Commission after consultation with the AFL clubs, including club funding arrangements established in 2017, revenue sharing and the various components to support competitive balance, have had a positive impact on the financial health of clubs.

In this section, we highlight the contribution of the AFL's major corporate partners across the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the NAB AFLW competition while the section ends with the 2017 financial report.

## Corporate Partners

In 2017, the AFL continued to enjoy strong links with several commercial partners representing various domestic and international companies.

The AFL would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following corporate partners in 2017:

**PREMIER PARTNER**

**TOYOTA**

**MAJOR PARTNERS**

CARLTON DRAUGHT, nab, Coca-Cola, GATORADE

**OFFICIAL PARTNERS**

Woolworths, CrownBet, McDonald's, Virgin Australia, CHEMIST WAREHOUSE, HOSTPLUS, JLT, Mars, AUSTRALIA POST, Swisse, DRAFTSTARS, TISSOT, Thrifty, WOLF BLASS, JIM BEAM, GIO, OPSM, CITY OF MELBOURNE, ACCOR HOTELS, MUSCLE MILK, PUMP, coateshire, SUNNINGS WAREHOUSE, DrinkWise, NSW GOVERNMENT, rebel, MLC LIFE INSURANCE, SHERRIN, ZXU, Radiant, donateLife

The inaugural NAB AFL Women's season started in 2017 with eight corporate partners coming on board to support the competition. Without the generous support of the following corporate partners, the league would not have hit the heights it did.

**PREMIER PARTNER**

**nab**

**MAJOR PARTNER**

CHEMIST WAREHOUSE, DISCOUNT CHEMIST

**OFFICIAL PARTNERS**

GATORADE, rebel, HOSTPLUS, Special K, WOLF BLASS, Woolworths

*In 2017, the AFL continued to enjoy strong links with several commercial partners representing various domestic and international companies*



#### Toyota Motor Corporation Australia

The 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season marked the 14th year of Toyota's status as a premier partner of the AFL. The year began with the Season Launch, which was broadcast live on Fox Footy, and was followed by a breakfast that was attended exclusively by Toyota fleet clients and all 18 AFL club captains.

Toyota's passion for football has inspired its continuing support from the grassroots to elite levels. Over the 2017 Premiership Season, Toyota has supported grassroots football through its Good For Footy campaign and also celebrated great moments at the elite level through its Season So Far and Oh What a Feeling video properties.

Toyota again delivered the excitement in September, escorting one of the most prestigious Retiring Legends Laps of Honour in living history, and ultimately culminating in Matthew Richardson handing the Premiership Cup to Trent Cotchin in front of 100,021 fans at the MCG at the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Toyota's leverage of its AFL partnership showcases an extensive array of activations and initiatives, including:

- ▶ The Toyota Good for Footy Raffle which was launched at the start of the home and away season and over the year involved 418 clubs from around Australia, raising \$682,420. This fantastic initiative supports grassroots clubs to raise much-needed funds to support their sporting communities.
- ▶ Round 14 of the Toyota AFL home and away season was transformed through all of Toyota's assets to support the Good For Footy Round initiative. Toyota donated \$500 for each goal kicked to the player's local club. This culminated in \$48,500 being donated after the round across 61 clubs, given a staggering 97 goals were kicked.

△ Toyota's status as premier partner of the AFL continued for a 14th season in 2017, with the finals launched at the MCG by Toyota president David Buttner and AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan.

◁ Tom Mitchell enjoyed a superb first season with the Hawks, averaging 35.8 disposals a game to top the AFL in the home and away season.

- ▶ Engaging fans via AFL Media platforms Facebook and Instagram with Oh What a Feeling moments. Across both platforms there were more than 100 million impressions delivered, with a reach of over 70 million in total throughout the AFL season.
- ▶ Toyota, in conjunction with AFL Media, released the sixth episode of the *Season So Far* which was created to celebrate highlights from the 2017 season with each month's highlights aligning to a specific Toyota vehicle's tagline.
- ▶ To further its commitment to demonstrate it is Good For Footy, Toyota released 15 online flip books, highlighting great moments across the home and away and finals series. These were supported via the AFL's social media channels.
- ▶ The Toyota Grand Final Parade was an enormous success, attracting a crowd of more than 150,000 which cheered on the teams as they made their way to the Live Site at Yarra Park.
- ▶ Toyota Good For Footy kids were lucky enough to walk alongside their footy heroes handing out merchandise to the excited crowd at the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade.
- ▶ The Toyota Live Site activation within the AFL Footy Festival featured the Toyota Dunkinator where grassroots clubs had the opportunity to be 'dunked' to go into the running to win \$10,000. The more times they were dunked by the ready and willing crowd, the more entries they received into the contest.
- ▶ On Grand Final Day, Toyota Premiership Cup Ambassador Brent Harvey 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 champions.

### Carlton United Breweries

The popular Carlton Draught Grand Final Front Bar returned in 2017 and was extended to allow for more fans to enjoy the “best seats not in the house” experience on Grand Final Day. Almost 3000 guests were given the opportunity to enjoy this private hospitality environment, with tickets given away through *The Front Bar* television show and digital media. Those who attended were treated to pre-game entertainment by some of football’s biggest names, big screens to watch the match, and last-minute Grand Final ticket draws. Carlton Draught also gave three lucky mates the chance to watch the season-decider in the MCG; all they had to do was race a keg from one end of the ground to the other in 46 seconds at quarter-time.

Carlton Draught partnered with Uber to help fans get home safely on Grand Final Day by giving away 10,000 free Uber rides. The initiative, supported by DrinkWise and the AFL, looked to ensure fans were being smart about their choices and also had planned a safe journey home in Melbourne from their celebrations.

▽ After more than 150,000 fans lined the streets for the Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade, rival captains Taylor Walker and Trent Cotchin lifted the premiership cup at the Toyota AFL Live Site in Yarra Park.

*Those who attended were treated to pre-game entertainment by some of football’s biggest names*



### Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola renewed its AFL agreement at the back end of 2016 to extend the partnership to October 31, 2018, with an extension option to October 2019. The new agreement expanded to include two other Coca-Cola Amatil brands in the portfolio – active lifestyle water Pump and global spirits brand Jim Beam. Both are official partners of the AFL in the water and spirits category respectively.

Part of Coca-Cola’s new AFL agreement is an annual \$50,000 contribution to the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre or associated programs in the Northern Territory which aim to provide football talent pathway and education access to remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Coca-Cola aims to make a meaningful, tangible contribution to improve such access to communities which would otherwise not have an opportunity. Building on 2016, Coca-Cola utilised its AFL partnership to further promote Lift Hard Hitting Lemon by taking presenting rights to the weekly *Access All Areas* show on *AFL.com.au*. The show’s audience demographic is nicely aligned to Lift’s target market age group of 30-plus males who are rusted-on footy fans.

From July, Coca-Cola started marketing its new Coke No Sugar product to grow awareness and trial, and utilised a key MCG match to conduct a mass sampling exercise as fans left the stadium post-match. It also included significant LED stadium signage and big screen integration during the match to raise awareness of the activity and product.



### National Australia Bank

NAB started its 2017 sponsorship with the announcement it would be the naming rights partner to the AFL Women’s competition.

NAB AFLW kicked off on February 3 with the clash between Collingwood and Carlton at Ikon Park played in front of almost 25,000 fans. With free entry to all AFLW games, fans continued to flock into community stadiums with an average attendance of 6840.

The Adelaide Crows were crowned the inaugural premiers, defeating the Brisbane Lions by a goal in front of a strong 15,610 crowd and a television audience of 594,000 (higher than any Saturday afternoon AFL game in 2016). Adelaide’s Ebony Marinoff was the winner of the first NAB AFLW Rising Star Medal. She received a \$20,000 personal investment folio and a dedicated personal banker.

NAB AFL Auskick continues to be the benchmark for introductory sporting programs in Australia and saw strong growth again in 2017, up 2.26 per cent to 200,138. Most impressive was the increase in participation in NSW/ACT, up 9.31 per cent year-on-year. For the fourth successive year, the NAB AFL Auskick Free-Kick initiative was run and in total \$20,000 was provided to Auskick centres throughout the year.

The 2017 NAB AFL Rising Star was awarded to Essendon’s Andrew McGrath at a function at the Peninsula. He received the Ron Evans Medal, a \$20,000 personal investment folio and a dedicated personal banker, courtesy of NAB.

△ The NAB’s popular Mini Legends Draft campaign put some lucky young fans into the shoes of their AFL heroes.

The NAB AFL Academy continued to attract interest with the new 2016-17 intake announced and a 20th year ‘anniversary’ activity conducted to celebrate the 20th intake of players into the Academy.

During the Celebration of Football week, the AFL and NAB combined to stage the first AFLW State of Origin fixture. A Victorian team played the Allies at Etihad Stadium, winning convincingly in front of 9400 fans.

The 2017 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from October 3-6. Draft prospects participated in an in-depth evaluation of their potential to play at the highest level during the four-day Combine. Testing measured athletic attributes such as speed, agility and endurance along with refined drills to assess football skills, with 85 players attending. It was also the inaugural year of the NAB AFLW Draft Combine in which 46 hopeful draftees participated in the same testing as the men’s.

A total of 27 players changed clubs during the NAB AFL Trade Period. There was no shortage of interest from the fans as *AFL.com.au* provided extensive coverage across all platforms. A daily live blog, NAB AFL Trade Radio and daily social updates provided the greatest engagement.

The Brisbane Lions took Western Jets midfielder Cameron Rayner as the No. 1 pick in the 2017 NAB AFL Draft held at the Sydney Showgrounds.



△ Richmond's dominance of Grand Final day extended to the Gatorade AFL Grand Final Sprint, with Connor Menadue storming to victory.

**Gatorade**

The partnership between the AFL and Gatorade, the AFL's official hydration partner since 2014, continued to grow in 2017.

Gatorade not only signed on as the official hydration partner of the NAB AFL Women's Competition but expanded its partnership of the AFL competition to include naming rights of the AFL Grand Final Sprint for the next three years.

The Gatorade AFL Grand Final sprint activation was an enormous success for the brand with both the heats and the final broadcast on Channel Seven to more than 3.56 million people. Gatorade Ambassador Scott Pendlebury was on hand to fire the starter's gun for the final. Bespoke content filmed on the day enabled Gatorade to amplify the partnership after the sprint via Gatorade's social channels.

An important element to Gatorade's 2017 AFL partnership was a content series produced to support the new Gatorade Liquid Concentrate product. Gatorade utilised its ambassadors Patrick Dangerfield and Pendlebury in the three-part social media series and the campaign was rolled out across September and October through Gatorade social channels as well as *AFL.com.au*.

Gatorade also continued to leverage the partnership through a wide array of on-field initiatives across the year, including strong branding via equipment and securing the signage rights for interchange benches at the MCG and Etihad Stadium as well as Gatorade trainer stations at Adelaide Oval, Domain Stadium, the SCG, Etihad Stadium and the MCG.

Working closely with all 18 clubs throughout the year, Gatorade enlisted the clubs' support through the production of short social media content pieces focusing on Gatorade Showers and G Challenge trick shots. Each club submitted two content pieces featuring players undertaking the challenges and these were posted across the club's and Gatorade's social channels.

*The Gatorade AFL Grand Final sprint activation was an enormous success for the brand*

**Virgin Australia**

The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia, the AFL's official airline since 2011, continued to grow in 2017. Virgin Australia successfully leveraged this integrated partnership through an array of activities.

The 2017 Virgin Australia Grand Final entertainment saw one of the world's biggest music acts, The Killers, provide pre and post-match entertainment for fans. The Premiership Party attracted 50,000 fans.

Virgin Australia utilised its presence on Grand Final Day to launch its new brand platform – "Here's to Looking Up" – with LED creative and the brand TVC played on the big screen after the flyover. Along with the in-ground activation of the 'Fan Cam', Virgin Australia worked with Channel Seven to provide the 'Fan Report' which used in-ground fan tracking technology to showcase how the fans viewed the day.

The Virgin Australia Grand Final Party was back again in 2017 for its fifth year, with 600 guests gathering at Melbourne's CQ, just days before the AFL Grand Final. Stars of the AFL such as Nic Naitanui, along with celebrities such as Ricky Ponting and Rob Mills, were among the guests who enjoyed this year's theme of 'Urban Utopia with a Hong Kong twist'. Guests experienced many magical moments, including augmented reality installations, Chinese dragon dances and a surprise performance from Australian musical legend Daryl Braithwaite.

It was also Virgin Australia's fourth year as the naming rights partner of the All-Australian Awards. The exclusive Virgin Australia All-Australian Awards were held at the newly renovated Palais Theatre and were attended by 250 VIP guests. The All-Australian Awards provided Virgin Australia with a great platform for brand integration while a dedicated hub ran on *AFL.com.au* encouraging fans to enter a 'Pick Your Best 22 Competition' with the chance to win a trip to the 2017 Virgin Australia International Rules Series in Adelaide or Perth.

The Virgin Australia International Rules series returned to Australian shores in 2017, with the two-game series at Adelaide Oval on November 12 and Domain Stadium on November 18. Australia won the series in a come-from-behind win in front of a crowd of 30,116 fans at the farewell game to Domain Stadium. Australia won the match in Adelaide by 10 points in front of 25,502 fans. Fremantle star Nat Fyfe was awarded the Jim Stynes Medal as the best Australian player of the series.

Virgin Australia and the AFL combined to produce three content pieces in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, titled Answer the Call. The first-of-its-kind concept in Australia included the use of real-time video bus station advertising boards prompting passers-by to 'answer the call' for several challenges from some of their AFL heroes. Featuring talent such as Shane Mumford, Alex Rance and Taylor Walker, fans had the chance to win tickets to the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series.

AFL Travel, the fan travel portal operated by Virgin Australia in conjunction with the AFL, helps fans to follow their teams throughout the season. AFL teams need their fans to support them on the road, and the AFL and Virgin Australia have teamed up for a one-stop shop throughout the season. By bundling flights, accommodation and match tickets – along with tours and other activities to experience the destination before and after the match – fans can make a holiday out of following their team.

With five key tourism partners, Thrifty Rental Car and other accommodation partners all providing content experiences to fans, there was great growth in the program for the 2017 season. While bookings and fan numbers increased by 14 per cent, there was a 17 per cent increase in sales and a 16 per cent increase in nights booked, demonstrating fans are enjoying the AFL Travel offering, the football experience and the destination when they arrive.

AFL Travel is the exclusive place to purchase match packages from the fixture launch right up until general public tickets go on sale.

▽ Virgin Australia, the AFL's official airline, carried players, officials, fans and even the premiership cup around the country in 2017.

*The partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia, the AFL's official airline since 2011, continued to grow in 2017*



### CrownBet

Since its launch in March 2015, CrownBet has successfully established itself in the top-tier market space of an industry which offers many choices.

CrownBet, the AFL's official wagering partner, continued its support of the Pick a Winner show on *AFL.com.au*, with further integration through the AFL Live App's match centre. It also worked with the *AFL Record* team to create a weekly stats centre that gives fans an insight into where their team was positioned across the most influential data points in our game.

The CrownBet Rewards program continued to offer AFL-related products for members to redeem while also providing a few lucky members with money-can't-buy experiences throughout the 2017 Finals Series.

CrownBet also continued to produce new initiatives such as the race to the cup and the second year of the largest activation within the Toyota AFL Grand Final Live Site - 'The Tower of Torp 2.0'.

### Woolworths

Woolworths continued its support of the AFL Playground in 2017, with playgrounds operating during the home and away season at the MCG, Etihad Stadium, Spotless Stadium and Metricon Stadium. Over the course of the season, the playground entertained 71,249 supporters with Woolworths providing complimentary fresh fruit to 19,750 young fans who visited the AFL Playground across the four sites. Woolworths continued its commitment to inspire a healthier generation, introducing the Woolworths Fresh Food Kids Lunch Box in the Kids Zone at the Toyota AFL Live Site during the finals. Children had the chance to see some of their favourite AFL stars show off their cooking skills with healthy snacks.

▷ Robbie Gray played a key role in Port Adelaide's rise up the ladder, earning his third All-Australian selection in the past four years.

▽ Lucky fans joined former AFL stars for the McDonald's Kick 2 Kick experience on the hallowed MCG on Grand Final day.

The Woolworths Mark of the Year extended into the NAB AFL Women's competition in 2017 with Carlton's Darcy Vescio taking home the inaugural award and Essendon's Joe Daniher winning the fan vote to take out the Mark of the Year in the AFL.

### McDonald's

McDonald's renewed its partnership with the AFL, taking the naming rights to the much-loved AFL tradition Kick 2 Kick and the official AFL Match Centre. These assets ensured McDonald's was synonymous with the AFL match experience, providing unique environments to engage with fans and support brand-led messaging at games across the country. At the back end of the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, McDonald's utilised its association with Kick 2 Kick to provide McDonald's customers the opportunity to go in the draw to win an ultimate 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final Kick 2 Kick experience.

Leading into the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final, McDonald's activated at the 2017 Footy Festival with a McDonald's McCafé. This was a huge hit with about 6000 coffees served over the four days. All coffees were sold for a gold coin donation, which went to the Ronald McDonald House Charity. The support for the Ronald McDonald House Charity continued, with Richmond's Jack Riewoldt signing the McDonald's Goal Post pad after the Grand Final. This was captured in broadcast and photographed to promote the eight memorabilia pieces that McDonald's auctioned with all proceeds again going to the Ronald McDonald House Charity. The framed memorabilia raised more than \$14,000 for charity and included a signed Grand Final Goal Post pad, a photo of the premiership team and a replica of the Norm Smith and premiership medals.





# Financial Report

**Travis Auld**  
Chief Financial Officer



## Financial Result

The AFL reported a net surplus of \$48.8 million in 2017, compared with a \$17.8 million net deficit in 2016, an increase of \$66.6 million from 2016.

Key take-outs for the year were:

- ▶ Revenue increased by \$133.6 million or 26 per cent primarily due to an increase in broadcasting revenue starting in the 2017 financial year.
- ▶ Expenditure increased by \$5.3 million or three per cent which includes expenditure on the launch of AFLW and the additional investment in female participation. This increase is net of the reduction in contra advertising expenditure.
- ▶ Distributions to clubs and the AFLPA increased by \$47 million in line with the AFLPA Collective Bargaining Agreement signed in 2017 and the new club funding model.

The AFL took ownership of Etihad Stadium in this financial year. The Etihad Stadium operations are reflected in the results of the Consolidated entity for the year ended 31 October 2017.

The Consolidated entity, which includes all the AFL's controlled state subsidiaries, Champion Data and Etihad Stadium, produced a net surplus of \$60.3 million after tax. The net surplus is inclusive of a \$41.5 million non-cash gain realised from the acquisition of Etihad Stadium. This gain has been calculated by determining the fair value of assets acquired compared to the amount paid for these assets under Australian Accounting Standards.

▶ Despite being double-teamed by brothers Oscar and Tom McDonald, big Cat Tom Hawkins kicked five goals in a match-winning display for Geelong against Melbourne in round three at Etihad Stadium.





△ Young Swans Lewis Melican, Will Hayward and Oliver Florent celebrated their first wins in the red and white in round seven at the SCG against the Brisbane Lions.

## AFL Clubs' Financial Results

It was the first year of the 2017 to 2022 Broadcast Rights Agreement. Aligned to this, the AFL introduced an enhanced Club Funding Model which recognises a variety of structural differences between clubs across the AFL competition. These structural differences include, inter alia, different supporter base sizes and histories, differing commercial arrangements at stadia, the financial impact of the fixture and the extent to which clubs have access to non-football revenue generating businesses.

Key outcomes of our enhanced Club Funding Model for 2017 included:

- ▶ Removal of the revenue sharing and gate levy equalisation models;
- ▶ A new funding model which allocated \$87 million in variable funding across the clubs in addition to equal payments, with those allocations largely informed by each club's relative structural capacity to generate revenues.

The football department soft cap continued to operate in 2017 and remains a key part of our overall Competitive Balance Policy. This policy prescribes an upper limit on non-player football department expenditure, above which clubs are required to pay a luxury tax should they exceed that limit. The soft cap limit was \$9.6 million in 2016 and remained at \$9.6 million in 2017.

In the 2017 financial year, 11 of the 18 AFL clubs recorded an operating profit – this compares with seven in 2016. Clubs recording operating losses are mostly influenced by large non-cash depreciation and amortisation expenses linked to club training and administration facilities. Excluding these non-cash items, we estimate 16 out of 18 clubs recorded a cash operating surplus in 2017.

## AFL's Industry Investment Model: 2017

The Industry Investment Model was applied for the first time in the 2017 financial year. The Industry Investment Model was developed in 2016 with the purpose of sustaining the AFL industry well beyond the six years of the new rights deal.

This model was determined as an investment model, not as a spend model, based on justified investment levels to sustain and grow the game. The Industry Investment Model in 2017 was applied across:

- ▶ Clubs
- ▶ Players
- ▶ Infrastructure
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Competition
- ▶ Fans

In addition, a capital reserve of \$20 million has been established to strengthen the balance sheet and to position the AFL for the future. The intention is to allocate an amount of \$20 million per annum to the capital reserve in line with the new rights deal.

## Distributions to AFL Clubs

The AFL makes a number of distributions to AFL clubs. These distributions included the following in 2017:

- ▶ The enhanced Club Funding Model included equal and variable financial assistance to clubs.

▽ Riley Knight, David Mackay and Mitch McGovern celebrate a goal during the Crows' 24-point victory over Hawthorn in round two at the MCG.

- ▶ The AFL also made the following distributions to clubs throughout 2017, including but not limited to, travel subsidies, prizemoney, licensing royalties, AFL membership-related distributions, AFL commercial partner distributions, AFL facilitated stadium distributions, Next Generation Academy funding and AFLW funding.

### 2017 CLUB DISTRIBUTIONS

Club	Total \$m
Adelaide Crows	11.469
Brisbane Lions	20.011
Carlton	12.565
Collingwood	10.611
Essendon	11.448
Fremantle	11.274
Geelong Cats	11.428
Gold Coast Suns	24.163
GWS Giants	22.591
Hawthorn	10.661
Melbourne	15.440
North Melbourne	15.723
Port Adelaide	14.464
Richmond	12.360
St Kilda	19.443
Sydney Swans	12.759
West Coast Eagles	10.611
Western Bulldogs	16.576
<b>Total</b>	<b>263.597</b>

Club	Total \$m
Adelaide Crows	2.090
Brisbane Lions	1.315
Carlton	2.761
Collingwood	3.409
Essendon	3.666
Fremantle	1.645
Geelong Cats	2.150
Gold Coast Suns	1.067
GWS Giants	4.040
Hawthorn	2.283
Melbourne	2.038
North Melbourne	1.654
Port Adelaide	1.150
Richmond	3.622
St Kilda	2.761
Sydney Swans	1.039
West Coast Eagles	1.532
Western Bulldogs	2.771
<b>Total</b>	<b>40.993</b>



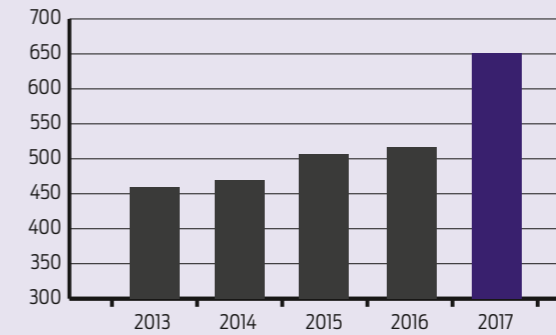
THE AFL 2008-2017

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Profit &amp; Loss (\$ mill)</b>										
Revenue	318.221	320.001	351.308	359.501	437.853	459.495	472.739	506.026	516.991	650.597
Operating Expenses	112.166	107.385	121.095	126.980	142.700	149.591	155.322	167.981	186.781	192.031
Net Financing Income/(Expense)	1.391	0.927	2.054	1.041	0.446	(0.137)	0.471	0.243	0.302	1.648
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>207.446</b>	<b>213.543</b>	<b>232.267</b>	<b>233.562</b>	<b>295.599</b>	<b>309.767</b>	<b>317.888</b>	<b>338.288</b>	<b>330.512</b>	<b>460.214</b>
Distributions to AFL Clubs	131.752	135.808	141.363	151.511	200.251	209.152	218.309	245.151	272.407	304.590
Distributions to the AFLPA	12.518	13.897	16.991	21.991	21.986	21.692	22.680	30.547	22.270	37.043
Game Development Grants	25.871	27.305	29.129	30.750	36.487	37.253	38.715	39.392	41.696	44.177
Ground Improvements	5.095	5.014	4.547	5.065	6.025	6.071	6.389	6.851	7.031	20.510
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.255	0.300	0.300	0.161	0.150	0.329	0.842	1.272	1.277	1.517
Facilities Development	8.655	13.735	9.524	6.720	7.731	5.890	7.307	5.308	3.608	3.604
Strategic Partnership	0.877	1.502	1.848	1.915	1.602	1.224	1.225	0.525	-	-
New Markets	2.967	13.349	23.737	39.065	14.633	11.549	9.884	6.700	-	-
<b>Net Profit/(Loss) before Transfers (to)/from Reserves</b>	<b>19.456</b>	<b>2.633</b>	<b>4.828</b>	<b>(23.616)</b>	<b>6.734</b>	<b>16.607</b>	<b>12.537</b>	<b>2.542</b>	<b>(17.777)</b>	<b>48.773</b>
Facilities Development Reserve	0.314	6.333	2.122	(0.682)	1.731	0.190	0.990	-	-	-
Strategic Partnership Reserve	(0.123)	0.502	0.844	0.915	-	-	-	0.525	-	-
New Markets Reserve	(0.033)	0.415	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(20.000)
Future Fund Reserve	(17.245)	(17.409)	(18.431)	(19.874)	-	-	-	-	-	89.359
<b>Movement in Retained Earnings</b>	<b>2.369</b>	<b>(7.526)</b>	<b>(10.637)</b>	<b>(43.257)</b>	<b>8.465</b>	<b>16.797</b>	<b>13.527</b>	<b>3.067</b>	<b>(17.777)</b>	<b>118.132</b>
<b>Balance Sheet (\$ mill)</b>										
Total Assets	152.073	151.640	155.967	185.294	138.331	151.003	161.654	182.628	182.643	399.826
Total Liabilities	48.361	45.295	44.798	97.741	44.044	40.109	38.223	56.655	74.447	242.857
Net Assets	103.712	106.345	111.169	87.553	94.287	110.894	123.431	125.973	108.196	156.969
<b>TPP Statistics (\$ mill)</b>										
Total Player Payments (TPP)	118.900	123.100	127.200	139.613	158.173	164.500	173.383	181.284	186.642	224.011
TPP per Club	7.431	7.694	7.950	8.213	8.787	9.139	9.632	10.071	10.369	12.445
<b>Attendance Statistics (mill)</b>										
Home & Away Season Attendance	6.511	6.370	6.496	6.525	6.239	6.368	6.385	6.352	6.306	6.733
Finals Series Attendance	0.572	0.615	0.651	0.615	0.540	0.558	0.570	0.519	0.558	0.554
Total Premiership Season Attendance	7.082	6.986	7.147	7.140	6.779	6.926	6.955	6.871	6.865	7.286
Pre-Season Attendance	0.240	0.283	0.227	0.256	0.299	0.244	0.136	0.246	0.192	0.165
Total Attendance	7.322	7.269	7.375	7.396	7.078	7.171	7.090	7.116	7.056	7.452
<b>Membership Statistics</b>										
Total of Club Members	574,091	586,748	614,251	699,684	707,621	756,717	804,480	836,136	875,197	907,561
No. of Clubs in the AFL	16	16	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	18
Average No. of Members per Club	35,881	36,672	38,391	41,158	39,312	42,040	44,693	46,452	48,622	50,420
Total AFL Members	49,150	51,013	53,959	55,216	56,595	56,513	54,983	54,808	54,808	55,557

Revenue

Up 26%  
to \$650.6 million

All figures \$ million

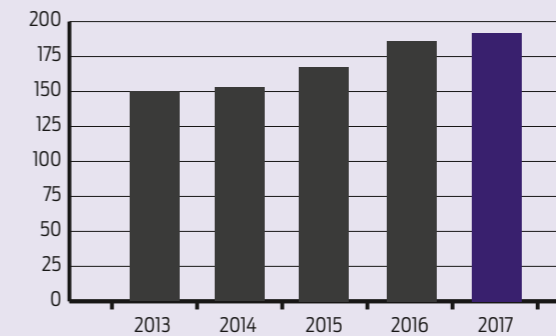


Revenue increased by \$133.6 million with the major movements comprising:

- ▶ Broadcasting and Media Revenues up \$117.3 million;
- ▶ Commercial Operations Revenues up \$7.9 million; offset by
- ▶ Contra Revenue from the new Broadcast Rights deal down \$11 million.

Expenditure

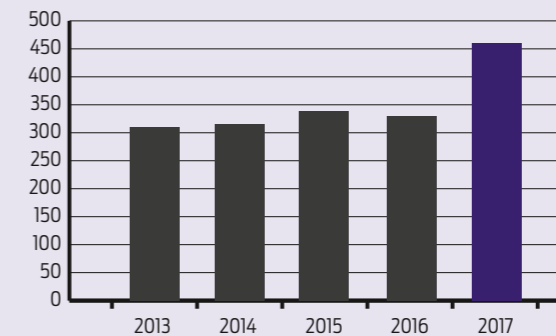
Up 3%  
to \$192.0 million



Expenditure increased by \$5.3 million with major movements primarily due to the launch of AFLW and investing in the growth of female participation.

Operating Surplus

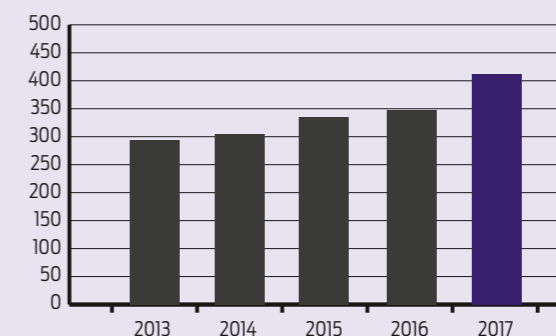
Up 39%  
to \$460.2 million



The AFL's Operating Surplus increased by \$129.7 million to \$460.2 million.

Distributions

Up 18%  
to \$411.4 million

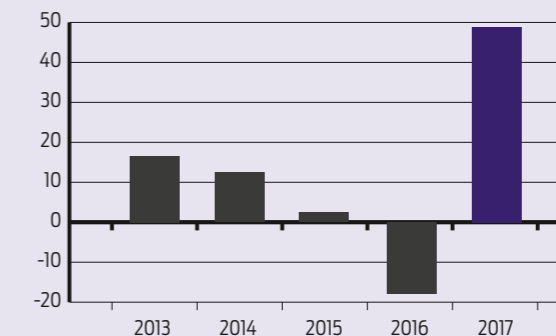


Distributions increased by \$63.2 million due primarily to:

- ▶ Payments to clubs up \$32.2 million;
- ▶ Payments to the AFLPA up \$14.8 million;
- ▶ Ground improvement payments for community and elite football facilities up \$13.5 million.

Net Surplus

Of \$48.8m



The AFL's Net Profit increased by \$66.6 million in 2017.

# CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT

31 OCTOBER 2017

## AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES

CONCISE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 OCTOBER 2017

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.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by the consolidated entity may be found in the consolidated entity's full financial report.

## 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 2017 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 R J Goyder, AO

**Chairman** – Appointed Commissioner 21 November 2011  
Chairman from March 2017

Chairman of Remuneration Committee  
Member of Audit and Risk Committee

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Commerce (The University of Western Australia)

**Experience:** Chair, JDRF Australia; Director, Qantas Airways; Director & Chairman-elect, Woodside; Former Director, Wesfarmers Ltd; Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

### Mr M C Fitzpatrick

**Chairman** – Appointed Commissioner 2003 – Resigned 16 March 2017

Chairman from March 2007 until March 2017

Chairman of Remuneration Committee until March 2017

Member of Audit and Risk Committee until March 2017

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Engineering (Hons.) (The University of Western Australia); Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) (University of Oxford, 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 5 June 2014

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Commerce (The University of Adelaide); Bachelor of Laws (Hons.) (The 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 P M Bassat

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 20 February 2012  
Member of Remuneration Committee

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Laws (The University of Melbourne); Bachelor of Commerce (The 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, 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 4 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, Videcorp; 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; Board Member, University of Western Sydney Foundation; Board Member, Australian Grape and Wine Authority; Acting Chair, Thomson Reuters

### Mr J A Ball

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 25 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

### Mr R M Bishop

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 21 April 2017  
Member of Audit and Risk Committee

Member of Remuneration Committee

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Laws (Hons.) (The University of Melbourne); Bachelor of Commerce (The University of Melbourne)  
Bachelor of Arts (The University of Melbourne)

**Experience:** Managing Partner and Founder, BGH Capital; Consultant, Macquarie Group Limited; Non-Executive Director, Burnet Institute; Member, Takeovers Panel

### Ms S L Wilkie, AO

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 25 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:** Commander, Australian Defence College; Chief of Staff to the Chief of Army; National Commander ADF commitment in Afghanistan; Director General Army Training; Officer 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; Director, AFL SportsReady; Director, Australian American Education Leadership

### Mr P A Newbold

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 17 March 2016  
Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Laws (Monash University); Bachelor of Economics (Monash University)

**Experience:** Chairman, SEDA; Director, Supra Capital Limited; Director, Methodist Ladies College; President, Hawthorn Football Club 2012-2016; Life Member, Hawthorn Football Club

### Ms G M Trainor, AO

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 17 March 2016  
**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Laws (The University of Melbourne);

Master of Arts in Cultural & Creative Practice (Western Sydney University); Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors  
**Experience:** Chair, National Film & Sound Archive; Commissioner, Australian Sports Commission; Director, Infrastructure Australia; Director, Major Infrastructure Projects Board (VIC); Director, ANZ Ltd Wealth Boards: One Path Life & General Insurance; Member, ACT City Renewal Authority; Director, Wattle Hill Fund #1 Advisory Board; Director, Business Events Sydney; Director, Temple Pty Ltd; Member, Clinical Excellence Commission Audit Committee (NSW); Member, Central Sydney Planning Committee; Chair, Barnardos Australia;

Director, Cape York Partnership Limited; Trustee, Western Sydney University Foundation; Trustee, Western Sydney University Board of Trustees; Director, Whitlam Institute; Trustee, The Charlie Perkins Trust; Trustee, Aurora Education Foundation

## 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 R J Goyder, AO	9	9	2	2	2	2
Mr M C Fitzpatrick	4	4	1	1	1	1
Mr G A McLachlan	9	9	-	-	-	-
Mr P M Bassat	9	9	-	-	2	2
Mr K L Williams, AM	8	9	-	-	-	-
Mr J A Ball	9	9	2	2	-	-
Ms S L Wilkie, AO	8	9	-	-	-	-
Mr P A Newbold	9	9	2	2	-	-
Ms G M Trainor, AO	9	9	-	-	-	-
Mr R M Bishop	4	5	-	-	-	-

\* 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 Football.

The Company entered into a new Broadcast Rights deal for the 2017-2022 financial years. The new Broadcast Rights deal has increased by a material amount on the previous deal and forms a major part of the investment based industry funding model.

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 just below \$200 million. The Company entered into Debt Facility Agreements for \$280 million to fund this acquisition and to meet ongoing working capital requirements of the

Consolidated Entity. These operations are reflected in the results of the Consolidated Entity for the year ended 31 October 2017.

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.

The Company entered into a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the AFL Players Association during the financial year for the 2017-2022 financial years. The Collective Bargaining Agreement contains a review mechanism applicable at the end of each three year interval.

Other than the above, 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:

- To manage the AFL competitions to ensure they remain the most exciting in Australian Sport.
- To build a stronger relationship with the supporters at all levels of the game.
- To help ensure that AFL clubs are financially secure and competitive.
- 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 profit of the Consolidated Entity was \$60.3 million, compared with an operating loss of \$15.5 million in 2016.

The result reflects a significant improvement in the AFL's operating profit and the contribution of \$5 million by Stadium Operations Limited upon consolidation.

Adjusting for the impact of the one-off gain on bargain purchase of \$41.5 million and depreciation from the acquisition of Etihad Stadium of \$21.5 million, the underlying profit of the Consolidated Entity was \$40.3 million.

## 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

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.

## 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' benefit

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 21 and 22 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 89 and forms part of the Directors' report for the year ended 31 October 2017.

## 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 Corporations (Rounding in Financial/Directors' Reports) Instrument 2016/191 and in accordance with that Instrument, amounts in the financial report and directors' report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Dated at Melbourne this 15th day of February 2018

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:

Mr R J Goyder, AO  
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 of Australian Football League for the financial year ended 31 October 2017 there have been:

- no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

KPMG

Maurice Bisetto  
PARTNER

15 February 2018

## Statements Of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 October 2017

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Revenue	752,622	569,856	650,597	516,991
Net financing income/ (expense)	(5,468)	378	1,648	302
Gain on bargain purchase	41,492	-	-	-
Expenses from operating activities	(727,510)	(585,016)	(603,472)	(535,070)
<b>Profit/(loss) from operating activities before related income tax expense</b>	<b>61,136</b>	<b>(14,782)</b>	<b>48,773</b>	<b>(17,777)</b>
Income tax expense relating to operating activities	(792)	(673)	-	-
<b>Profit/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>60,344</b>	<b>(15,455)</b>	<b>48,773</b>	<b>(17,777)</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>60,344</b>	<b>(15,455)</b>	<b>48,773</b>	<b>(17,777)</b>
<b>Profit/(loss) attributable to:</b>				
Owners of the Company	59,401	(16,256)	48,773	(17,777)
Non-controlling interests	943	801	-	-
<b>Profit/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>60,344</b>	<b>(15,455)</b>	<b>48,773</b>	<b>(17,777)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to:</b>				
Owners of the Company	59,401	(16,256)	48,773	(17,777)
Non-controlling interests	943	801	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>60,344</b>	<b>(15,455)</b>	<b>48,773</b>	<b>(17,777)</b>

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 92 to 93.

### Discussion and Analysis of the Statements of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

The consolidated profit in 2017 was \$60.3 million which compared with a loss of \$15.5 million in 2016.

Consolidated revenue increased by \$182.8 million to \$752.6 million. There were three main areas of revenue which contributed to this movement:

- ▶ an increase in broadcasting and AFL media revenues totalling \$116.9 million due to the new Broadcast Rights deal commencing in the 2017 financial year;
- ▶ an increase in commercial operations revenue totalling \$79.2 million due to Etihad Stadium operations;
- ▶ a decrease in contra advertising revenue of \$11 million due to the new Broadcast Rights deal commencing in the 2017 financial year.

Consolidated expenditure increased by \$142.5 million to \$727.5 million. The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ an increase in commercial operations expenditure totalling \$45.6 million due to Etihad Stadium operations;
- ▶ an increase in distributions to AFL clubs totalling \$32.2 million;
- ▶ an increase in finance and administration expenditure totalling \$26.1 million due to Etihad Stadium operations;
- ▶ an increase in distributions to the AFL Players Association totalling \$14.8 million due to the new Collective Bargaining Agreement entered into in the 2017 financial year;
- ▶ an increase in ground improvement payments totalling \$13.5 million;
- ▶ an increase in football operations expenditure totalling \$8.9 million due to Etihad Stadium operations and the first season of AFLW;
- ▶ an increase in development grants totalling \$6.9 million;
- ▶ a decrease in strategy and marketing expenditure totalling \$4.8 million primarily due to the reduction in contra advertising expenditure from the new Broadcast Rights deal commencing in the 2017 financial year.

### Statements of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 October 2017

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
<b>Total equity at the start of the year</b>	<b>124,751</b>	<b>140,206</b>	<b>108,196</b>	<b>125,973</b>
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	60,344	(15,455)	48,773	(17,777)
<b>Total equity at the end of the year</b>	<b>185,095</b>	<b>124,751</b>	<b>156,969</b>	<b>108,196</b>
<b>Equity attributable to:</b>				
Owners of the Company	180,582	121,181	156,969	108,196
Non-controlling interests	4,513	3,570	-	-
<b>Total equity at the end of the year</b>	<b>185,095</b>	<b>124,751</b>	<b>156,969</b>	<b>108,196</b>

The Statements of Changes in Equity are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 90 to 93.

### Statements of Financial Position

As at 31 October 2017

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	135,307	86,821	105,454	78,854
Trade and other receivables	50,510	55,873	39,260	50,561
Inventories	195	136	-	-
Other assets	5,536	3,328	1,934	1,891
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>191,548</b>	<b>146,158</b>	<b>146,648</b>	<b>131,306</b>
Trade and other receivables	4,608	3,608	4,608	3,608
Loans to subsidiaries	-	-	200,479	-
Property, plant and equipment	237,804	20,114	45,091	13,979
Intangible assets	38,517	-	-	-
Other assets	4,172	33,798	3,000	33,750
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>285,101</b>	<b>57,520</b>	<b>253,178</b>	<b>51,337</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>476,649</b>	<b>203,678</b>	<b>399,826</b>	<b>182,643</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade and other payables	52,058	47,365	39,783	52,773
Deferred income	22,630	19,254	1,629	15,295
Fair value derivative	324	-	324	-
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	8	7	-	-
Provisions	13,478	10,531	5,052	5,266
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>88,498</b>	<b>77,157</b>	<b>46,788</b>	<b>73,334</b>
Trade and other payables	5,013	-	5,000	-
Deferred income	5,940	-	260	-
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	185,144	38	185,114	-
Provisions	6,959	1,732	5,695	1,113
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>203,056</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>196,069</b>	<b>1,113</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>291,554</b>	<b>78,927</b>	<b>242,857</b>	<b>74,447</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>185,095</b>	<b>124,751</b>	<b>156,969</b>	<b>108,196</b>
<b>Equity</b>				
Member Contributions	21	21	-	-
Reserves	20,000	89,359	20,000	89,359
Retained earnings	160,561	31,801	136,969	18,837
<b>Total equity attributable to equity holders of the Company</b>	<b>180,582</b>	<b>121,181</b>	<b>156,969</b>	<b>108,196</b>
Non-controlling interest	4,513	3,570	-	-
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>185,095</b>	<b>124,751</b>	<b>156,969</b>	<b>108,196</b>

The Statements of Financial Position are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 92 to 93.

### Discussion and Analysis of the Statements of Financial Position

The consolidated entity's total assets increased by \$273.0 million to \$476.6 million.

The movement in total assets principally comprised:

- ▶ an increase in property, plant and equipment totalling \$217.7 million as a result of the purchase of Etihad Stadium;
- ▶ an increase in cash and cash equivalents totalling \$48.5 million;
- ▶ an increase in intangible assets totalling \$38.5 million relating to Medallion Club licences held for sale and stadium naming rights and supply relationships;
- ▶ a decrease in other assets totalling \$29.6 million as a result of exercising the option to purchase the freehold title to Etihad Stadium.
- ▶ a decrease in total trade and other receivables totalling \$4.4 million.

The consolidated entity's total liabilities increased by \$212.6 million to \$291.6 million.

The movement in total liabilities principally comprised:

- ▶ an increase in interest-bearing liabilities totalling \$185.1 million to fund the acquisition of Stadium Operations Limited (SOL);
- ▶ an increase in total trade and other payables totalling \$9.7 million;
- ▶ an increase in total deferred income totalling \$9.3 million;
- ▶ an increase in provisions totalling \$8.2 million.

### Statements of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 October 2017

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>				
Cash receipts in the course of operations	747,634	598,803	611,446	540,896
Cash payments in the course of operations	(676,891)	(590,662)	(564,183)	(529,872)
<b>Net cash from operating activities</b>	<b>70,743</b>	<b>8,141</b>	<b>47,263</b>	<b>11,024</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>				
Interest received	1,811	1,034	9,146	954
Acquisition of subsidiary, net of cash acquired	(193,571)	-	-	-
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(8,325)	(3,848)	(6,946)	(2,466)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(200,085)</b>	<b>(2,814)</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>(1,512)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>				
Interest paid	(7,279)	(656)	(7,498)	(652)
Net proceeds from external borrowings	185,114	-	185,114	-
Payment of intercompany borrowings	-	-	(200,479)	-
Payment of finance lease liabilities	(7)	(6)	-	-
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>	<b>177,828</b>	<b>(662)</b>	<b>(22,863)</b>	<b>(652)</b>
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>48,486</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>26,600</b>	<b>8,860</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the financial year	86,821	82,156	78,854	69,994
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>135,307</b>	<b>86,821</b>	<b>105,454</b>	<b>78,854</b>

The Statements of Cash Flows are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the concise financial statements set out on pages 92 to 93.

### 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 \$48.5 million.

The major movements in cash during the year included the following:

- ▶ funds provided by the operating activities for the year totalling \$70.7 million;
- ▶ purchases of property, plant and equipment totalling \$8.3 million;
- ▶ acquisition of Stadium Operations Limited (SOL), net of cash acquired, for \$193.6 million;
- ▶ proceeds from external borrowings, net of repayments, totalling \$185.1 million;
- ▶ net interest paid totalling \$5.5 million.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 October 2017

### 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 and Consolidated entity's activities are confined to Australia except for the sale of television rights to various overseas countries and conduct of matches overseas from time to time.

### 3. Revenue

	Consolidated		The Company	
	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
<b>Revenue from operating activities</b>				
Broadcasting and AFL media	381,028	264,154	381,456	264,154
Commercial operations	265,189	185,978	193,866	185,978
Football operations	5,008	4,654	5,048	4,654
Game development	6,567	10,571	11,023	10,571
Other revenue	78,830	77,499	43,204	24,634
Contra advertising revenue	16,000	27,000	16,000	27,000
	<b>752,622</b>	<b>569,856</b>	<b>650,597</b>	<b>516,991</b>

### 4. Contingent liabilities

- i. The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players Association Inc. for a period of six years commencing on 1 November 2016 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 million. This guarantee expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$5 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$5.11 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 million. This guarantee expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$3 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$6.75 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$4.55 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 million. This guarantee expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$8 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 million. This guarantee expired on 31 January 2018. A new guarantee has commenced on 13 November 2017 for \$10 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2020.
- 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 April 2018.

- 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 31 December 2018.
- 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 April 2018.
- 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 April 2018.
- 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 April 2018.
- 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 April 2018.
- 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 April 2018.
- 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 April 2018.

### 5. Events subsequent to balance date

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.

## Directors' 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 2017, set out on pages 89 to 93:

- (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 15th day of February 2018.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:

**Mr R J Goyder, AO**  
CHAIRMAN

**Mr G A McLachlan**  
DIRECTOR

## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of the Australian Football League

### Report on the audit of the Concise Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the Concise Financial Report of Australian Football League (the Company) and its controlled entities (the Group) as at 31 October 2017 and for the year ended on that date.

In our opinion, the accompanying Concise Financial Report, including the discussion and analysis of the Group and Company, complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

The Concise Financial Report comprises:

- ▶ Statements of financial position as at 31 October 2017
- ▶ Statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, Statements of changes in equity, and Statements of cash flows for the year then ended
- ▶ Discussion and analysis
- ▶ Related notes.

The financial statements, listed above, and related notes are derived from the financial report of the Company for the year ended 31 October 2017 (the Financial Report).

The Group consists of the Company and the entities it controlled at the year-end or from time to time during the financial year.

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Concise Financial Report section of our report.

We are independent of the Group and Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the Concise Financial Report in Australia. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

#### Concise Financial Report

The Concise Financial Report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards in the preparation of the Financial Report. Reading the Concise Financial Report and auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the Financial Report and the auditor's report thereon.

#### The Financial Report and our auditor's report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the Audited Financial Report in our auditor's report dated 15 February 2018.

#### Other Information

Other Information is financial and non-financial information in Australian Football League's Annual Report which is provided in addition to the Concise Financial Report and this Auditor's Report. The Directors are responsible for the Other Information.

Our opinion on the Concise Financial Report does not cover the Other Information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the Concise Financial Report, our responsibility is to read the Other Information. In doing so, we consider whether the Other Information is materially inconsistent with the Concise Financial Report or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

We are required to report if we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this Other Information, and based on the work we have performed on the Other Information that we obtained prior to the date of this Auditor's Report we have nothing to report.

#### Responsibilities of the Directors for the Concise Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for:

- ▶ preparing the Concise Financial Report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports and the Corporations Act 2001
- ▶ implementing necessary internal control to enable the preparation of the Concise Financial Report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Concise Financial Report

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the Concise Financial Report, including the discussion and analysis, in all material respects, complies with Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

KPMG

Maurice Bisetto  
PARTNER

15 February 2018

## Committees and Advisors

#### AFL Audit Committee

Andrew Newbold (Chair), Jason Ball, Robin Bishop, Richard Goyder AO.

#### AFL Remuneration Committee

Richard Goyder AO (Chair), Paul Bassat, Robin Bishop, Sarah Fair.

#### AFL Nominations Committee

Richard Goyder AO (Chair), Paul Bassat, Glen Bartlett, Tony Shepherd.

#### AFL Investment Committee

Ray Gunston (Chair), Richard Goyder AO, Robin Bishop, Colin Carter, Rob Chapman, Simon Clarke, Walter Lee.

#### AFL Executive Committee

Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Travis Auld, Darren Birch, Andrew Dillon, Sarah Fair, Ray Gunston, Steve Hocking, Tanya Hosch, Walter Lee, Elizabeth Lukin, Tony Peek, Kylie Rogers.

#### 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 AO, Kim Williams AM.

#### AFL Football Operations Sub-Committee

Steve Hocking (Chair), Patrick Clifton, Tom Phillips, Patrick Keane, Jennie Loughnan, Ben Lowe, Tom McCoy, Tessie McManus, Scott Taylor.

#### AFL Tribunal

David Jones (Chair), Ross Howie (Deputy Chair), Wayne Henwood, Stewart Loewe, Richard Loveridge, Hamish McIntosh, David Neitz, David Pittman, Michael Sexton, Shane Wakelin, Paul Williams, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

#### AFL Laws of the Game Committee

Steve Hocking (Chair), Brett Burton, Wayne Campbell, Michael Christian, Neil Craig, Chris Judd, Hayden Kennedy, Leigh Matthews, Jack Riewoldt, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

#### AFL Appeals Board

Peter O'Callaghan QC (Chair), Brian Collis QC (Deputy Chair), Brian Bourke, Michael Green, Stephen Jurica, John Schultz, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

#### AFL Match Review Panel

Nathan Burke, Michael Christian, Michael Jamison, Jason Johnson, 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 & NAB AFL Rising Star Selectors

Gillon McLachlan (Chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Steve Hocking, 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

Richard Goyder\* AO (Chair), Barry Cable, Dennis Cometti, Jim Main, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin, Michelangelo Rucci, Col Hutchinson (statistics & history consultant), Patrick Clifton (secretary).

\*Mike Fitzpatrick resigned as Chair in March, 2017

#### AFL Research Board

Michael Poulton (Chair), Mark Brayshaw, David Buttifant, Matt Finnis, Brett Johnson, Dr Peter Harcourt, Briana Harvey, Dr Michael Makdissi, Assoc Prof Colin McLeod, David Rath, Anthony Schache, Lawrie Woodman, Patrick Clifton (secretary).

#### AFL Concussion Working Group

Dr Peter Harcourt (Chair), Simon Clarke, Assoc Prof Gavin Davis, Elizabeth Lukin, Clay Mackinnon, 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 Justin Madden AM (Chair), Jenny Samms (Deputy Chair), James Montgomery (Chief Executive Officer), Andrew Blair AM, Jude Donnelly, Steve Drummy, David Huggins, Brett Johnson, Simone Wilkie AO.



# Community Football

To provide an inclusive and accessible game at all levels across the country. We will provide curriculum, awareness and welfare in societal issues that affect our players, people and clubs.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ Australia's game – national, representative and connected to the community
- ▷ Growth in community football across the country
- ▷ National second-tier competitions
- ▷ An inclusive game

▷ More than 300 participants from multicultural or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds took part in the National Diversity Championships at Blacktown International Sportspark last April.



▷ NAB AFL Auskick continued to introduce youngsters to the game, with more than 200,000 participants enjoying the fun at the 3416 centres around the country in 2017.

Participation across all levels of Australian Football reached a record high of 1,547,915 in 2017.

All states and territories saw an increase in overall participation, with the total number of participants rising 10.24 per cent from 2016.

The introduction of the NAB AFL Women's competition has played a key role in contributing to the growth as, in 2017, the total number of female participants across all levels of Australian Football increased by 22 per cent to 463,364. Female participation now reflects 30 per cent of all participation and has seen 1690 female teams created in 2017, an increase of 76 per cent from 2016.

NAB AFL Auskick continued to be a marquee program with more than 200,000 boys and girls being introduced to the skills of Australian Football nationally, a two per cent increase year-on-year.

All states and territories had growth in 2017 which was demonstrated by constant growth in community club participation reaching more than 371,000. In 2017, there were 2913 community clubs throughout Australia, fielding 15,431 teams in 237 leagues.

International participation also enjoyed a significant increase of 25.19 per cent in 2017, reaching a high of 170,744 participants.

The overall participation number excludes players from the 18 AFL clubs but includes state league competitions.

The AFL would like to acknowledge its partners and the Australian Sports Commission for their support in growing the number of people playing Australian Football.

#### 2017 AFL Participation highlights

- ▶ Overall participants – 1,547,915 (up 10.24 per cent)
- ▶ Community club participants (across all age groups starting at five years of age through to Masters competitions) – 371,311 (2.96 per cent)
- ▶ NAB AFL Auskick participation – 200,138 (up 2.26 per cent) across 3416 centres nationally
- ▶ Inter-school competitions – 300,567 (up 11.18 per cent)
- ▶ AFL 9s competitions – 25,406 (up 15.46 per cent)
- ▶ Accredited coaches – 33,721
- ▶ Accredited umpires – 15,024

▽ Beau Vernon, who coaches from a wheelchair after suffering a spinal injury while playing football, inspired Leongatha to an emotional one-point victory in the Gippsland league grand final.



#### Female participation

- ▶ Total female participation – 463,364 (up 22 per cent)
- ▶ Female community club teams – 1690 (up 76 per cent or 730 new teams)
- ▶ The number of girls playing NAB AFL Auskick grew by six per cent to 56,559
- ▶ Female community club participation (across all age groups) – 44,650 (up 68 per cent)
- ▶ Females now account for 30 per cent of all participation

#### NAB AFL Auskick

The NAB AFL Auskick program continued to introduce Australian Football to our youngest participants and their families in 2017. A total of 200,138 children participated in the program at 3416 centres around the country, representing growth of more than two per cent from 2016.

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.

NAB AFL Auskick provides a structured coaching and match program that allows boys and girls to learn about the game in a fun and safe family environment. The AFL is enormously 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, eight remarkable NAB AFL Auskick volunteers were rewarded by the AFL and NAB with a trip to Melbourne. They were Justin Murray (SA), Sonny Davies (Qld), Sonia West (WA), Dean West (WA), Sally-Anne Donnelly (Tas), John Armstrong (NT), Sean Egan (NSW/ACT) and Ryan MacKay (Vic).

Our 22 NAB AFL Auskicker of the Year nominees also took centre stage during Grand Final week.

The nominees attended a dinner with a number of AFL stars, walked in the parade, played on the MCG at half-time and presented the premiership medallions.

The AFL thanks 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.



### Total Participation

1,547,915

+10.24%  
Growth

We also delivered more than 2.16M promotional experiences in communities and schools



850k

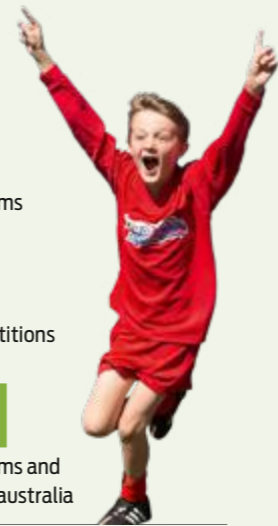
Participated in programs

697k

Participated in competitions

170,744

Participated in programs and competitions outside Australia



### NAB AFL Auskick

200,138

Participants

3416

Auskick centres

+2%

Growth in participants

### Club Football

371,311

Participants

15,431

Teams

237

Community leagues

2913

Clubs

+3%

Growth in participants

### School Football

300,567

Participants In School Competitions

636,539

Participants in School-Based Programs

+16.21%

Total School Growth



### Social Football

25,406

Participants in AFL 9s competitions

### Diversity & Inclusion

90,385

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

145,376

Multicultural participants

### Coaches & Umpires

33,721

Accredited coaches

15,376

Accredited umpires



### Social Football

25,406

Participants In AFL 9s competitions

### Female Football

463,364

Female program and competition participants

30%  
of all participation

1690

Dedicated female football teams

+76%  
Growth in teams



### Participation By State & Territory



### 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. Total participation in either interschool competitions or school-based programs reached 937,106 in 2017, an overall increase of 16 per cent.

#### Highlights

- ▶ In 2017, there were 300,567 students competing in inter-school football competitions.
- ▶ In-school AFL programs continued to grow, with 636,539 students participating.
- ▶ More than 30,000 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 AFL School Ambassador program provided support for teachers who strongly promote Australian Football. Fifteen teachers, among the 5500 who were involved in the program, were named 2017 AFL School Ambassadors of the Year for their outstanding service to the game.
- ▶ The 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.

#### 2017 AFL SCHOOL AMBASSADORS

<b>Brad Schutz</b>	SA School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Christiaan Moir</b>	WA School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Thomas Moscarda</b>	WA School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Michael Austen</b>	Qld School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Michael Rose</b>	Qld School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Narelle Genge</b>	Tas School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Tom Robinson</b>	Tas School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Paula Sellars</b>	NT School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Tim Reilly</b>	NT School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Anna Goyen</b>	NSW School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Lynne Daly</b>	NSW School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Dean O'Brien</b>	ACT School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Michael Goodyear</b>	Vic School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Mark Robinson</b>	Vic School Ambassador of the Year
<b>Ben Kane</b>	Vic School Ambassador of the Year

### AFL 9s

AFL 9s is 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 25,000 people participated in competitions across Australia, representing growth of more than 15 per cent on 2016.

Events in 2017 included the second annual AFL 9s Classic in Sydney, the annual Byron Bay Carnival and other corporate and community carnival events across the country.

### AFL Education

The AFL Education Team is responsible for delivering education on key compliance and social issues across the AFL Industry. In 2017, all players and club officials from each AFL club participated in an annual education program that consisted of face-to-face and online modules focused on the following AFL policies: AFL Anti-Doping Code, AFL Illicit Drugs Policy, AFL Vilification Rules, AFL Gambling Regulations, AFL Respect and Responsibility Policy and AFL concussion protocols.

All new AFL draftees also participated in education programs at the AFL/AFLPA Draftee Induction Camp.

A key component of the AFL Education program involved the delivery of education at the state and community levels of football.

Through the AFL's partnerships with Our Watch and other government departments, a total of 8000 people participated in AFL education and training activities on key social issues, helping create positive change in the football community.

Twenty-two community football clubs reaching 1120 players around Australia received education on respectful relationships, violence against women, vilification and discrimination.

Trained AFL state body staff reached 5409 players, delivering education covering topics such as integrity, respectful relationships and vilification and discrimination.

*A total of 8000 people participated in AFL education and training activities on key social issues, helping create positive change in the football community*

▶ James Shearing epitomised the passion of community football when celebrating the Bothwell Rabbits' Grand Final win over the Mount Pleasant Mounties in Tasmania's Oatlands District Football Association.

### Facility Development Projects

Some \$14.8 million was allocated by the AFL from its facility development reserve to support the construction of community facilities throughout Australia from 2012-16.

The total cost of the projects was more than \$253 million to benefit the game at a community level.

In 2017, more than \$3.6 million was allocated to community facility projects with a total value of more than \$82 million.

The allocation of the funds is done in partnership with various levels of government and local football bodies at all levels to provide the best possible facilities for local clubs and leagues. As far as we are aware, the AFL is one of the few national sporting bodies to directly contribute to the development of local community facilities.

In addition, the AFL provided \$44.2 million to the various state and territory bodies in game development grants in 2017. Almost 400 clubs have had their facilities under the program, upgraded or newly built.

### NATIONAL FUNDING MIX FOR CONFIRMED AFL COMMUNITY FACILITIES 2012-16

Confirmed Projects	253,287,538	
Funding Partners		
Local Council	101,969,087	40.3%
State Government	74,402,902	29.4%
Federal Government	29,453,000	11.6%
Local AFL football bodies	16,047,275	6.3%
Other sports	1,410,000	0.6%
Local community partners	15,181,102	6.0%
AFL grants	14,824,172	5.9%
		100.0%
	253,287,538	



▶ In 2017, the AFL allocated more than \$3.6 million to community facility projects with a total value of more than \$82 million. The allocation of the funds is done in partnership with various levels of government and local football bodies at all levels.

### CONFIRMED PROJECTS AND COSTS FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT RESERVE 2012-16

	Project Value	Local Council	State Government	Federal Government	Local Community Partners	Other Sports	Local AFL Football	AFL Grants
VIC	94,403,320	40,739,000	32,403,140	5,875,000	3,015,500	200,000	8,625,180	3,545,500
QLD	56,985,197	29,850,833	7,693,862	9,590,000	5,582,500	30,000	2,135,002	2,103,000
NSW	39,533,000	23,274,754	7,199,500	2,053,000	1,032,167	550,000	1,351,928	4,071,651
SA	22,597,000	5,278,500	6,047,400	4,000,000	2,023,935	60,000	3,707,165	1,480,000
NT	15,030,000	0	2,515,000	7,500,000	3,500,000	0	0	1,515,000
WA	21,996,000	2,585,000	18,480,000	310,000	0	0	151,000	470,000
TAS	1,848,000	241,000	64,000	125,000	27,000	570,000	77,000	744,000
AFL	895,021							895,021
<b>Total</b>	<b>253,287,538</b>	<b>101,969,087</b>	<b>74,402,902</b>	<b>29,453,000</b>	<b>15,181,102</b>	<b>1,410,000</b>	<b>16,047,275</b>	<b>14,824,172</b>



## Community Engagement — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

### AFL Indigenous All Stars Camp

The AFL Indigenous All Stars Camp was held in Broome with 56 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AFL players coming together to participate in a camp focusing on personal and cultural development as well as industry education.

The camp provided a unique opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander footballers to bond through player-led development sessions, football training and traditional activities with local communities such as fishing and dancing. These sessions looked at the expectation of clubs, the industry and the community and how the AFL and the AFLPA can work collaboratively to best cater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.

### National Male Kickstart Championships

The National Male Kickstart Championships were held in Blacktown in April with 200 under-15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players representing their state or territory in a five-day football carnival.

Each team selected the best 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 a pathway to the Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs.

### National Female Kickstart Championships

The National Female Kickstart Championships were held in Byron Bay in October with 100 under-15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players representing their state or territory in a five-day carnival.

Each team selected the best 25 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 a pathway to the Rio Tinto AFL Woomeras program.

*The camp provided a unique opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players to bond*



△ The Rio Tinto Cup, featuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players from around the country, was played as a curtain-raiser to the Dreamtime at the 'G in round 10.

### Rio Tinto AFL Flying Boomerangs Leadership Program

At the end of the annual AFL Male Kickstart Championships, 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players were selected to participate in the Rio Tinto AFL 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 again in December for a high-performance training, cultural and leadership camp in Fiji where they visited Yanuca Island, Mosquito Island and a community church. The Boomerangs played an exhibition match against the South Pacific All Stars team which was selected from the AFL Oceania Cup.



◁ The best under-15 female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent travelled to Byron Bay to contest the National Kickstart Championships.

### Rio Tinto AFL Woomeras Leadership Program

Twenty-five of the best performing participants from the AFL National Kickstart Championships were selected for the Rio Tinto AFL Woomeras program.

The Woomeras program is the AFL's national female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander development program for under-15 girls, immersing participants into an elite training environment, with the aim of increasing football and personal development as well as leadership skills. The Woomeras participated in the Female Diversity All Stars Leadership Program in Darwin during October. The Woomeras program is a pathway to the mainstream talent Academy and AFL Women's competition.

### Cape York House

AFL Cape York House is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to provide educational, employment and training opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 through the Federal and State Indigenous Housing Partnership program and supported by Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Indigenous Schooling Support, Education Queensland, Jim Stynes Scholarship and the AFL.

In 2017, three graduates went on to study at universities across the country, taking the total to 21 graduates over the past four years.

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.

In 2017, AFL Cape York donated \$6000 toward domestic violence services in Cairns and continued successful community activities such as Students' High Tea, Stand Up Against Domestic Violence High Tea, and NAIDOC days at the house.

The team at AFL Cape York House experienced its best year on record in its development program, with a record 15,000 people engaged in programs across the year. The AFL is proud to partner with and support the efforts of the dedicated team at AFL Cape York House.

*... immersing participants into an elite training environment with the aim of increasing football and personal development as well as leadership skills*

**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 Territorians from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds with the same opportunities in life as their non-Indigenous peers, with a focus 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.

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 14 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.

AFLNT remote projects had 10 staff engaged in nine regions across the Northern Territory. This meant full seasons of men's football were played in Galiwinku and Groote Eylandt for the first time since 2014 and the first AFLNT-managed competition in Gunbalanya was up and running. There was also the first season of remote women's football played in Gove.

In 2017, 237 children from 14 communities were engaged in the one-week leadership residential component at the centre. The communities involved in the program included Tiwi Islands, Maningrida, Elcho Island, Groote Eylandt, Ngukurr, Minyerri, Borroloola, Wadeye, Lajamanu, Hermannsburg and Canteen Creek, with Ramingining, Gapuwiyak and Yarralin joining the program for the first time.



△ The National Male and Female Kickstart Championships provide wonderful opportunities for young male and female (below) footballers to display their prowess and learn lifelong skills.

▷ The Yagmoor and Campbell teams came together for a war cry before the Rio Tinto Cup at the MCG.



**AFL Indigenous Advisory Council**

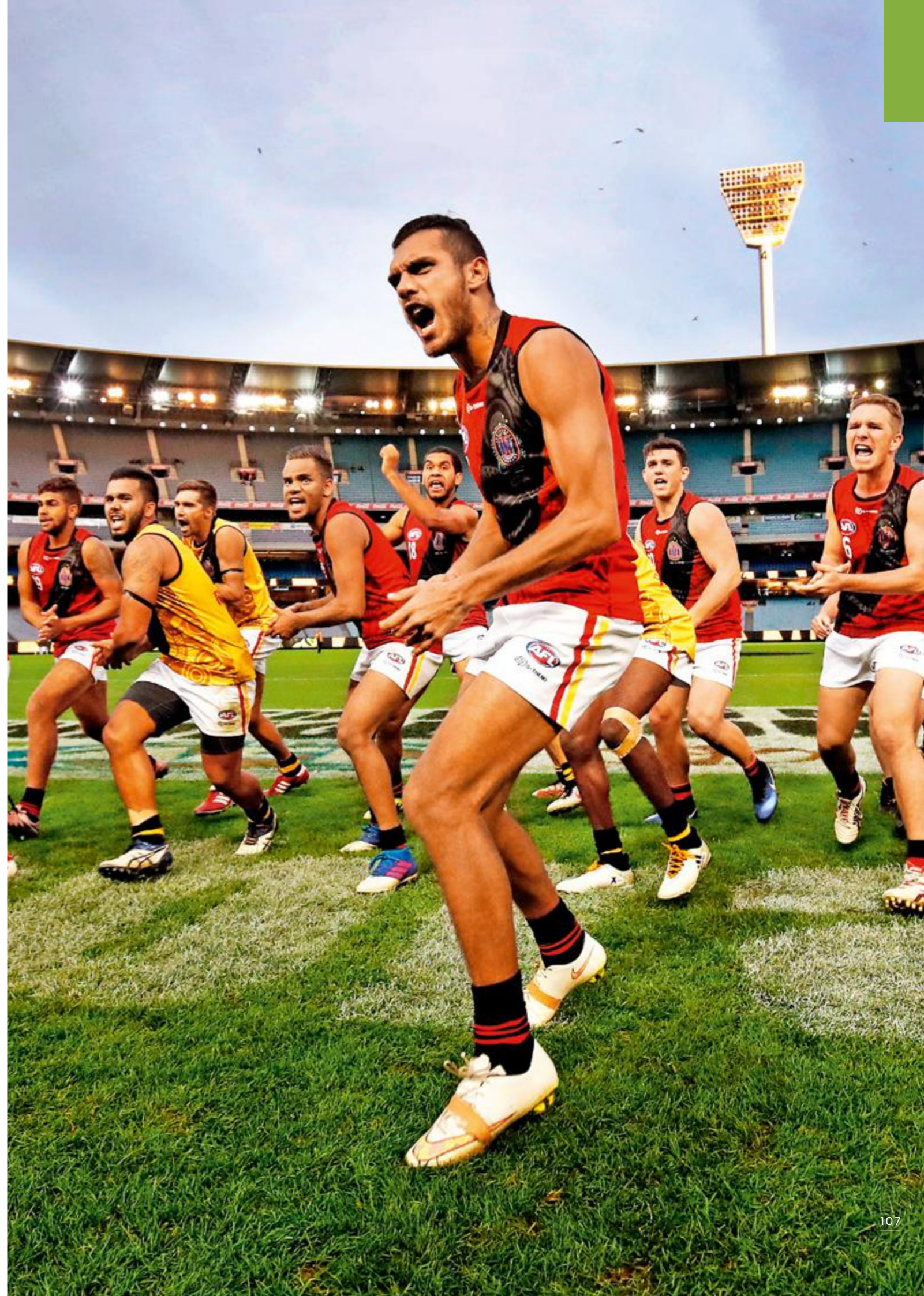
The AFL Indigenous Advisory Council provides advice to the AFL Executive and Commission on the implementation of the AFL's Indigenous strategy and policies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players and communities are a critical part of Australian Football and the Indigenous Advisory Council assists the industry in continuing to be part of social and cultural change in Australia.

Australian Football plays a critical role in engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is an enabler to greater individual and community wellbeing.

- The Council oversaw:
- ▶ Employment and procurement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the AFL industry;
  - ▶ Maintenance of cultural integrity through the continued understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs;
  - ▶ Support for the ongoing cultural safety for the AFL's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and players;
  - ▶ Promotion of the AFL's focus on Sir Doug Nicholls Round celebrations.

Paul Briggs, Kaiela Institute chair and Rumbalara Football/Netball Club president, is the chair of the Advisory Council. In 2017, the Indigenous Advisory Council consisted of 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.





## Community Engagement — Multicultural

### Multicultural Round

The 2017 Toyota AFL Multicultural Round was held during round 19 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 playing lists. The feature of the round included the 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 Schools Program continued to grow in 2017, with 233 schools and 26,595 students engaged nationally.

More than 18,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse community backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time.

### Australia Post AFL Multicultural Player Ambassadors

The Australia Post Multicultural AFL Ambassadors are part of the Australia Post Community Inclusion Partnership. The 2017 Ambassadors included 19 AFL and AFLW players: Adam Saad, Akec Makur Chuot, Aliir Aliir, Bachar Houli, Christian Salem, Darcy Vescio, David Zaharakis, Dayne Zorko, Dyson Heppell, Helen Roden, Jake Kolodjashnij, Jason Johannisen, Jimmy Toumpas, Lin Jong, Majak Daw, Nic Naitanui, Sabrina Frederick-Traub, Stephen Coniglio and Tom Nicholls.

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.

### Australia Post AFL Multicultural Community Ambassadors

The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Community Ambassador Program reached a record high in 2017, with 330 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 Male All Nations Cup

In 2017, multicultural teams representing all states and territories competed in the All Nations Cup held in Blacktown. 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.

*More than 18,000 people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds attended an AFL game – many for the first time*

△ The Australia Post AFL Multicultural Ambassadors, featuring stars from the AFL men's and women's competitions, use football as a vehicle for inclusion.

### Australia Post World Team Program

The World Team brings together 25 of the most talented multicultural players selected from the All Nations Cup. The program consists of two residential camps focusing on football development, leadership and cultural education. The primary objective of the program is to ensure players are provided with the tools and education to transition into the mainstream talent pathway. The World team also engages three multicultural coaches selected from the All Nations Cup to further develop their coaching education.

### 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 Byron Bay, included education sessions on topics such as pathway to excellence and identity. Twenty-five of the best-performing participants represented the Medleys team.

### Australia Post Medleys Program

The Medleys program brings together 25 of the most talented multicultural female players who are selected from the Female Diversity Championships to participate in an accelerated football development program which focuses on strengthening leaderships, cultural identity and life skills. The Medleys participated in the Female Diversity All Stars Leadership Program in Darwin during October.

The Medleys program is a pathway to the mainstream talent Academy and AFL Women's competition.



△ Multicultural teams representing each state and territory contested the National Diversity Championships.

▽ The Bachar Houli Leadership Academy aims to fast-track the development of players from an Islamic background.

### Bachar Houli Program

Developed by the AFL 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 2017, 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.

#### 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 2017, 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.
- ▶ Ismail Moussa was awarded the Bachar Houli Medal, presented to the Academy member who displays leadership on and off the field.



## NAB AFL Under-18 Championships

The 2017 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships expanded to six teams in Division 2 and for the first time incorporated AFL club academies. The four northern club academies (Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney and GWS) joined Tasmania and the Northern Territory in the championships which were held in March.

Comprising players from the northern states and territories, the Allies again formed a team to compete in Division 1. Matches were played in Western Australia, Geelong, Melbourne and Adelaide from June 10-July 5.

Vic Metro defended its championship title from 2016 in Division 1 while the Sydney Swans Academy won Division 2.

West Australian captain Oscar Allen won the Larke Medal awarded to the best player in Division 1 and Nick Blakey (Sydney) won the Harrison Medal as Division 2's best player.

### NAB MVPs

**Vic Country:** James Worpel  
**Western Australia:** Aaron Naughton  
**Vic Metro:** Jack Higgins  
**South Australia:** Harrison Petty  
**Allies:** Brayden Crossley

### All-Australian Team

**Defenders:** Ben Paton (Vic Country), Oscar Clavarino (Vic Country), Sam Taylor (WA), Charlie Constable (Vic Metro), Aaron Naughton (WA), Nick Coffield (Vic Metro)  
**Midfielders:** Patrick Naish (Vic Metro), Brayden Ainsworth (WA), Izak Rankine (SA), Brayden Crossley (Allies), Cameron Rayner (Vic Metro), Paddy Dow (Vic Country)  
**Forwards:** Zac Bailey (Allies), Jarrod Brander (Allies), Jack Higgins (Vic Metro), Callum Coleman-Jones (SA), Oscar Allen (WA), Dylan Moore (Vic Metro)  
**Interchange:** Sam Hayes (Vic Metro), Lachie Fogarty (Vic Metro), Harrison Petty (SA), James Worpel (Vic Country), Joel Garner (Vic Metro)  
**Coach:** Martin Allison (Vic Metro)  
**Assistant coach:** Peter Sumich (WA)

## NAB AFL Under-16 Championships

The NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held in Blacktown (NSW), Melbourne, Western Australia and Queensland from June 12-July 15.

Western Australia was the Division 1 premier and Queensland won Division 2. Noah Anderson (Vic Metro) won the Kevin Sheehan Medal, awarded to the best Division 1 player, while Liam Delahunty (NSW/ACT) won the Alan McLean Medal for best Division 2 player.

◀ Vic Metro successfully defended its Division 1 title in the 2017 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships.

### NAB MVPs

**NSW-ACT:** Sam Thorne  
**Northern Territory:** Dominic Forbes  
**Queensland:** Mitch Fitzpatrick  
**South Australia:** Karl Finlay  
**Tasmania:** Jared Dakin  
**Vic Country:** Hayden Young  
**Vic Metro:** Noah Anderson  
**Western Australia:** Devon Robertson

## NAB AFL Women's Under-18 Championships

The 2017 NAB AFL Women's Under-18 Championships were played under a new format. All states and territories competed in round one during May and June in Adelaide, Sydney and Geelong.

Players from the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania formed an Allies team which then comprised part of the six-team round two fixture (Allies, NSW/ACT, Queensland, Vic Country, Vic Metro, Western Australia) on the Gold Coast from July 10-14. There was no championship awarded.

Adelaide Crows premiership coach Bec Goddard coached the Allies, assisted by AFLW players Renee Forth (GWS Giants), Jessica Dal Pos (GWS Giants) and Katherine Smith (Melbourne).

All matches were streamed live and were well supported by local media.

An All-Australian squad was selected after the championships. The squad played in a curtain-raiser to the NAB AFLW State of Origin match in September. The 2017 under-18 All-Australian team was announced after the match.

### NAB MVPs

**NSW/ACT:** Alyce Parker  
**Northern Territory:** Danielle Ponter  
**Queensland:** Lauren Bella  
**South Australia:** Eloise Jones  
**Tasmania:** Courtney Webb  
**Vic Country:** Tyla Hanks  
**Vic Metro:** Maddi Prespakis  
**Western Australia:** Courtney Hodder

### All-Australian Team

**B:** Lucy McEvoy, Rebecca Webster, Bridie Kennedy  
**HB:** Jordyn Allen, McKenzie Dowrick, Darcy Guttridge (capt)  
**C:** Tarni White, Maddi Prespakis, Georgia Gee  
**HF:** Kalinda Howarth, Rosie Deegan, Eloise Jones  
**F:** Tyla Hanks, Eden Zanker, Jordyn Jolliffe  
**R:** Alyce Parker, Jess Allan (vice-capt), Courtney Hodder  
**Inter:** Olivia Purcell, Ari Clarke, Sophie Conway, Lauren Bella



## Around the Regions

### Victoria

- ▶ Record participation levels with 461,000 participants, including female club team numbers doubling.
- ▶ The female talent pathway was completed, with the introduction of the TAC Cup girls competition as the under-18 state talent pathway competition, which produced the No. 1 NAB AFLW Draft selection.
- ▶ 58 per cent of all players drafted in the NAB AFL Draft were produced from Victorian pathway competitions, with nine of the top 10 selections hailing from the TAC Cup competition, including the player selected at No. 1 (the seventh consecutive No. 1 selection from Victorian).
- ▶ The Swisse Wellness VFL Women's Grand Final was held at Etihad Stadium and was televised live on Channel Seven for the first time, averaging 106,000 viewers.
- ▶ Release of a new Statewide Facilities Strategy "Growing the Heartland" and continued strong investment in football facilities across the state.

### NSW/ACT

- ▶ Club football participation in New South Wales and the ACT grew 8.2 per cent off the back of a 78 per cent increase in the number of female participants playing in registered club football competitions across the state and territory.
- ▶ AFL 9s participation grew 30 per cent in NSW/ACT, making it the home of the AFL official non-contact social game with close to 10,000 participants. Sydney was also host to the second annual AFL 9s Classic where more than 120 teams competed for more than \$50,000 in cash prizes in November.
- ▶ New South Wales played host to the 2017 National Diversity Championships in April, when more than 300 participants from a multicultural or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background took part in the tournament held at Blacktown International SportsPark.
- ▶ From \$1.3 million in AFL investment, NSW/ACT benefited from \$23.5 million of completed facilities upgrades across the region.
- ▶ Nick Shipley was the first Giants Academy member from Western Sydney to be drafted into the AFL, selected by his hometown club the GWS Giants in the 2017 NAB AFL Draft.
- ▶ Umpiring across the region grew by 13.1 per cent.

*More than 300 participants from a multicultural or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background took part in the tournament*



△ Adelaide Crows father-son rookie selection Jackson Edwards impressed for South Australia in the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships.

### Queensland

- ▶ Total participation in Queensland increased by 10.21 per cent to a record 252,624 in 2017 (including NSW Northern Rivers).
- ▶ Community club participation experienced 6.2 per cent growth across all age-groups (male and female), highlighting the game's healthy position at community level in Queensland.
- ▶ Female participation grew with 100,841 women and girls involved in programs and competitions. Seventy new female teams were established.
- ▶ AFL Queensland's statewide Schools Cup competition grew by a staggering 102 teams to 521.
- ▶ AFL Queensland secured \$16 million in grant funding for community clubs.
- ▶ The Brisbane Lions AFLW team was runner-up in the inaugural year of the competition, with 22 of the 27 listed players from Queensland.
- ▶ Eight Queensland girls were drafted by the Brisbane Lions in the 2017 NAB AFLW Draft.
- ▶ Seven Queenslanders were selected by AFL clubs via the national and rookie drafts.
- ▶ AFL Queensland's Diversity Employment Program won the Community Sector Organisation (not-for-profit) Award at the Queensland Multicultural Awards. The program creates opportunities for migrants, refugees and international students to gain work experience in the sporting industry.
- ▶ AFL Queensland launched its Reconciliation Action Plan.
- ▶ \$12 million was secured from the Federal Government to build AFL Cape York House for girls. The new house will replicate the highly successful AFL Cape York House for boys program.

### NT

- ▶ Total participation grew by six per cent to 44,729 and more than 60,000 people are involved in the game, which equates to a quarter of the NT's population.
- ▶ Three male players were drafted to AFL clubs and seven women were re-signed or drafted to the Adelaide Crows.
- ▶ AFLNT and the Adelaide Football Club's joint venture to field a team for the AFL Women's competition yielded the inaugural AFLW premiership in March.
- ▶ The Toyota AFL Premiership Season round 17 match between Melbourne and the Adelaide Crows was played in front of a sellout crowd at TIO Stadium in Darwin.
- ▶ NT Thunder, made up of 49 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players hailing from local NT competitions, played NEAFL finals for the fourth consecutive year.
- ▶ 237 students from remote regions came to the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre for a one-week education program based on the AFL values. In addition, a 15-week community leadership program to support their trip has been implemented in 70 per cent of schools engaged in the program.
- ▶ AFLNT remote projects had 10 staff engaged in nine regions across the Northern Territory. This meant full seasons of men's football were played in Galiwinku and Groote Eylandt for the first time since 2014 and the first AFLNT-managed competition in Gunbalanya was up and running. There was also the first season of remote women's football played in Gove.
- ▶ The NTFL in Darwin and the whole NT Thunder NEAFL season were broadcast in a regular weekly timeslot on free-to-air television, and the CAFL in Alice Springs had its country grand finals narrowcast live into remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

▽ Western Australia enjoyed great success in 2017, winning the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships and finishing second in the Under-18s.

### WA

- ▶ Total participation in Western Australia grew by nine per cent to 330,001, highlighted by a 28 per cent increase in female football participants.
- ▶ School program participation grew by 24.5 per cent to 169,184.
- ▶ Peel Thunder won its second consecutive WAFL premiership, defeating Subiaco by 16 points in what was the last WAFL Grand Final at Subiaco Oval.
- ▶ The WAFL state team defeated Victoria in Victoria for the first time in 113 years, by 63 points.
- ▶ WA's Kickstart team won the AFL National Kickstart Championships.
- ▶ WA won the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships and finished second by percentage in the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships.
- ▶ 15 WA players were recruited for the 2018 AFLW competition.
- ▶ 20 WA players were drafted by AFL clubs.
- ▶ WA Football Commission's Reconciliation Action Plan was finalised in 2017.

### SA

- ▶ Participation increased to more than 174,000, an overall rise of more than 15 per cent on 2016.
- ▶ A 53 per cent increase in female participation at club level with a 22 per cent increase in girls involved in Auskick.
- ▶ Norwood won the inaugural SANFL women's premiership, with two new clubs – Sturt and South Adelaide – added to the competition for 2018.
- ▶ Sturt claimed back-to-back SANFL premierships with a pulsating one-point win against Port Adelaide at Adelaide Oval. The crowd of 39,813 was the largest for a Grand Final since the same two clubs did battle in front of 44,838 in 1998.

### Tasmania

- ▶ The number of Tasmanians playing football reached record numbers with a rise of 3.8 per cent in participation (41,667 played in 2017).
- ▶ Auskick at community and club level saw growth of 25 per cent. Tasmania's school programs increased by 26 per cent with minimum four-week football programs now in 68 per cent of Tasmanian schools.
- ▶ Female football continued its explosion in the state with the launch of the Tasmanian State League Women's and strong growth of 28 per cent in participation. Women's football has grown from six teams to 62 teams in just three years.
- ▶ Tasmania Football Foundation announced the launch of a junior coaching mentor network and hosted its first major event in the Celebration of Tasmanian Football.
- ▶ AFL Tasmania embarked on a joint venture AFLW licence issued to compete in the 2019 season – the North Melbourne Tassie Kangaroos.



International

- ▶ Participation reached a record with 170,744 (25 per cent increase) taking part in competitions and programs, with a further 92,232 attending promotional activities (226 per cent increase).
- ▶ The AFL continued its partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Pacific Sports Partnership 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, resulting in 71,186 participants in Papua New Guinea (69 per cent increase) and 27,770 participants in the South Pacific (41 per cent increase).
- ▶ After helping PNG secure victory in the 2017 AFL International Cup and impressing for Queensland in the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, Hewago 'Ace' Oea was selected in the 2018 Level 1 NAB AFL Academy.

▶ Twenty-one nations were represented in the sixth AFL International Cup held in Victoria in August, including New Zealand (right) and Canada and the USA (below).



- ▶ The AFL Asia Shanghai Cup saw 14 teams from across Asia compete in a tournament in Shanghai the day before the Port Adelaide-Gold Coast Suns match. The China Reds and the All-Asian Lions also played an exhibition match following the AFL clash at Jiangwan Stadium.
- ▶ The AFL Asian Championships were held in Manila, Philippines, in October with 18 teams from across Asia.
- ▶ The 20th annual USAFL Nationals were held in San Diego, California, in October with a record number of players (1200) and teams (53) playing more than 90 matches across seven divisions (five men's and two women's).
- ▶ AFL Canada experienced a record 10,464 participants (60 per cent increase), including more than 5000 children taking part in the Calgary AFL School Program.
- ▶ 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 ninth annual Anzac Cup between Australia and France at Villers-Bretonneux, followed by the dawn service; European Championships (18-a-side international tournament); and the AFL Euro Cup (nine-a-side international tournament held in Bordeaux, France).
- ▶ AFLX (modified game played on a rectangular field with fewer players) was trialled with North Melbourne at Arden St in January and in an exhibition between Port Melbourne and Coburg at Lakeside Stadium in March.
- ▶ The Australian under-17 AFL Academy team travelled to New Zealand to play the NZ Hawks national side at Westpac Stadium over Anzac Day weekend.
- ▶ More than 26,000 participants took part in FootyWild programs in South Africa.



Message from the Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) thanks all of our partner National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) for your continued hard work and commitment to excellence. All of you understand innately the importance of sport in Australian life. It's much more than a source of national identity and pride, it's the fabric that binds us together – a common language for all, with multiplier benefits in health, education, social cohesion and the economy.



There were many great sporting events to celebrate during the course of last year – the launch of both the AFL Women's competition and the National Netball League with prime-time TV coverage, Richmond's win in the AFL, dominant performances by the Australian Ashes teams in the men's and the women's series, the Matildas winning the football Tournament of Nations and the Socceroos qualifying for this year's World Cup in Russia – just to pick a few.

Sport has traditionally been our national pastime. A competitive sporting spirit has been a natural part of our DNA. But like any industry, sport faces competition, from other entertainment options domestically or from other nations internationally. At the ASC, we are serious about taking on that competition.

We appreciate the willingness of NSOs to embrace this challenge. We commend athletes for their dedicated commitment to training for the upcoming Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games and, further ahead, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

One of the most important long-term challenges for our country is to help our children be physically active, to participate in sport and enjoy its lifelong benefits.

The ASC's Sporting Schools program has reached more than 6000 primary schools around Australia and now includes a targeted program for high schools. It is vital to ensure physical education is re-emphasised in the national school curriculum. To this end, the ASC has been doing ground-breaking work on physical literacy for children and youth and we look forward to rolling this out nationally in the year ahead.

As the national leadership organisation for sport in Australia, the ASC is excited by the enthusiasm the Minister for Sport, Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie, is showing for promoting physical activity for all Australians, and we continue to work with her on a National Sport Plan. This will create, for the first time, a comprehensive blueprint for Australian sport. It is an outstanding initiative and we thank the Minister for her commitment and those who have contributed to the plan.

Finally, I say a big thank you to the army of volunteers – parents, coaches, officials and administrators – who contribute their time and services for the good of Australian sport. You bring community strength, passion and great value to the identity, productivity, cohesion and health of our nation.

The ASC wishes you every success in the year ahead. We look forward to working closely with you for the common good of Australian sport.

John Wylie AM  
Chair – Australian Sports Commission

▶ The Australian Sports Commission's Sporting Schools program has reached more than 6000 primary schools around Australia.



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission





## International Cup

The 2017 AFL International Cup was the sixth edition hosted by the AFL.

Eighteen male and eight female teams representing 21 different nations descended upon Melbourne to compete in 65 matches during two weeks in August, at more than 20 venues across Melbourne and regional Victoria. The key feature of the competition is that no expatriate Australians are eligible to play and teams comprise solely of amateurs who must be a national of the country they represent.

### Participating teams

**Men's teams:** Canada, China, Croatia\*, Fiji, France, Germany\*, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Nauru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Sri Lanka\*, USA.

**Women's teams:** Canada, European Crusaders\*, Fiji, Great Britain\*, Ireland, Pakistan\*, Papua New Guinea\*, USA.

\*new teams that did not compete in 2014

Government House in Melbourne, the official residence of the Victorian Governor and former AFL Commissioner The Hon Linda Dessau AM, provided the setting for the official launch of the two-week IC17 carnival on August 5.

The 900-plus players and officials in attendance in the Grand Ballroom provided a great atmosphere to launch the International Cup, before the teams walked a lap of the MCG before the Essendon-Carlton clash as part of the parade of nations.

Matches kicked off at Royal Park on August 6.

Round two (School Round) saw thousands of students experience the AFL International Cup as teams played in school grounds across Melbourne and regional Victoria, with matches taking place from Mount Eliza to Ballarat. The School Round was a new addition to the International Cup, with students producing team banners and having their faces painted and there was also an opportunity for students to mix with the teams in classroom sessions.

Round three (Community Round) saw matches played at community football clubs across Melbourne and regional Victoria over the weekend of August 11-13 as the IC17 teams played as curtain-raisers before senior men and women's community football matches. Many teams also participated in Thursday night training sessions and post-match functions with their "host" community club to experience a typical weekend of community footy in Victoria.

Matches continued at Royal Park on August 15. This was followed by a basic umpiring course on August 16 and a Level 1 coaching course on August 17 conducted by AFL and AFL Victoria development staff. Each team, except for the two men's and two women's Grand Final teams, then participated in their final match at Royal Park on August 18 where Croatia secured the men's Division 2 trophy after the Knights defeated a gallant German team by 66 points.



Irish eyes were smiling after a thrilling four-point win over Canada in the grand final of the AFL International Cup women's competition (left), while Papua New Guinea (above) became the first team to win back-to-back titles in the men's Division 1.

The 2017 AFL International Cup gala dinner at Crown Palladium was a celebration of diversity as teams came together for the presentation of the world teams, players of the tournament and leading goalkickers.

The men's Division 1 and women's AFL International Cup Grand Final matches took place as AFL curtain-raisers on August 19 to end the 2017 AFL International Cup.

In the men's Division 1 decider, Papua New Guinea became the first team to win back-to-back titles after beating New Zealand by a point at the MCG. And in the women's final, Ireland wrested back its crown as the best team at international level with a four-point victory over Canada at Etihad Stadium later that afternoon.

### Grand Final results

#### Men's Division 1

Papua New Guinea 4.5 (29) d New Zealand 4.4 (28)

#### Men's Division 2

Croatia 11.8 (74) d Germany 1.2 (8)

#### Women's

Ireland 4.1 (25) d Canada 3.3 (21)

### FINAL RANKINGS

Men's Division 1		Men's Division 2		Women's Division	
Rank	Country	Rank	Country	Rank	Country
1	Papua New Guinea	1	Croatia	1	Ireland
2	New Zealand	2	Germany	2	Canada
3	Ireland	3	China	3	Great Britain
4	USA	4	Japan	4	USA
5	Nauru	5	Sri Lanka	5	Fiji
6	Great Britain	6	Indonesia	6	Papua New Guinea
7	Canada	7	Pakistan	7	European Crusaders
8	Fiji	8	India	8	Pakistan
9	South Africa				
10	France				



## Coaching Development

The AFL Census shows there were 33,721 accredited coaches in Australian Football in 2017. Accredited coaches are actively involved in delivering football programs to participants in all segments of the game.

### Accreditation Courses

Strong attendance at AFL coach accreditation courses continues to drive growth in the number of accredited coaches. More than 7500 coaches participated in courses in 2017.

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 course was also conducted at the Gold Coast Suns and an increasing number of AFL players are also participating in the state/territory-conducted Level 2 courses.

**AFL/AFLPA Course – 43 participants**  
**Gold Coast Suns – 14 participants**

The AFL High Performance Coaching Course was again held in Melbourne with the first segment conducted in October.

Twenty-three participants took part in the four-day program and will return to Melbourne in March 2018 for the second segment of the course (two days).

△ Twenty-three aspiring elite coaches were invited to attend the AFL High Performance Coaching Course in Melbourne in October.

### AFL Level 4 Senior Coach Accreditation

The AFL Level 4 Senior Coach Accreditation program continues with the full support of the AFL Coaches Association. Six new participants were selected into the program in 2017. Three participants completed their final requirements of the program in December, adding to the six graduates who completed in February.

Two coaches from the Level 4 program are now senior coaches at AFL clubs – Simon Goodwin (Melbourne) and Stuart Dew (Gold Coast Suns) – while Simon Lloyd is now general manager of football with Geelong. Carlton coach Brendon Bolton was in the Level 4 program before his appointment.

### International Courses

AFL international affiliates continued to be active in coach development in 2017, with Level 1 courses in Europe, South Pacific and New Zealand.

The AFL, in collaboration with AFL Victoria, conducted a Level 1 coaching course during the 2017 AFL International Cup. More than 60 participants from more than 14 countries took part in the one-day program.

*The AFL Census shows there were 33,721 accredited coaches in Australian Football in 2017*



### AFL National Coaching Conference

The 2017 AFL National Coaching Conference (15th edition) was conducted at the MCG from February 3-5. Essendon coach John Worsfold presented the opening keynote address. Other keynote presenters at the conference, which attracted more than 400 coaches, were Kevin Sheehan, Luke Power, Ange Postecoglou, Bo Hanson, Kate Hall, Robert Harvey, Cliff Mallet and David Rath. Thirty-four breakout sessions on a wide range of football and coaching topics were delivered across the weekend.

### AFL Diversity Coaching Academy

An AFL Diversity Coaching Academy was conducted during the AFL National Diversity Championships in Blacktown in April (male) and Byron Bay in September (female). This included daily coach education sessions and ongoing coach mentoring throughout the championships from experienced mentor coaches including Mark Williams, Daniel Gilmore, Lawrie Woodman and Peta Searle.

### AFL Female Coaching Forum

Coaches of female football from around Australia gathered at Ikon Park on November 12 for the second annual 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 including Peta Searle, Matti Clements, Emily Walker, Paul Hood, Matt Jones, Tenille Hay, Malcolm Bangs and David Rath. AFL coaching department staff member and Western Bulldogs AFLW player Emma Kearney was MC.

△ A wide range of football and coaching topics were delivered at the 2017 AFL National Coaching Conference at the MCG last February.



## Other Highlights

### 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 Craig, Neil Barras, Brendan Mason and David Wheadon also regularly assisted in coaching development programs around Australia.

### AFL Coaches' Association – Appearances Program

The partnership between the AFL and the AFL Coaches Association in respect of game development continued in 2017, particularly through the coach appearance program. Association members performed around 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 AFLCA, 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.



▷ The AFL, the Sydney Swans and St Kilda supported the round 18 Pride Match, to promote inclusiveness of the LGBTI community in the national game.

## Community Partnerships

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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, 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 our 18 clubs all have strong partnerships and social commitments across a range of issues.

To bring clarity and outline our social responsibilities, the AFL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy assists us in directing our decisions and commitments.



▷ Western Bulldogs ruckman Jordan Roughead invited Ladder success story Darcy to be his guest at the 2017 Brownlow Medal count.

**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:**

1. Gender equality;
2. Empowerment of young people through sporting engagement;
3. 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 2017, 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.

The AFL has partnered with AFL SportsReady to offer 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.

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 2018.

### Ladder

Ladder was established more than 10 years ago by AFL players who wanted to address one of the biggest social issues facing Australia – youth homelessness.

Drawing on the power of the AFL industry and utilising the principles of sport, these players established programs and pathways so young people could access accommodation and the wrap around support they needed to get their lives back on track. Thousands of lives have been changed because of Ladder but there is still more work to be done.



On any given night, there will more than 43,000 young people without a safe place to call home. With the support of the AFL industry, including the AFL and the AFL Players Association, Ladder is working to change this number and ensure that young people have an opportunity to build a future full of possibilities and free from homelessness.

It was a defining year for Ladder, which continued to operate in and run internationally recognised supported accommodation centres, known as Foyers. It also further established its early intervention stream, which works with at-risk groups of young people to prevent them from becoming homeless. The Ladder Step Up model is operating in Western Sydney and a new program was announced for Victoria's Latrobe Valley region. AFLW players, led by Daisy Pearce, spearheaded a fundraising campaign for Ladder to coincide with the inaugural AFLW Grand Final.

Ladder was also the official charity partner of the Toyota AFL Finals Series which has become the organisation's flagship awareness and fundraising initiative. AFL staff from across the business volunteered their time to the campaign that called on footy fans to help 'Change The Number' of young people experiencing homelessness. It was Ladder's most successful finals series. The AFL continued to provide considerable volunteering, financial and back office support, including finance and IT, and supported Ladder to harness the AFL industry's profile, knowledge and networks to change the lives of young people in need.

#### 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.

This was underpinned by the release of the updated Respect and Responsibility Policy in September 2017.

*The Million Dollar Lunch is the annual fundraiser for the Children's Cancer Foundation*

▽ The Children's Cancer Foundation Million Dollar Lunch raised more than \$2 million in 2017.

## Supporting our clubs

The AFL supports a range of initiatives through our key partners and 18 AFL clubs which 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 2017 was the round 18 Pride Match between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans.

After supporting the Community Pride Cup over numerous years, 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. After a successful year one introduction in 2016, activities in and around the match were significantly increased.

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 2017 were the Big Freeze at the 'G to raise funds for the MND Foundation, Maddie's Match in support of Maddie's Vision, an organisation set up to raise funds to #fightlikemaddie and find new treatments for Bone Marrow Failure, along with Melbourne's Pink Lady match to support the Breast Cancer Australia Network.

## Children's Cancer Foundation Lunch

The AFL was again proud to support the Children's Cancer Foundation's Million Dollar Lunch in 2017, one of Melbourne's premier charity events.

The lunch raised more than \$2 million, for the first time in the event's history, to support children living with cancer, lifting the total funds raised since the lunch was first held in 2005 to almost \$17.5 million.



The Million Dollar Lunch is the annual fundraiser for the Children's Cancer Foundation.

Funds raised underpin the Foundation's programs to provide children suffering from cancer with much-needed support, access to world-class treatment and funding for clinical research.

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.

## AFL Support of Marriage Equality Vote

In September, the AFL demonstrated its commitment in equality within the context of the national postal vote on marriage equality.

The intention was not to campaign or lecture on this issue, but to send a clear message on what the organisation believes in and stands for:

The AFL is committed to equality and diversity and we support the rights of all Australians to live, work and play free from discrimination.

The AFL aims to have a workplace where everyone feels welcome and proud of who they are and what they bring to the organisation.

To support the message, there were several key initiatives undertaken:

- ▶ **AFL Logo:** The sign at the front of AFL House was changed from AFL to YES. AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan was joined by representatives from across the football community, including Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson, Essendon captain Dyson Heppell, North Melbourne's Ben Brown, Melbourne's Max Gawn, AFLW players Meg Hutchins and Darcy Vescio, AFL umpire games record-holder Hayden Kennedy and AFL executive Tanya Hosch.

- ▶ **Staff Education Session:** Staff were invited to an education session to learn more about the postal vote and what it meant, the differing views on this important issue as well as hearing from our own people and their personal experiences. The session was conducted by executive members Elizabeth Lukin and Tanya Hosch, along with AFL staff member Ben Kerswill.

- ▶ **YES Footballs:** Specially produced 'YES' branded Sherrins were distributed to state offices across the country and to key stakeholders involved in the plebiscite.

△ Football identities stood in front of AFL House when the AFL sign was changed to YES in support of the yes vote on marriage equality. They were (from left) Meg Hutchins, Max Gawn, Ben Brown, Alastair Clarkson, Gillon McLachlan, Tanya Hosch, Dyson Heppell, Darcy Vescio and Hayden Kennedy.

# Growth/ Fans

Our fan base should be a reflection of the cultural diversity in society. We must ensure we engage our next generation of fans, while delivering unprecedented multi-platform access to our game, both now and into the future.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ Diverse fan base that reflects the changing face of Australia
- ▷ Engaging kids to be our next generation of fans
- ▷ A game for women as much as men
- ▷ Technology and new products to drive consumption of the game

▷ The next generation of AFL fans and the cultural diversity of Australian society was reflected in Melbourne's 'Welcome Game' at the MCG.





## Attendances

A total of 6,732,601 people attended the 198 games of the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the all-time high for any home and away season and a seven per cent increase on 2016.

The GWS Giants (145,152), Sydney Swans (794,457) and Melbourne (833,190) all recorded their highest total home and away attendees in a single season.

The on-field improvement of Essendon, Melbourne and Richmond contributed to attendances in Victoria increasing 11 per cent from the previous year. The increase was highlighted by two matches in round five – Anzac Eve between Richmond and Melbourne, which drew 85,657 fans, followed the next day by 87,685 at the MCG for the traditional Anzac Day game between Essendon and Collingwood, the biggest crowd for the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Richmond's on-field improvement was reflected through its home match attendances, which totalled 609,089 for the season, its highest ever and the sixth highest for any team in history. This was a 36 per cent increase for the Tigers from 2016.

The Anzac Eve match against Melbourne was the fifth highest attendance for a Richmond home game and the Tigers' Dreamtime at the 'G match against Essendon, with a crowd of 85,656, was the highest attendance for a home and away game on a Saturday night.

The average attendance each round during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was 292,721 (34,003 a game).

Across the nine matches of the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series, crowds were down 0.8 per cent on 2016, with a combined total of 553,818.

△ Melbourne was on the march in 2017, drawing record club attendance figures for the home and away season.

This was the ninth-highest cumulative total since the introduction of the final eight and the second highest for a season where fewer than five finals were hosted at the MCG.

Across all AFL matches, the JLT Community Series pre-season matches, the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the Toyota AFL Finals Series, crowds had a cumulative total of 7,451,505.

Essendon recorded the biggest increase in home game attendances, averaging 50,812 attendees in 2017, compared with 33,729 in 2016. This represented a year-on-year increase of 50.6 per cent.

Richmond recorded the second-highest growth rate in 2017, with an increase of 36 per cent in home game attendances compared with 2016.

The top five clubs in terms of average attendance per home game during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season were:

- ▶ Richmond 55,958
- ▶ Essendon 50,812
- ▶ Collingwood 46,815
- ▶ Adelaide Crows 46,650
- ▶ Carlton 38,356

### ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

	2017	2016	Variance	%
JLT Community Series	165,086	191,614	-26,528	-13.8%
Premiership Season	6,732,601	6,306,336	426,265	6.8%
Finals Series	553,818	558,342	-4,524	-0.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,451,505</b>	<b>7,056,292</b>	<b>395,213</b>	<b>5.6%</b>

### ATTENDANCE BY VENUE

Venue	2017 Games	Attendance	Average	2016 Games	Attendance	Average	% Variance
Adelaide Oval	22	932,645	42,393	22	947,282	43,058	-1.5%
Blundstone Arena	3	32,761	10,920	3	46,946	15,649	-30.2%
Cazalys Stadium	1	9,364	9,364	1	8,509	8,509	10.0%
Domain Stadium	22	760,378	34,563	22	748,022	34,001	1.7%
Etihad Stadium	46	1,514,914	32,933	46	1,389,976	30,217	9.0%
Gabba	11	181,007	16,455	11	187,816	17,074	-3.6%
Jiangwan Sports Centre	1	10,118	10,118	-	-	-	-
Manuka Oval	3	37,507	12,502	3	38,658	12,886	-3.0%
Mars Stadium	1	10,087	10,087	-	-	-	-
MCG	46	2,351,354	51,116	46	2,088,695	45,406	12.6%
Metricon Stadium	10	140,174	14,017	11	127,168	11,561	21.3%
SCG	11	367,376	33,398	11	367,679	33,425	-0.1%
Simonds Stadium	7	207,306	29,615	8	187,973	23,497	26.0%
Spotless Stadium	8	107,645	13,456	8	97,006	12,126	11.0%
TIO Stadium	1	12,104	12,104	1	8,163	8,163	48.3%
TIO Traeger Park	1	5,072	5,072	1	5,146	5,146	-1.4%
UTAS Stadium	4	52,789	13,197	4	57,297	14,324	-7.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>6,732,601</b>	<b>34,003</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>6,306,336</b>	<b>31,850</b>	<b>6.8%</b>

### AFL HOME GAME ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

Club	2017	Average	2016	Average	% Variance
Adelaide Crows	513,151	46,650	514,629	46,784	-0.3%
Brisbane Lions	181,007	16,455	187,816	17,074	-3.6%
Carlton	421,916	38,356	389,242	35,386	8.4%
Collingwood	514,963	46,815	508,066	46,188	1.4%
Essendon	558,936	50,812	371,015	33,729	50.6%
Fremantle	356,122	32,375	345,575	31,416	3.1%
Geelong Cats	384,758	34,978	335,490	30,499	14.7%
Gold Coast Suns	150,292	13,663	127,168	11,561	18.2%
GWS Giants	145,152	13,196	135,664	12,333	7.0%
Hawthorn	365,822	33,257	404,957	36,814	-9.7%
Melbourne	392,638	35,694	345,490	31,408	13.6%
North Melbourne	249,460	22,678	309,881	28,171	-19.5%
Port Adelaide	419,494	38,136	432,653	39,332	-3.0%
Richmond	615,542	55,958	452,609	41,146	36.0%
St Kilda	345,510	31,410	338,219	30,747	2.2%
Sydney Swans	367,376	33,398	367,679	33,425	-0.1%
West Coast Eagles	404,256	36,751	402,447	36,586	0.4%
Western Bulldogs	346,206	31,473	337,736	30,703	2.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,732,601</b>	<b>34,003</b>	<b>6,306,336</b>	<b>31,850</b>	<b>6.8%</b>



## Club Membership

The combined AFL club membership tally hit record numbers for the 26th time in the past 27 years, rising by 3.7 per cent to a total of 907,561.

The GWS Giants, Western Bulldogs, Essendon and St Kilda recorded double-digit growth and all but six clubs – West Coast Eagles, Fremantle, North Melbourne, Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide – recorded increases on their 2016 membership figures.

The Giants led the way in membership growth with a 36.8 per cent rise, with the Western Bulldogs second with a 20.8 per cent increase to 47,653 members.

Collingwood is the largest-supported club in the competition with a total membership of 75,879, overtaking Hawthorn and heading a list of 11 clubs exceeding 50,000 members. Ten clubs tallied record membership totals, down from 11 in 2016.

## Ticketing

In 2017, the AFL continued its focus on affordability, with the base general admission ticket price remaining frozen at the same levels as 2014.

### 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season – Base General Admission Ticket Prices

**Adult \$22**  
**Concession \$13**  
**Junior (under 15) \$3**  
**Family \$44**

It was the second season in which there was a national \$35 entry level ticket for weeks one and two of the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series. The entry level reserved seat category for preliminary finals matches was also held at \$65 across all venues.

The price of tickets for the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final increased by three per cent, but the entry level reserved seat price of \$180 remained frozen at 2013 levels.

### AFL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Club (*record)	2017	2016	Variance	%
Adelaide Crows*	56,865	54,307	2,558	4.7%
Brisbane Lions	21,362	23,286	-1,924	-8.3%
Carlton	50,326	50,130	196	0.4%
Collingwood	75,879	74,643	1,236	1.7%
Essendon*	67,768	57,494	10,274	17.9%
Fremantle	51,254	51,889	-635	-1.2%
Geelong Cats*	54,854	50,571	4,283	8.5%
Gold Coast Suns	11,665	12,854	-1,189	-9.3%
GWS Giants*	20,944	15,312	5,632	36.8%
Hawthorn*	75,663	75,351	312	0.4%
Melbourne*	42,233	39,146	3,087	7.9%
North Melbourne	40,343	45,014	-4,671	-10.4%
Port Adelaide	52,129	53,743	-1,614	-3.0%
Richmond*	72,669	72,278	391	0.5%
St Kilda*	42,052	38,009	4,043	10.6%
Sydney Swans*	58,838	56,523	2,315	4.1%
West Coast Eagles	65,064	65,188	-124	-0.2%
Western Bulldogs*	47,653	39,459	8,194	20.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>907,561</b>	<b>875,197</b>	<b>32,364</b>	<b>3.7%</b>

### AFLW HOME GAME ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

Club	2017 Games	Attendance	Average
Adelaide Crows	4	35,464	8,866
Brisbane Lions	3	13,200	4,400
Carlton	3	20,518	6,839
Collingwood	4	36,617	9,154
Fremantle	4	18,962	4,741
GWS Giants	3	12,115	4,038
Melbourne	3	12,965	4,322
Western Bulldogs	4	29,502	7,376
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>179,343</b>	<b>6,405</b>



## Consumer Products

The Consumer Products program performed strongly in 2017 with a successful end to the season with the release of Richmond's premiership merchandise ranges.

Growth was seen across the key categories of Supporter and On-field apparel and accessories, while there was a decline in the collectables category for the first time in many seasons. *AFL Evolution*, the new video game launched in May, sold close to 100,000 units across retail channels and held the position of the highest-selling game in Australia for the week of the launch.

Record-breaking sales for Richmond premiership product was seen in October, carrying all the way through into November, December and the new year. While sales were expected to be strong, they have surpassed all expectations, particularly premiership memorabilia with licensee SE Products achieving its largest program across all sports locally and internationally. The finals series was also one of the strongest on record with a large amount of locally produced product being made during September to keep up with the demands of fans.

Another key highlight of the season was the launch of the new AFLW retail ranges by Cotton On and New Era. The exciting new apparel range featured new cuts and fabrics taking the On-field program to a new level with sellout ranges across all clubs during the eight-week season.

△ Supporter and On-field apparel was in demand by fans in 2017, with sales growth recorded across key categories.

Playbill took over the MCG concessionaire rights and, by realigning itself with the tenant clubs, achieved significant growth year-on-year. Finals in particular saw a 400 per cent increase in revenue growth.

Three-and-a-half years since its inception, ShopAFL delivered consistently strong results, with an annual result of \$1.2m, with record premier sales delivering a 75 per cent uplift year-on-year for October and 70 per cent uplift year-on-year for November.

The merchandise operations model at Etihad Stadium continued to deliver increased sales for a fourth consecutive year with the season totalling \$1.52m in gross sales, an uplift of more than \$300,000 on the previous year.

The AFL Consumer Products department worked alongside clubs to ensure the merchandise offering and fan experience were enhanced across online and match-day retail touch points. The increased level of 'away' club presence at matches again proved to be a major contributor to the huge success of the model, supported by the introduction of the fixed structures (Club Hubs) located outside Gate 5.

AFL Stores saw some major structural improvements throughout 2017, with Scott Bingley becoming the majority owner within the group, with consolidation to just four owners, a reduction from six throughout the year. Bingley owns 12 of the 15 bricks and mortar stores, as well as the online site, with a new store refit invested into two stores (Hay St in Perth's CBD and a new store location at Fountain Gate in Melbourne). Total sales across the group for 2017 totalled \$11.5m, up \$1.5m on 2016.



## AFL Media

It was another highly successful year for AFL Media with a number of key metrics surging and the introduction of new content categories – most notably AFLW.

It was also the first term of the new six-year rights deal with Telstra; a partnership designed to deliver world's-best digital experiences to football fans.

AFL Media's comprehensive coverage of the men's and women's competitions saw it win three major industry awards and *AFL.com.au* and the AFL Live app comfortably maintained their position as Australia's No. 1 digital sporting destination in their respective categories.

This outstanding result was built on several foundations, but technological excellence and a commitment to create authentic, authoritative content were key.

The year began on a high with traffic to the new digital destination – *afl.com.au/womens* – reflecting the huge public interest in the fledgling competition.

The success of the mini-site was the result of collaboration between several AFL departments including AFL Media, the AFLW team and AFL technology, with additional valued support from Telstra.

Focus then moved to the JLT pre-season competition and the launch of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Record crowds, unpredictable results, a game in China, several razor-thin margins and the rise of Richmond all helped fuel record-breaking digital traffic and engagement.

△ With its award-winning coverage of the men's and women's competitions, AFL Media continues to take fans closer to the game and its stars, such as Carlton's Jack Silvagni.



*Technological excellence and a commitment to create authentic, authoritative content were key*

These outcomes were amplified by the launch of 19 new apps, allowing fans to get closer than ever to their clubs, football news and entertainment plus high-quality streaming of all matches on the Telstra AFL Live app.

With Telstra customers benefiting from no-cost streaming, a simplified registration system and data-free news and video consumption, the app surged ahead of all competition to set and then re-set traffic records throughout the year.

This was an important contributor to the AFL digital network maintaining and building its status as Australia's No. 1 sports site between February and October as measured by the Nielsen Unique Audience metric.

This included three months – April, July and August – in which the AFL Network exceeded four million unique visitors, making it significantly larger than many major Australian digital news outlets.

In round 23 when positions in the eight were still in flux deep into Sunday afternoon, traffic to the AFL network topped more than five million unique visitors for the first time. (Unlike Unique Audience, the unique visitor metric counts multiple visits by a single user).

Over the year, aggregate video views grew by six per cent to more than 143 million streams – a significant measure of fan engagement and commercial potential.

In addition, streaming of live matches through the app grew by 115 per cent to more than 400 million minutes – that's more than 760 years of AFL football viewed on mobile devices in 2017.

This extraordinary result was built on the foundation of more than one million AFL Live Pass subscribers, a year-on-year increase of 334 per cent.

Overseas, expat AFL fans drove a 58 per cent increase in international live pass subscriptions via our new partner Fox Sports which replaced Brave Bison.

The year also saw a significant re-examination of the AFL's social media activities, from a fan, commercial and marketing perspective.

The result was strong growth across the board, including generation of an AFLW social community of more than 200,000 fans.

### Other key results included:

- ▶ Nine per cent community growth on AFL social channels, highlighted by 15 per cent growth on Instagram;
- ▶ Ten per cent community growth across social channels when including clubs;
- ▶ The AFL Facebook page generated one billion impressions and was the focus of significant commercial and marketing activity;
- ▶ More than 134 million video views on AFL social channels which included 109 million views on Facebook, 13 million on YouTube and 12 million on Twitter.

The AFL content, social and tech teams also launched an experimental AFL Messenger Bot which provided personalised instant responses to fan questions during the Toyota Finals Series, NAB Trade Period and NAB AFL Draft.

The AFL Creative Service team had a highly productive 2017, highlighted by the execution of the concept, design and roll-out of the AFL Season Campaign, Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous Round, Multicultural Round and 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series.

The team also won the AFL Travel campaign for 2018, created the concept for the successful *Hostplus See Us Perform* AFLW campaign, created the 2018 Gold Coast Suns *Ride The Next Wave* membership campaign and was a key stakeholder in the inaugural



△ The successful concept, design and roll-out of the AFL Season Campaign was the highlight of a productive 2017 for the AFL Creative Service team.

AFL Finals *Always On* campaign – an initiative that created more than 300 pieces of short-form content to drive awareness and excitement around the finals.

The team also worked on the photographic and design requirements of the new AFLW competition and added more than 7000 historical photos to a searchable digital archive that helps secure a key element of the AFL's legacy while creating new commercial opportunities through photo sales.

Finally, the team worked with Telstra, Pulse and Yinzcam to ensure that highly functional modern design principles were implemented in the 19 new club and AFL apps.

The *AFL Record* and Custom Publishing team continued to defy industry trends by recording a 3.1 per cent increase in *Record* circulation and by selling a massive 40,000 editions of the *Premiers Magazine* – a unique high-quality souvenir produced in the handful of hours between the final siren and the family day of the triumphant Richmond Football Club.

Match-day sales of the 2017 Grand Final *Record* were up 16 per cent on the 2016 figure and the *Record* team also produced a special souvenir edition for the historic game in Shanghai between Port Adelaide and the Gold Coast Suns.

In other significant developments, *Racing.com* moved a content and production team into AFL HQ where it launched a year-round digital content service centred around the AFL's state-of-the-art broadcast studio, Media Exchange and technical expertise.

The 2017 departure of AFL Media and Broadcasting General Manager Peter Campbell saw the department merged into the new Growth, Digital and Audience division under the leadership of General Manager Darren Birch.

Once completed, the structural realignment of the Media, Marketing, AFLW, Programs and Market Development, Technology and Events, Match Day and Customer Experience divisions will deliver a range of new and enhanced products and experiences for a wide range of fans, participants and communities.

◁ The *AFL Record* continued to defy publishing trends, with the Grand Final match-day sales up 16 per cent on 2016.



△ In just its first season, the NAB AFL Women's Competition attracted more than three million viewers via free-to-air television and just over 1.7 million viewers on subscription television.

## Broadcasting

### NAB AFL Women's Competition

The inaugural season of the NAB AFL Women's Competition received amazing support from the AFL's television broadcast partners, with the Seven Network broadcasting the Saturday night match every round, as well as the opening match and Grand Final, while Fox Sports broadcast every match during the home and away season live across Australia.

The first year of the competition achieved some major ratings highlights, including:

- ▶ National average audience of 596,067 across Channel Seven and 7mate (New South Wales only) for the Grand Final between Brisbane Lions and Adelaide Crows. On a like-for-like basis, this would have been the highest free-to-air rating Saturday afternoon audience for a Channel Seven-produced match in 2016 (noting that the Channel Seven match on Saturday afternoon was no longer broadcast in 2017).



- ▶ Melbourne metropolitan free-to-air audience of 415,294 on Channel Seven for the opening match between Carlton and Collingwood on a Friday night was 23 per cent higher than the average Melbourne metropolitan free-to-air audience for Friday night matches during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season (337,110).
- ▶ National average audience of 164,268 on Fox Footy for the round two match between Western Bulldogs and Adelaide Crows made it the highest-rating program on subscription television for that weekend (Friday-Sunday).
- ▶ The cumulative gross national audience during the home and away season exceeded five million (5,049,420), comprised of 3.33 million viewers on free-to-air and 1.71 million viewers on subscription television.

The 2017 NAB AFL Women's Competition also enjoyed strong radio coverage with one to two matches per round broadcast around Australia, while the Grand Final was broadcast to every corner of the country by most of the AFL's radio rights holders.

### Toyota AFL Premiership Season

The 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season again delivered strong results on television, with the Seven Network's free-to-air coverage and Foxtel/Fox Sport's subscription television platform drawing large audiences every week.

Despite overall television industry ratings (free-to-air and subscription television) being down 8.9 per cent year on year, the average gross national audience across free-to-air and subscription television per home and away round was 4.449 million, compared with 4.508 million in 2016 (a decrease of only 1.3 per cent). It was also the first year of the new broadcast rights deal, with 11 less matches on free-to-air into Victoria which was further evidence that this was an excellent result.

The cumulative gross national audience during the home and away season exceeded 102 million (102,337,684), slightly down from 103.7 million (103,697,176) in 2016. The 102 million viewers comprised 62.98 million viewers on free-to-air (down 2.5 per cent on 2016) and 39.36 million viewers on subscription television (up 0.7 per cent on 2016).

The 10 most-watched matches of the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season (national average audiences across free-to-air and subscription television) were:

1. **Round 5** – Essendon v Collingwood, 1.587 million (Anzac Day)
2. **Round 22** – Adelaide Crows v Sydney Swans, 1.393 million
3. **Round 11** – Geelong Cats v Adelaide Crows, 1.251 million
4. **Round 6** – GWS Giants v Western Bulldogs, 1.246 million
5. **Round 19** – Hawthorn v Sydney Swans, 1.240 million
6. **Round 9** – Geelong Cats v Western Bulldogs, 1.239 million
7. **Round 3** – Sydney Swans v Collingwood, 1.239 million
8. **Round 10** – Sydney Swans v Hawthorn, 1.197 million
9. **Round 14** – Sydney Swans v Essendon, 1.194 million
10. **Round 23** – Hawthorn v Western Bulldogs, 1.187 million

Friday night audiences continued to be strong in 2017, with 1,143,699 viewers on average across free-to-air and subscription television watching each week, only slightly down on the 2016 average of 1,149,515.



▽ The GWS Giants celebrate their stunning victory over Melbourne in round five of the NAB AFLW at Blacktown International Sportsspark.

### Toyota AFL Finals Series

The gross cumulative audience for the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals Series was 16,904,687. This marks a decrease of 7.9 per cent on the total national viewership for the 2016 Toyota AFL Finals Series (18,368,305), noting that 2016 was the highest gross cumulative audience for a Finals Series in AFL/VFL history, with several close matches.

The 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 3,562,254 on the Seven Network was 13.5 per cent down on the 4.12 million who tuned into the 2016 Grand Final between Sydney Swans and Western Bulldogs (the fourth most-watched game in AFL/VFL history).

The combined five mainland capital city metropolitan audience of 2,714,870 viewers for the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final made it the most-watched program on metropolitan free-to-air television in 2017 as well as the highest-rating one-off sports event for the year.

### Celebration of Football

In its second year as part of the Celebration of Football weekend, the 2017 Chemist Warehouse E.J. Whitten Legends Game attracted a national average audience of 837,459 across free-to-air and subscription television, 15 per cent below the national average audience of the E.J. Whitten Legends Game in 2016. However, the match was 10 per cent above the national average audience of the three E.J. Whitten Legends Games from 2013-15 (noting that those matches were not simulcast on subscription television and were not broadcast nationally on free-to-air on a Friday night).

The national average Melbourne metropolitan free-to-air audience of 345,000 was three per cent above the national average Melbourne metropolitan free-to-air audience for Friday night matches during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season (335,000).

The 2017 NAB AFL Women's State of Origin match attracted a national average audience of 477,489 across free-to-air and subscription television.



*The 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season again delivered strong results on television*



### Seven Network

In addition to broadcasting the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Finals Series matches in Australia, the Seven Network partnered with the AFL to broadcast the first AFL Premiership Season match held in Asia live back into Australia and around the globe. The round eight match in Shanghai between the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide attracted a national average audience of 577,888 on free-to-air television and subscription television in Australia and marked a significant moment in the history of the AFL/VFL.

As part of the new television broadcast agreement, the network also broadcast the prestigious Brownlow Medal live exclusively and attracted a national average audience (metropolitan and regional) of 1,380,152.

### Foxtel/Fox Sports

Fans from all around the country were again able to enjoy every game of the 2017 NAB AFL Women's Competition, 2017 JLT Community Series and 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season live in high definition on Fox Footy/Fox Sports 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* and *Bounce* as well as the 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 the broadcast of 2017 events included broadcasting the entire Australian Football Hall of Fame Induction Dinner live from Adelaide Oval as well as further enhancing the coverage of the Virgin Australia AFL All-Australian Awards and NAB AFL Draft.

The network continued its support of the NAB AFL Rising Stars Program by broadcasting five live matches during the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships.

The network also achieved major ratings highlights on the subscription television platform during 2017, including a national average audience of 553,000 for the preliminary final between Richmond and GWS Giants, which made it the highest-rating AFL match of all time on its platform.

▶ Geelong captain Joel Selwood climbs over Port Adelaide's Karl Amon to pull down a screamer in round 10.

### International Broadcast

International AFL fans were brought closer to the game than ever before, with increased broadcast coverage of NAB AFL Women's matches, 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 168 territories worldwide by rights holders Australia Plus, ESPN (sub-licensed to Econet, BT Sport, TSN and Viasat), Fox Sports/Fox Soccer Plus, Global Eagle Entertainment, Orbit Showtime Network, Sky Sports New Zealand and TVNZ.

The AFL was also thrilled to secure an agreement with new rights holder Guangzhou Competition Channel (GZTV) which saw one match broadcast live directly into China on GZTV during each week of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Finals Series, including the round eight match in Shanghai between the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide and the 2017 Toyota AFL Grand Final. In addition, the AFL secured an agreement with Shanghai Media Group (SMG) to also broadcast the round eight match in Shanghai into China.

Viewers were also treated to 33 episodes of the AFL's own Toyota AFL Highlights program every week throughout the Premiership Season as well as the Finals Series. The program format delivered a range of entertaining content, covering AFL news and match highlights from every round of the season.

It also marked the first year of a new five-year global digital offering between the AFL and Fox Sports for international audiences via WatchAFL. With subscribers from 191 different countries, every match of every round was broadcast live internationally across this platform and, for the first time, viewers could access Fox Sport's award-winning shows such as *AFL 360* and *On The Couch* seven days a week, ensuring fans outside Australia had the greatest possible access to the game across all media platforms.

### Radio

Radio again played a significant role in taking the game to all corners of metropolitan and regional Australia in 2017 in the first year of a new radio rights agreement.

The AFL's metropolitan radio partners are Triple M, 3AW 693, 2UE, Magic 882, 6PR 882, ABC Radio, 1116 SEN, FIVEaa, and Talking Lifestyle. Regional areas received AFL broadcasts via Crocmedia's AFL Nation, ABC Radio, K-Rock (Geelong), Gold FM (Gold Coast), Southern Cross Austereo and the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS).

In Victoria, every match of every round during the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was 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.

*The round eight match in Shanghai attracted a national average audience of 577,888 on free-to-air television and subscription television in Australia and marked a significant moment in the history of the AFL/VFL*



## Marketing

The AFL continued to focus on its fans by encouraging them to attend and engage with the game across all levels, from grassroots to the elite game.

To kick off the 2017 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, one of the AFL's most iconic campaigns – "I'd like to see that" – was reimagined, showcasing what makes our game so spectacular and special to so many people.

Led by leading Australian and international actor Chris Hemsworth, the campaign had strong reach and engagement across the country and generated significant national interest to kick off the season. The campaign had more than 40,000 engagements through social media.

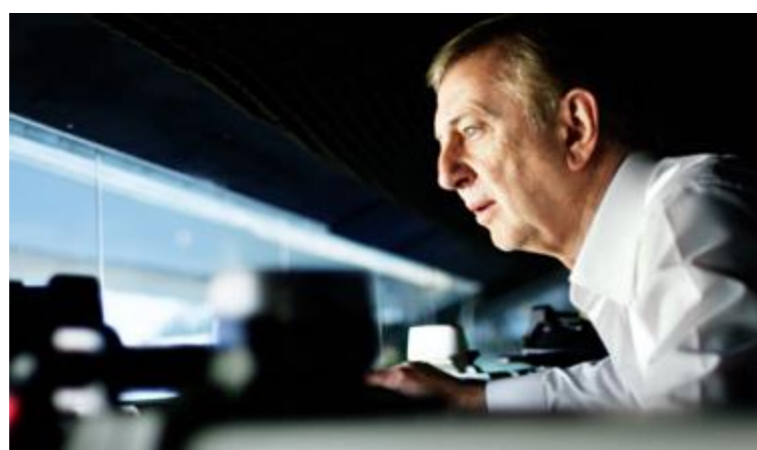
Sunday Funday continued to go from strength to strength, making the AFL more affordable and accessible to families across the country. Since its inception in 2014, junior attendance has continued to increase year-on-year, helping to introduce AFL football to the next generation of fans.

Several fan-friendly initiatives were also launched. They featured brands such as Disney and Lego and will be expanded in 2018. Kids' attendances increased 11 per cent over the year and junior ticket sales were up 16 per cent on Sundays.

The 2017 Toyota AFL Finals series also included an AFL first. In conjunction with Virgin Australia, Vizeum and JCDecaux, the AFL rolled out an experiential campaign giving fans the opportunity to engage with players and win tickets to the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals series. The results saw 110 fans given the opportunity to attend a final while more than 1.6 million people saw the activation through Facebook. Marketing and media news industry website Mumbrella awarded it the "best use of outdoor and experiential" at its BEFEST awards.

A targeted content series during the finals, featuring well-known commentators Anthony Hudson and Dennis Cometti, was watched by more than one million fans. A focus on providing constant content targeted to fans was a success with more than 400 pieces of content produced during the 2017 Toyota AFL Finals series.

The second year of the 'play.afl' participation campaign saw traffic to the website grow by 490 per cent year-on-year, resulting in a four per cent increase in NAB AFL Auskick participation.



▷ Some of the AFL's marketing campaigns in 2017: (from top) international actor Chris Hemsworth in the rebooted 'I'd like to see that' advertisement; GWS Giants ruckman Shane Mumford engages with supporters in Sydney during the Toyota AFL Finals series; Dennis Cometti revs up the fans for the finals from the commentary box; and the play.afl campaign, which resulted in a four per cent increase in NAB AFL Auskick participation.

## AFLX

AFLX is a new and exciting concept created by the AFL to showcase some of the most thrilling elements of Australian Football, with an aim to attract new fans.

While there are some familiar aspects, this new game provides a very different experience. The AFLX version of Australian Football is played on a rectangular playing surface with seven players on the field and three on the bench.

AFLX is an express form of the game with action for fans of all ages. There are 10-point super goals, last touch out of bounds and non-stop action on and off the field.

The inaugural 2018 AFLX Tournaments were held in February 2018 in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. These events featured six teams at each location with two pools of three playing in a round-robin format, with Adelaide, Melbourne and the Brisbane Lions winning their respective events.

The tournaments provided a great family experience, including LED goals, DJs, in-game commentary, roving performers, kids and family zones and giveaways.

### Ten facts about AFLX

1. The 2018 AFLX Tournaments saw three events played across three days featuring six teams at each location with two pools of three playing in a round-robin format. A Grand Final was played at each event.
2. The 'X' in AFLX relates to the roman numeral character for the number 10 which is a constant through the alternative version of the game, with 10 players (seven on the field and three on the bench with unlimited rotations), 10-point super goals and 10-minute halves.
3. Played on a rectangular field (approx. 70m wide x 110m long) with four posts at each end (as per a normal AFL field). Ground markings showcase an X in the centre and 40m arcs.
4. Two field umpires, two boundary umpires and one goal umpire at each end of the ground.
5. Free kick against for last touch out of bounds.
6. Kick-ins from behind the goal line after all scores.
7. No marks paid for kicks backwards (except in forward 40m area).
8. Quarters start with a ball-up in the centre and at least two players from each team starting inside the 40m arc.
9. Free shot from forward 40m arc – directly in front for deliberate rushed behinds.
10. 10-point super goals when goals kicked on the full from outside the 40m arc.



◁ The AFLX version of Australian Football is played on a rectangular surface, with seven players on the field and three on the bench.



# People

Our organisation is only as good as our people. We aim to provide an inclusive, diverse and values-based environment that provides opportunity for all.

## Key focus areas

- ▷ An engaged, high-performing workforce
- ▷ Talented people from diverse backgrounds
- ▷ Opportunities for development and career progression
- ▷ Our values embedded in everything we do

▷ AFL staff members were joined by representatives from across the football community in support of the yes vote on marriage equality.





## Creating a great experience for our people

Over the past 12 months we have focused on creating a great employee experience and bringing out the best in our people so we can continue to support the progression of our great game into the future for all to enjoy.

As a result, our people have never been more engaged and more willing to recommend the AFL as a great place to work. In addition, more than 90 per cent of our people are proud to work at the AFL and strongly believe we are in a position to succeed over the next three years.

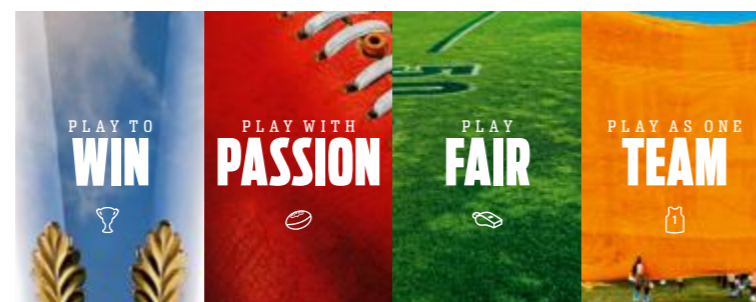
Importantly, our values are also becoming more embedded in everything we do. More than ever before, our people:

- ▶ are passionate about what they do (*Play with Passion*);
- ▶ are focused on achieving great outcomes for our fans, partners and community (*Play to Win*);
- ▶ show respect and empathy for each other (*Play Fair*);
- ▶ embrace diverse ideas, skills and backgrounds (*Play as One Team*).

△ AFL Commission Chairman Richard Goyder (far left) and CEO Gillon McLachlan with the winners of the annual Speccy awards last year: (from left) Amy Blake, Hannah Davis, Callum Twomey, Ben Kerswill, Sam Bridges and Georgie Evans.

## Health and wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our people, both at work and home, is a core part of our culture at the AFL. Over the past 12 months, we launched our new health and wellbeing program focusing on healthy bodies, healthy minds and healthy workplace. Our program also has a strong focus on flexible working, encouraging all of our people to 'play the day their way'. Whether it is working from another location, dressing casually or changing their hours, our people feel supported to work in a way that brings out their best.



## Developing our people

We are committed to developing our people to ensure they can have fulfilling careers at the AFL and into the future. In 2017, we again invested heavily in several AFL leadership programs:

- ▶ **AFL Executive Leadership Program:** For the second year, the AFL conducted its executive program targeting our top 20 'next generation' executive leaders. The program includes assessment, coaching, corporate and community immersions and a series of workshops.
- ▶ **Leadership Bootcamp:** More than 100 of our people leaders participated in our bootcamp series – an intensive program aligned to our four leadership principles.
- ▶ **Emerging Leaders Program:** More than 20 of our 'rising star' employees across the AFL industry participated in the program focused on building their leadership style and capability.
- ▶ **Female Talent Program:** We continued to invest in our high-performing female talent in 2017, delivering four programs, targeted at our emerging, middle and senior female leaders to support their development and build a strong pipeline to executive level roles.

△ The Female Talent Program is a key part of the AFL's investment in developing people and emerging leaders.

## Diversity and inclusion

Following the roll out of diversity engagement sessions in 2016 and the success of the inaugural AFLW competition, in early 2017 the AFL launched its workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

The plan incorporates the key focus areas of our Male Champion of Change Program in which our CEO Gillon McLachlan is a member as well as addressing key challenges specific to the AFL.

With so many diversity strategies failing to deliver sustainable change outcomes, the AFL sought to develop a plan with a strong focus on:

- ▶ **Inclusion:** Creating a more inclusive culture where our people feel a strong sense of belonging and that their differences are valued.
- ▶ **More than just visible differences:** Many diversity plans focus just on visible differences such as age, gender and race. Our plan also focuses on the less visible, but equally important aspects of diversity such as thinking styles, life experiences and skill sets.
- ▶ **An 'outside in' perspective:** The AFL believes diversity is so much more than just a workplace challenge. As such, in all aspects of our plan, we also focus on how outside societal attitudes shape the attitudes and perceptions we bring into work each day such as tackling the notion of traditional gender roles and everyday sexism.

The implementation of the plan has already resulted in higher levels of engagement for men and women, a more inclusive culture and more women being recruited into key roles. The AFL Executive now has 40 per cent female representation.

*More than 100 of our people leaders participated in our bootcamp series – an intensive program aligned to our four leadership principles*

## Graeme Samuel Scholarship



Western Bulldogs Chief Marketing Officer Kelly Ryan was awarded the 2017 Graeme Samuel Scholarship.

Ryan started her career with the Western Bulldogs in 2005 as the Events and Marketing Manager before moving to the AFL in 2008 as Brand Manager.

After working as General Manager – Stadium Consumer

and Community for the Gold Coast Suns between 2011-16, Ryan returned to the Western Bulldogs in 2016 as the Chief Marketing Officer. She has subsequently been appointed to a new role as General Manager, Operations and Customer Experience, by Etihad Stadium.

Awarded by the AFL Commission, the scholarship

is named after former AFL Commissioner Graeme Samuel, who was a member of the original VFL Commission in 1984, serving until his retirement in June 2003. He played an invaluable role in the strategic direction of the AFL competition and the game in general.

▽ A document outlining the renewed Respect and Responsibility Policy was released during 2017.



▽ The annual AFL Women's Industry Lunch provided an afternoon of inspiring discussion and entertainment.

## Renewed Respect and Responsibility Policy

A renewed Respect and Responsibility Policy was delivered to club presidents and CEOs during the 2017 season.

The renewed policy is the outcome of work managed by AFL General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy, Tanya Hosch, with advice by an expert committee and a review of existing policies and procedures by Canberra-based social policy consultancy, Rapid Context.

The committee consisted of:

- ▶ **Kate Jenkins (chair)** – Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner and Carlton Football Club Director. Former Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner.
- ▶ **Ken Lay AO** – Chair of the Council of Australian Government's Advisory Council on Family Violence and Essendon Football Club Director. Former Victoria Police Commissioner.
- ▶ **Larissa Behrendt** – Professor of Indigenous Research at the University of Technology, Sydney.
- ▶ **Mary Barry** – CEO of Our Watch organisation.

The work by Rapid Context involved extensive stakeholder interviews across the AFL, football, community and other sports, including reviews of other policy frameworks.

The new policy document:

- ▶ Establishes a clear complaint, investigation and support protocol;
- ▶ Commits the AFL to establishing public facing complaints mechanisms;
- ▶ Commits to a complainant-centred investigations process and independent support for complainants;
- ▶ Increases oversight of key incidents by the AFL Integrity Unit;
- ▶ Sets out the principles and objectives of disciplinary responses to harassment and violence against women, including sexual assault and domestic violence;
- ▶ Establishes ongoing maintenance and review mechanisms for the policy, including oversight by the GM of Inclusion and Social Policy and annual reporting to the Commission on incidents and outcomes.

The policy is subject to ongoing education and also commits to annual reporting to the AFL Commission. Consideration will be given to further policy adjustments based on data relating to incidents.

The document has been signed off by the AFL Commission, together with the AFLPA, and has been the subject of a workshop with all club CEOs.

For further information on the policy, visit [afl.com.au/policies](http://afl.com.au/policies).



## Jill Lindsay Scholarship

GWS Giants AFLW player and AFL NSW/ACT female ambassador Maddy Collier was awarded the 2017 Jill Lindsay Scholarship.

Federal Minister for Women Michaelia Cash presented the scholarship at the AFL's ninth annual Women's Industry Lunch, which celebrates women within the sporting industry and highlights the new pathways that are emerging for women to become increasingly involved in sport and the sporting community.

Collier, 22, made AFL history as the first NSW/ACT player to be signed as an AFLW player. As an AFL NSW/ACT female ambassador, Collier is passionate about bringing football to girls of all ages in all areas of the country.

Through the AFL SportsReady program, Collier has completed her Certificate III in Sport and Recreation and now has a Certificate IV in Business Studies.

She is pursuing further study and professional development by completing a Certificate IV Sport Coaching and hopes to pursue a Diploma in Sport Development.

The Jill Lindsay Scholarship provides \$20,000 to assist in any further education but also provides Collier with a chance to travel to regional towns to promote AFL and conduct clinics engaging young girls in these areas.

After 41 years with the AFL/VFL, Jill Lindsay was the League's longest-serving employee. In 2002 she was the first female to be awarded AFL life membership and in 2010 then-AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou announced a scholarship in her name.

Lindsay paved the way for women in the AFL and after losing her long battle with cancer in 2011, continues to create pathways for young women to move into the industry through her scholarship. The Jill Lindsay Scholarship is awarded to the female graduate with the most potential to come through the AFL SportsReady program.

As the AFL's official employment and training partner, AFL SportsReady is dedicated to helping all young Australians kick-start their careers through traineeships and educational opportunities.

With offices across Australia, the not-for-profit company works in partnership with organisations across a range of industries including sport, business, arts, finance and education to provide real opportunities for athletes and non-athletes.

AFL SportsReady has been providing training and career opportunities for AFL footballers for more than two decades. There are 160 trainees working in the AFL industry across the country.

▽ The 2017 Jill Lindsay Scholarship winner Maddy Collier made AFL history as the first NSW/ACT player to be signed for the AFLW.



*The Jill Lindsay Scholarship provides \$20,000 to assist in any further education but also provides Collier with a chance to travel to regional towns to promote AFL and conduct clinics engaging young girls in these areas*



# Awards, Results & Farewells

For long-suffering Richmond supporters, it was a season to savour.

In front of 100,021 people, the Tigers broke a 37-year premiership drought when they defeated the Adelaide Crows by eight goals in the Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Richmond's 11th AFL/VFL premiership sparked emotional celebrations at the MCG which spilled into the neighbouring suburban streets post-match and continued the following day at the club's Punt Rd Oval headquarters.

Before last season, the Tigers' September record since the 1980 premiership had been a tale of woe, winning only three of their 11 finals, including consecutive defeats in their previous three elimination finals.

But this did not faze Damien Hardwick's men, who perfectly executed a game-plan in their three finals built around frenzied forward-half pressure and a versatile defence led by All-Australian captain Alex Rance.

In the midfield, skipper Trent Cotchin was inspirational and Dustin Martin capped off a sensational season by becoming the first male player to win the Brownlow, Norm Smith and premiership medals in the same year.

For the vanquished Crows, the McClelland Trophy was a highlight – only the second time they have won the award in their history, for finishing on top at the end of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Adelaide also had three representatives in the Virgin Australia All-Australian team – Eddie Betts, Matt Crouch and Rory Laird. Essendon and West Coast also had three members, with Geelong, GWS Giants, Port Adelaide and Richmond having two apiece.

Some of the AFL's greatest players retired, notably St Kilda's Nick Riewoldt, Essendon's Jobe Watson, Geelong premiership stars Steve Johnson and James Kelly, Western Bulldogs stalwarts Matthew Boyd and Robert Murphy and Brownlow medallists Sam Mitchell and Matt Priddis.

The game mourned the passing of several former champions, including the Swans' 1955 Brownlow medallist Fred Goldsmith, Carlton's Ken Hands and North Melbourne's Kevin Dynon.

Collingwood's 1953 premiership captain Lou Richards headed the list of media identities to pass on, with others including Rob Astbury, Trevor Grant and Drew Morphet. Umpire and leading broadcaster Harry Beitzel and 1959 Grand Final umpire Bill Barbour also died.

► The triumphant Tigers are engulfed by fans and the media after their drought-breaking premiership in 2017.





## The Premiers

Richmond's 11th premiership was built on what coach Damien Hardwick described as "manic" pressure, which became the Tigers' trademark in 2017.

The set-up of spearhead Jack Riewoldt as the sole tall target surrounded by a group of speedy, hard-working smaller forwards was unconventional but developed into an irresistible force, hunting down the Adelaide Crows' defence with ruthless intent and trapping the ball inside the Richmond forward 50.

Dustin Martin capped off his stellar season with another sublime performance, becoming the first male player to win premiership, Brownlow and Norm Smith medals in the same season.

All-Australian captain Alex Rance marshalled a well-organised defence that restricted the Crows, the AFL's highest-scoring team last year, to a mere 60 points.

Bachar Houli, runner-up to Martin in the Norm Smith Medal, set up the victory with his penetrating kicking off half-back, booting an inspirational goal in the first quarter to give the Tigers the lead for the first time.

All-Australian Matt Crouch was easily Adelaide's best with a game-high 37 disposals.

In its first Grand Final in 35 years, Richmond started shakily as the Crows kicked the first two goals.

With light rain falling, the game changed in the second quarter. Richmond ramped up its pressure and stifled Adelaide's ball movement, holding it goalless for the term.

The Tigers scored seven unanswered goals and took a 34-point lead into the final change.

Richmond achieved the biggest turnaround in AFL/VFL history, climbing from 13th in 2016 to win the ultimate prize.

The victory sparked scenes of unbridled joy at the ground and celebrations in the neighbouring suburban thoroughfares, particularly Punt Rd and Swan St, after the game.

It was 37 years in the making, but in the eyes of the vast Tiger army, it was well worth the wait.

### 2017 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL

Richmond	2.3	6.4	11.8	16.12 (108)
Adelaide Crows	4.2	4.7	5.10	8.12 (60)

**BEST:** Richmond – Martin, Rance, Houli, Astbury, Prestia, Edwards, Graham, Grimes.  
Adelaide Crows – M. Crouch, Jacobs, B. Crouch, Sloane, Laird.

**GOALS:** Richmond – Graham 3, Townsend 2, Martin 2, Riewoldt 2, Caddy, Houli, Grigg, Lambert, Castagna, Prestia, Butler.  
Adelaide Crows – Sloane 2, Walker 2, Betts, Greenwood, B. Crouch, Cameron.

**Umpires:** M. Stevic, S. Meredith, S. Ryan.

**Crowd:** 100,021 at the MCG.

### TEAMS AS SELECTED

Richmond v Adelaide Crows			
<b>F</b>	<b>Dan Butler</b>	<b>Jack Riewoldt</b>	<b>Daniel Rioli</b>
B	Rory Laird	Kyle Hartigan	Jake Lever
<b>HF</b>	<b>Kane Lambert</b>	<b>Dustin Martin</b>	<b>Josh Caddy</b>
HB	Paul Seedsman	Daniel Talia	Luke Brown
<b>C</b>	<b>Kamdyn McIntosh</b>	<b>Trent Cotchin (c)</b>	<b>Jacob Townsend</b>
C	David Mackay	Rory Sloane	Rory Atkins
<b>HB</b>	<b>Bachar Houli</b>	<b>David Astbury</b>	<b>Nick Vlastuin</b>
HF	Charlie Cameron	Josh Jenkins	Eddie Betts
<b>B</b>	<b>Brandon Ellis</b>	<b>Alex Rance</b>	<b>Dylan Grimes</b>
F	Tom Lynch	Taylor Walker	Richard Douglas
<b>R</b>	<b>Toby Nankervis</b>	<b>Dion Prestia</b>	<b>Shaun Grigg</b>
R	Sam Jacobs	Brad Crouch	Matt Crouch
<b>I/C</b>	<b>Shane Edwards, Jack Graham, Nathan Broad, Jason Castagna</b>		
<b>EM</b>	<b>Shaun Hampson, Corey Ellis, Jayden Short</b>		
<b>Coach</b>	<b>Damien Hardwick</b>		
I/C	Riley Knight, Jake Kelly, Hugh Greenwood, Andy Otten		
EM	Wayne Milera, Alex Keath, Reilly O'Brien		
Coach	Don Pyke		

## Norm Smith Medal

Dustin Martin could do no wrong in 2017. In a season described by his coach Damien Hardwick as the "most special" he has seen from any player, the powerful midfielder with the best fend-off in the game capped off his year with another brilliant display that earned him the Norm Smith Medal.

Martin achieved a feat no other male player has done in the game's history – win premiership, Brownlow and Norm Smith medals in the same season.

A man of few words, Martin thanked the fans and sponsors after being presented with his medal by 2000 winner James Hird before yelling "yellow and black" to the joyous Tiger faithful.

He joined Australian Football Hall of Fame Legend Kevin Bartlett (1980) and the late Maurice Rioli (1982) as Richmond Norm Smith medallists.

Martin was adjudged best afield by four of the five judges and received 13 votes to win from teammate Bachar Houli (10).

Alex Rance, Shane Edwards and Dion Prestia each received two votes and Jack Graham received one.

Martin kicked two goals and won plenty of the ball – a team-high 29 disposals. He won most of his disposals in tight, finishing with 22 contested possessions.

### NORM SMITH MEDAL VOTING

<b>Chris Judd</b> (Triple M, chairman)	<b>3</b> D. Martin (Rich), <b>2</b> B. Houli (Rich), <b>1</b> J. Graham (Rich)
<b>Terry Wallace</b> (AFL Nation)	<b>3</b> B. Houli (Rich), <b>2</b> S. Edwards (Rich), <b>1</b> D. Martin (Rich)
<b>Daisy Pearce</b> (Channel 7)	<b>3</b> D. Martin (Rich), <b>2</b> B. Houli (Rich), <b>1</b> D. Prestia (Rich)
<b>Mark Maclure</b> (ABC Radio)	<b>3</b> D. Martin (Rich), <b>2</b> A. Rance (Rich), <b>1</b> B. Houli (Rich)
<b>Jake Niall</b> (Fox Sports)	<b>3</b> D. Martin (Rich), <b>2</b> B. Houli (Rich), <b>1</b> D. Prestia (Rich)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13</b> Martin, <b>10</b> Houli, <b>2</b> Rance, <b>2</b> Edwards, <b>2</b> Prestia, <b>1</b> Graham

## Jock McHale Medal

As he stood on the dais after accepting the premiership cup with his captain Trent Cotchin, Damien Hardwick was bursting with pride.

In the space of 12 months, Hardwick had overseen a remarkable transformation not only in Richmond's fortunes but his position as senior coach.

At the end of 2016, Hardwick was on shaky ground after the Tigers finished a disappointing 13th, despite having the security of a contract until the end of 2018.

Several off-field changes helped Hardwick and proved pivotal in the Tigers' breakthrough premiership.

Blake Caracella, who played in a premiership with Hardwick at Essendon, switched from Geelong after seven seasons to be a senior assistant coach. He was responsible for improving Richmond's midfield spread and ball movement.

Justin Leppitsch returned after three years as senior coach with the Brisbane Lions. In his role as forwards coach, Leppitsch convinced Hardwick to go with Jack Riewoldt as the sole tall target in attack in the second half of the season surrounded by a fleet of speedy, hard-working forwards who applied constant pressure to the opposition.

During Grand Final week, Hardwick's role in the Tigers' resurgence was recognised by the AFL Coaches Association, winning its Coach of the Year award. But the Jock McHale Medal was his crowning glory.

Hardwick enjoyed plenty of success as a player in 207 games between 1994-2004, winning flags at Essendon (2000) and Port Adelaide (2004).

He was an assistant under coach Alastair Clarkson in Hawthorn's 2008 triumph over Geelong and has remained firm friends with the Hawks mentor.

Hardwick and Caracella became the first men to win premierships with four clubs as players, coaches or assistant coaches.

The senior coach also joined Ron Barassi, Leigh Matthews and Mick Malthouse as the only men to win flags at three clubs as a player or coach.



### Brownlow Medal

Dustin Martin became the sixth Tiger to win the Brownlow Medal, only nine months after his skipper Trent Cotchin was awarded the 2012 medal retrospectively.

Martin's superb season was duly recognised by the umpires and set several records.

His total of 36 votes was the highest in Brownlow history, excluding the 1976-77 seasons when two umpires awarded separate votes.

Martin's winning margin of 11 bettered fellow Tiger and dual Brownlow medallist Roy Wright's 10-vote triumph in 1954.

With his 11th best-on-ground display in the final round against St Kilda, the star Tiger broke Patrick Dangerfield's record 35-vote haul in 2016.

Martin collected the most three-vote performances, eclipsing the nine polled by Greg Williams (1994), Nat Fyfe (2015) and Dangerfield (2016).

Only the 14th player to achieve the Brownlow-premiership double, the Tiger became the only male player to win premiership, Brownlow and Norm Smith medals in the same season.

#### BROWNLOW MEDAL

	Votes	3			Games
		3	2	1	
<b>Dustin Martin (Rich)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>
Patrick Dangerfield (Geel)*	33	7	6	0	21
Tom Mitchell (Haw)	25	6	2	3	22
Josh Kennedy (Syd)	23	4	5	1	19
Lance Franklin (Syd)	22	5	3	1	22
Josh Kelly (GWS)	21	5	3	0	21
Rory Sloane (Adel)	20	4	3	2	22
Marcus Bontempelli (WB)	19	6	0	1	22
Ollie Wines (PA)	18	2	5	2	22
Dayne Beams (BL)	17	2	5	1	19

### Coleman Medal

As he trailed leading goalkicker Josh Kennedy by five goals at the start of the final home and away round, Lance Franklin knew he needed to produce something special against Carlton to win his fourth Coleman Medal.

Franklin, who was third behind Kennedy on 59, delivered with a stunning 10-goal haul as he and the Swans feasted on the hapless Blues at the SCG.

The star forward played in all 22 games to finish with 69 goals, four ahead of the West Coast spearhead.

Franklin, who has booted 860 goals in his 271-game career, won Coleman Medals in 2008, 2011 and 2014.

Kennedy, who was looking to win a third consecutive Coleman, kicked only one goal in West Coast's final round clash against the Adelaide Crows at Domain Stadium.

Roos key forward Ben Brown was another to end the season with a flourish, booting a career-high seven goals against the Lions at the Gabba to finish third with 63.

#### COLEMAN MEDAL

	Home & Away			Including Finals				
	G	B	Gms	G	B	%	Ave	Gms
<b>Lance Franklin (Syd)</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>24</b>
Josh Kennedy (WCE)	65	38	17	69	39	67	3.6	19
Ben Brown (NM)	63	30	22	63	30	68	2.9	22
Joe Daniher (Ess)	62	37	22	65	39	66	2.8	23
Jack Riewoldt (Rich)	50	31	20	54	37	67	2.3	23
Eddie Betts (Adel)	49	30	21	55	34	70	2.3	24
Taylor Walker (Adel)	49	32	20	54	35	67	2.3	23
Tom Hawkins (Geel)	48	26	19	51	26	69	2.3	22
Robbie Gray (PA)	47	28	22	47	29	63	2.0	23
Charlie Dixon (PA)	46	24	22	49	30	70	2.1	23
Jeremy Cameron (GWS)	45	25	18	45	25	64	2.4	19

### McClelland Trophy

Adelaide continued its rise under coach Don Pyke to win the McClelland Trophy in 2017 for only the second time in the club's history.

Despite climbing from sixth to first last year, the Crows won one fewer game during the home and away season than in 2016. They finished with 15 wins, six losses and a draw.

Adelaide was on top for 18 of the 23 rounds and held second spot in the other five.

The longest period the Crows were not on top was in rounds 14-15, having slipped to second after losing to Hawthorn at home.

They regained top spot with a victory over the Western Bulldogs at Adelaide Oval in round 16 and stayed there, despite losing their final two games to the Sydney Swans (home) and West Coast Eagles (away).

The Crows went straight to the top of the ladder after their 56-point win in the opening round over the GWS Giants at home.

Adelaide won its first six games before losing to North Melbourne in round seven. The Crows won six of seven matches between rounds 15 and 21, with a draw against Collingwood in round 19 their only blemish.

Their biggest win was against Fremantle by 100 points in round 10. Other significant victories included round 20 against Port Adelaide (84 points), round nine against the Brisbane Lions (80), round six against Richmond (76), round five against the Gold Coast Suns (67), round four against Essendon (65), round 16 against the Bulldogs (59) and round 12 against St Kilda (57).

Adelaide's other McClelland Trophy win was in 2005. Since 1991, the trophy has been awarded to the team finishing on top of the ladder at the end of the home and away season.

#### 2017 PREMIERSHIP SEASON LADDER

#	CLUB	P				For			Against			%	Mtch Pts	Home			Away			Form W/L	Scores High Low		Av Margin W L	W < L < 7pts 7pts	Pls used	Rd 23 2016	1st Year Players	QTRS Won		
		W	L	D	Gls	Beh	Pts	Gls	Beh	Pts	W			L	D	W	L	D	High		Low									
1	Adelaide Crows	22	15	6	1	354	291	2415	260	216	1776	135.98	62	8	3	0	7	3	1	2L	153	66	54	28	0	1	31	5	4	59
2	Geelong Cats	22	15	6	1	313	256	2134	260	258	1818	117.38	62	9	2	0	6	4	1	3W	163	61	31	25	4	0	36	2	8	49
3	Richmond	22	15	7	0	287	270	1992	242	232	1684	118.29	60	9	2	0	6	5	0	2W	155	64	32	25	0	3	38	13	5	47
4	GWS Giants	22	14	6	2	302	269	2081	262	240	1812	114.85	60	10	1	1	5	7	1	1L	160	45	30	26	3	1	37	4	5	48
5	Port Adelaide	22	14	8	0	313	290	2168	239	237	1671	129.74	56	8	3	0	6	5	0	3W	150	46	54	31	1	1	35	10	6	56
6	Sydney	22	14	8	0	305	263	2093	237	229	1651	126.77	56	7	4	0	7	4	0	4W	143	63	42	19	2	3	35	1	6	51
7	Essendon	22	12	10	0	311	269	2135	288	276	2004	106.54	48	8	3	0	4	7	0	2W	132	42	33	27	0	1	36	18	3	45
8	West Coast	22	12	10	0	288	236	1964	266	262	1858	105.71	48	8	3	0	4	7	0	1W	136	60	21	27	0	2	34	6	2	46
9	Melbourne	22	12	10	0	302	223	2035	280	254	1934	105.22	48	6	5	0	6	5	0	1L	122	50	25	20	2	3	36	11	4	49
10	Western Bulldogs	22	11	11	0	260	297	1857	279	239	1913	97.07	44	7	4	0	4	7	0	3L	127	42	21	27	3	1	37	7	3	41
11	St Kilda	22	11	11	0	271	299	1925	291	240	1986	96.93	44	7	4	0	4	7	0	1L	138	50	31	37	0	1	34	9	3	38
12	Hawthorn	22	10	11	1	273	226	1864	301	249	2055	90.71	42	6	4	1	4	7	0	1W	125	47	23	38	3	1	37	3	5	42
13	Collingwood	22	9	12	1	278	276	1944	287	241	1963	99.03	38	4	6	1	5	6	0	1W	129	55	23	19	1	2	37	12	3	40
14	Fremantle	22	8	14	0	231	221	1607	317	258	2160	74.40	32	5	6	0	3	8	0	3L	116	39	16	48	4	1	37	16	7	29
15	North Melbourne	22	6	16	0	290	243	1983	331	278	2264	87.59	24	3	8	0	3	8	0	1W	145	57	26	27	1	5	37	8	11	34
16	Carlton	22	6	16	0	232	202	1594	299	244	2038	78.21	24	4	7	0	2	9	0	1L	97	47	13	32	1	0	39	14	7	35
17	Gold Coast Suns	22	6	16	0	257	214	1756	337	289	2311	75.98	24	4	7	0	2	9	0	8L	139	20	29	46	1	1	42	15	6	30
18	Brisbane Lions	22	5	17	0	276	221	1877	367	324	2526	74.31	20	3	8	0	2	9	0	2L	142	45	31	47	1	0	38	17	6	29



## NAB AFL Women's 2017 Season

Adelaide became the first club to win a NAB AFLW premiership, capping off the seven-round season with a six-point win over the Brisbane Lions in the Grand Final at Metricon Stadium.

The close-fought clash was a fitting end to the inaugural AFLW season, which started with more than 24,000 people cramming into Ikon Park on a hot summer's night to watch traditional rivals Collingwood and Carlton take to an old stage with a new look.

With the top two sides on the ladder at the end of the short season qualifying for the Grand Final, every match counted.

Undefeated sides Adelaide and Carlton met in a low-scoring, bruising encounter in round three, with the Crows triumphing by just three points, courtesy of a 55m bomb from star on-baller Erin Phillips, the former WNBA basketballer who was one of many to make the cross from another sport.

The Western Bulldogs hit the ground running, but losing captain and key forward Katie Brennan early in the season to an ankle injury was too big a hurdle to overcome.

Greater Western Sydney's young and inexperienced line-up struggled early, but found its feet to finish with a win and a draw.

Fremantle was decimated by injuries, adding three replacement players in order to field a side, while Melbourne made a thrilling late charge, defeating Fremantle by 54 points in the last round, but was pipped by Adelaide in the final standings.

The Lions were steady throughout, coasting into the Grand Final, a final-round draw with Carlton their only blemish.

In the Grand Final, Phillips bullied opponents, winning clearances and kicking two goals in a best-on-ground display.

Lion Tayla Harris made it interesting in the final term, closing the margin to one goal, but Adelaide held firm to be crowned premier.

### 2017 LADDER

	P	W	L	D	%	Pts
Brisbane Lions	7	6	0	1	151.4	26
Adelaide Crows	7	5	2	0	157.3	20
Melbourne	7	5	2	0	141	20
Carlton	7	3	3	1	112.5	14
Collingwood	7	3	4	0	85.5	12
W Bulldogs	7	2	5	0	102.2	8
Fremantle	7	1	5	1	64.1	6
GWS Giants	7	1	5	1	51.8	6

### 2017 NAB AFL WOMEN'S GRAND FINAL

Adelaide Crows	2.1	2.7	4.9	4.11 (35)
Brisbane Lions	1.0	2.1	3.3	4.5 (29)

**BEST:** Adelaide Crows – Phillips, Randall, Marinoff, Cramey, Gibson, Bevan.  
Brisbane Lions – Bates, Frederick-Traub, Virgo, Kaslar, Hunt, Ashmore.

**GOALS:** Adelaide Crows – Phillips 2, Gibson, Varnhagen.  
Brisbane Lions – Wuetschner 2, Frederick-Traub, Harris.

**Umpires:** M. Rodger, T. Bryce, B. Cheever.

**Crowd:** 15,610 at Metricon Stadium.

**Grand Final Best on Ground:** Erin Phillips, Adelaide Crows

### TEAMS AS SELECTED

F	Courtney Cramey	Sarah Perkins	Kellie Gibson
B	Sam Virgo	Leah Kaslar	Shannon Campbell
HF	Ebony Marinoff	Erin Phillips (c)	Stevie-Lee Thompson
HB	Tahlia Randall	Kate Lutkins	Breanna Koenen
C	Dayna Cox		
C	Megan Hunt		
HB	Anne Hatchard	Deni Varnhagen	Angela Foley
HF	Kaitlyn Ashmore	Sabrina Frederick-Traub	Kate McCarthy
B	Heather Anderson	Georgia Bevan	Talia Radan
F	Jordan Membrey	Tayla Harris	Jessica Wuetschner
Foll	Sarah Allan	Justine Mules	Sally Riley
Foll	Sharni Webb	Emily Bates	Emma Zielke (c)
I/C	Chelsea Randall (c), Rachael Killian, Abbey Holmes, Rhiannon Metcalfe, Jenna McCormick, Jessica Sedunary		
EM	Tayla Thorn, Lauren O'Shea		
Coach	Bec Goddard		
I/C	Nikki Wallace, Jamie Stanton, Nicole Hildebrand, Selina Goodman, Brittany Gibson, Alexandra Anderson		
EM	Delissa Kimmince, Kate Deegan		
Coach	Craig Starcevich		

## NAB AFLW Awards

Adelaide premiership co-captain Erin Phillips capped off a dominant season by winning the inaugural NAB AFL Women's best and fairest award at a gala event in Melbourne.

Just three days after a brilliant best-on-ground performance in the Crows' Grand Final win against the Brisbane Lions at Metricon Stadium, Phillips collected the competition best and fairest award. She also won the AFLPA women's MVP award and was named vice-captain of the Virgin Australia AFLW All-Australian team.

Phillips finished with 14 votes, four ahead of Western Bulldogs midfielder Ellie Blackburn and Melbourne on-baller Karen Paxman. Fremantle's Lara Filocamo was next with nine votes.

She polled three votes in the round one win against Greater Western Sydney and did not relinquish the lead from there. She was judged best-on-ground in three games.

The former champion basketballer's stellar season also included the Coates Hire Goal of the Year award, for her effort in round three against Carlton. She also won the Crows' best and fairest award.

Adelaide youngster Ebony Marinoff was named the NAB AFLW Rising Star. The midfielder lit up the AFLW competition with her joy and passion for the game.

Marinoff showed she could be fierce on the field, finishing the seven-game home and away season with a competition-high 70 tackles. But she also displayed a lighter side, exuberantly celebrating teammates' goals and starring in comedic GIFs with teammates for the Crows' social media accounts. She came to attention in 2016 when, after being drafted seventh overall, said she was swapping netball for football because she liked the physicality.

Marinoff, who also competed in surf lifesaving before making the full-time move to football, was also picked in the All-Australian team, one of five Crows in the elite squad. The Lions also had five representatives, while Melbourne had four players recognised including Daisy Pearce (who was named skipper) and Paxman.

Carlton forward Darcy Vescio was crowned the competition's leading goalkicker and was named winner of the Woolworths Mark of the Year for her grab in a win against the Western Bulldogs in round five.

### 2017 ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

**Defenders:** Nicola Stevens (Collingwood), Courtney Cramey (Adelaide), Chelsea Randall (Adelaide), Brianna Davey (Carlton), Karen Paxman (Melbourne)

**Midfielders:** Elise O'Dea (Melbourne), Daisy Pearce (Melbourne), Emma Kearney (Western Bulldogs), Emma King (Collingwood), Kara Donnellan (Fremantle), Emily Bates (Brisbane Lions)

**Forwards:** Erin Phillips (Adelaide), Sabrina Frederick-Traub (Brisbane Lions), Ellie Blackburn (Western Bulldogs), Sarah Perkins (Adelaide), Darcy Vescio (Carlton)

**Interchange:** Kate McCarthy (Brisbane Lions), Ebony Marinoff (Adelaide), Tayla Harris (Brisbane Lions), Jessica Dal Pos (Greater Western Sydney), Melissa Hickey (Melbourne), Sam Virgo (Brisbane Lions)



### RISING STAR

Player	Club	Votes
Ebony Marinoff	Adelaide	47



### LEADING GOALKICKER

Player	Club	Goals
Darcy Vescio	Carlton	14

### GOAL OF THE YEAR

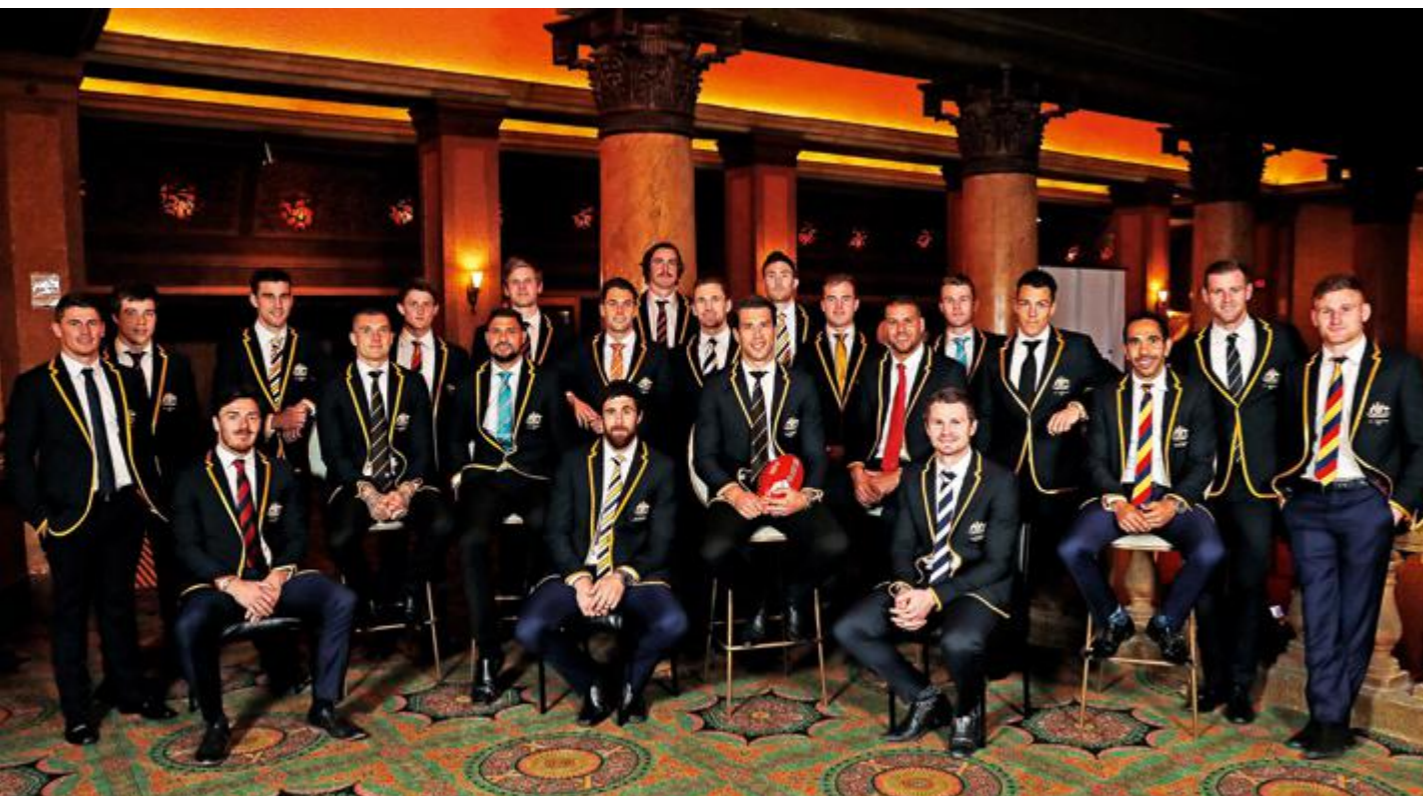
Player	Club
Erin Phillips	Adelaide

### MARK OF THE YEAR

Player	Club
Darcy Vescio	Carlton

### BEST & FAIREST

Player	Club	Votes
Erin Phillips	Adelaide	14



## Virgin Australia All-Australian team

Star Richmond defender Alex Rance's spectacular home and away season was recognised when he was named captain of the Virgin Australia All-Australian team for the first time.

Rance was picked in the team for the fourth consecutive season.

West Coast's Josh Kennedy missed out on a third consecutive Coleman Medal when the Sydney Swans' Lance Franklin overtook him in the final round but was rewarded with the vice-captaincy and the full-forward spot.

Franklin, named at centre half-forward, made the team for the seventh time, joining champions Nathan Buckley, Wayne Carey and Stephen Silvagni on that total.

Geelong skipper Joel Selwood was selected for a sixth time while teammate Patrick Dangerfield was named for a fifth time.

Port Adelaide's Robbie Gray and Adelaide small forward Eddie Betts became three-time All-Australians. Eagles defender Jeremy McGovern, Bombers backman Michael Hurley and Brownlow medallist Dustin Martin secured All-Australian honours for a second time.

Crows defender Rory Laird, who missed out in the previous two seasons after being named in the squad, was one of 12 debutants.

Another first-timer was Carlton rebound defender Sam Docherty, who became the first Blue since Chris Judd and Marc Murphy in 2011 to be selected.

Melbourne defender Michael Hibberd and Port Adelaide ruckman Paddy Ryder, who both spent a year out of the game as a result of anti-doping bans imposed on 34 current and former Essendon players, completed remarkable comeback seasons to be picked for the first time. Hurley also missed the 2016 season.

Other debutants were Matt Crouch (Adelaide), Joe Daniher (Essendon), Josh Kelly (GWS Giants), Zach Merrett (Essendon), Tom Mitchell (Hawthorn), Dylan Shiel (GWS Giants), Elliot Yeo (West Coast) and Dayne Zorko (Brisbane Lions).

Minor premier Adelaide, Essendon and West Coast each had three members in the team, with Geelong, GWS Giants, Port Adelaide and Richmond having two apiece.

Six clubs did not have a representative – Collingwood, Fremantle, Gold Coast, North Melbourne, St Kilda and the Western Bulldogs.

The All-Australian selection panel is made up of Gillon McLachlan (chairman), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Kevin Dillon, Danny Frawley, Glen Jakovich, Chris Johnson, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson and Warren Tredrea.

### VIRGIN AUSTRALIA ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

<b>B</b>	<b>Michael Hibberd</b> Melbourne	<b>Alex Rance (c)</b> Richmond	<b>Jeremy McGovern</b> West Coast Eagles	
<b>HB</b>	<b>Rory Laird</b> Adelaide Crows	<b>Michael Hurley</b> Essendon	<b>Sam Docherty</b> Carlton	
<b>C</b>	<b>Josh Kelly</b> GWS Giants	<b>Dustin Martin</b> Richmond	<b>Zach Merrett</b> Essendon	
<b>HF</b>	<b>Robbie Gray</b> Port Adelaide	<b>Lance Franklin</b> Sydney Swans	<b>Dayne Zorko</b> Brisbane Lions	
<b>F</b>	<b>Joe Daniher</b> Essendon	<b>Josh Kennedy (vc)</b> West Coast Eagles	<b>Eddie Betts</b> Adelaide Crows	
<b>R</b>	<b>Paddy Ryder</b> Port Adelaide	<b>Patrick Dangerfield</b> Geelong Cats	<b>Tom Mitchell</b> Hawthorn	
<b>IC</b>	<b>Matt Crouch</b> Adelaide Crows	<b>Joel Selwood</b> Geelong Cats	<b>Dylan Shiel</b> GWS Giants	<b>Elliot Yeo</b> West Coast Eagles
<b>Coach</b>	<b>Damien Hardwick</b> Richmond			
<b>Umpire</b>	<b>Matt Stevic</b>			

## Mark & Goal of the Year

Essendon spearhead Joe Daniher capped off a breakout season by taking out the Woolworths Mark of the Year.

Daniher, who secured his first club best and fairest award and finished fourth in the Coleman Medal, won for his screamer against St Kilda in round 17.

The key forward rose above former teammate Jake Carlisle in a superb effort to take the ball about four metres off the ground.

Daniher earned 52 per cent of the vote from fans. Collingwood high-flyer Jeremy Howe was next with 41 per cent for his brilliant mark against Melbourne in round 12.

Fellow Magpie Brodie Grundy's effort in round 14 against Port Adelaide scored the remaining seven per cent.

Young Richmond forward Daniel Rioli won the Coates Hire Goal of the Year for his outstanding effort against West Coast in round three.

Rioli was involved in two contests before snapping it through from the boundary. The Tiger won 46 per cent of the fan vote.

Crows star Eddie Betts, who won the award in the previous two seasons, polled 34 per cent for his spectacular left-foot snap against Brisbane in round nine and Coleman medallist Lance Franklin, the winner in 2010 and 2013, gained 20 per cent for his brilliant running goal against Adelaide in round 22.

The awards were presented at the Brownlow Medal count at Melbourne's Crown Palladium.

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.



## Australian Football Hall of Fame

The Australian Football Hall of Fame grew in 2017 with the induction of six newcomers and the elevation of premiership player and coach, Brownlow medallist and Magarey medallist Malcolm Blight to Legend. The new inductees were Brett Allen (seven-time Grand Final field umpire), Simon Goodwin (dual Adelaide premiership player), John Halbert (Sturt great and Magarey medallist), Barry Hall (Sydney Swans premiership captain), Anthony Stevens (dual North Melbourne premiership player) and Ron Todd (star spearhead with Collingwood and Williamstown). 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 139 inductees has increased the Hall of Fame to 275. Among this are 27 Legends (there is a restriction that no more than 10 per cent of inductees may be Legends). The 2017 Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee was Mike Fitzpatrick (chair), Patrick Clifton (secretary), Barry Cable, Dennis Cometti, Col Hutchinson (statistics and history consultant), Jim Main, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin and Michelangelo Rucci.



△ The 2017 Hall of Fame Inductees (back from left) Brett Allen, Barry Hall and Simon Goodwin; (front) John Halbert, Malcolm Blight and Anthony Stevens.

### Brett Allen

**Born:** April 14, 1966  
Was regarded as one of the game's premier umpires. During his involvement in Australian Football, the game changed dramatically, going from man-on-man battles to the tactic of flooding and all players being in a confined part of the ground. Soon after he made it to senior ranks, the three-umpire system was brought in, which helped him survive in the game much longer. Officiated in 347 games for 16 seasons between 1992-2007. Umpired in seven Grand Finals (1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) and rated the last two between the Sydney Swans and the West Coast Eagles as the best he officiated in. Of his 37 finals, Allen said the most memorable was the 1999 preliminary final when Carlton stunned the heavily favoured Essendon. Was the All-Australian umpire on four occasions (1999, 2000, 2002, 2006) and took part in two International Rules Series. Officiated in two State of Origin matches (1996, 1999). The grandson of former Geelong player Jim Allen, who played one game for the Cats in 1935. Became a member of the AFL 200 Club in 2001 and an AFL life member in 2004. Awarded the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 for his contribution to Australian Football.



### Simon Goodwin

**Born:** December 26, 1976  
**Playing career:** 1995-2010 (South Adelaide 1995-98; Adelaide 1997-2010)  
**Games:** 293 (S Adel 18; Adel 275)  
**Goals:** 163 (S Adel 1; Adel 162)  
Goodwin was a key member of Adelaide's first premiership teams in 1997-98, winning two flags before his 22nd birthday. The left-footer had excellent kicking skills and evolved from a reliable half-back to a creative midfielder. Captained the Crows for three seasons (2008-10) and won their best and fairest award three times (2000, 2005, 2006), was second twice (2007, 2008) and third in 2009. A five-time All-Australian representative (2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009), he was the AFLCA Player of the Year in 2006. Represented South Australia and the AFL Dream Team, and played three International Rules games. Member of Adelaide's Team of the Decade (1991-2000) and has been inducted into the Crows' and South Australian Football halls of fame. Went into coaching after his playing career finished at the end of 2010. Was a senior assistant coach at Essendon before moving to Melbourne and working under Paul Roos. Took over the senior coaching role in 2017, with the Demons narrowly missing out on the finals on percentage.



### John Halbert

**Born:** September 5, 1937  
**Playing career:** 1955-68  
**Games:** 242  
**Goals:** 253  
Halbert was a star player in Sturt's golden era in the 1960s and went on to become a respected coach and administrator. Won the Magarey Medal in 1961, was runner-up three times (1955, 1958, 1960), was a four-time club best and fairest winner (1958, 1960, 1961, 1964) and made 17 appearances for South Australia. An All-Australian in 1961, he captained the Double Blues to a premiership in 1966, but injury stopped him from playing in their 1967 and 1968 triumphs before he hung up the boots. In 1979, he took on the senior coaching job with Glenelg, spending four seasons there before returning to Sturt from 1983-84. Took his teams to three grand finals, but was unable to claim the ultimate prize. The SANFL life member filled a range of administrative roles within football, including being a member of the SANFL Football Commission (1996-2008), chairman of selectors with the Adelaide Crows (1992-94) and member of the AFL Laws Committee (2000-08). Was awarded an MBE in 1969 for services to sport and work among young people and an Order of Australia Medal (AM) in 2009.



### LEGEND

## Malcolm Blight

**Born:** February 16, 1950  
**Playing career:** 1968-85 (Woodville 1968-73, 1983-85; North Melbourne 1974-82)  
**Games:** 330 (Wood 152; NM 178)  
**Goals:** 786 (Wood 342; NM 444)  
Blight was a brilliant footballer with magical skills who was equally at home in the midfield or in attack. After starting his career at SANFL club Woodville, he crossed to North Melbourne in 1974 and became an integral member of the team under Ron Barassi that won the club's first two premierships. An inaugural inductee in the Australian Football Hall of Fame, he is in the South Australian Football Hall of Fame and a member of the SANFL Team of the Century. A three-time All-Australian

(1972, 1982, 1985), he represented South Australia in nine games and Victoria in seven. Blight is the only player to have produced 100-goal seasons in the AFL/VFL and SANFL. He is also the only winner of the Brownlow, Magarey and Coleman Medals. Won North Melbourne's best and fairest award in 1978 and took out the club's goalkicking in 1978, 1979, 1981 and 1982. Is a member of North Melbourne's Team of the Century and the club's Hall of Fame. Later became a master coach, leading the Crows to their first AFL premiership in 1997 and backing up with another flag the following season. Coached Geelong to three Grand Final appearances in six seasons and had coaching stints with North Melbourne, St Kilda and Woodville. Inducted as an AFLCA coaching legend in 2017.



### Barry Hall

**Born:** February 8, 1977  
**Playing career:** 1996-2011 (St Kilda 1996-2001; Sydney 2002-09; Western Bulldogs 2010-11)  
**Games:** 289 (St K 88; Syd 162; WB 39)  
**Goals:** 746 (St K 144; Syd 467; WB 135)  
Rugged key forward who is the only player to kick 100 goals for three different AFL/VFL clubs. Athletic, strong in one-on-one contests and an accurate kick for goal. Began his career at St Kilda where he played six seasons, was twice the leading club goalkicker (1999, 2001) and was in the Saints' line-up that lost to Adelaide in the 1997 Grand Final. At times he could be undisciplined and opted to make a fresh start with the Swans, which was most successful. Hall won Sydney's best and fairest award in 2004 and was second the following year when he captained the Swans to a drought-breaking premiership. The four-time All-Australian (2004, 2005, 2006, 2010) was the AFLCA Player of the Year in 2005. Was the Swans' leading goalkicker an equal club-record seven times (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) and is third on the club's all-time list with 467 (162 games). Finished his career with the Bulldogs, topping the goalkicking in his two seasons at Whitten Oval.



### Anthony Stevens

**Born:** July 2, 1971  
**Playing career:** 1989-2004  
**Games:** 292  
**Goals:** 127  
Stevens was a gutsy, hard-working midfielder who was the heart and soul of a team moulded by Denis Pagan, first in the North Melbourne under-19s and then from 1993 at senior level. While he relished being given the difficult assignments of trying to shut down the opposition's best midfielder, he could win plenty of the ball and knew how to use it when he had it with a penetrating left boot. Renowned for his tough mindset, as he displayed in 1999 when he overcame a three-week ankle injury in five days to play in the Grand Final. Played in two premiership teams (1996, 1999) and lost another Grand Final in 1998. Won North's best and fairest twice (1997, 1999), was second four times (1993, 1994, 1996, 1998) and third in 2002. Earned All-Australian honours in 1998 and was the Kangaroos' captain for two seasons (2002-03). Played four State of Origin games for Victoria and twice represented Australia in International Rules. He is a member of North Melbourne's Team of the Century and the club's Hall of Fame. His brothers Gary and Michael also played AFL football.



### Ron Todd

**Born:** October 23, 1916  
**Died:** February 8, 1991  
**Playing career:** 1935-49 (Collingwood 1935-39; Williamstown 1940-49)  
**Games:** 217 (Coll 76; Will 141)  
**Goals:** 1001 (Coll 327; Will 674)  
Todd was a star full-forward who had a profound influence at his two clubs, Collingwood and Williamstown. Born in Collingwood, he made his VFL debut at 18 in 1935 and became the League's most exciting forward after the retirement of fellow Magpie Gordon Coventry. Member of Collingwood's premiership team in 1936 and finished third in the Copeland Trophy in 1938 and 1939. Kicked League-high tallies of 120 goals in 1938 and 121 the next year before crossing to VFA club Williamstown without a clearance in 1940. Won the 1945 VFA flag with Williamstown and kicked a record 188 goals, including a best haul of 20. In his last game, Todd captained Williamstown to the 1949 premiership. Was the leading VFA goalkicker in 1945-46 and led Williamstown's goalkicking in 1940, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948 (equal) and 1949. Member of Collingwood's Hall of Fame, Williamstown Team of the Century and a Williamstown Hall of Fame Legend.



## LIFE MEMBERS



**Eddie Betts**

Betts has developed into one of the AFL's best small forwards. He began his career at Carlton

after being picked up in the 2005 NAB AFL Pre-Season Draft, playing 184 games for the Blues in nine seasons. He switched to Adelaide in 2014 and has played the past four seasons with the Crows, gaining All-Australian selection three times (2015-17). He has been leading club goalkicker on six occasions – twice with Carlton (2010, 2012) and four times with the Crows (2014-17). A three-time winner of the AFL Goal of the Year, he has finished in the top three of club best and fairest awards on three occasions – 2012, 2015 and 2016. He played in the Blues' pre-season premiership team in 2007 and has represented Australia in International Rules seven times.



**Chris Donlon**

Recruited from the Victorian Amateur Football Association, Donlon was selected on the

VFL senior panel in 2000 before winning the most improved award in 2001. He umpired the 2001 VFL reserves Grand Final and the 2004 VFL senior Grand Final before making his AFL senior debut in round four, 2005. The business analyst has umpired 14 finals, including the 2011 Grand Final. At the end of 2017, he had officiated in 268 premiership season games and 31 pre-season matches.



**Mike Fitzpatrick**

Fitzpatrick was a premiership player with Subiaco and dual premiership captain with Carlton before

joining the AFL Commission in 2003 and going on to become Commission chairman. He played 97 games with Subiaco and was a member of the 1973 premiership team before playing 150 games for Carlton between 1975-76 and 1978-83. He was a member of the 1979 Carlton premiership team and captained the Blues' premiership teams in 1981 and 1982. He was a state representative for WA and Victoria, captaining Victoria in 1982. He was vice-president of the AFLPA in the early 1980s and a former director of Carlton. Fitzpatrick became AFL Commission chairman in 2007, succeeding the late Ron Evans. He led the AFL through a period of growth and innovation until retiring in March 2017.



**Rex Hunt**

Hunt made his name as a dual premiership player at Richmond and went on to become one of the most

recognisable voices on radio with his colourful commentary of AFL games. He began playing with Richmond under-19s in 1966, going on to play 202 senior games with the Tigers, Geelong and St Kilda. He was Richmond's leading goalkicker in 1969 and was a reserve in its premiership team that year. Four years later he played in another premiership with the Tigers, this time as a defender. He later played with Sandringham in the VFA before focusing on building a media career. Hunt worked most of his radio career for Melbourne station 3AW, later calling games for Triple M and Crocmedia's AFL Live. In 2015, he celebrated his 2000th game as a broadcaster.



**Steve Johnson**

One of the game's most dynamic players during a career spanning more than 300 games across the

premiership season, finals, pre-season and International Rules Series. Johnson had a crucial role in three Geelong premierships in 2007, 2009 and 2011. Blessed with dazzling skills on both sides of his body and a razor-sharp footy brain, he made his name as a forward who could make the seemingly impossible look simple before showing his versatility by moving into the midfield. Won the Norm Smith Medal in 2007, was a three-time All-Australian (2007, 2008 and 2010) and finished fourth in the Brownlow Medal in 2013 behind former teammate Gary Ablett. Battled a debilitating knee problem in his final two seasons with the GWS Giants. In 2018, he will be an assistant coach under John Longmire at the Swans.



**Jordan Lewis**

Recruited from Warrnambool, Lewis became a key figure in Hawthorn's rise under Alastair

Clarkson. Taken at No. 7 in the 2004 NAB AFL Draft, the midfielder was a member of the Hawks' premiership teams in 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015. An All-Australian in 2014, he won the best and fairest award that year and finished second in 2016. The left-footer was traded to Melbourne at the end of 2016 and had a consistent season, finishing equal third in the best and fairest after filling several roles through the midfield and across half-back. Handles pressure well and provides leadership for his younger teammates.



**Michael Long**

The 1993 Norm Smith medallist was brilliant at his best, a midfielder capable of destroying

the opposition with pace, skill and a little magic. Long was a member of the Bombers' 1990 losing Grand Final before playing in two premiership teams, 1993 and 2000. A two-time All-Australian, he finished second in the Bombers' best and fairest in 1995 and third in 1999. A member of the Essendon and indigenous Teams of the Century, he was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2007. While he had a decorated playing career, his role off the field has been just as significant, displaying positive leadership on the issue of racism in the game and a commitment to the establishment of the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre in Darwin.



**Andrew Mackie**

Attacking defender who was a key member of the Cats' premiership teams in 2007, 2009 and 2011. Courageous

and prepared to take risks with his ball use while having the ability to shut down a dangerous opponent. Hailing from South Australia, he was third in the club best and fairest and an All-Australian in 2013. Nominated in the All-Australian squad on two other occasions and a NAB AFL Rising Star nominee in 2004. He also played in the Cats' pre-season premiership teams in 2006 and 2009.



**Shaun Ryan**

Ryan started with the Geelong Football League in 1992 and joined the VFL list in 1997. He umpired the

under-18 championships in 2001 and VFL Grand Final in 2002. The barrister was promoted to the AFL panel in 2003 and has umpired six Grand Finals – 2008-11, including the 2010 replay, and 2017. He retired at the end of 2011, but returned to the AFL list in 2015. At the end of the 2017 season, Ryan had officiated in 282 premiership season games, including 30 finals and 31 pre-season matches.



**Kade Simpson**

One of the game's most durable and courageous players who is due to become only the fifth player

in Carlton history to play 300 club games this season. A favourite among the Blues' faithful, he has played more than 300 games across the premiership season, finals, pre-season and International Rules Series. In recent seasons, the prolific left-footer has spent most of his time in defence, but has played in various positions over his long career. Won Carlton's best and fairest in 2013, was second in 2016 and third in 2014. Was a member of the Blues' pre-season premiership teams in 2005 and 2007.

### JACK TITUS AWARD



**John Condon**

Condon has given 58 years of continuous service at club level. He began as a player at

the Prospect Football Club in 1959 and won the best player trophy in the grand final in 1962. He joined North Adelaide in 1964 and held various roles until 1991, including general manager, league team manager, assistant general manager, league reserve team manager and club assistant secretary. He continues to serve on North Adelaide's Hall of Fame selection committee. He joined Adelaide as its inaugural football manager in 1992 and has maintained his involvement at the Crows with their past players and officials association and as club historian and archivist. He was a League director to the SANFL between 1979-91 and elected to the inaugural South Australian Football Commission in 1991. Condon is a life member of North Adelaide and Adelaide football clubs. He is a life member of the SANFL and was admitted to the League's Hall of Fame in 2017. He was awarded an Australian Sports Medal in 2000 and an Order of Australia Medal in 2009.

## RETIREEES



Some of the AFL's greatest players hung up their boots in 2017. Among them were Brownlow medallists Sam Mitchell and Matt Priddis, St Kilda stalwarts Nick Riewoldt (pictured above with sons William and James) and Leigh Montagna, Geelong triple premiership players Steve Johnson, James Kelly and Andrew Mackie, Western Bulldogs duo Robert Murphy and Matthew Boyd, Essendon midfielders Brent Stanton and Jobe Watson and Collingwood 2010 premiership players Travis Cloke and Sharrod Wellingham.

Mitchell and Priddis played their last season together as teammates at West Coast, but Mitchell made his name with the Hawks. He won the NAB AFL Rising Star award in 2003, captained Hawthorn to its drought-breaking 2008 premiership and was a vital contributor to the Hawks' 2013-15 flags.

After starting as a rookie with the Eagles in 2006, Priddis became one of the game's best inside midfielders. He won the Brownlow Medal in 2014 and was runner-up the following year. Priddis and Haydn Bunton snr are the only players to have won a Brownlow Medal and Sandover Medal.

Riewoldt is a St Kilda great, having led the Saints for a club-record 11 seasons. He is third on the AFL/VFL list of games as captain (220) and won a club-record six best and fairest awards.

Montagna played in St Kilda's three Grand Finals in 2009 and 2010 and won All-Australian selection in both seasons.

Johnson, Kelly and Mackie were part of the Cats' triumphs in 2007, 2009 and 2011, but only Mackie finished his career with Geelong. Johnson played his final two seasons with GWS Giants while Kelly was at Essendon.

They will be joined on the sidelines by 2011 premiership teammate Tom Lonergan.

One of the game's most popular figures, Murphy became the heart and soul of the Bulldogs. He missed out on playing in the 2016 premiership after suffering a season-ending knee injury early in the season.

Boyd played in the flag-winning team and in 2017 broke the record for the most games by a rookie draftee.

Two other 300-game players, Drew Petrie and Scott Thompson, called it quits. Petrie played most of his career with North Melbourne before switching to West Coast, while Thompson started with Melbourne before returning to his home state of South Australia.

Player	Club/s	Games	Goals
Nick Riewoldt	St Kilda	336	718
Drew Petrie	North Melbourne/West Coast Eagles	332	444
Sam Mitchell	Hawthorn/West Coast Eagles	329	71
James Kelly	Geelong Cats/Essendon	313	90
Robert Murphy	Western Bulldogs	312	183
Scott Thompson	Melbourne/Adelaide Crows	308	162
Steve Johnson	Geelong Cats/GWS Giants	293	516
Matthew Boyd	Western Bulldogs	292	86
Leigh Montagna	St Kilda	287	155
Andrew Mackie	Geelong Cats	280	100
Travis Cloke	Collingwood/Western Bulldogs	256	452
Brent Stanton	Essendon	255	158
Matt Priddis	West Coast Eagles	240	73
Josh Gibson	North Melbourne/Hawthorn	225	5
Andrew Swallow	North Melbourne	224	80
Heritier Lumumba	Collingwood/Melbourne	223	30
Sean Dempster	Sydney Swans/St Kilda	222	21
Joel Patfull	Brisbane Lions/GWS Giants	220	26
Jobe Watson	Essendon	220	113
Angus Monfries	Essendon/Port Adelaide	211	248
Tom Lonergan	Geelong Cats	209	55
Garrick Ibbotson	Fremantle	177	22
Josh Hill	Western Bulldogs/West Coast Eagles	173	226
Shane Mumford	Geelong Cats/Sydney Swans/GWS Giants	172	52
Sharrod Wellingham	Collingwood/West Coast Eagles	171	73
Sam Butler	West Coast Eagles	166	16
Zac Dawson	Hawthorn/St Kilda/Fremantle	166	7
Craig Bird	Sydney Swans/Essendon	157	59
Ivan Maric	Adelaide Crows/Richmond	157	61
Nick Suban	Fremantle	156	60
Matt White	Richmond/Port Adelaide	153	98
Lachlan Hansen	North Melbourne	151	81
Dennis Armfield	Carlton	145	75
Colin Garland	Melbourne	141	16
Jesse White	Sydney Swans/Collingwood	127	148
Heath Hocking	Essendon	126	45
Ben Howlett	Essendon	124	58
Rhys Palmer	Fremantle/GWS Giants/Carlton	123	95
Chris Yarran	Carlton/Richmond	119	90
Tendai Mzungu	Fremantle/GWS Giants	106	55
Taylor Hunt	Geelong Cats/Richmond	105	21
Zac Clarke	Fremantle	101	46

## OBITUARIES

### Phil Gibbs

Gibbs, a respected sports commentator best known as the host of Channel 0/10's live coverage of VFA football for 18 seasons, died in his home state of Tasmania on January 7, 2017, a day before what would have been his 88th birthday. Gibbs started his radio career in 1944 at 7LA in Launceston, crossing to 3KZ five years later when he started broadcasting VFL matches. He called VFL games on Channel 0 before focusing on the VFA, bringing the game into lounge rooms on Sunday afternoons during the competition's glory days. During this period, he worked with Bruce McAvaney and Eddie McGuire, who benefited from his vast experience. In 2013, he was inducted as a life member of the Australian Football Media Association.

### Darryl Sutton

The popular Sutton, North Melbourne's 1977 premiership forward, died on January 28, 2017, aged 64. At 183cm, he was a classic third forward with a huge leap who could turn it on in big games. He played under the legendary Peter Hudson at Glenorchy in Tasmania before signing with North Melbourne. He played 91 games for the Kangaroos between 1973 and 1980, including the drawn 1977 Grand Final and replay. He was a member of the Kangaroos' losing Grand Final teams in 1976 and 1978. He kicked five of North's 10 goals in a one-point win over Carlton in the 1976 preliminary final. After a year out of the VFL, he joined Richmond in 1982, but played only six games before a mid-season transfer in 1983 to Sydney where he kicked 25 goals in 14 games. He was a two-time All-Australian and was the Tasmanian league's leading goalkicker aged 20.

### Harry Sullivan

Sullivan, the full-back in Collingwood's famous 1958 premiership team, died on February 5, 2017, aged 84. Recruited from Brighton Tech, Sullivan started his VFL career with Carlton. He played five seasons with the Blues, but struggled to secure a regular place in the seniors as a centre half-forward. After only 31 games, he switched to Collingwood in 1955. A strong mark, the right-footer found his niche in defence with the Magpies, displaying superb judgment and coolness under pressure. In six seasons with Collingwood, he played 78 games, including the 1956 and 1958 Grand Finals, before retiring in 1960. As well as playing in the premiership team in 1958, Sullivan finished third in the Magpies' best and fairest count, polled 14 votes in the Brownlow Medal and represented Victoria in two games in the Australian Football Carnival in Melbourne.

### Ray Stokes

Stokes, a classy midfielder from Burnie in Tasmania who played 93 games for Richmond between 1946-51, died on February 26, 2017. He started as a winger and developed into a fine centreman over six seasons. The left-footer played one final in 1947 and finished third in the best and fairest in his last season with the Tigers in 1951. After leaving Punt Rd, he returned to Tasmania to coach Burnie. He represented Tasmania at the 1953 Adelaide and 1956 Perth interstate carnivals. He was also a fine cricketer and played for Tasmania against several touring sides.

### Trevor Grant

Grant, a veteran sportswriter who covered football for 40 years, died after a battle with the asbestos cancer, mesothelioma, on March 5, 2017, aged 65. He was an excellent writer who was determined to seek the truth, often grilling coaches at post-match media conferences. He started his career as a copy boy and cadet at the Melbourne afternoon paper *Newsday* in 1968. He worked in various newspapers including the *Sunday Herald Sun*, *Sunday Herald*, *Sunday Press*, *The Age* and *The Sporting Globe* before finishing up with the *Herald Sun* in 2008. As well as reporting on AFL, he wrote about other sports, notably cricket, golf and racing. He was a life member of the Australian Football Media Association and a member of the MCG Media Hall of Fame.

### Dulcie Kennedy

The wife of Hawthorn legend and former AFL Commission chairman John Kennedy died on April 7, 2017, aged 87. She provided great support for her husband and was a key figure of the Kennedy family. A committed Hawthorn supporter, she was the No. 1 female ticket holder for three years between 2014-16.

### Fred Goldsmith

Goldsmith, who achieved the rare honour of winning football's biggest individual prize as a full-back, died on April 13, 2017, aged 84. A spectacular high mark and magnificent drop kick, the Swans great polled in eight games to finish with 21 votes and win the 1955 Brownlow Medal by one vote. After winning the Brownlow, he was often used in attack and was South Melbourne's leading goalkicker with 43 in 1957. But he returned to defence on windy days, often being stationed at the same end of the ground for the game. Nicknamed 'Cracker', he represented Victoria 11 times, including the 1956 and 1958 interstate carnivals. Goldsmith was named on the bench in the Swans Team of the Century in 2003 and was inducted into the club's Hall of Fame in 2009. Recruited from Spotswood, Goldsmith started his VFL career as a half-forward flanker in 1951, but after contemplating a move to VFA club Yarraville, he found his right spot at full-back and decided to stay. He left South Melbourne after 119 games at the end of 1959 to become captain-coach of Ovens and Murray league club Albury between 1960-65. He returned to Melbourne to play briefly with Port Melbourne in 1966 before he retired after injuring his knee.

### John Bahen

Renowned as a magnificent long and accurate kick, the former Fitzroy centreman died on May 2, 2017, aged 73. Bahen was a champion schoolboy footballer at CBC Parade and Assumption College before making his debut for Fitzroy in round one, 1962, against Essendon. Nicknamed 'Silver', he played 67 games and kicked 35 goals in six seasons, highlighted by a third-place finish in the best and fairest in 1964. He later played in the VFA with Port Melbourne.



## Colin Stubbs

Stubbs, the former Essendon chairman instrumental in luring Kevin Sheedy to Windy Hill as senior coach in 1981, died on May 1, 2017, aged 83. The quietly spoken Stubbs was a passionate Bombers man who made a significant contribution to the club. He served as vice-chairman between 1972-75 before taking over as chairman in 1976, staying in the role until late 1980. One of his final acts was the decision to appoint Sheedy.

## Lou Richards

One of football's greatest and most iconic characters, Richards passed away peacefully on May 8, 2017, aged 94. He stood only 170cm, but was a giant on and off the field. A trailblazer in the football media, he became one of the AFL's most beloved figures in print, radio and television. Born and raised in Collingwood, he became one of the Magpies' finest rovers. He slotted 423 goals in 250 games from 1941-55, three times finishing top three in the best and fairest, winning three club goalkicking awards, representing Victoria three times and captaining the Pies to the 1953 premiership. In 1996, Richards was one of the original inductees, as a player, in the Australian Football Hall of Fame. However, it was in his post-playing career that he became a revolutionary figure. A media presence for almost five decades, 'Louie the Lip' most famously teamed with fellow greats Jack Dyer and Bob Davis on Channel Seven's long-running *League Teams* program on Thursday nights (Dyer died in 2003 and Davis in 2011). The trio appeared together for many years on the network's popular Sunday program *World of Sport*. After Channel Seven lost the rights to televise football, Richards moved to Channel Nine in 1987, where he appeared on many programs. Richards' 'Kiss of Death' column in *The Sun News-Pictorial* newspaper was compulsory match-day reading, as much for its humour as its insights. In 1982, he was one of the few football identities to be awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for his services to sport. In April 2014, Collingwood unveiled a statue of Richards at the club's headquarters. On the same day, the AFL Commission awarded him the inaugural John Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognises an individual's contribution to the game in multiple fields.

## John Watts

The Geelong premiership player and WAFL great died after a long battle with cancer on June 3, 2017, aged 80. Renowned for his toughness, reliability and strong marking, Watts was a nimble defender for his size. He moved to Geelong to play with long-time friend Graham 'Polly' Farmer and played 52 games, including the 1963 flag win against Hawthorn. The Grand Final victory came in his first year with the Cats, where he played until the end of the 1965 season. Watts was a policeman before moving into the media after his playing career, enjoying a long, successful career on radio and TV. He composed the club songs for Geelong, East Perth and Swan Districts. He was a three-time premiership player at East Perth, playing 166 games for the WAFL club. He played 13 state matches for Western Australia, was full-back in East Perth's Team of the Century and a member of the East Perth and West Australian Football halls of fame. He was also captain-coach of Hobart for 60 games, leading the Tasmanian club to a premiership in 1966.

## Bruce McMaster-Smith

McMaster-Smith, a lightly built, diminutive wingman renowned for his kicking skills, died on June 6, 2017, aged 78. Recruited from Greensborough, the speedy McMaster-Smith played with three clubs, Fitzroy, Carlton and St Kilda, with his highlight playing in the 1965 Grand Final for the Saints against Essendon. He made his debut with Fitzroy on Anzac Day 1960 and played in 10 games that season, including two finals. He played only three games with the Lions the following season before swapping to the Blues in 1962. In three years with Carlton he played 26 games, his best season being in 1962 when he polled 10 Brownlow votes from 14 matches, before finishing his career with St Kilda.

## Ken Hopper

Hopper, a utility who played 83 games for Carlton and Hawthorn between 1945-51, passed away on June 29, 2017, aged 93. Born in South Melbourne in 1924, he was raised in Melbourne's northern suburbs and played for Pascoe Vale. In two seasons with the Blues, he played 17 games and was an emergency in Carlton's premiership team in 1945. He transferred to Hawthorn, where he was afforded greater opportunities, playing 66 games and finding his niche as a capable utility who could play anywhere. He was later rewarded with life membership of the Hawks after being a long-time president of the club's past players' association.

## Jim Norman

Norman, who was part of a golden era for Geelong in the early 1950s, died on July 26, 2017, aged 88. Renowned as a big-occasion player, he was a member of the Cats' 1951-52 premiership teams. Recruited from Horsham, Norman was a solid ruckman who used his bulk to advantage, playing 37 games and booting 15 goals between 1950-52. The 1952 Grand Final was the last of his six finals for Geelong. Of all the players to win two premierships, Norman is in eighth place for the fewest career matches to achieve that feat.

## 'Mac' Wilson

Andrew McDonald 'Mac' Wilson had been Carlton's and the AFL's oldest surviving former player until his death on August 9, 2017, aged 103. Recruited from Footscray District League club Sunshine, Wilson played nine games for the Blues in 1943-44. Seven of Wilson's matches for Carlton were as 19th man.

## Harry Beitzel

Beitzel, who was one of the biggest names and voices in the game for three decades, died in Sydney on August 13, 2017, aged 90. With his distinctive booming voice, gregarious personality and progressive thinking, the 'Big H' is fondly remembered for his colourful radio commentary on games. Having played reserves football for Fitzroy, Beitzel first came to prominence as a senior umpire, officiating in 153 VFL games between 1948-60, including the 1955 Grand Final between Melbourne and Collingwood. But it was in the media that he thrived. Beitzel was on 3KZ for 11 years before joining 3AW. He was at the station for 17 seasons before moving to 3AK for three years. He appeared on ABC-TV, hosting the Friday night preview and Saturday night review shows, and his

interests extended to the print media as editor of *Footy Week* in the 1960s. Beitzel was the driving force behind the Galahs, a team of star VFL players who travelled to Ireland and the US to play a series of Gaelic football matches after the 1967 season. He held the position of VFL umpires' director for two seasons. In 2000, he was admitted to the MCG's Media Hall of Fame and was inducted to the Australian Football Hall of Fame in the media section in 2006.

## Drew Morphett

Morphett, one of the most respected football commentators on radio and TV for 40 years, died suddenly at his home in Melbourne on August 25, 2017, aged 69. Born in Sydney and growing up with little knowledge of Australian Football, Morphett began his career at the ABC in 1966 and later moved to Perth. He came to Melbourne and gained national prominence as the host of *The Winners* for 10 years, a program featuring edited highlights of VFL matches. When Channel Seven regained the TV rights in 1988, Morphett joined the network and stayed there for 13 seasons. He later rejoined the ABC as a commentator and was working with Perth station 6PR until his death. Morphett received an Order of Australia Medal for services to broadcasting in 2014 and was a life member of the Australian Football Media Association.

## Kevin Dynon

Regarded as one of North Melbourne's greatest players, Dynon died on September 8, 2017, aged 92. Recruited from North Colts, the solidly built centreman made his debut as a 17-year-old in 1943 and played 149 games in 12 seasons. In 1947, he became the youngest player at that time to captain North Melbourne, aged 21. Speedy, skilful and an accurate kick, he was captain for three seasons and vice-captain between 1948-51. Dynon finished in the top three of the best and fairest award on four occasions (1949, 1952, 1953, 1954) and represented Victoria eight times. He played a key role in the Kangaroos' rise to their first VFL Grand Final in 1950. He was inducted into North Melbourne's Hall of Fame in 2011.

## Bill Barbour

One of the VFL's best field umpires in the 1950s, Barbour died after a short illness on October 4, 2017, aged 93. Barbour officiated in seven finals, including the 1959 Grand Final between Melbourne and Essendon, and was the emergency field umpire in the 1958 Grand Final. He began umpiring in the VFL reserve grade in 1947 and joined the VFL senior list in 1949. He made his senior debut in 1950 and umpired 154 games until his retirement in 1959 when he was awarded life membership of the VFL Umpires Association.

## Rob Astbury

Astbury, who made his name as a trailblazing news-breaking TV journalist, died on the Gold Coast on November 9, 2017, aged 69. Born in 1948, he grew up in the Victorian country town of Avoca and played football with the local team. After starting his media career on radio, Astbury rose to prominence in the 1980s as a hard-hitting TV reporter, first with Channel 10 (formerly 0) and then with Channel Nine and Channel Seven. In a career spanning 21 years, he won 10 AFL/VFL awards, two national Penguin Awards and was twice nominated for the Logie Award for the Best News Story of the year.

## Dave Boyd

Boyd, a seven-time SANFL premiership player during a golden era in Port Adelaide's history, died on December 15, 2017, aged 90. Boyd played 222 games and kicked 183 goals between 1948 and 1960, being a key member of six consecutive premiership teams between 1954-59. The centreman won the 1956 Magarey Medal and represented South Australia on 19 occasions. He was a member of Port Adelaide's Hall of Fame and the SANFL Hall of Fame and a life member of Port Adelaide and the SANFL. After retiring as a player, Boyd became an administrator for Port Adelaide for the next three decades. He was Port Adelaide's chairman of selectors between 1962-86 and a club director between 1961-90.

## Ken Hands

Hands, who left an indelible mark on and off the field at Carlton, died on December 22, 2017, aged 91. Until his death, he had been the last surviving member of the Blues' 1945 and 1947 premiership teams. Hands was a key player in the 28-point victory over South Melbourne in the 1945 premiership decider, which infamously became known as the 'Bloodbath'. In only his 18th senior match after being recruited from North Geelong, Hands was knocked out in the second quarter but stayed on to contribute three goals. Nicknamed 'Solvol', he won the Blues' best and fairest in 1953 and during his 211 games between 1945-57, in which he booted 188 goals, he served under just two coaches – Percy Bentley and Jim Francis. After a bitter wrangle, Hands eventually took over from Francis in 1959 and coached Carlton in 114 games before being replaced by Ron Barassi at the end of the 1964 season. Hands was admitted to the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2009. Three years earlier he became a Blues Legend and was named in a forward pocket in the club's Team of the Century in 2000.

## Keith McKenzie

A star wingman with North Melbourne who went on to become a coach and respected administrator, McKenzie died after a short illness on January 8, 2018, aged 95. Recruited from North Colts, the left-footer played 130 games for the Kangaroos between 1944-51, winning the best and fairest in 1947 and being a member of the club's first Grand Final team in 1950. McKenzie, who served in the Australian Air Force in World War II, represented Victoria in seven games. Nicknamed 'Caper', he was handed the coaching reins at North for four seasons (1967-70) before accepting an offer from Ron Barassi to be his assistant at Carlton in 1971. After Barassi left the Blues, McKenzie stayed on under John Nicholls and filled in for him on three occasions. McKenzie took over as Carlton general manager in 1976 and held the position until 1979.

## Joan Hamilton

The wife of Jack Hamilton, the former Collingwood full-back who became the AFL's first chief commissioner in 1984, died on January 17, 2018, aged 88. A loyal Magpie fan, she was a great support for her husband, who died in a car accident in 1990, and was a popular figure in football circles.

