

**2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



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## AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE 124TH ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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The 2020 Grand Final was played outside Victoria for the first time, with the Gabba hosting the game, and it was the first time it was played at night.

Cover: Richmond celebrated its third flag in four seasons while Gold Coast's AFLW team was delighted with its narrow win over West Coast in round six.

Back Cover: The AFL farewelled one of the greats of the modern era when Geelong star Gary Ablett retired after the 2020 Grand Final.

**29,707**

Attendance at the first Grand Final played at the Gabba, as a night game.

**3.812M**

Television audience for the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

**1.58M**

Record Melbourne viewing audience for a Grand Final.



Richmond star Jack Riewoldt and daughter Poppy share a special moment together after the Tigers' Grand Final win.

**992,854**

2020 club  
membership

**FIVE CLUBS**

break their all-time membership record -  
Carlton, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, St Kilda  
and West Coast Eagles.

**20,849**

AFLW membership increases to 20,849,  
rising by 48.9 per cent.

Despite the COVID-19  
restrictions on  
match-day attendance,  
almost one million  
members still committed  
to their clubs in 2020.





# MAJOR AFL AWARDS



## BROWNLOW MEDAL

LACHIE NEALE  
Brisbane Lions



## NORM SMITH MEDAL

DUSTIN MARTIN  
Richmond



## COLEMAN MEDAL

TOM HAWKINS  
Geelong Cats



## NAB AFL RISING STAR

CALEB SERONG  
Fremantle



Brisbane Lions star Lachie Neale capped a dominant season with a runaway 10-vote win in the Brownlow Medal.



# MAJOR AFLW AWARDS



## NAB AFLW BEST & FAIREST

MADISON PRESPAKIS  
Carlton



## NAB AFLW LEADING GOALKICKER

CAITLIN GREISER  
St Kilda



## NAB AFLW RISING STAR

ISABEL HUNTINGTON  
Western Bulldogs



Carlton's Madison Prespakis claimed the AFLW best and fairest award in just her second season in the competition.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**RICHARD GOYDER**  
CHAIRMAN



**T**hrough 2020, the collective unity of football enabled the game to weather the biggest crisis in our history.

Our game, which has endured through World Wars and Depressions, was forced from ovals across the nation at every level by the COVID-19 pandemic, from the elite AFL and AFLW competitions, down through every step of state league, community and regional football for women and men, to our youngest girls and boys hoping to take their first steps in the game.

Separate to the heavy blows to our national and state economies, the impact on our communities with the loss of our sporting networks, and the ability to maintain our friendships and links through our love of our game, was devastating.

In this turmoil, the AFL Commission is able to report that football found a way to survive and now we can plan to thrive again, thanks to the collective effort of all within our game - players, coaches, clubs, administrators, umpires, volunteers and, above all, fans and members.

Richmond won perhaps the greatest premiership of all, coming from behind to run away from the Geelong Cats at the Gabba on October 24, in the first-ever night Grand Final, the first decider played away from Victoria and the latest premiership within a year in the game's history.

The Tigers completed back-to-back flags for the first time since the Tom Hafey era of the 1970s and three flags within four years marks them as a truly great side.

The 2020 AFLW competition could not be completed, while community football in Victoria was not able to be played when the COVID-19 lockdown hit hardest in that state, but elsewhere across the country our game refused to wither.

As the year progressed, leagues returned to the field in all other states and territories as our game worked with government and health authorities to 'stop the spread' and ensure we could play again.

Nearly one million club members made the decision to back their clubs through our hardest time, while the financial base of our game was restructured to be able to secure our position for the longer term.

The support of our game's broadcast partners and commercial partners was invaluable as we confronted significant change, but the strength of our relationships is vital as we plan for our future.

The next few years will see considerable readjustment and re-sizing as we adapt to our new circumstances, but our game goes on, we think, better than ever!

Footy will continue to find a way.

Fremantle champion  
Nat Fyfe at the 2020 Captains  
Day held at Marvel Stadium.



## Club presidents/AFL Commission emergency working group

As we faced the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, it was determined by the Commission and club presidents/chairs that a new immediacy of key decision-making ability would be required for the game to confront this crisis.

Club leaders Peter Gordon (Western Bulldogs), Jeff Kennett (Hawthorn), Eddie McGuire (Collingwood) and Andrew Pridham (Sydney Swans) joined with Commissioners Paul Bassat and Robin Bishop, Chief Executive Gillon McLachlan and myself to guide our initial steps and ensure the views of the wider competition were properly represented when major outcomes were required.

In short succession, the competition was required to consider the game's funding arrangements for our league and the majority of our clubs, our key contractual relationships with our broadcast partners and other major sponsors, our agreement with our playing group and the work required to plan how football may resume at every level at some point later in 2020.

I thank the working group for their time commitment, often on short notice to discuss major issues of importance to the game at considerable length, while also working to ensure they consulted more widely among their fellow clubs and Commissioners to represent all views.

At all times, the confidentiality of very serious matters was preserved and enabled the game to act with the flexibility and rigour required in fast-moving critical situations.

▽ Channel Seven commentators Matthew Richardson (left) and Luke Hodge share a joke before the season-opener at the MCG between Richmond and Carlton.



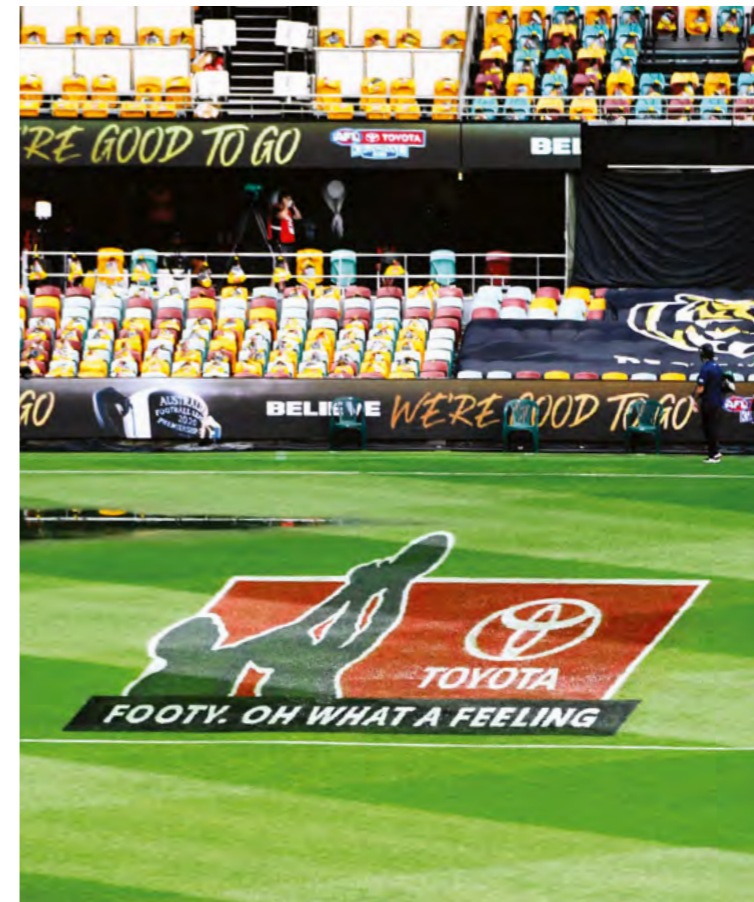
On behalf of the Commission, I thank all clubs for their willingness to support our working group in the two-month period they were engaged, often on a daily basis, and thank each member for their time, wisdom and energy.

In a typical year, our Commission may meet with club presidents/chairs on two or three occasions, but this was dramatically stepped up in 2020, to ensure full lines of communication at the senior levels of our game.

Between March and the eventual conclusion to the season at the end of October, 22 full meetings of our Commission and clubs were held to step through each part of our key decisions - be that the halt to play, preparations to return, key contractual decisions and updates, protocols to play our games, key fixture and travel/hub decisions and the altered arrangements for a first-ever finals series to be played entirely out of Victoria, including the Grand Final.

The commitment to these honorary roles by all club presidents/chairs through such a challenging and demanding season was vital in being able to secure the stability of each club and our game as a whole.

### THE COMMITMENT TO THESE HONOURARY ROLES BY ALL CLUB PRESIDENTS/CHAIRS THROUGH SUCH A CHALLENGING AND DEMANDING SEASON WAS VITAL



## Broadcast and corporate partners

The economic impact of COVID-19 was devastating and hit hard among the partners to our game, at all levels from the elite to community sporting clubs across the nation.

The AFL was privileged to be able to rely on the support of our long-standing relationships, both with our broadcast and corporate partners, as well as the many companies who support our clubs and our leagues at all levels of the game.

Key agreements with our broadcasters and many of our corporate partners were revisited in 2020 to ensure the altered needs of both ourselves and our partners could be properly met.

I wish to acknowledge our broadcast partners - the Seven Network via free-to-air, Foxtel and Fox Sports and Kayo subscription coverage, and digital partner Telstra, who all serve our members and fans so well, along with our many radio broadcasters.

And AFL Media continued to enhance its position as Australia's most popular sports digital media network.

Our major partner Toyota supports the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the Toyota AFL Finals Series and the Toyota AFL Grand Final, while we look forward to the return of the Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade in 2021. Toyota is a great friend of the AFL.

NAB is our partner of the AFLW competition and our pathway programs, while Virgin and Accor, who respectively fly our teams and accommodate our clubs around the country, are valued greatly for their support.

## Gabba hosts first-ever night Grand Final

The serious COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria through the 2020 winter required the Grand Final to be moved out of Victoria for the first time in the competition's history.

The state governments of South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales all lodged compelling bids to host the game, which was eventually awarded to Queensland for the match to be played at the Gabba, and scheduled as the first night Grand Final on October 24.

Led by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, Queensland lodged a world-class outline for the full finals series and a state-wide build-up to the game.

The Commission also wished to acknowledge the state had supported the AFL competition at the time it was most needed, with the operation of its club hubs across the southern part of the state when teams were forced out of Victoria and New South Wales.

△ The support of the AFL's corporate sponsors, including major partner Toyota, was crucial in 2020.

◁ Queensland, led by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, won the right to host the 2020 Grand Final.





## Legend of the Game, John Kennedy snr

In 2020, John Kennedy snr was elevated to Legend of the Game status - the 29th person in our game's history to be so honoured.

Due to John's advancing age, the Commission asked Chief Executive Gillon McLachlan to immediately inform Kennedy and his family when the honour was bestowed in early 2020 by the Hall of Fame selection committee.

The game was privileged to be able to celebrate his contribution before his passing later in the year.

Upon his elevation, Kennedy and his family graciously agreed to more than three hours of interviews, spread over several weeks, so that his memories and contribution to the game across some 70 years, primarily as a player and coach but also as a former Chair of the AFL Commission, were preserved for our game's history.

Congratulations are in order for the members of the 2020 Hall of Fame class - John Abley, Simon Black, Jonathan Brown, Dennis Cometti, Dean Cox, Lenny Hayes and Greg Phillips.

△ Hawthorn icon John Kennedy snr became the 29th person to be elevated to Legend status in the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

**HIS MEMORIES AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE GAME ACROSS SOME 70 YEARS ... WERE PRESERVED FOR OUR GAME'S HISTORY**



## Financial result

Revenue decreased by \$127.8m, due to reductions in broadcast and commercial revenues from the COVID-19 pandemic;

Operating expenditure increased by \$1.8m (0.4 per cent). This was due to the costs of completing the men's season in which the AFL covered the majority of match-day costs as well as the High Performance Centres clubs stayed in throughout the season. These unbudgeted costs were offset by a cost reduction across the industry, including operating expenditure, salaries and wages;

Distributions decreased by \$105.3m (28 per cent) through reductions in club and AFL Players Association distributions to offset the reduction in revenue and increased costs of running the men's season.

After all revenue, operating expenditure and distributions, the AFL group's loss for 2020 was \$22.8m, compared with a surplus of \$27.9m in 2019.

△ Fans found new ways to show support for their clubs during the COVID-affected 2020 season.

## Thank you to our players and clubs

The Toyota AFL Premiership Season fixture was regularly altered and revised through 2020 in response to changing community environments and border restrictions across the country, while many steps thought previously impossible were taken to ensure a 153-game season was completed.

The AFL acknowledges the support of its partners, and the flexibility of clubs, players, coaches and administrators to be able to deliver a season for the game's fans and members.

Our clubs and players performed superbly to undertake initiatives such as same-day interstate travel, a rolling fixture, compressed fixture periods, short-notice fixture alterations on occasions, multiple four and five-day turnarounds, mid-week double-headers, neutral state venue games, quarantine training conditions and the extensive use of High Performance Hubs for nearly all clubs at some point within the season.

## Grand Final ratings

On Grand Final day, the game attracted massive interest across the country, with a total average audience of 3.812m, comprising 2.979m metropolitan viewers and 833,000 regional viewers.

This was the most-watched Grand Final since 2016 and the Melbourne average audience of 1.58m was the highest for a Grand Final, while the Brisbane average audience of 383,000 was the highest since 2004, when the Brisbane Lions last contested a Grand Final.

## Co-operation of federal and state governments and health authorities

Through the difficulties faced to return to play, the guiding principles for the AFL Commission and Executive at all times were that our game would look after the health and wellbeing of our players and officials and adhere to all requirements of health authorities across the nation and the directives of the federal and state governments.

With our national competition, this required constant consultation and flexibility through the year, both for our administration and our clubs, and the AFL is greatly appreciative of the on-going assistance and co-operation received.

▽ The passing of former North Adelaide star and AFL Commissioner Bob Hammond was a huge loss to the game.

## 2020 NAB AFLW competition and football for women and girls

The initial spread of the COVID-19 virus was felt most keenly with the suspension of the 2020 NAB AFLW Season, when our game was forced into recess.

The Commission ruled that no premiership could be awarded, given the twin conference structure, with four teams still in contention for the flag when the season was halted.

This was a significant blow for our elite women players and, at a mid-year meeting with club presidents and chairs, the Commission subsequently determined it would not alter the AFLW CBA player contract arrangements, nor the intended format of the 2021 season.

The Seven Network extended its partnership to cover the 2023 and 2024 AFLW seasons as part of the revised broadcast arrangements and it remains our view the AFLW, and football for women and girls, is a significant growth area for the game and should continue to be strongly supported.

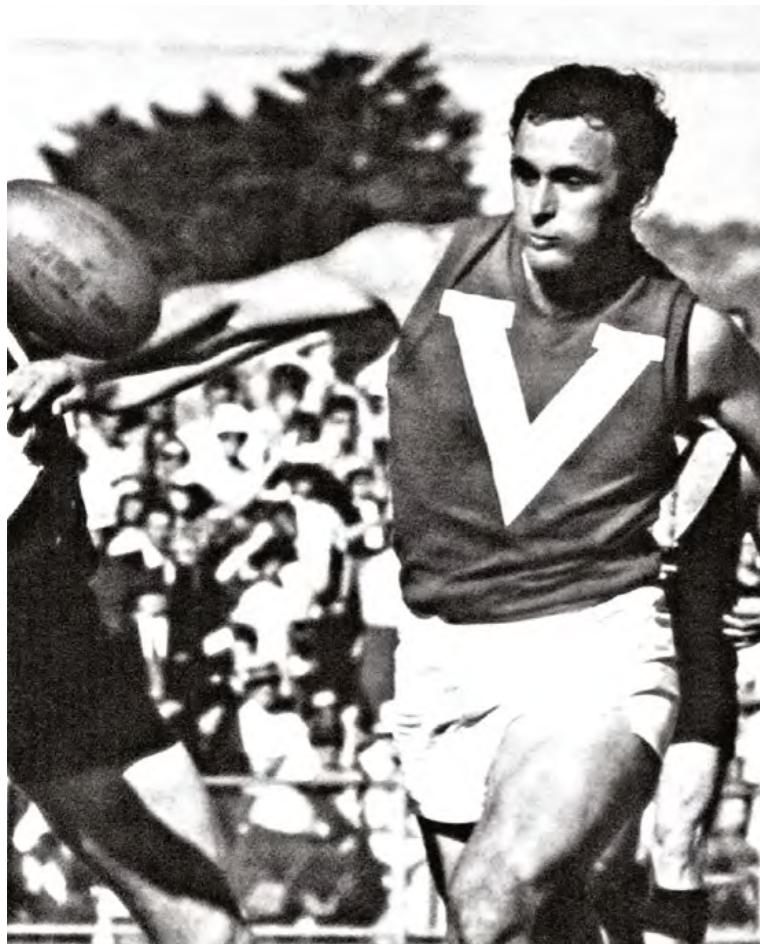
## Passing of former AFL Commissioner Bob Hammond

Former AFL Commissioner Bob Hammond passed away in 2020, after an enormous contribution to our game.

A three-time premiership player with North Adelaide and dual premiership coach with Norwood in the SANFL, Hammond's further off-field contribution to the SANFL and AFL has him recognised as one of just 16 administrators in the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

In a remarkable administrative career, he was the inaugural chairman of the Adelaide Crows, overseeing the club's only two AFL premierships, and then serving as an AFL Commissioner for a decade from 2001-11. He was also a member of the SANFL Hall of Fame and was awarded Life Membership of both the SANFL and the AFL. Bob's loss is felt by our game and his many friends in it.

**ON GRAND FINAL DAY,  
THE GAME ATTRACTED  
MASSIVE INTEREST  
ACROSS THE COUNTRY**



△ The AFLW competition and female football in general is recognised as a significant growth area for the game.

## Club membership

The extraordinary bond between our game and our fans can never be better illustrated than the commitment of nearly one million people to club membership in 2020.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 and the heavy restrictions on match-day attendance, club membership in 2020 was 992,854, just 6.1 per cent behind the all-time record of 1,057,572 in the 2019 season.

One in 26 Australians is a member of an AFL club and this loyalty was a key reason our 18 clubs were able to work through an unprecedented year.

Five of the 18 AFL clubs broke their all-time records - Carlton (67,035), Gold Coast Suns (16,236), GWS Giants (30,841), St Kilda (48,588) and the West Coast Eagles (100,776).

The West Coast Eagles exceeded 100,000 members for the first time, becoming the first non-Victorian club to top the membership table in more than a decade, while Richmond passed 100,000 members for the third year running (100,420) after becoming the first sporting club in Australian history to pass 100,000 members in 2018.

## Congratulations to AFL premier Richmond

Richmond cemented its position as the dominant side of the past four years with its third Grand Final victory, proving too strong for the Geelong Cats. Congratulations to president Peggy O'Neal and the Tigers' Board, and the club staff and players led by chief executive Brendon Gale.

The club was on the road for more than 100 days in the lead-up to its premiership success, but its relentless playing style was too good for a brave Geelong Cats outfit.

Dustin Martin now stands as one of the very great finals players in the game's history, with a third Norm Smith Medal from three attempts.

Congratulations also to Geelong, which remains a consistently strong club across the past decade, led by president Colin Carter and chief executive Brian Cook. The Cats led up to half-time of the Grand Final and in the end were only overrun in the final term as Richmond surged to a historic victory in our first-ever night Grand Final.

## THE CLUB WAS ON THE ROAD FOR MORE THAN 100 DAYS IN THE LEAD-UP TO ITS PREMIERSHIP SUCCESS

▷ The West Coast Eagles topped 100,000 members for the first time in 2020 (top), while Richmond continued its dominance of the competition with a third flag in four seasons, much to the delight of president Peggy O'Neal.



## Club presidents/chairs and my fellow Commissioners

More than any other year in recent history, a heavy thanks is owed to all who worked on behalf of our game in 2020.

While fans were greatly limited in their ability to attend games, the extraordinary levels of club membership and the sharp rise again in viewership numbers must be attributed to the powerful connection that supporters feel with their clubs.

Support that is garnered over many years, and is never taken for granted.

The AFL Commission lays out the game's strategic direction, but our bond within communities must be attributed to all those who commit their time and energy to help build our sport.

I would like to thank each board member, staff member, player, coach and volunteer from across our clubs for their contribution.

I particularly want to thank the leaders of four clubs who retired from their roles in 2020 - Colin Carter, Rob Chapman, Peter Gordon and Lindsay Tanner.

Rob Chapman, who became chairman of the Adelaide Crows in 2009, finishes his tenure as the longest-serving chair in the club's AFL history, while Essendon President Lindsay Tanner announced his retirement after five years.

Peter Gordon served the Western Bulldogs across two stints as president, first taking the role back in 1989 when his intervention saved the club in its own right, while his recent return saw a second premiership for the club and financial strength and stability for the future.

Colin Carter was also rewarded with a premiership during his decade in the role with the Geelong Cats, having previously served the game as an AFL commissioner for 15 years between 1993-2008.

△ Leaders of four clubs retired from their roles in 2020, from left, Rob Chapman (Adelaide), Colin Carter (Geelong), Peter Gordon (Western Bulldogs) and Lindsay Tanner (Essendon).

All four men provided many hours of time and dedication to their roles, while also providing valuable counsel to the commission. I wish their respective successors, Paul Brasher (Essendon), Craig Drummond (Geelong Cats), John Olsen (Adelaide Crows) and Kylie Watson-Wheeler (Western Bulldogs) respectively, every success in the role. Kylie will become the second woman to head an AFL club, following on from Peggy O'Neal at Richmond.

I wish to personally thank my fellow commissioners - Jason Ball, Paul Bassat, Robin Bishop, Professor Helen Milroy, Andrew Newbold, Gab Trainor, Simone Wilkie and Kim Williams - who all provided so much more time, advice and contribution through the difficulties of 2020.

The AFL executive and staff, led by our Chief Executive Gillon McLachlan, performed magnificently to be able to deliver a season when it appeared at times the game could be lost for a year.

I thank all our staff, past and present, for their dedication to their roles.

In conclusion, thank you again to the hundreds and thousands of members and fans around the country whose passion drives our game.

**Richard Goyder, AO**  
Chairman

# CEO'S REPORT

**GILLON McLACHLAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The combined concerted efforts of all within our game were required to protect Australian Football in 2020 and ensure its survival.

After the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, our AFL clubs, working in lock-step with the AFL Commission and Executive over many months, put aside the historic day-to-day rivalries that fire the passion across our game to share their knowledge and work to restore and save the season of the elite game for the greater good of all.

Club CEOs immediately resolved to work in collaboration to give all clubs the best opportunity to work through a quickly unfolding situation, while leaders across the industry at all levels of the game combined to prepare for a return to play at both the elite and community level, and the steps required to achieve this primary goal.

Players, coaches, umpires and administrators took steps never before taken at the elite level to ensure the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season could be resumed and then completed in circumstances previously considered unimaginable, with 16 clubs relocated at some point of the season through high-performance hubs in Queensland, as well as clubs undertaking stints in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales.

At community and grassroots level, the football community worked assiduously to stop the spread of COVID-19 and respect the directives of government and health authorities to protect the wider community. In every state bar Victoria, some level of community football was able to be played in the latter part of 2020.

Above all, the members of our AFL clubs and fans of the game across the country from grassroots to the elite committed their overwhelming support to the game, despite being unable to attend matches for the vast majority of our season.

Membership levels remained at near-record totals while fans consumed through the media in numbers not seen for many years.

All of football was needed for the game to survive in 2020, and survive we did.

From now, we focus our efforts on thriving again.

The entire football community across the country, from grassroots to the elite, committed their support to help the game survive in 2020.



“IT CROSSES  
OUR HEART  
AND UNITES  
US ALL.”



### Industry collaboration and leadership

Faced with an unprecedented collective crisis, football worked to share its key information and best practices to navigate our way through the shutdown period caused by COVID-19.

In the three months our game was forced into recess, this collaboration was vital as club CEOs met daily with the AFL Executive through the initial period to confront the massive financial ramifications facing the game. As industry costs were re-set, the game then pivoted to its return-to-play planning, as meetings eventually phased to bi-weekly and weekly upon the return of games.

Sincere thanks are extended to all clubs for their willingness to assist each other, with club-led working groups sharing key next steps for administrations across football (Greg Swann, Brisbane Lions and Ameet Bains, Western Bulldogs), membership (Brendon Gale, Richmond and Cain Liddle, Carlton) and financial (Xavier Campbell, Essendon).

For the resumption of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, a similar collegiate approach enabled the drive to return to play.

The collective knowledge of our senior coaches was represented through a working group comprising Luke Beveridge, Nathan Buckley, Alastair Clarkson, Chris Fagan, John Longmire and Adam Simpson, along with GM Football Steve Hocking and myself, for the key steps in re-preparing players to be able to resume the season after their stand-down period, mitigating against injury wherever possible and ensuring the highest possible standard of play.

In this period, discussion around match compression periods and shorter rest turnarounds and the information gathered enabled the AFL to consider all possible fixture outcomes, including the use of club player ‘hubs’, to be able to complete the season.

◀ Essendon’s message was loud and clear as Bomber favourite Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti ran on to Marvel Stadium for the round one clash against Fremantle.

### Broadcast and major corporate partners

The long-term strength of the AFL’s key relationships with our major broadcast and corporate partners was central to the game’s successful return from the COVID-19 shutdown

The AFL reached agreement with broadcast partners the Seven Network and Foxtel on a revised arrangement for 2020-22, along with signing a two-year extension for the Seven Network mid-year to cover the 2023-24 years for both the AFL and AFLW competitions.

In late December, the AFL reached a new agreement with Foxtel and Telstra to also see their coverage rights extend by two years across 2023-24.

The negotiations with each of the broadcast partners reflected the strength of the relationship between the game and its broadcast partners, as well as understanding the challenges encountered by all parties as they faced the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new extended broadcast deal will deliver \$946m overall to the AFL industry over 2023 and 2024, putting the game at all levels in a position of great strength.

I wish to personally thank our broadcast partners the Seven Network, Foxtel and Fox Footy and Telstra for their ongoing support of our game.

Naming rights partners Toyota and NAB both demonstrated strong support of their AFL and AFLW partnerships, with positive sentiment across all 43 AFL partners and a heavy AFL-team focus on maintaining regular communications.

The majority of partners continued through the year, despite their own difficulties in a challenging financial environment, to actively leverage their relationship with the game, while a number of key new agreements were finalised, which are detailed elsewhere within this report.

▽ New agreements were reached with broadcast partners in 2020, including Foxtel’s extended coverage of the AFLW for the 2023 and 2024 seasons.





## Guiding principles through COVID-19

At the first onset of COVID-19, the competition established clear guidelines for how it would deal with this unprecedented situation.

From the AFL Commission, it was stated as a core principle that 18 AFL clubs and 14 AFLW clubs would be supported, with no loss of any teams at the elite level.

A significant re-set of the game's cost base needed to be immediately undertaken, along with financial lines of credit to support cash flow, but the game would support its elite clubs.

As a community at all levels, football resolved it would always work with government and health authorities to respect and adhere to the guidelines in their respective jurisdictions - all in the game would play our role in helping to slow the spread of the virus and to ensure we flatten the curve to reduce the impact on our hospital facilities and the medical system.

Footy was not the main game in these initial months, as we moved to assist community health outcomes.

At grassroots level, the AFL and state leagues resolved to provide support and advice for community clubs on how to manage their costs and adjust to a shutdown period, knowing there would be significant changes through difficult times for many clubs and leagues at a community level.

△ The hosting of the 2020 Grand Final at the Gabba proved a reward for the people of Queensland who had supported the AFL at a time when the game needed it most.

## 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final in Queensland

The AFL Commission ratified an Executive recommendation on September 1 for the Grand Final to be played at the Gabba, once it became apparent that Victoria would be unable to host the game at the MCG due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Submissions for the game were received from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, with the AFL Executive recommendation based on:

- ▶ Safety and the best environment for all;
- ▶ Integrity and the need for uncompromised games in a high-performance environment;
- ▶ AFL fans and the engagement of existing and new supporters;
- ▶ Financial support for our game in a year where revenue has been so impacted;
- ▶ And the legacy and the long-term vision for our game.

The AFL also recognised how the Queensland Government and people of the state had supported the AFL at a time when the game needed it most with teams forced out of Victoria and then New South Wales.

As part of the hosting decision, it was agreed with the Victorian Government to extend the current contractual arrangement for the MCG as the Grand Final venue for an additional year, out to the end of 2058.

## Assistance from federal and state governments and health authorities

The AFL's social licence to return to the field and resume our season after the initial COVID-19 lockdown was reliant on working closely with government and health authorities to ensure the community's health was protected.

The AFL is greatly appreciative to all government and health authorities, both state and federal, for the assistance provided in enabling our season to be completed, often in a challenging and fast-moving environment.

Protocols for our clubs, players, officials and umpires to observe in training and on match-day, to ensure we mitigated against any spread of the disease, were developed in close consultation with key authorities to ensure the safest possible environment.

## A fast-moving environment

This was a season like no other as the second wave of COVID-19 struck the community after the resumption of the 2020 Toyota AFL premiership season.

To complete our season, initiatives never imagined previously possible were successfully undertaken and, again, the AFL thanks the support of its partners, and the flexibility of its clubs, players, coaches and administrators for undertaking initiatives such as same-day interstate travel, a rolling fixture, compressed fixture periods, short-notice fixture alterations on occasions, multiple four- and five-day turnarounds, mid-week double-headers, neutral state venue games, quarantine training conditions and the extensive use of high-performance hubs for nearly all clubs at some point within the season.

The support of our broadcast partners to adjust and respond with us was critical in ensuring fans could access our game.

Television and radio broadcast partners undertook remote calling at points through the season, enabled broadcast personnel to quarantine at times, and their support of new broadcast days and timeslots enabled the AFL to compress the fixture and not only complete the season but to do so in a way that saw extremely strong audiences tune in to watch our great game, when fans and members were heavily restricted in being able to attend on match-days.

**TO COMPLETE OUR SEASON, INITIATIVES NEVER IMAGINED PREVIOUSLY POSSIBLE WERE SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTAKEN**

▽ The Tigers again delivered on their promise from a decade ago to return to power by claiming their third premiership in the past four seasons.

## AFLW expansion - women's football

In 2020, the NAB AFLW competition expanded by four teams to include new arrivals the Gold Coast Suns, Richmond, St Kilda and the West Coast Eagles, increasing the available options for elite players by more than 100 senior list positions.

No premiership was declared for the AFLW competition following a Commission ruling as four clubs - North Melbourne, Carlton, Fremantle and Melbourne - were still in contention at the semi-final stage when the wider Australian community went into lockdown.

At a club presidents' meeting soon after the mid-year resumption of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the Commission told the industry there would be no reductions to the spend around the women's game, in planning for 2021.

## Congratulations to Richmond

Richmond won its third premiership in four seasons when it surged past the Geelong Cats in the second half of the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

Dustin Martin cemented his place as one of the great big-occasion players in our game's history with a third Norm Smith Medal from those three Tiger flags, dominating the match with four goals. Martin started the season with a best-on-ground performance in the Bushfire Relief match, displaying his wares then when surrounded by the competition's elite.

Congratulations to president Peggy O'Neal and the board, chief executive Brendon Gale and the staff and the coach and players led by Damien Hardwick and Trent Cotchin.

The Tigers have delivered on their promise from a decade ago to return to power and completed a brilliant premiership victory.



## A strong year from the Geelong Cats

Grand Final night ended in disappointment for the Geelong Cats, with their loss to Richmond, but should not detract from an outstanding year again for the club.

Since 2007, the Cats have missed the finals just once and have been consistently outstanding, doing a superb job through 2020 in dealing with many variables of travel and hub life.

Congratulations to outgoing president Colin Carter and the board, chief executive Brian Cook and the staff and the coach and players led by Chris Scott and Joel Selwood for a very strong season.

The Grand Final was the last senior game for Gary Ablett jnr, one of the greatest players in our game's history, who retires with 357 games and a glittering CV to his name.

## Sir Doug Nicholls Round

In an incredibly difficult year, the adjustments to the 2020 fixture saw an undoubted highlight with the Sir Doug Nicholls Round placed in round 13 in late August.

Two matches were played in Darwin and allowed the rare opportunity to take one of the most meaningful games of the season to a new location, with Essendon meeting Richmond in Darwin. The Welcome to Country at the Dreamtime game was another highlight, while the Heart of the Nation game was also honoured by a special Welcome to Country by the Arrrente peoples.

Matches in the round were played in the NT, Queensland, SA and WA, with the Marn Grook game relocated to Optus Stadium between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle.

▽ The Geelong Cats' Grand Final loss was a disappointing end to another outstanding year for the club, under the leadership of coach Chris Scott and captain Joel Selwood.

## Financial result

The AFL's revenue decreased by \$119.1m to \$674.8m, due to lower commercial revenues and revised broadcast rights agreements and lower commercial returns due to COVID-19 restrictions. This revenue assisted in covering the following costs:

- ▶ \$230.8m to AFL clubs;
- ▶ \$66.8m on the administration of the 2020 men's season, including match-day costs and the management of high-performance centres throughout the season;
- ▶ \$32m to game development - investment in game development was reduced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ▶ \$18.9m to the AFLPA;
- ▶ \$13.7m in women's football;
- ▶ \$11.9m to infrastructure comprising of elite and community facilities and contributions for stadia redevelopments;
- ▶ \$2.8m to corporate and social responsibility initiatives, including a contribution of \$1.35m to the AFL industry's Bushfire Relief fund.

**(IT) ALLOWED THE RARE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL GAMES OF THE SEASON TO A NEW LOCATION**

## AFL, AFL umpire and AFLW CBA discussions

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with both our player group and our umpiring group was revised to reflect the impact of COVID-19, and the AFL thanks each of the AFLPA, the player group, the AFL Umpires Association and the AFL umpires for their willingness to help clubs and the wider industry limit the potential financial losses the game faced.

Separate to immediate pay reductions, players and umpires in the AFL importantly both committed to flexible scheduling to complete the remaining 144 matches, plus finals, when the competition was halted.

At the end of the season, the AFL and AFLPA agreed to a variation for 2021 that will see a reduction in Everything Paid to Players and the AFL Players Association (EPP&A) of 10 per cent, which includes a decrease in the Total Player Payments and Additional Services Agreement Limits for 2021 of nine per cent.

- Under the new agreement for 2021:
  - ▶ The total TPP for each club will be \$12.1m and the Additional Services Agreement Limit will be \$1.09m for the 2021 season.
  - ▶ Each club must have a minimum of 37 players, with a maximum of 44 players. The primary list must have no fewer than 36 players and no more than 38 players. The maximum number of Category A rookies will be four-six (depending on the number of primary list players and with the maximum across those two lists not exceeding 42) and the maximum number of category B rookies shall be two.
  - ▶ A new minimum base salary category to be added for any player who has previously been primary-listed and is subsequently rookie-listed.
  - ▶ Payments to the AFLPA/Players that include AFLPA operating grant and player retirement fund have decreased by more than 10 per cent.
  - ▶ Funding for programs and services supporting players, including wellbeing, player development and the injury and hardship fund, remain unchanged

Given the continued uncertainty on the impact of COVID in 2021, the AFL and AFLPA have also agreed to a system for 2021 where players will share in the financial upside should actual industry football revenue exceed the AFL's current forecast and also share in a reduced amount should total industry revenue be lower than the AFL forecasts.

It was determined there should be no alteration to the AFLW CBA for 2021, due to the fact the 2020 season was not able to be completed.



△ Investment in community football will be one of the four key strategic objectives of the revised operations of the AFL.

## AFL operations restructure/staffing

The restructure of AFL operations came into effect on November 1, after considerable consultation and work across the industry through the the season.

The focus was centred on four areas of the AFL business - AFL House, Marvel Stadium, AFL State Entities and AFL Industry Club Shared Services - and how they would operate differently moving into the future.

Going forward, the revised operations of the AFL will centre on four key strategic objectives:

- ▶ Rebuilding financial strength;
- ▶ Fan-first;
- ▶ Investment in community football;
- ▶ Investment in technology.

It was devastating for the wider industry in having to confront the loss of so many roles for outstanding individuals across AFL House, our clubs, our state leagues and the community game.

At AFL House, some 20 per cent of roles were made redundant, with many good people leaving the industry.

The AFL is extremely grateful for the service and dedication of all those who were unable to continue in roles beyond 2020, due to the difficult and distressing decisions that were required to be made.

Among the AFL Executive team, AFL Executive Darren Birch left the organisation after 15 years of outstanding service while Ray Gunston transitioned to an industry advisory role in a consulting capacity. Patrick Keane continued in his role as Office of CEO but was no longer a member of the Executive team.



## State of Origin for Bushfire Relief/grants to affected clubs and regions

A State of Origin game to support bushfire-affected communities was played in front of a 51,052-strong crowd at Marvel Stadium on the eve of the season. The AFL industry fundraising activities raised \$8m, comprising \$6.4m from the initial donations and State of Origin game for the Red Cross and AFL Community Relief Fund, combined with a further \$1.6m in club-led activities.

Through 2020, these monies were distributed to affected communities and clubs, via an independent Governance Committee headed by retiring Essendon president Lindsay Tanner.

As at mid-December 2020, all 262 community football clubs in bushfire-affected areas had received an initial donation while an additional 49 grants were awarded and distributed across 72 clubs, totalling \$3.81m, in addition to \$1.4m from club-led activities. A \$1m donation was also made to the Red Cross.

The Committee continues to work on a recommendation how best to use the remaining \$2.63m balance in the fund, which will be distributed in 2021 and beyond in bushfire-affected areas.

## AFL clubs and state associations

The strong leadership of club CEOs was vital for the day-to-day direction for our industry through the many difficulties and challenges of the year.

AFL clubs and the game are fortunate to be able to call on the talented and committed leaders of our clubs, while our senior state leagues are also extremely well-served by the leadership of their boards and executive teams.

In 2020, Port Adelaide's Keith Thomas elected to finish up after more than a decade as an extremely successful CEO at the Power, while WAFL and SANFL Chief Executives Gavin Taylor and Jake Parkinson each completed their terms, having guided our key state leagues through a return to competition and successful respective strong state league Grand Finals. In early 2021, the Adelaide Crows' Andrew Fagan announced he would transition out of the club after seven years in the CEO role.

Thank you to all four for their commitment and to all club leaders for the contribution through this past year.

**ALL 262 COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CLUBS IN BUSHFIRE-AFFECTED AREAS HAD RECEIVED AN INITIAL DONATION**

▽ St Kilda, which returned to finals action for the first time since 2011, was one of five clubs to break its membership record in 2020.

## NAB/ANZ key financial support

Relationship bankers NAB and ANZ stepped forward for the AFL with lines of credit to provide urgent funds for initial cash shortfalls the AFL industry faced.

This was a crucial first step for the game to work through the COVID-19 crisis and address the initial massive financial deficit that the game faced.

AFL Commissioner Robin Bishop and AFL executives Ray Gunston and Travis Auld had central roles in accessing this funding and working with clubs in the immediate short term to reduce their costs, while the foresight of the AFL Commission under chair Richard Goyder and previous chair Mike Fitzpatrick, in supporting the strengthening of the AFL balance sheet and early purchase of Marvel Stadium, had provided the AFL with the ability to secure the debt funding.

## AFL club membership

AFL club membership reached 992,854 members in 2020 - an extraordinary display of loyalty from club members when considering the lengthy hiatus in the initial part of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the restrictions for many members around the country in being able to attend games.

The 2020 membership tally was only 6.1 per cent (64,718 members) less than the all-time record of 1,057,572 established in 2019, with five clubs breaking their records (Carlton, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, St Kilda and West Coast Eagles).

The Eagles exceeded 100,000 members for the first time and led the AFL membership tally for the first time with 100,776 members, the first time a non-Victorian club has topped the table since the Adelaide Crows in 2008.

Full detail is in our Commercial Operations report.



## Season revisions

At the outset of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, when it was apparent the game was facing serious difficulties, the following changes were approved by the AFL Commission to ensure the season could be completed, at a time when it was unknown how many months may be required to determine the premiership:

- ▶ Reduction of five rounds to a 153-match fixture with each club to play 17 games;
- ▶ Quarter lengths to be reduced to 16 minutes, with extended quarter-time and three-quarter time breaks.

## Finals ticket pricing

Ticket prices for the Toyota AFL Finals Series were frozen at 2019 prices for all finals across weeks 1-3 and the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

With the game relocated from the MCG to the Gabba, the AFL's primary approach was to protect access for club members of the competing clubs. Grand Final allocations were reduced across various industry groups to provide members of competing clubs Richmond and the Geelong Cats with 16,300 tickets (54 per cent of capacity).

△ Zoom chats throughout the industry, such as this Gold Coast Suns training meeting, became commonplace in the COVID-affected 2020 season.

## AFL Commission and Senior Executive staff

Thank you to the members of the AFL Commission, led by chairman Richard Goyder, for their unflinching support through an enormous year of challenge and change for the game. I am privileged to be able to call on such wise counsel and support in the role.

Thank you also to my senior executive team and the wider management and staff across the AFL for their efforts through 2020 to keep our game viable and strong, both on and off the field.

Gillon McLachlan  
Chief Executive Officer



# FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

**STEVE HOCKING**  
GENERAL MANAGER FOOTBALL OPERATIONS



The ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic around the country saw the AFL Football Operations Department make decisions and relevant adjustments to ensure the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was completed, while at all times prioritising the health and welfare of our players, staff and the wider community.

Strict protocols were put in place to protect players, officials, staff and the wider public, with everyone involved in the game subject to regular testing throughout the season to protect the interests of the wider game and held accountable for any breach of the protocols in place.

Upon resumption of the season, the AFL Football Operations Department, umpires and all clubs maintained a high level of agility to achieve the completion of the season through so many obstacles.

A record 83 AFL games were played in Queensland during the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season - in Brisbane (35), Gold Coast (44) and Cairns (four), including the history-making 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final at the Gabba - the first time the AFL Grand Final has been played outside of Victoria.

A large number of games were played at the Gabba and Metricon Stadium to complete the season, with a big crowd welcomed back to the preliminary final at the Gabba.



## Competition adjustments

The AFL Commission approved adjustments to the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the NAB AFL Women's Competition on March 16, just before the first impacts of COVID-19. It was decided the women's competition, with two home and away rounds still to play, would move straight to finals.

The adjustments for the AFL premiership season saw the fixture reduced to 153 matches with each club to play each other once across 17 games apiece. Quarter lengths were reduced to 16 minutes (plus time-on), first quarter and third quarter intervals increased from six to eight minutes and the half-time break remained 20 minutes. Breaks after goals were extended from 45 seconds to 60 seconds. The rules implemented before round one of the men's season enabled greater flexibility for the fixture to be compressed and allowed for greater recovery opportunities for players and umpires.

The continued spread of COVID-19 across the country saw the AFL announce on March 22 it would immediately move to suspend the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season after round one and conclude the NAB AFL Women's Competition. Given the twin conference structure of AFLW and that the finals series was not completed, the AFL Commission determined no premierships could be awarded.

## High Performance Centres

As COVID-19 took hold in some states, the AFL utilised High Performance Centres (HPCs) in Queensland for the season to continue.

At one point, 16 of the 18 AFL clubs were temporarily relocated to HPCs in Queensland, including the relocation and housing of more than 550 players, 750 staff and their families.

By season's end, many players and staff spent in excess of 100 days in a High Performance Centre.

## 2020 INITIATIVES

### Game-day

- ▶ Fixture reduced to 153 matches, with each club playing 17 games.
- ▶ Game length reduced with quarter lengths consisting of 16 minutes (plus time-on), first quarter and third quarter intervals increased from six minutes to eight minutes and the half-time break remained at 20 minutes. Breaks after goals were extended from 45 seconds to 60 seconds.
- ▶ Team selection deadlines altered before the compressed period to be submitted on the eve of the match. This remained in place until the end of the season.
- ▶ Four-into-three umpire rotations in games.
- ▶ Rolling 24-hour match review outcomes and Tribunal hearings as required.
- ▶ Full use of the AFL Review Centre remotely from Victoria for score review, match review, injury spotting and umpire assessment.

### Travel initiatives

- ▶ Same-day interstate travel for clubs and umpires.
- ▶ A combination of short haul and medium haul stays.
- ▶ Clubs and umpires committing to a hard quarantine in WA to enable matches in that state.
- ▶ Competing teams and umpires travelling together on 120 chartered flights pre and/or post-match.

### Match preparation initiatives

- ▶ Introduction of scrimmage matches for non-selected players.
- ▶ Clubs in control of who plays, how many teams are involved, length of sessions etc.

### Fixturing and broadcast initiatives

- ▶ Midweek double-headers played on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays as part of the compressed fixture. Multiple clubs played off four-day breaks.
- ▶ Short-notice fixture changes, including new state locations and/or new opponents and in some cases changes to whole rounds.
- ▶ An unbalanced fixture saw teams having played more or less games than others at equivalent points of season with byes as required.
- ▶ Neutral state venue games for promotional and crowd purposes for the first time since 1952.
- ▶ More standalone games, including Sunday night games and Fox Footy Thursday games (and more variety of timeslots).
- ▶ In-game player interviews and interviews with senior coaches at half-time.
- ▶ Limited on-ground commentary set-ups saw remote match coverage by broadcasters.

## Festivals of Footy

The fixture for rounds 9-12 saw matches played every day for 20 straight days. This compression of the fixture saw 33 matches played across Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Four-day breaks were used for the first time, with the Brisbane Lions, Collingwood, Geelong Cats, Melbourne and North Melbourne having two each, while the Adelaide Crows, Essendon, Gold Coast Suns, Port Adelaide, Richmond and St Kilda all had one short break in this fixture block.

The fixture was again compressed for rounds 14-17 and saw 31 matches played across 18 of 19 days. Matches were played in the Northern Territory, Queensland (including three in Cairns), South Australia and Western Australia in this block.

Four-day breaks were again in place with the West Coast Eagles having two, while the Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Fremantle, GWS Giants, Melbourne and St Kilda all had one four-day break.

▽ The AFL Commission has approved a number of game adjustments for the 2021 season, including a reduction of rotations from 90 to 75.

## Game adjustments for 2021

In preparation for the 2021 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the AFL Commission approved the following game adjustments:

Rotations - will decrease from 90 per match in 2020 to 75 per match in 2021.

Player standing the mark - the defending player will be pinned to the mark, with no lateral movement, and the mark cannot be handed over to a teammate or a 50m penalty will apply. No shepherding will be allowed on the mark.

Location of the mark at kick-ins - at kick-ins, the distance for the mark will increase from 10m to 15m from the centre of the kick-off line.

For the VFL competition, a further adjustment was also accepted:

Three players to be stationed inside 50m at each stoppage - a minimum of three players from each team to be stationed inside 50m - including one pair in the goalsquare. The officiating umpire will not recommence play until all players are in position.



▶ Matt Stevic achieved an outstanding milestone in 2020 when he officiated his 400th game.



## Industry pre-season schedule

Leading into 2020, the Christmas and New Year period saw the introduction of an industry-wide three-week leave period for men's programs. The objective of this break period was to declutter the pre-season schedules of clubs by streamlining the industry's requirements of its players, providing a clear training block for all clubs post-Christmas through to the start of the Marsh Community Series. This was retained ahead of the 2021 season.

## Industry mental health

The Industry Mental Health Steering Committee, chaired by AFL Commissioner Professor Helen Milroy, guided the AFL mental health team's actions during the year with a focus on how to best support the industry during the shutdown period and subsequently the 2020 AFL season.

Comprehensive mental health protocols were implemented across the League and mental health experts were redeployed across the country to support all staff and players requiring professional mental health help.

While the AFL has put in place systems to identify and respond quickly to mental health challenges, a significant part of the AFL industry's mental health strategy continues to focus squarely on prevention.

## Talent Pathway and Second-Tier Review

A review of the AFL Talent Pathway Programs and Second-Tier Football, initiated for the impact of COVID-19, will see changes for 2021 as follows:

- ▶ The AFL Talent Pathway Programs remodelled to further align and simplify the talent pathway calendar, to provide boys' and girls' programs with the same opportunities for elite development while also increasing their connection to community football.
- ▶ Programs for all AFL Talent Pathway Programs, including the NAB League Girls and Boys and the NAB AFL/AFLW National Championships, to be re-focused from under-16 and under-18 levels to under-17 and under-19 in 2021.
- ▶ Next Generation Academies (NGAs) - targeting Indigenous and multicultural players - now to be implemented by the AFL Talent Pathway Team with support from AFL clubs, while Northern Club Academies (Sydney Swans, GWS Giants, Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns) will be provided with greater responsibility and investment.
- ▶ Revised Second-Tier model for men's football to see the North Eastern Australian Football League (NEAFL) amalgamated into the Victorian Football League (VFL). The VFL competition will see 22 teams play in a 16-round season in 2021.

The AFL acknowledges and thanks the contribution and collaboration from all those that were involved in the review and its outcomes.

- ▶ AFL Talent Committee - Luke Beveridge, Alastair Clarkson, Chris Fagan, Ned Guy, Damien Hardwick, Jason McCartney and Stephen Wells;
- ▶ All 18 AFL club list managers, club GMs football, coaches, high performance staff;
- ▶ SANFL, WAFL, NEAFL, VFL club presidents and/or CEOs;
- ▶ AFL state bodies, AFL national and regional Talent staff
- ▶ AFL Players Association.

## AFL Review Centre

The AFL's score review system, match review, concussion spotting and umpire review process were centralised in the newly developed AFL Review Centre (ARC) located within Marvel Stadium for the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

This enabled the pool of score review officials and Hawk-Eye operators to be reduced to a small number of individuals (five SROs and four operators) to consistently operate all AFL matches, compared with the larger group spread around the country in 2019 (17 SROs and 18 operators), improving decisional accuracy and advancing operations across all functional areas.

The ARC also helped streamline the process of the Match Review Officer to only view incidents that required attention, allowed an independent medical examiner to identify any potential concussion-related incidents in real time and flag these with club doctors where required, and gave the national field umpires independent and in-depth umpire analysis for all of their decision-making, with performance assessments being provided within 24 hours of a match.

Due to the operational challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the ARC also enabled selected umpire coaches and match officials to perform their jobs remotely, which proved to be an additional benefit.

The scope of the ARC, powered by RMIT University, was also expanded to also serve as the central hub for the operations and broadcast of the 2020 NAB AFL Women's Draft, the 2020 AFL Trade Period and the 2020 NAB AFL Draft.



## Competition Committee

The AFL Competition Committee serves as a guide around decision-making for the AFL Commission and AFL Executive on key aspects of the future direction of the AFL competition.

GWS Giants captain Stephen Coniglio joined the Committee ahead of its first meeting for 2020 as a representative of the AFL playing group. 2020 members were:

- ▶ **Club board members** - Colin Carter (Geelong Cats), Eddie McGuire (Collingwood), Peggy O'Neal (Richmond), Andrew Ireland (Sydney Swans).
- ▶ **Club CEOs** - Andrew Fagan (Adelaide Crows), Justin Reeves (Hawthorn).
- ▶ **Club coach** - Chris Fagan (Brisbane Lions).
- ▶ **Club football managers** - Chris Davies (Port Adelaide), Craig Vozzo (West Coast Eagles).
- ▶ **Current AFL players** - Patrick Dangerfield (AFLPA president/Geelong Cats), Stephen Coniglio (GWS Giants).
- ▶ **AFL Players Association** - Brett Murphy (General Manager Player and Stakeholder Relations).
- ▶ **AFL representatives** - Steve Hocking (Executive General Manager Football Operations, chair), Jason Ball (AFL Commissioner), Nicole Livingstone (Head of Women's Football), Kylie Rogers (Executive General Manager Customer and Commercial), Rob Auld (General Manager AFL Competitions).

▽ GWS youngster Tom Green shows his kicking style at a community camp in Wagga Wagga.

## Hall of Fame

The 2020 Australian Football Hall of Fame was held as a televised event across four evenings from June 1-4 with a Legend elevation, six players and one media commentator inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame to recognise their stellar contribution to our game.

The late John Kennedy snr, a Hall of Fame member, was elevated to Legend status - the 29th Legend of the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

Inducted as new members of the Hall of Fame were: John Abley, Simon Black, Jonathan Brown, Dean Cox, Dennis Cometti, Lenny Hayes and Greg Phillips.

## Marsh Community Series

The 2020 Marsh Community Series saw clubs scheduled to play two matches each as part of the pre-season. Australia-wide insurance broker Marsh again partnered with the AFL for the pre-season competition, with a primary focus on regional and suburban venues leading into the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

In 2020, games were played in Blacktown (NSW), Wagga Wagga (NSW), Gold Coast (Qld), Burpengary (Qld), Noarlunga (SA), Whyalla (SA), Hobart (Tas), Launceston (Tas), Moorabbin (Vic), Wangaratta (Vic), Carlton (Vic), Colac (Vic), Cranbourne (Vic), Docklands (Vic), Morwell (Vic), Joondalup (WA), Lathlain (WA) and Mandurah (WA).

The game between the West Coast Eagles and Essendon was moved from February 28 to February 27 in order to facilitate the State of Origin for Bushfire Relief Match.

All matches were televised live on Fox Footy as well as on the AFL Live app.

## AFL State of Origin for Bushfire Relief double-header



The State of Origin for Bushfire Relief Match was announced on January 9 to raise funds for recovery efforts following the 2019-20 Australian bushfire season.

Two representative sides, Victoria and the All-Stars, played at Marvel Stadium on February 28 with all proceeds from tickets sales and any additional donations going into a Community Relief Fund set up by the AFL to support the local communities in fire-affected areas. The game was played as a double-header with the NAB AFL Women's round four match between Collingwood and Melbourne.

Richmond coach Damien Hardwick led Victoria and was joined by Robert Harvey, Dean Solomon and Adam Kingsley as assistants while Sydney coach John Longmire led the All-Stars with Stuart Dew, Michael Voss, Mark McVeigh, Joel Corey and Dean Cox as assistants.

Richmond captain Trent Cotchin and Fremantle captain Nat Fyfe were named to captain Victoria and the All-Stars respectively. Dustin Martin was named best-on-ground with Victoria winning by 46 points in front of a crowd of 51,052 - the largest crowd ultimately for any game played in 2020.

The double-header supported the \$2.5m donated by the AFL, its 18 clubs and AFL/AFLW players through the AFL Players Association, to support communities impacted by the bushfires across Australia. A donation of \$1m went towards immediate relief efforts on the ground through the Australian Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund with a further \$1.5m contributed into the Community Relief Fund that directly supported local football clubs and families across the country.

▽ AFLW players Maddison Gay and Brittany Bonnici were joined by AFL counterparts Patrick Cripps and Bacher Houli to promote the Bushfire Relief Match.

## Goal and Mark of the Year

Collingwood's Josh Daicos was named as the winner of the Goal of the Year while Carlton's Sam Walsh was named as the winner of the Rebel Mark of the Year Award.

## Umpiring

The AFL Umpiring Department played a key role in ensuring the progression of the season, managing multiple logistical challenges and obstacles to complete the season. The commitment to complete the season saw all umpires moving states and spending extended amounts of time in High Performance Centres and hubs across the country.

The AFL was greatly appreciative of the efforts of all field, boundary and goal umpires across the season.

In a selection of games across rounds two-five, there were four field umpires rotating in and out of the three on-field umpiring positions with rotations between umpires made between quarters. Implemented during the 2019 premiership season, the 'four-into-three' system ensured all senior-listed umpires were game-ready given the interrupted start to the season and the absence of second-tier football across the country, and allowed for the accommodation of an evolving fixture.

In early April 2020, the AFL and the AFL Umpires Association reached an agreement that saw umpires take a salary reduction of 50 per cent to help limit the game's financial losses and to ensure the AFL season was able to continue once the relevant government approvals were granted.

### Grand Final Umpires:

**Field:** Matt Stevic, Simon Meredith, Craig Fleer  
**Emergency:** Rob Findlay

**Boundary:** Michael Marantelli, Ian Burrows,  
Matthew Konetschka, Matthew Tomkins

**Emergency:** Christopher Gordon

**Goal:** Matthew Dervan, Steven Piperno

**Emergency:** Steven Axon



**THE DOUBLE-HEADER SUPPORTED THE \$2.5M DONATED BY THE AFL, ITS 18 CLUBS AND AFL/AFLW PLAYERS THROUGH THE AFL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION**

## 2020 Milestones

### 400 AFL matches

Matt Stevic (Field)

### 350 AFL matches

Dean Margetts (Field), Shaun Ryan (Field)

### 300 AFL matches

Nathan Doig (Boundary), Ian Burrows (Boundary)

### 200 AFL matches

Matthew Tomkins (Boundary), Tim Morrison (Boundary), Stephen Williams (Goal)

### Boundary Umpiring Games Record

Mark Thomson (Boundary) officiated his 405th game in round four and ended the season on 418 games.

### All-Australian Umpires

Matt Stevic (Field)  
Matthew Tomkins (Boundary)  
Matthew Dervan (Goal)

### Retirees/Departures

Shaun Ryan  
350 matches, 41 finals, seven Grand Finals,  
twice All-Australian

## Match Review

The Match Review model of a single decision-maker continued in 2020, with Match Review Officer Michael Christian assessing reportable incidents from all AFL and AFLW matches.

The AFL Commission approved changes to the Tribunal process for the 2020 AFL and AFLW seasons:

- ▶ The chairperson communicate Tribunal outcomes with a verbal explanation outlining the reasons for the decision, developed in conjunction with the jury;
- ▶ Tribunal proceedings to be simplified for challenges to financial sanctions, where a single legally-trained Jury member adjudicates the matter on the basis of written submissions only;
- ▶ The MRO to classify intentional off-ball high strikes one grade higher, to adequately punish offenders;
- ▶ A 24-hour turnaround to be implemented across all AFL matches in 2020 (not applicable for AFLW);
- ▶ Strengthened guidelines in relation to repeat offenders being directly referred to the Tribunal to disincentivise further offences;
- ▶ Guidelines in relation to upgrading impact based on the potential to cause serious injury clarified, including when the victim player should not reasonably be expecting/is prepared for contact;
- ▶ A stricter adjudication of melees for third and subsequent players who contribute to their escalation, particularly at quarter breaks;
- ▶ Tripping added as a fixed-financial offence to allow the MRO to charge intentional trips with negligible impact.

Changes made to the operation and governance of the AFL Tribunal for the 2020 season also saw the roles of the Match Review Officer and the AFL Tribunal governed separately. The revised model saw the Tribunal process managed by the AFL Legal Department.

Following round two of the men's season, the AFL made an amendment to the AFL Tribunal Guidelines relating to Rough Conduct (Dangerous Tackles) to ensure that the potential of a dangerous tackle to cause injury could be taken into account by the MRO when grading the consequence of an incident.

Through the compressed phase of the 2020 men's season, the Match Review Officer sat daily to immediately assess key incidents from the previous day's games.

## Injury Report

The 2019 AFL Injury Survey Report stated the overall injury incidence, prevalence and recurrence rates had remained relatively stable when compared to recent years.

The injury incidence (number of new injuries per club per season) in 2019 was 37.9 compared with 39.1 in 2018, and injury prevalence (number of missed matches per club per season) in 2019 was 168.2 compared with 163.5 in 2018.

Hamstring strains remain the most common injury in the AFL with an incidence of 5.1 new injuries per club, and the most common cause of matches missed with 18.5 matches missed per club. These figures have returned to levels observed in previous years after a spike in incidence and prevalence of hamstring injuries in 2018, which saw 6.3 new injuries per club with 25.2 matches missed per club.

The AFL has observed that concussion incidence (whether a match was missed or not) remains relatively stable compared with previous years, with 6.5 per 1000 player hours in 2019 compared with 7.5 in 2018. However, the number of matches missed due to concussion continues to increase with 8.0 matches missed per club per season in 2019 compared with 5.4 in 2018. This reflects an ongoing conservative management approach.

The results of the report have a direct impact on the AFL's investment into injury research across all levels of the game, from the AFL competition to grassroots football.

**THE NUMBER OF MATCHES MISSED DUE TO CONCUSSION CONTINUES TO INCREASE... THIS REFLECTS AN ONGOING CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

▶ Port Adelaide's Brad Ebert is helped from the ground after being concussed in the preliminary final against Richmond.



## 2020 TRIBUNAL STATS

|  | 2017          | 2018            | 2019           | 2020           |
|--|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Total MRO charges</b>                                     | 160           | 272             | 188            | 207            |
| <b>Number of players accepting prescribed penalty (%)</b>    | 155 (98%)     | 245 (93%)       | 169 (92%)      | 181/204        |
| <b>Number of players accepting prescribed suspension (%)</b> | 39 (93%)      | 22 (66%)        | 16 (57%)       | 14/23          |
| <b>Tribunal hearings</b>                                     | 5             | 27              | 19             | 26             |
| <b>Direct Tribunal referrals</b>                             | 2             | 12              | 4              | 3              |
| <b>Number of charges upheld at Tribunal (%)</b>              | 2 (67%)       | 9 (60%)         | 10 (66%)       | 16/23          |
| <b>Number of charges not sustained at Tribunal (%)</b>       | 1 (33%)       | 5 (33%)         | 1 (7%)         | 6/23           |
| <b>Number of charges downgraded at Tribunal (%)</b>          | 0 (0%)        | 1 (7%)          | 4 (27%)        | 2/23           |
| <b>Number of players suspended</b>                           | 38            | 36              | 26             | 21             |
| <b>Matches lost through suspension</b>                       | 66            | 64              | 28             | 30             |
| <b>Average suspension length in matches</b>                  | 1.53          | 1.68            | 1.04           | 1.43           |
| <b>Longest suspension in matches</b>                         | 6             | 8               | 2              | 4              |
| <b>Appeals</b>   | 1             | 2               | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Appeals upheld</b>  | 1             | 1               | 0              | 1              |
| <b>Appeals dismissed</b>                                     | 0             | 1               | 1              | 0              |
| <b>Classifiable offences</b>                                 | 122           | 113             | 107            | 112            |
| <b>Low-level classifiable offences (\$)</b>                  | 80 (\$89,000) | 78 (\$161,000)  | 82 (\$178,000) | 88 (\$107,500) |
| <b>Fixed financial sanctions (\$)</b>                        | 37 (\$50,500) | 150 (\$209,000) | 78 (\$106,000) | 92 (\$62,250)  |
| <b>Intentional charges</b>                                   | 60            | 44              | 45             | 23             |
| <b>Careless charges</b>                                      | 62            | 69              | 62             | 87             |

# AFL WOMEN'S

**NICOLE LIVINGSTONE OAM**  
HEAD OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL



A standout 2020 NAB AFLW season was in full flight when COVID-19 took hold and state border restrictions were announced. It was shattering for the competition to be forced into recess.

No premiership was declared for the AFLW competition following a Commission ruling, as four clubs were still in contention at the semi-final stage when the wider Australian community went into lockdown - North Melbourne, Carlton, Fremantle and Melbourne.

At subsequent AFL Commission meetings in 2020, the clear view was football for women and girls was a significant growth area for the game and should not suffer any further due to COVID-19.

At a club presidents' meeting soon after the mid-year resumption of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the Commission told the industry there would be no reductions to the spend around the women's game, in planning for 2021.

The AFL remains grateful to those partners who have continued to support women's football. NAB, the inaugural partner of the AFLW, has been a partner of pathway programs for 19 years and a principal partner for football for women and girls as the game has expanded.

In 2020, the NAB AFLW competition expanded by four teams to include new arrivals the Gold Coast Suns, Richmond, St Kilda and the West Coast Eagles, expanding the available options for elite players by more than 100 senior list positions.

**'IT IS THE COMMISSION'S VIEW THAT IT IS CRITICAL AT THIS JUNCTURE TO PROVIDE CLARITY TO THE AFLW CLUBS AND PLAYERS BY DEMONSTRATING OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AND THE NAB AFLW COMPETITION.'**

Richard Goyder, AFL Commission Chair

▶ St Kilda was one of four new clubs that took to the field to boost the AFLW competition in 2020.





### Father-Daughter selections

Three players were confirmed as AFLW Father/Daughter selections in the lead-in to the 2020 NAB AFLW Draft.

- ▶ **Tarni Brown (Collingwood)**, daughter of Gavin (254 games, 1987-2000), taken at selection No. 19;
- ▶ **Alice Burke (St Kilda)**, daughter of Nathan (323 games, 1987-2003), taken at selection No. 24;
- ▶ **Amy Smith (North Melbourne)**, daughter of Shaun (47 games 1987-92, along with 62 games Melbourne, 1995-98), taken at selection No. 55.

### AFLW Competition Committee

The AFLW Competition Committee met on four occasions in 2020, to provide guidance to the AFL Commission and Executive around major issues affecting the women's game. The early closure to the 2020 season and preparations for how the 2021 season may be conducted were primary issues, along with welfare issues for elite AFLW players and the operations of the clubs and the wider competition.

From the time the initial committee was first appointed, the 2020 year saw the first changes in representation, with the retirements of Kara Antonio, Debbie Lee, Cain Liddle and Alan McConnell, being replaced by Alicia Eva, Brendon Gale, Alicia Janz and Diana Taylor.

### AFLW corporate support

The continued growth of football for women and girls, and the expansion of the AFLW in 2020 with the addition of four new teams, has been achieved with the support of outstanding partners for the game.

We welcomed Toyota, Coles and BHP to the AFLW family to support women's football and enable re-investment into the community system of volunteers, administrators and fans driving the game at all levels.

Cotton On, Thrifty, AAMI and LINX Cargo Care Group partnered with the AFLW game, while Special K and Chemist Warehouse extended their partnerships through to 2022. In a year like no other, we saw strong commitment from our AFLW partners who were able to innovate how they leveraged their partnerships, none more so than NAB, our premier partner.

◀ A beaming Mua Laloifi embraces teammate Nicola Stevens after Carlton's round three win over the Western Bulldogs.

### AFLW/BHP partnership

A new three-year partnership with BHP and the AFL was announced in the lead-up to the 2020 NAB AFLW season. The 'Game Changer' partnership focuses on creating a positive impact in the area of gender diversity and equality, reflecting BHP's and the AFLW's shared ambition, advocacy and journey in this space across sport and business in Australia.

With specific focus on creating more opportunities for women to play, coach and umpire the game, through seven key initiatives:

- ▶ Player development managers at the 14 AFLW clubs;
- ▶ A BHP Think Big Leadership Forum for all AFLW players;
- ▶ The BHP AFL Women's Coaching Academy;
- ▶ The BHP AFL Female Umpiring Academy;
- ▶ An annual gender equality roundtable;
- ▶ A Female Football Community Coach of the Year Award;
- ▶ Development of National Female Community Football Guidelines.

### AFLW Finals Series

The premierships were not able to be awarded for the 2020 AFLW competition, as the COVID-19 pandemic quickly unfolded. At the time, one week of finals matches was able to be completed, after a change to the competition saw the top four teams from each conference qualify for finals.

North Melbourne, the GWS Giants, the Brisbane Lions and the Gold Coast Suns qualified from Conference A, with Fremantle, Carlton, Melbourne and Collingwood qualifying from Conference B.

North Melbourne defeated Collingwood, Carlton defeated the Brisbane Lions, Fremantle defeated the Gold Coast Suns and Melbourne defeated the GWS Giants in week one of finals.

▽ North Melbourne chose Amy Smith as a Father/Daughter selection in the 2020 NAB AFLW Draft.



## 2020 Toyota AFLW All-Australian team

Melbourne 2019 best and fairest winner Karen Paxman was named captain of the Toyota AFL Women's All-Australian team, while 2018 AFL Women's Best and Fairest and premiership player Emma Kearney (Kangaroos) was appointed vice-captain.

Paxman and Kearney, as four-time All-Australians, also created history becoming the only players to have gained selection in the All-Australian team every year since the inception of the NAB AFL Women's competition in 2017.

A total of 11 debutants were named in the team: Sarah Allan (Adelaide Crows), Libby Birch (Melbourne), Isabel Huntington (Western Bulldogs), Jaimee Lambert (Collingwood), Olivia Purcell (Geelong Cats), Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda), Kate Hore (Melbourne), Sharni Layton (Collingwood), Kalinda Howarth (Gold Coast Suns), Alyce Parker (GWS Giants) and Ash Riddell (North Melbourne).

▽ The Western Bulldogs' Isabel Huntington polled 34 votes to claim the NAB AFLW Rising Star award.

## NAB AFLW Rising Star

The Western Bulldogs' Isabel Huntington claimed victory in the NAB AFLW Rising Star award with 34 votes to finish ahead of St Kilda young guns Caitlin Greiser (30) and Georgia Patrikios (24) and Gold Coast's Kalinda Howarth (also 24).

After an injury-interrupted start to Huntington's AFLW career, 2020 was a standout year for the 21-year-old.

Under the guidance of new Western Bulldogs coach Nathan Burke, Huntington moved from the forward line into defence, where she was a force. These were the weekly nominations:

**Round 1: Georgia Patrikios** (St Kilda, 23 votes),

**Lucy McEvoy** (Carlton, one vote).

**Round 2: Jesse Wardlaw** (Brisbane Lions, five votes), **Roxanne Roux** (Fremantle, one vote).

**Round 3: Kalinda Howarth** (Gold Coast Suns, 24 votes),

**Caitlin Greiser** (St Kilda, 30 votes).

**Round 4: Gabby Newton** (Western Bulldogs),

**Grace Egan** (Carlton, two votes).

**Round 5: Charlotte Wilson** (Carlton), **Olivia Vesely** (St Kilda).

**Round 6: Isabel Huntington** (Western Bulldogs, 34 votes), **Tait Mackrill** (GWS Giants).

## 2020 Toyota AFLW All-Australian team

**Backs:** Sarah Allan (Adelaide Crows), **Kate Lutkins** (Brisbane Lions)

**Half-backs:** Kerryn Harrington (Carlton),

**Libby Birch** (Melbourne), **Isabel Huntington** (Western Bulldogs)

**Centres:** Emma Kearney (North Melbourne, vice-captain),

**Kiara Bowers** (Fremantle), **Jaimee Lambert** (Collingwood)

**Half-forwards:** Olivia Purcell (Geelong Cats),

**Gemma Houghton** (Fremantle), **Jasmine Garner** (North Melbourne)

**Forwards:** Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda), **Kate Hore** (Melbourne)

**Followers:** Sharni Layton (Collingwood),

**Karen Paxman** (Melbourne, captain), **Madison Prespakis** (Carlton)

**Interchange:** Kalinda Howarth (Gold Coast Suns),

**Alyce Parker** (GWS Giants), **Tayla Harris** (Carlton),

**Ash Riddell** (North Melbourne), **Anne Hatchard** (Adelaide Crows)

**Captain:** Karen Paxman

**Vice-captain:** Emma Kearney

## Mark and Goal of the Year

Rebecca Privitelli (GWS Giants) won the 2020 AFLW Mark of the Year Award and Kate Hore (Melbourne) won the 2020 AFLW Coates Hire Goal of the Year Award.

## Leading Goalkicker

Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda) won the 2020 AFLW Leading Goalkicker Award, ending the home and away season with 10 goals.



## AFLW Best and Fairest

Carlton midfielder Madison Prespakis won the 2020 AFLW Best and Fairest in just her second season.

Prespakis, who has won the Blues' best and fairest in both her senior seasons, polled 15 votes from six games, to finish clear of Fremantle's Kiara Bowers (12 votes) and 2018 winner, North Melbourne's Emma Kearney (11 votes).

Prespakis averaged more than 21 disposals a game, having been selected at pick three by Carlton in the 2018 NAB AFLW Draft.

| 2020 AFLW Best and Fairest                  | Votes |
|---|-------|
| 1 <b>Madison Prespakis</b> (Carlton)        | 15    |
| 2 <b>Kiara Bowers</b> (Fremantle)           | 12    |
| 3 <b>Emma Kearney</b> (North Melbourne)     | 11    |
| 4 <b>Anne Hatchard</b> (Adelaide Crows)     | 10    |
| 5 <b>Jenna Bruton</b> (North Melbourne)     | 10    |
| 6 <b>Karen Paxman</b> (Melbourne)           | 9     |
| 7 <b>Brittany Bonnici</b> (Collingwood)     | 7     |
| 8 <b>Georgia Patrikios</b> (St Kilda)       | 7     |
| 9 <b>Jaimee Lambert</b> (Collingwood)       | 7     |
| 10 <b>Monique Conti</b> (Richmond)          | 7     |
| 11 <b>Alyce Parker</b> (GWS Giants)         | 6     |
| 12 <b>Cora Staunton</b> (GWS Giants)        | 6     |
| 13 <b>Dana Hooker</b> (West Coast)          | 6     |
| 14 <b>Elle Blackburn</b> (Western Bulldogs) | 6     |



## Competition special assistance

Richmond and West Coast were each provided with competition assistance after making applications to the AFLW List Committee following the 2020 season.

Richmond was awarded an additional selection at the end of round one (No. 15), which was required to be on-traded.

West Coast was awarded an additional selection at the end of round one (No. 16), which was required to be on-traded.



▷ Carlton star Madison Prespakis (top right) won the 2020 AFLW Best and Fairest in just her second season, beating Fremantle's Kiara Bowers (right) by three votes.



▷ Northern Knights star Ellie McKenzie was selected by Richmond with the No. 1 pick in the 2020 NAB AFLW Draft.



## AFLW Trade Period

The following players were traded in the 2020 AFLW Trade Period:

- ▶ **Tayla Bresland** from Fremantle to West Coast.
- ▶ **Grace Campbell** from Richmond to North Melbourne.
- ▶ **Harriett Cordner** from Melbourne to Richmond.
- ▶ **Sarah D'Arcy** from Collingwood to Richmond.
- ▶ **Sarah Dargan** from Collingwood to Richmond.
- ▶ **Alison Drennan** from St Kilda to the Gold Coast Suns.
- ▶ **Abbey Green** from North Melbourne to Collingwood.
- ▶ **Madeleine Guerin** from Melbourne to Carlton.
- ▶ **Charlotte Hammans** from the Gold Coast Suns to Carlton.
- ▶ **Sarah Hosking** from Carlton to Richmond.
- ▶ **Bianca Jakobsson** from Melbourne to St Kilda.
- ▶ **Katie Lynch** from Collingwood to the Western Bulldogs.
- ▶ **Aisling McCarthy** from the Western Bulldogs to West Coast.
- ▶ **Hannah Munyard** from the Adelaide Crows to the Western Bulldogs.
- ▶ **Aliesha Newman** from Melbourne to Collingwood.
- ▶ **Elise O'Dea** from Melbourne to Carlton.
- ▶ **Jess Sedunary** from St Kilda to the Adelaide Crows.
- ▶ **Katherine Smith** from Melbourne to the GWS Giants.
- ▶ **Taylor Smith** from the Gold Coast Suns to the Brisbane Lions.
- ▶ **Jessica Trend** from North Melbourne to Fremantle.
- ▶ **Jayde Van Dyk** from Carlton to St Kilda.
- ▶ **Lisa Whitely** from the GWS Giants to the Adelaide Crows.

## 2020 NAB AFLW Draft (First Round)

The 2020 NAB AFLW Draft was held in a virtual format, with clubs participating via Microsoft Teams video conference due to the continuing community restrictions in place in parts of Australia in October 2020, and broadcast live from the AFL Media studios.

| No. | Player                | Selected by      | Club                   |
|-----|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1   | Ellie McKenzie        | Richmond         | Northern Knights       |
| 2   | Jessica Fitzgerald    | Western Bulldogs | Northern Knights       |
| 3   | Isabella Lewis        | West Coast       | Claremont              |
| 4   | Teah Charlton         | Adelaide Crows   | South Adelaide         |
| 5   | Alyssa Bannan         | Melbourne        | Northern Knights       |
| 6   | Tyanna Smith          | St Kilda         | Dandenong Stingrays    |
| 7   | Annie Bradfield       | Gold Coast Suns  | Bond University        |
| 8   | Zimmerlei Farquharson | Brisbane Lions   | Yeronga South Brisbane |
| 9   | Tarni Evans           | Brisbane Lions   | Queanbeyan Tigers      |
| 10  | Darcy Moloney         | Geelong Cats     | Geelong Falcons        |
| 11  | Sarah Hartwig         | Western Bulldogs | Sandringham Dragons    |
| 12  | Mimi Hill             | Carlton          | Oakleigh Chargers      |
| 13  | Bella Eddy            | North Melbourne  | Sandringham Dragons    |
| 14  | Sarah Verrier         | Fremantle        | Peel Thunder           |



◁ Tarni Brown was one of three Father/Daughter selections in 2020, and follows in the footsteps of former Magpie skipper Gavin Brown.

# BROADCASTING

## TRAVIS AULD

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND  
GENERAL MANAGER OF CLUBS AND BROADCASTING



Strong relationships with the AFL's broadcast partners, stretching across many years, were vital in the game being able to effectively manage the remarkable requirements needed to complete the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

After the season was initially called to a halt at the end of round one in late March, the AFL and the Seven Network and Foxtel re-negotiated a revised broadcast agreement to provide for a reduced 17-round home and away season and then were in almost daily contact in the ensuing months when football was able to resume, with the many demands of completing the most challenging season in the game's history.

The fixture was regularly altered and revised through 2020, in response to changing community environments and border restrictions across the country, while many steps thought previously impossible were taken to ensure a 153-game season was completed.

The AFL acknowledges the support of its partners, and the flexibility of its clubs, players, coaches and administrators, to be able to deliver a season for the game's fans and members, undertaking initiatives such as same-day interstate travel, a rolling fixture, compressed fixture periods, short notice fixture alterations on occasions, multiple four and five-day turnarounds, mid-week double-headers, neutral state venue games, quarantine training conditions and the extensive use of High Performance Hubs for nearly all clubs at some point within the season.

The support of our broadcast partners to adjust and respond with us was critical in ensuring fans could access our game.

Television and radio broadcast partners undertook remote calling at points through the season, enabled broadcast personnel to quarantine at times, and their support of new broadcast days and timeslots enabled the AFL to compress the fixture and, not only complete the season, but do so in a way that saw extremely strong audiences tune in to watch our great game.

Gold Coast Suns youngster Izak Rankine excited fans with some freakish goals in 2020.



**Toyota AFL Premiership Season**

More than 77 million viewers across Australia tuned into the 153 televised home and away games, with the average audience per game up 14 per cent compared with last season. The Seven Network's national average audience was up 12 per cent, with its average metro audience up 14 per cent. The Brisbane average free-to-air television audience was up 32 per cent on 2019, confirming the increasing interest in AFL in Queensland, while Victorians turned to football throughout with average FTA audiences up 13 per cent. Foxtel's subscription-based television numbers increased 19 per cent on 2019, while the Foxtel Group's streaming audiences were up 200-plus per cent, led by the fast-growing Kayo.



▽ Due to the shortened season, there was only one Western Derby clash in 2020 which saw West Coast defeat Fremantle by 30 points in round seven at Optus Stadium.

**Toyota AFL Finals Series**

The Toyota AFL Finals Series attracted a cumulative average audience of 15,976,197, including the Grand Final attracting an average TV audience of 3,858,698. The Grand Final audience was 30 per cent up on the 2019 Grand Final and the highest since 2016. Audiences were particularly strong in Victoria and Queensland. Melbourne's average audience of 1.58m was its highest ever for an AFL Grand Final, while the overall average audience of 1.84m in Victoria was 50 per cent up on 2019. Brisbane's average audience of 383,206 was the highest Grand Final audience in Brisbane since 2004 and the highest for a Grand Final not involving the Brisbane Lions. Sydney's average audience of 416,779 was the highest figure in 20 years for a Grand Final not involving the Sydney Swans.



**MOST WATCHED GAMES FOR 2020**

| Match                  | Round    | Timeslot       | Average TV audience |
|------------------------|----------|----------------|---------------------|
| Collingwood v Richmond | Round 2  | Thursday night | 1,629,190           |
| Richmond v Carlton     | Round 1  | Thursday night | 1,365,290           |
| Geelong v Hawthorn     | Round 2  | Friday night   | 1,284,740           |
| Geelong v Collingwood  | Round 7  | Thursday night | 1,149,707           |
| Geelong v Richmond     | Round 17 | Friday night   | 1,144,809           |

**MOST WATCHED GAMES BY MARKET**

| Market | Match                    | Round    | Timeslot         | Average TV audience |
|--------|--------------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|
| VIC    | Collingwood v Richmond   | Round 2  | Thursday night   | 796,322             |
| SA     | Port Adelaide v Adelaide | Round 2  | Saturday night   | 200,584             |
| WA     | Fremantle v West Coast   | Round 7  | Sunday night     | 328,029             |
| NSW    | Sydney v Essendon        | Round 2  | Sunday afternoon | 101,900             |
| QLD    | Brisbane v Collingwood   | Round 15 | Friday night     | 110,508             |



**Virtual Brownlow Medal**

The 2020 Brownlow Medal presentation was held as a virtual event on the Sunday before the Grand Final, October 18.

Players gathered remotely in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, dependent either on the completion of their season or their ongoing part in a hub as part of the finals series, with the broadcast anchored by the Seven Network from Melbourne.

△ Channel Seven presenter Hamish McLachlan toasts winner Lachie Neale at the Brownlow Medal count, which was staged as a virtual event.

**Fixture policy for the 2020 Toyota AFL Finals Series**

With Victorian-based clubs unable to play finals matches at home in 2020, along with restrictions for WA-based clubs beyond the opening week of the finals series, the AFL reviewed its scheduling policy for the 2020 Toyota AFL Finals Series.

In the lead-up to the first Grand Final played at the Gabba, a recommendation from the executive was approved by the AFL Commission whereby clubs not able to play in their home state were able to select a preferred venue.

Neutral ground finals were scheduled in week one for St Kilda (v Western Bulldogs at the Gabba) and week two for the Geelong Cats (v Collingwood at the Gabba) and Richmond (v St Kilda at Metricon Stadium).

All other finals before the Grand Final were hosted by West Coast (week one at Optus Stadium), the Brisbane Lions (weeks one and three at the Gabba) and Port Adelaide (weeks one and three at Adelaide Oval) at the venue of the higher-ranked team.

**AFL Awards night**

At the end of the home and away season, in the bye week before the finals, a consolidated AFL Awards night was held as a virtual event, comprising the naming of the 2020 All-Australian team, the NAB AFL Rising Star, the AFL Coaches Association Best Player and the AFLPA MVP.

At that point of the season, all Victorian-based clubs had been out of the state for 10 weeks or more, while NSW-based and WA-based clubs had also spent parts of their season away from home for extended periods.

The consolidated awards evening enabled the game's standout achievers of 2020 to be appropriately acknowledged, while ensuring the strict living arrangements in 'bubbles' to complete the season could continue to be respected.



△ Melbourne's Christian Petracca enjoyed a breakout season in 2020, leaving rivals such as Fremantle's David Mundy in his wake.

## Broadcast Rights Agreement

In June, the AFL reached agreement with broadcast partners the Seven Network and Foxtel on a revised arrangement for 2020-22, along with signing a two-year extension for the Seven Network mid-year to cover the 2023-24 years for both the AFL and AFLW competitions.

In late December, the AFL reached a new agreement with Foxtel and Telstra to also see their coverage rights for AFL and AFLW extended by two years across the 2023-24 years.

The negotiations with each of the broadcast partners reflected the strength of the relationship between the game and its broadcast partners, as well as an understanding of the challenges encountered by all parties as they faced the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new extended broadcast deals will deliver \$946 million to the AFL industry over the 2023 and 2024 years.

## Dreamtime in Darwin

The disruption to the season allowed for the game to achieve a remarkable highlight with the transfer of the Dreamtime game between Essendon and Richmond to TIO Stadium in Darwin.

Played on Saturday, August 22, and broadcast nationally by the Seven Network, one of the season's iconic matches was taken to the Northern Territory community to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The venue also hosted a game between the Gold Coast Suns and Carlton in the same round, with matches also played in Queensland, SA and WA across the round.

In the following week, Melbourne played its 'Heart of the Nation' game against St Kilda in Alice Springs.

The Dreamtime Round recognised former Carlton and East Perth champion Syd Jackson, a member of the Indigenous Team of the Century.

## Cairns playing hub

As part of the revised fixture options that were in place for the 2020 season, players and staff from Fremantle and the Sydney Swans were temporarily relocated to Cairns between rounds 15-18. Melbourne also spent a number of days in Cairns in between playing two games there. In this period, four AFL games were fixtured, with Cazalys Stadium hosting games between Sydney Swans and Melbourne (round 15), Melbourne and Fremantle (round 16), Sydney and Brisbane Lions (round 17) and Fremantle and Western Bulldogs (round 18).

## Compressed fixture periods

After the delays caused by the shutdown of the season in late March, the AFL fixtured two compressed periods of matches, to take advantage of the period when the majority of clubs were living out of hubs.

Between rounds 9-12, matches were played every day for 20 straight days, with 33 games fixtured in the period. In this first block, four night-time double-headers were scheduled on weekdays, with a total of 16 four-day breaks scheduled across 11 different clubs.

Between rounds 14-17, 18 matches were played in 19 days for this block, with games scheduled across WA, SA, NT and Queensland, including three in Cairns.

Across these four rounds, mid-week night-time double-headers were featured on four occasions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while seven clubs worked through a total of eight four-day breaks between games.

**ONE OF THE SEASON'S ICONIC MATCHES WAS TAKEN TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES**

## 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final location

The AFL Commission ratified a recommendation on September 1 for the 2020 Grand Final to be played at the Gabba, once it became apparent that Victoria would be unable to host the game at the MCG due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the historic decision, the Queensland Government declared it would host a festival of football across the state, with the people of Queensland supporting the AFL at a time when the game needed it most, with teams forced out of Victoria and then New South Wales.

Submissions for the game were received from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, with the AFL Executive recommendation based on:

- ▶ Safety and the best environment for all;
- ▶ Integrity and the need for uncompromised games in a high-performance environment;
- ▶ AFL fans and the engagement of existing and new supporters;
- ▶ Financial support for our game in a year where revenue was so impacted;
- ▶ And the legacy and the long-term vision for our game.

The AFL agreed with the Victorian Government to extend the contractual arrangement for the MCG as the Grand Final venue for an additional year, out to the end of 2058.

▽ With the MCG out of bounds because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gabba hosted the first Grand Final held outside Victoria.

## AFL restructure, department impacts

As part of the revised structure of the AFL, the coming years will see the department focused on reducing industry debt levels and building future financial security.

The Marvel Stadium/Docklands precinct redevelopment will now be led by the department, with Travis Auld to be EGM Finance, Clubs and Broadcasting.

A dedicated precinct redevelopment will now be led by General Manager of Property Development, Matthew Chun.

An expanded Club Shared Services model will aim to drive greater productivity, enhanced capability and efficiency across the industry, with the AFL and clubs to work collectively on this through 2021-22.

**... WITH THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND SUPPORTING THE AFL AT A TIME WHEN THE GAME NEEDED IT MOST**



# GAME DEVELOPMENT, LEGAL & INTEGRITY

**ANDREW DILLON**

GENERAL COUNSEL, GENERAL MANAGER GAME DEVELOPMENT

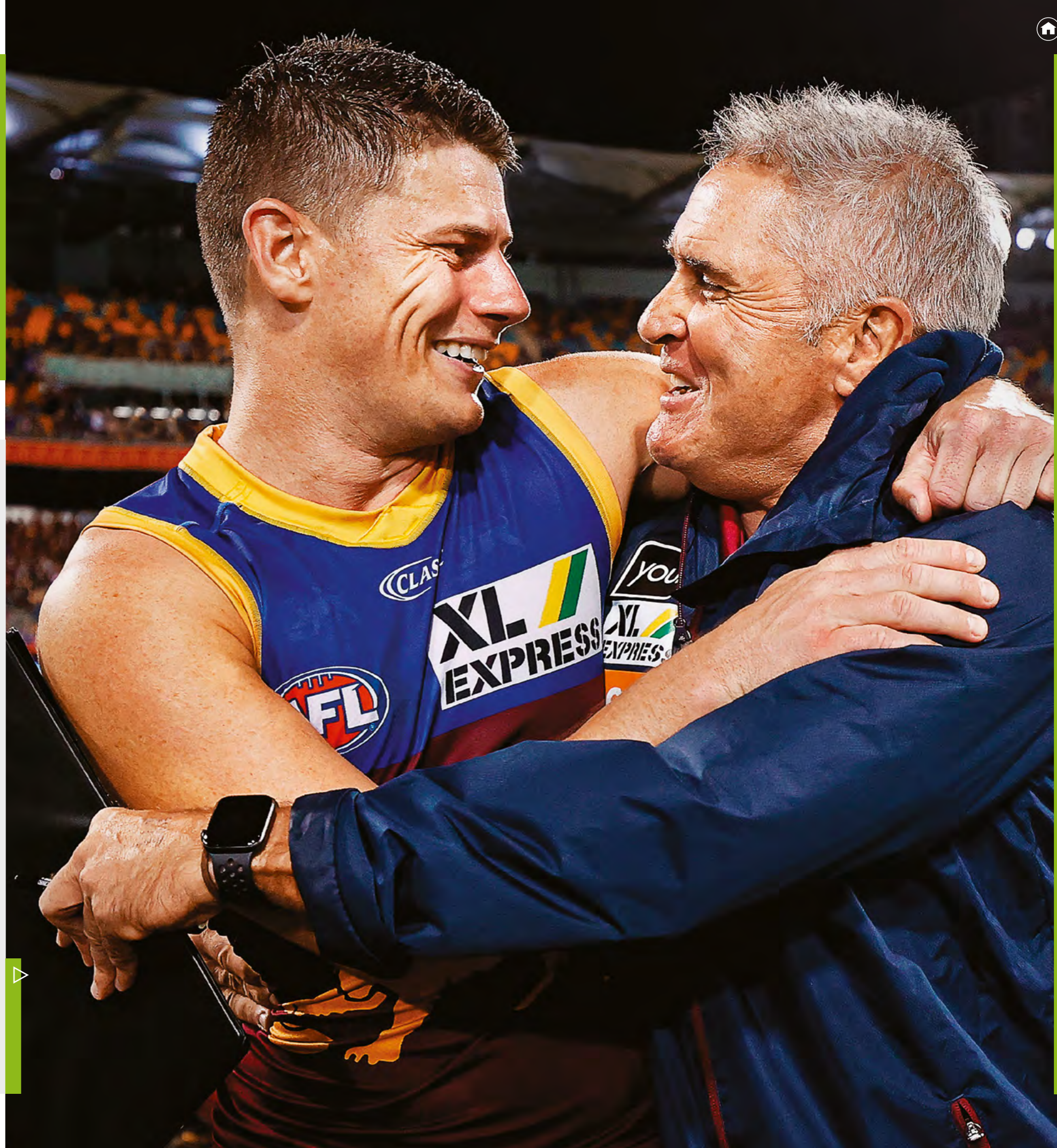


The operations of the Legal and Integrity Department were required to be fast moving in an extremely challenging environment when the first stages of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the game.

The AFL and wider game's major agreements with our key broadcast partners, commercial partners, player and umpire groups and venues across the nation, as well as nearly all other relationships, required close examination as our game entered shutdown.

In the vast majority of instances, variations were negotiated to ensure the continued strength of these key relationships. This enabled both ourselves and the AFL's valued partners to be able to continue to work together in a dramatically changed economic environment.

Brisbane captain Dayne Zorko and coach Chris Fagan celebrate after the Lions defeated Richmond in the qualifying final.





## Game Development

The Game Development team provided critical advice and support to all levels of the game around the country as leagues and clubs initially confronted a shutdown, and then later navigated the staged returns to play where possible.

At the first instance, all state league football and community football was initially ceased until the end of May, before gradual returns around the country could be considered.

Across the nation, differing requirements outlined by respective state governments and medical authorities were worked through, to enable much-needed community networks to return to training and on-field competition.

While the overwhelming majority of teams in Victoria were not able to get back on the field at a community level through 2020, Game Development provided a range of support to Community football leagues and clubs including:

△ It was all smiles as these first-round selections from the 2020 NAB AFL Draft gathered at Marvel Stadium.

- ▶ Tools to help clubs assess the financial impact of COVID-19 and initiatives to support clubs in maintaining revenues and mitigating expenses;
- ▶ Financial support initiatives including reducing personal accident insurance, reducing salary caps and player payments, fundraising ideas and advice to keep sponsors engaged;
- ▶ Development of detailed return to training and playing protocols and crowd management plans for government submissions;
- ▶ Education tools, including online courses, checklists, short videos and posters to help educate the community football network.

## 2020 NAB AFL Draft

The 2020 NAB AFL Draft was held as a virtual event, due to COVID-19 indoor-spacing gathering rules that were in operation at the time. The draft was broadcast live on Fox Footy and Kayo and via the official AFL Live App, thanks to Telstra. SEN 1116 also provided live radio coverage.

## 2020 NAB AFL DRAFT SELECTIONS (FIRST ROUND)

| No. | Player                        | Club   | Selected from                          |
|-----|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 1   | <b>Jamarra Ugle-Hagan</b>     | Western Bulldogs (matched Adelaide bid)  | Oakleigh Chargers/Scotch College       |
| 2   | <b>Riley Thilthorpe</b>       | Adelaide Crows   | West Adelaide/Goodwood Saints          |
| 3   | <b>Will Phillips</b>          | North Melbourne  | Oakleigh Chargers/Caulfield Grammar    |
| 4   | <b>Logan McDonald</b>         | Sydney Swans   | Perth/Aquinas College                  |
| 5   | <b>Braeden Campbell</b>       | Sydney Swans (matched Hawthorn bid)  | Sydney Swans Academy/Pennant Hills     |
| 6   | <b>Denver Grainger-Barras</b> | Hawthorn   | Swan Districts/Kalamunda               |
| 7   | <b>Elijah Hollands</b>        | Gold Coast Suns  | Murray Bushrangers/Wodonga             |
| 8   | <b>Nik Cox</b>                | Essendon   | Northern Knights/Ivanhoe Grammar       |
| 9   | <b>Archie Perkins</b>         | Essendon   | Sandringham Dragons/Brighton Grammar   |
| 10  | <b>Zach Reid</b>              | Essendon   | Gippsland Power/Inverloch-Kongwak      |
| 11  | <b>Luke Pedlar</b>            | Adelaide Crows   | Gleneilg                               |
| 12  | <b>Tanner Bruhn</b>           | GWS Giants   | Geelong Falcons/Geelong Grammar        |
| 13  | <b>Tom Powell</b>             | North Melbourne  | Sturt/Scotch College                   |
| 14  | <b>Heath Chapman</b>          | Fremantle  | West Perth/Joondalup-Kinross           |
| 15  | <b>Conor Stone</b>            | GWS Giants   | Oakleigh Chargers/St Kevin's College   |
| 16  | <b>Lachlan Jones</b>          | Port Adelaide (matched Collingwood bid)  | Woodville-West Torrens/Bute-Paskeville |
| 17  | <b>Oliver Henry</b>           | Collingwood  | Geelong Falcons/St Joseph's College    |
| 18  | <b>Ryan Angwin</b>            | GWS Giants   | Gippsland Power/Foster                 |
| 19  | <b>Finlay Macrae</b>          | Collingwood  | Oakleigh Chargers/Xavier College       |
| 20  | <b>Max Holmes</b>             | Geelong Cats (received during the draft as a pick swap)                                      | Sandringham Dragons/Prahran            |
| 21  | <b>Jake Bowey</b>             | Melbourne  | Sandringham Dragons/Highett            |
| 22  | <b>Bailey Laurie</b>          | Melbourne  | Oakleigh Chargers/Caulfield Grammar    |
| 23  | <b>Reef McInnes</b>           | Collingwood (matched GWS Giants bid)   | Oakleigh Chargers/Scotch College       |
| 24  | <b>Blake Coleman</b>          | Brisbane Lions (matched Collingwood bid, which was received during the draft as a pick swap) | Brisbane Lions Academy/Morningside     |
| 25  | <b>Brayden Cook</b>           | Adelaide Crows (received during the draft as pick swap)                                      | South Adelaide/Happy Valley            |
| 26  | <b>Matthew McLeod-Allison</b> | St Kilda   | Calder Cannons/Strathmore              |

▽ Jamarra Ugle-Hagan was taken as the No. 1 pick by the Western Bulldogs in the 2020 NAB AFL Draft.

## 2020 NAB AFL DRAFTS: WHERE FIRST-TIME DRAFTED PLAYERS CAME FROM

|                    | National  | Rookie    | Total     |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Victoria           | 30        | 2         | 32        |
| Western Australia  | 14        | 4         | 18        |
| South Australia    | 10        | 1         | 11        |
| Queensland         | 3         | 2         | 5         |
| NSW/ACT            | 1         | 3         | -         |
| Tasmania           | 2         | -         | 2         |
| Northern Territory | 2         | 2         | -         |
| <b>TOTALS</b>      | <b>61</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>73</b> |

**Note:** the above figures include the two Gold Coast Academy players (Joel Jeffrey and Alex Davies) who were pre-listed as primary list players.



## Father-son and Academy selections

There were two father-son selections in 2020. Maurice Rioli (Richmond, son of Maurice) was selected at the NAB AFL Draft. Taj Schofield (Port Adelaide, son of Jarrad) was listed at the Rookie Draft.

A further 11 players were selected by their Academy club:

- ▶ **Jamarra Ugle-Hagan** (Western Bulldogs Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Braeden Campbell** (Sydney Swans Northern Academy)
- ▶ **Lachlan Jones** (Port Adelaide Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Reef McInnes** (Collingwood Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Blake Coleman** (Brisbane Lions Northern Academy)
- ▶ **Errol Gulden** (Sydney Swans Northern Academy)
- ▶ **Connor Downie** (Hawthorn Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Josh Eyre** (Essendon Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Brandon Walker** (Fremantle Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Cody Brand** (Essendon Next Generation Academy)
- ▶ **Joel Western** (Fremantle Next Generation Academy)

Two players were pre-selected directly by their Academy club as Category A rookies:

- ▶ **Aiden Fyfe** (Gold Coast Suns Northern Academy)
- ▶ **Rhys Nicholls** (Gold Coast Suns Northern Academy)

No players were selected directly by their Father-Son or Academy club.

No NGA players were bid on and not matched during the National Draft.

Father-son and Academy players selected by matching during the NAB AFL Draft as shown in the table below.

## THE FOLLOWING FATHER/SON AND ACADEMY PLAYERS WERE SELECTED BY MATCHING DURING THE NATIONAL DRAFT

| Name               | Player Category         | Bid Team         | Match Team       | Bid | Points Value to Match | Selections Matched     | Selections Received    |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Jamarra Ugle-Hagan | Next Generation Academy | Adelaide Crows   | Western Bulldogs | 1   | 2400                  | 29, 33, 41, 42, 52, 54 | 66, 123, 124, 125, 126 |
| Braeden Campbell   | Northern Academy        | Hawthorn         | Sydney Swans     | 5   | 1503                  | 33, 36, 45, 52         | 60, 119, 122           |
| Lachlan Jones      | Next Generation Academy | Collingwood      | Port Adelaide    | 16  | 854                   | 38, 39                 | 69                     |
| Reef McInnes       | Next Generation Academy | GWS Giants       | Collingwood      | 23  | 617                   | 40, 41                 | 54                     |
| Blake Coleman      | Northern Academy        | Collingwood      | Brisbane Lions   | 24  | 588                   | 35, 45                 | 50                     |
| Errol Gulden       | Northern Academy        | Geelong          | Sydney Swans     | 32  | 387                   | 48, 50                 | 57                     |
| Connor Downie      | Next Generation Academy | North Melbourne  | Hawthorn         | 35  | 325                   | 54, 61                 | 71                     |
| Josh Eyre          | Next Generation Academy | Richmond         | Essendon         | 39  | 249                   | 49                     | 71                     |
| Brandon Walker     | Next Generation Academy | Essendon         | Fremantle        | 50  | 76                    | 53                     | 60                     |
| Maurice Rioli      | Father-Son              | Essendon         | Richmond         | 51  | 62                    | 52                     | 57                     |
| Cody Brand         | Next Generation Academy | Western Bulldogs | Essendon         | 53  | 36                    | 67                     | 71                     |
| Joel Western       | Next Generation Academy | Western Bulldogs | Fremantle        | 54  | 23                    | 55                     | 57                     |

## AFL free agency

### Free agency

The following players qualified for either full or restricted free agency going into the 2020 season, under the rules agreed between the AFL and AFLPA:

### Restricted free agents

**Adelaide Crows** - Brad Crouch  
**Essendon** - Joe Daniher  
**GWS Giants** - Jeremy Cameron, Aidan Corr, Zac Williams  
**Melbourne** - Jack Viney  
**Port Adelaide** - Brad Ebert

### Unrestricted free agents

**Adelaide Crows** - Rory Atkins, Kyle Hartigan, David Mackay, Ben Crocker (rookie)\*, Ben Keays (rookie)\*  
**Brisbane Lions** - Grant Birchall\*, Ryan Lester, Stefan Martin, Jacob Allison (rookie)\*, Matt Eagles (rookie)\*, Corey Lyons (rookie)\*, Sam Skinner (rookie)\*  
**Carlton** - Eddie Betts\*, Levi Casboul, Matthew Kreuzer, Marc Murphy, Kade Simpson, Hugh Goddard (rookie)\*, Callum Moore (rookie)\*  
**Collingwood** - Ben Reid, Tim Broomhead (rookie)\*, Lynden Dunn (rookie)\*^  
**Essendon** - Tom Bellchambers, Martin Gleeson, Shaun McKernan\*, Mitchell Hibberd (rookie)\*, Will Snelling (rookie)\*, Jacob Townsend (rookie)\*  
**Fremantle** - David Mundy, Hugh Dixon (rookie)\*, Tom North (rookie)\*  
**Geelong Cats** - Gary Ablett, Tom Hawkins, Harry Taylor, Lachie Henderson (rookie)\*  
**Gold Coast Suns** - Jarrod Harbrow, George Horlin-Smith\*, Anthony Miles\*, Josh Schoenfeld (rookie)\*  
**GWS Giants** - Sam Reid (rookie)\*, Tommy Sheridan (rookie)\*, Zach Sproule (rookie)\*  
**Hawthorn** - Shaun Burgoyne, James Frawley\*, Ricky Henderson\*^, Paul Puopolo, Isaac Smith,

Ben Stratton, Keegan Brooksby (rookie)\*, Darren Minchington (rookie)\*

**Melbourne** - Nathan Jones, Harley Bennell (rookie)\*, Mitch Brown (rookie)\*, Corey Wagner (rookie)\*

**North Melbourne** - Majak Daw\*, Taylor Garner, Ben Jacobs, Jamie Macmillan, Josh Walker\*, Mason Wood, Kyron Hayden (rookie)\*

**Port Adelaide** - Travis Boak, Wylie Buzza\*, Robbie Gray, Trent McKenzie\*, Justin Westhoff, Riley Grundy (rookie)\*, Cam Sutcliffe (rookie)\*, Boyd Woodcock (rookie)\*

**Richmond** - Bachar Houli

**St Kilda** - Ryan Abbott\*, Nathan Brown\*, Jarryn Geary  
**Sydney Swans** - Jack Maibaum\* (rookie)

**West Coast Eagles** - Andrew Gaff, Shannon Hurn, Mark Hutchings\*, Josh Kennedy, Will Schofield, Brendon Ah Chee (rookie)\*, Hamish Brayshaw (rookie)\*, Jamaine Jones (rookie)\*

**Western Bulldogs** - Tory Dickson, Taylor Duryea\*, Billy Gowers\*, Lin Jong, Matthew Suckling\*, Jackson Trengove\*, Easton Wood, Ryan Gardner (rookie)\*, Roarke Smith (rookie)\*

\*Previously delisted

^Previously qualified as a free agent

▽ Former Bomber Joe Daniher exercised his right as a restricted free agent and has joined Brisbane.

### Free agents exercising their rights

Four players elected to exercise their rights as Restricted Free Agents and change clubs for the 2021 season:

- ▶ **Zac Williams** (to Carlton)
- ▶ **Aidan Corr** (to North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Joe Daniher** (to Brisbane Lions)
- ▶ **Brad Crouch** (to St Kilda)

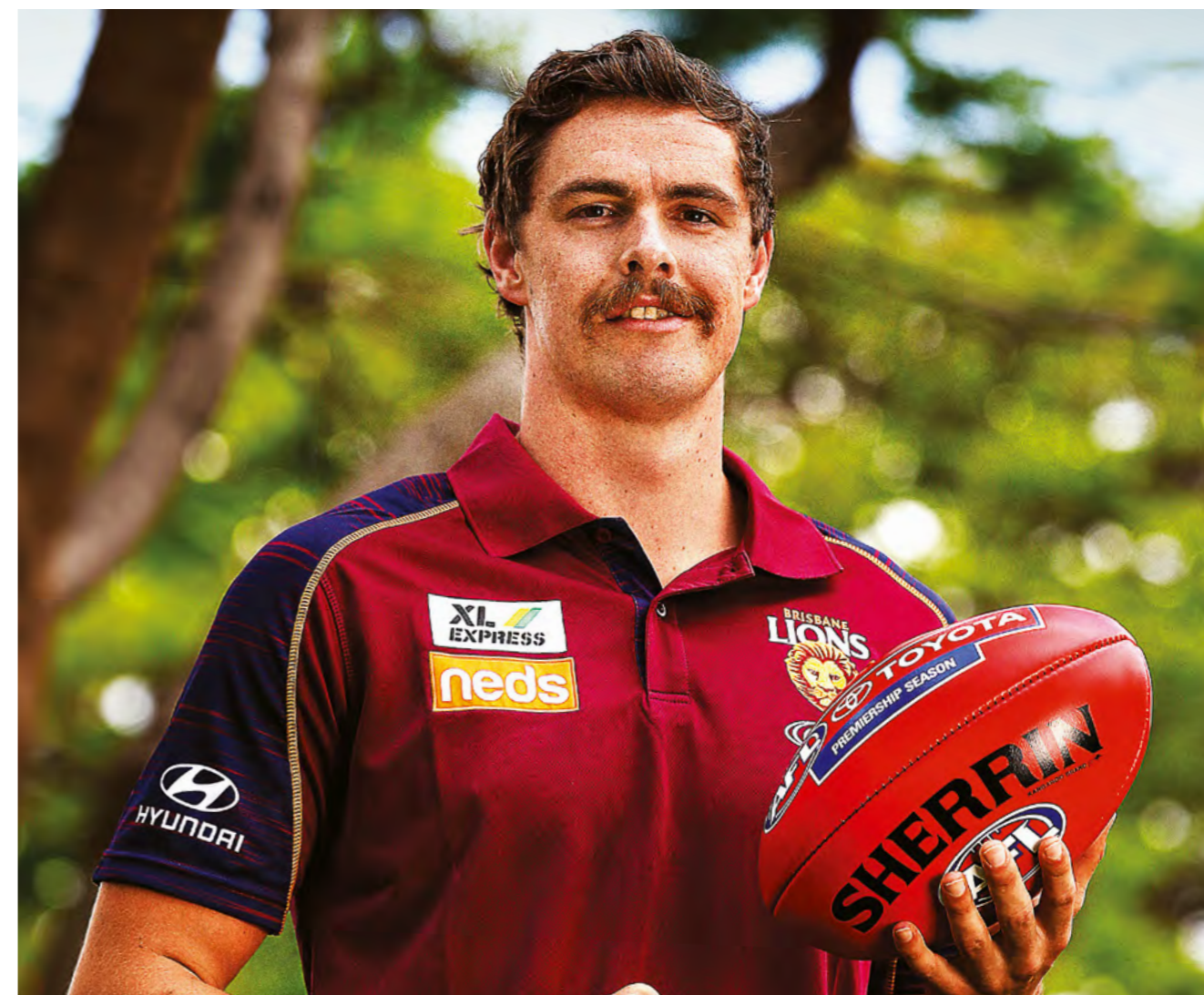
GWS player Jeremy Cameron exercised his rights as a free agent. For the first time since Free Agency was introduced, the GWS Giants matched the offer from the Geelong Cats.

A further three players elected to exercise their rights as Free Agents and change clubs for the 2021 season:

- ▶ **Rory Atkins** (to Gold Coast Suns)
- ▶ **Isaac Smith** (to Geelong Cats)
- ▶ **Shaun McKernan** (to St Kilda)

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

- ▶ **Mitchell Hinge** (Brisbane Lions to the Adelaide Crows)
- ▶ **James Frawley** (Hawthorn to St Kilda)



## Exchange Periods

### Players and Selections Traded

A total of 36 trades, 26 players and 81 draft selections (of which 25 were future selections and 18 were on-traded 2020 or 2021 selections) were traded during the 2020 AFL Trade Period (of exchange of players and selections, November 4-12). The following players were traded:

- ▶ **Zac Langdon** (GWS Giants to West Coast Eagles)
- ▶ **Oleg Markov** (Richmond to Gold Coast Suns)
- ▶ **Jesse Hogan** (Fremantle to GWS Giants)
- ▶ **Kyle Hartigan** (Adelaide Crows to Hawthorn)
- ▶ **Peter Wright** (Gold Coast Suns to Essendon)
- ▶ **Mitch Hannan** (Melbourne to Western Bulldogs)
- ▶ **Braydon Preuss** (Melbourne to GWS Giants)
- ▶ **Stefan Martin** (Brisbane Lions to the Western Bulldogs)
- ▶ **Lachie Young** (Western Bulldogs to North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Lachie Fogarty** (Geelong Cats to Carlton)
- ▶ **Nakia Cockatoo** (Geelong Cats to the Brisbane Lions)
- ▶ **Adam Saad** (Essendon to Carlton)
- ▶ **Aliir Aliir** (Sydney Swans to Port Adelaide)
- ▶ **Shaun Higgins** (North Melbourne to Geelong Cats)
- ▶ **Tom Hickey** (West Coast Eagles to Sydney Swans)
- ▶ **Ben Brown** (North Melbourne to Melbourne)
- ▶ **Jack Higgins** (Richmond to St Kilda)
- ▶ **Alex Witherden** (Brisbane Lions to West Coast Eagles)
- ▶ **Jaidyn Stephenson** (Collingwood to North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Atu Bosenavulagi** (Collingwood to North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Drazio Fantasia** (Essendon to Port Adelaide)
- ▶ **Tom Phillips** (Collingwood to Hawthorn)
- ▶ **Adam Treloar** (Collingwood to Western Bulldogs)
- ▶ **Jye Caldwell** (GWS Giants to Essendon)
- ▶ **Jeremy Cameron** (GWS Giants to Geelong Cats)
- ▶ **Nick Hind** (St Kilda to Essendon)

▶ In the biggest move of the 2020 trade period, **Jeremy Cameron** left the GWS Giants to join Geelong.

### Selections only periods

A total of seven trades including 20 draft selections (of which six were future selections and 12 were on-traded) were transacted during the selections only trade period from November 14 to December 3.

### Pre-Season Draft

One player was selected at the Pre-Season Draft:

- ▶ **Jackson Hately** (GWS Giants to Adelaide Crows)

### Rookie Draft

In 2020, 14 rookies were promoted by clubs to the Primary List. At the Rookie Draft, 26 players were selected, of which 12 were first-time drafted.

### Category A Rookie Pre-Listings

After the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the AFL announced a maximum of two players who were previously on a club's Primary List could be transferred to a Club's 2021 Category A Rookie List.

The following players were transferred:

- Adelaide Crows** - Ben Davis, David Mackay
- Brisbane Lions** - Connor Ballenden, Rhys Mathieson
- Carlton** - Eddie Betts, Matthew Kennedy
- Fremantle** - Brett Bewley, Lachie Schultz
- Gold Coast Suns** - Jarrod Harbrow, Zac Smith
- GWS Giants** - Matthew Buntine, Daniel Lloyd
- Hawthorn** - Dylan Moore
- Melbourne** - James Jordan, Aaron Nietschke
- North Melbourne** - Will Walker
- Richmond** - Ben Miller
- St Kilda** - Oscar Clavarino, Darragh Joyce
- Sydney Swans** - Robbie Fox, Sam Gray
- West Coast Eagles** - Mark Hutchings
- Western Bulldogs** - Ben Cavarra, Will Hayes

## PLAYER MOVEMENT SUMMARY

|                         | 2020/2021 | 2019/2020 | 2018/2019 | 2017/2018 | 2016/2017 | 2015/2016 | 2014/2015 | 2013/2014 |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Delisted/Retired</b> | 121       | 92        | 107       | 103       | 99        | 75        | 85        | 99        |
| Trades                  | 48        | 52        | 54        | 31        | 43        | 42        | 19        | 27        |
| Players                 | 26        | 27        | 39        | 25        | 34        | 40        | 24        | 28        |
| <b>Exchanged/Traded</b> | 143       | 169       | 142       | 87        | 113       | 103       | 40        | 38        |
| On-Trades               | 58        | 62        | 58        | 14        | 30        | 32        | 12        | 7         |
| Future Selections       | 42        | 58        | 45        | 34        | 19        | 14        | N/A       | N/A       |
| <b>Promoted Rookies</b> | 14        | 18        | 17        | 11        | 20        | 14        | 22        | 23        |
| <b>National Draft</b>   | 61/88     | 65/87     | 78/96     | 78/96     | 77/96     | 70/89     | 76/87     | 62/74     |
| First Drafted           | 61        | 65        | 78        | 75        | 76        | 68        | 76        | 62        |
| <b>Pre-Season Draft</b> | 1/1       | 2/2       | 0/11      | 1/11      | 0/10      | 0/12      | 1/12      | 1/12      |
| <b>Rookie Draft</b>     | 26/40     | 33/42     | 40/52     | 36/42     | 50/55     | 64/72     | 64/76     | 54/69     |
| First Drafted           | 12        | 14        | 18        | 23        | 34        | 43        | 45        | 39        |
| <b>Retained Rookies</b> | 59        | 74        | 51        | 54        | 42        | 42        | 36        | 37        |





**GAME DEVELOPMENT, LEGAL & INTEGRITY**

ANDREW DILLON

**2009-2020 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS**

| Earnings                | 2009<br>Played | 2010<br>Played | 2011<br>Played | 2011<br>Listed | 2012<br>Played | 2012<br>Listed | 2013<br>Played | 2013<br>Listed | 2014<br>Played | 2014<br>Listed | 2015<br>Played | 2015<br>Listed | 2016<br>Played | 2016<br>Listed | 2017<br>Played | 2017<br>Listed | 2018<br>Played | 2018<br>Listed | 2019<br>Played | 2019<br>Listed | 2020<br>Played | 2020<br>Listed |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| \$0-\$60,000            | 9              | 9              | 9              | 31             | 1              | 21             | 0              | 9              | 0              | 2              | 0              | 1              | 0              | 0              | 0              | 1              | 0              | 1              | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| \$60,001-\$100,000      | 80             | 67             | 75             | 114            | 71             | 120            | 48             | 109            | 33             | 90             | 17             | 65             | 21             | 70             | 9              | 38             | 3              | 24             | 5              | 31             | 47             | 113            |
| \$100,001-\$200,000     | 156            | 153            | 180            | 186            | 187            | 199            | 203            | 213            | 177            | 198            | 163            | 188            | 162            | 185            | 112            | 152            | 108            | 159            | 101            | 166            | 165            | 189            |
| \$200,001-\$300,000     | 151            | 158            | 162            | 166            | 166            | 170            | 148            | 156            | 136            | 147            | 143            | 153            | 121            | 131            | 130            | 140            | 129            | 136            | 111            | 124            | 134            | 142            |
| \$300,001-\$400,000     | 85             | 91             | 92             | 94             | 103            | 104            | 114            | 115            | 125            | 128            | 124            | 131            | 137            | 148            | 137            | 148            | 137            | 145            | 118            | 123            | 124            | 131            |
| \$400,001-\$500,000     | 37             | 45             | 53             | 53             | 58             | 60             | 64             | 64             | 75             | 76             | 84             | 85             | 87             | 89             | 87             | 89             | 86             | 88             | 104            | 107            | 58             | 60             |
| \$500,001-\$600,000     | 16             | 9              | 17             | 20             | 25             | 25             | 22             | 22             | 31             | 32             | 44             | 44             | 35             | 40             | 52             | 53             | 44             | 49             | 47             | 48             | 38             | 40             |
| \$600,001-\$700,000     | 6              | 8              | 10             | 10             | 11             | 12             | 19             | 19             | 26             | 26             | 18             | 21             | 22             | 23             | 34             | 34             | 46             | 46             | 41             | 42             | 13             | 13             |
| \$700,001-\$800,000     | 3              | 2              | 3              | 3              | 4              | 4              | 10             | 10             | 10             | 10             | 21             | 21             | 15             | 18             | 23             | 23             | 21             | 24             | 28             | 29             | 4              | 4              |
| \$800,001-\$900,000     | 2              | 2              | 4              | 4              | 1              | 1              | 7              | 7              | 6              | 6              | 3              | 3              | 5              | 5              | 9              | 9              | 15             | 15             | 16             | 16             | 1              | 2              |
| \$900,001-\$1,000,000   | 2              | 4              | 1              | 1              | 1              | 1              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 3              | 3              | 10             | 11             | 10             | 10             | 7              | 7              | 1              | 2              |
| \$1,000,001-\$1,100,000 | -              | -              | 1              | 1              | 4              | 4              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 4              | 4              | 2              | 2              | 3              | 4              | 1              | 1              |
| \$1,100,001-\$1,200,000 | -              | -              | -              | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              | -              | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              | 3              | 3              | 1              | 1              | 3              | 3              | 1              | 1              |
| \$1,200,001+            | -              | -              | 1              | 1              | 4              | 4              | 3              | 3              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 2              | 3              | 3              | 2              | 2              | 0              | 0              |
| <b>TOTAL</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>     | <b>605</b>     | <b>703</b>     | <b>586</b>     | <b>702</b>     | <b>587</b>     | <b>698</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. In 2020, a decrease in player payments arose due to the 29.17% reduction in payments agreed with the AFLPA as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2009-2020 AFL TOTAL PLAYER EARNINGS**

|   | 2009<br>\$                  | 2010<br>\$                  | 2011<br>\$                  | 2012<br>\$                  | 2013<br>\$                  | 2014<br>\$                  | 2015<br>\$                  | 2016<br>\$                  | 2017<br>\$                  | 2018<br>\$                  | 2019<br>\$                  | 2020<br>\$                  | Movement %<br>2018-2019 |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS (GPP)                             | 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                 | 240,417,657                 | 242,345,042                 | 170,043,949                 | 29.83%                  |
| <b>Deductions:</b>                                      |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                         |
| Finals/Relocation & Living & other Allowances           | 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                   | 3,189,413                   | 3,288,039                   | 2,190,456                   | 33.38%                  |
| Cost of Living and Expansion Allowances                 | 753,988                     | 779,100                     | 804,825                     | 1,722,326                   | 1,791,219                   | 3,047,844                   | 2,357,048                   | 1,691,090                   | 0                           | 0                           | 0                           | 0                           | 0.00%                   |
| Veterans' Allowance                                     | 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                     | 0                           | 0                           | 0                           | 0.00%                   |
| Other Deductions  | 2,561,369                   | 2,296,275                   | 3,921,152                   | 4,663,352                   | 4,303,185                   | 4,032,375                   | 4,790,648                   | 4,334,399                   | 1,883,819                   | 3,482,466                   | 3,839,162                   | 3,309,603                   | 13.79%                  |
| Underspend From Previous Years                          | -                           | -                           | -                           | -                           | -                           | -                           | 1,841,576                   | 764,531                     | 819,266                     | 1,540,436                   | 1,159,113                   | 1,478,675                   | 27.57%                  |
| <b>Total Deductions</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>8,222,315</b>            | <b>8,286,314</b>            | <b>6,978,734</b>            | <b>-15.78%</b>          |
| <b>PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS DEDUCTIONS</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>232,195,342</b>          | <b>234,058,728</b>          | <b>163,065,215</b>          | <b>30.33%</b>           |
| Injury Allowance  | 6,403,200                   | 5,572,800                   | 3,107,584                   | 2,551,893                   | 2,060,007                   | 1,597,906                   | 2,609,871                   | 3,452,129                   | 3,002,107                   | 5,902,635                   | 5,093,340                   | 0                           | 100.00%                 |
| <b>GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS INJURY ALLOWANCE</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>226,292,708</b>          | <b>228,965,388</b>          | <b>163,065,215</b>          | <b>28.78%</b>           |
| <b>TPP LIMIT</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>226,698,624</b>          | <b>229,645,710</b>          | <b>234,238,626</b>          | <b>2.00%</b>            |
| Gross Player Payments less Injury Allowance             | 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                 | 226,292,708                 | 228,965,388                 | 163,065,215                 | -28.78%                 |
| Margin/(Excess)   | 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                   | 405,916                     | 680,322                     | 71,173,411                  | 10361.72%               |
| Additional Services Agreements (ASAs)                   | 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                  | 20,120,412                  | 21,098,574                  | 15,416,183                  | -26.90%                 |
| <b>Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASAs)**</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$221,482</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$226,165</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$237,388</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$251,559</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$265,179</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$283,029</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$302,104</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$309,208</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$352,470</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$362,471</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$363,430</b> | <b>Listed<br/>\$259,651</b> |                         |
|   | <b>Played<br/>\$241,436</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$249,239</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$253,795</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$272,074</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$288,212</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$306,841</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$324,643</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$329,210</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$379,697</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$390,202</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$401,552</b> | <b>Played<br/>\$280,232</b> |                         |

NB: In 2020, the decrease in player payments across the competition arose due to the 29.17% reduction in payments agreed with the AFLPA as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

**Total Player Payments**

The Total Player Payment limit per club increased 2.0 per cent in 2020, from \$229.6m in 2019 to \$234.2m, while gross player payments decreased at a higher rate to the 2.0 per cent increase in Total Player Payments, down by 29.83 per cent from \$242.3m in 2019 to \$170.0m. The decrease arose due to the 29.17 per cent reduction in player payments agreed with the AFLPA as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Additional Services limit per club for the provision of marketing services by players increased by 3.0 per cent from \$1,125,983 to \$1,159,763 and the amount spent on these services by clubs decreased by 26.90 per cent, from \$21.09m in 2019 to \$15.42m.

In addition to these amounts, players earned \$1.32m from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of clubs.

▽ Youngsters enjoy some Auskick fun at half-time of the round one AFLW match between St Kilda and the Western Bulldogs at RSEA Park.

Taking into account the \$170.0m in gross player payments, \$15.42m in additional services agreements and \$1.32m from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of the clubs, the total earned by players in 2020 was \$186.8m, a decrease of 29.50 per cent on the 2019 total of \$264.9m.

The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2020 was \$259,651, a decrease of 28.56 per cent from 2019.

One club was sanctioned during 2020 for breaking the TPP rules:

- The Geelong Football Club was sanctioned \$40,000 for breaching the TPP rules through an administrative error. The club voluntarily advised the AFL of all the required information and the club's full co-operation had been taken into account regarding the penalty.





▶ Caleb Serong was named the 2020 NAB AFL Rising Star after an excellent debut season for the Dockers.

## Pre-season Supplemental Selection Period

Ahead of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, the Pre-season Supplemental Selection Period allowed clubs with available list spots to sign players to their rookie list. The following players were signed during the SSP:

- ▶ **Adelaide Crows:** Ayce Taylor
- ▶ **Carlton:** Callum Moore
- ▶ **Collingwood:** Lynden Dunn
- ▶ **Essendon:** Henry Crauford, Jacob Townsend
- ▶ **Hawthorn:** Keegan Brooksby, Darren Minchington
- ▶ **Melbourne:** Harley Bennell, Mitch Brown
- ▶ **West Coast Eagles:** Jamaine Jones, Nic Reid

## NAB AFL Rising Star Award

Fremantle's Caleb Serong won the 2020 NAB AFL Rising Star with 48 votes, ahead of Gold Coast Suns' Noah Anderson (39 votes) and St Kilda's Max King (28 votes).

He received the Ron Evans Medal, a \$20,000 personal investment portfolio and a dedicated personal banker, courtesy of NAB.

## NAB AFL RISING STAR

| Rd | Player             | AFL Club        | Votes |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1  | Sam Sturt          | Fremantle       | -     |
| 2  | Matt Rowell        | Gold Coast Suns | -     |
| 3  | Connor Budarick    | Gold Coast Suns | -     |
| 4  | Tom Green          | GWS Giants      | -     |
| 5  | Curtis Taylor      | North Melbourne | -     |
| 6  | Izak Rankine       | Gold Coast Suns | 16    |
| 7  | Noah Anderson      | Gold Coast Suns | 39    |
| 8  | Caleb Serong       | Fremantle       | 48    |
| 9  | Mitch Georgiades   | Port Adelaide   | -     |
| 10 | Luke Jackson       | Melbourne       | -     |
| 11 | Kysaiah Pickett    | Melbourne       | 1     |
| 12 | Max King           | St Kilda        | -     |
| 13 | Brandon Starcevich | Brisbane Lions  | 6     |
| 14 | Jake Riccardi      | GWS Giants      | -     |
| 15 | Justin McInerney   | Sydney Swans    | -     |
| 16 | Will Day           | Hawthorn        | 12    |
| 17 | Isaac Quaynor      | Collingwood     | -     |
| 18 | Lachlan Sholl      | Adelaide Crows  | -     |

## 2021 Second-Tier Competition

The VFL and NEAFL will combine into a single Second-Tier Competition to sit alongside the SANFL and WAFL in 2021. AFL clubs in Queensland, NSW and Victoria were given the option to determine the form of involvement best suited to them, being either:

- ▶ A standalone team;
- ▶ Alignment with an existing second-tier club;
- ▶ Spreading their AFL-listed players across multiple second-tier clubs.

In total, 22 licences were confirmed and clubs will play a 16-round season, providing all players with a premium standard of football.

All clubs will have connections to community clubs and pathway programs, including a varied alignment to Under-19 NAB League clubs for Victorian-based teams.

### Standalone Second-Tier clubs:

Aspley, Coburg, Frankston, Northern Bullants, Port Melbourne, Southport, Werribee, Williamstown

### Standalone AFL clubs:

Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Footscray, Geelong Cats, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, North Melbourne, Richmond, Sydney Swans

### Aligned clubs:

Sandringham, Box Hill Hawks, Casey Demons

## NAB AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft

The 2020 NAB AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft was not held, due to the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic at the time.

## Next Generation Academies

The Next Generation Academies (NGA) - targeting Indigenous and multicultural players - will be implemented by the AFL Talent Pathway Team from 2021 with support from AFL clubs. The Northern Club Academies (Sydney Swans, GWS Giants, Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns) will remain the responsibility of the AFL clubs with support to be provided by the AFL.

The eligibility and concessions for clubs for NGA-approved players was left unchanged for the 2020 NAB AFL Draft.

The following changes to the NGA concession model ahead of the 2021 and 2022 NAB AFL Drafts will be as follows:

- ▶ From 2021, nominated NGA prospects will only be eligible to be matched from pick 21 in the NAB AFL Draft. All other players selected from pick 41 onwards can be matched by their club using their next available selection, while undrafted players are still eligible to be pre-selected on the rookie list.

▽ Wheelchair football was one of many programs that had to be postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19.

- ▶ From 2022, nominated NGA prospects will only be eligible to be matched from pick 41 onwards by their club using their next available selection, while undrafted players are still eligible to be pre-selected on the rookie list.
- ▶ This model allows for elite talent to be available to all AFL clubs while still ensuring late prospects can find their way on to an AFL list and continue their relationship with the respective club that has been supporting them.

## Postponement of key programs

The onset of COVID-19 had a heavy impact on the ability of the AFL and state leagues to deliver key community and talent pathway programs through 2020.

The following programs were not able to be delivered through the year, including:

- ▶ Woomearas and Boomerangs programs
- ▶ Medleys and World Team programs
- ▶ Rio Tinto Footy Means Business programs
- ▶ Bachar Houli Football programs
- ▶ All state and territory multicultural and Indigenous programs
- ▶ International Cup
- ▶ Victorian Wheelchair Football League
- ▶ Toyota National Wheelchair Championships
- ▶ Victorian FIDA Football League
- ▶ Under-16s and under-18s NAB AFL Championships for boys and girls



## Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF)

As part of the AFL's investment into community football in Victoria, this fund will provide grants of \$1.5m per year for the next three years directly to local leagues and clubs. This is part of the \$18m investment announced in late 2019, the most significant investment in country Victorian football in more than two decades.

Former Victorian Premier Steve Bracks AC is chair of the independent Advisory Board, which includes representatives from across community football to provide recommendations of support to the AFL.

## National Risk Protection Program

AFL Victoria moved to support Victorian community clubs in 2020 by absorbing all fees for Personal Accident Insurance under the AFL National Risk Protection Program.

The move affected more than 1000 clubs and 5000 teams across the state, to provide a significant fee reduction, while ensuring players, clubs and leagues remained protected.

## AFL restructure - diversity outcomes

The significant AFL restructure announced in 2020 embraced an enhanced focus on diversity and inclusion across the game's workforce, talent programs, participation and audience engagement.

Investment will continue in football for women and girls at all levels nationally, while a new National Talent Diversity Manager will be appointed to lead Indigenous and multicultural talent programs across the country.

## 2021 NAB AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft

In 2021, an alternative model to the NAB AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft will allow clubs to fill vacant list spots or replace inactive players on a monthly basis as follows:

- ▶ Between the end of the SSP and before round one, undrafted and other eligible players can opt into being upgraded to an AFL list during the 2021 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.
- ▶ Clubs can then nominate to upgrade a previously undrafted or eligible player to their respective Rookie List at three different periods throughout the 2021 season (e.g. following round four, round eight and round 12).

In the instance that the same player is nominated by two or more clubs, the player will go to the team lower on the ladder under a rolling process (e.g. if a club selects a player, that club goes to the back of the line).

▽ Steve Bracks and Gillon McLachlan at the Strategic Community Investment Fund announcement.

## Rookie Me

The AFL and Rookie Me launched a coaching platform to enhance and develop coaching skills at all levels of the game.

Hosting a repository of training sessions and activities, along with coaching tools, education resources and session plans, it was produced for the 30,000 AFL community coaches around Australia, from grassroots to elite, covering girls, boys, women and men.

Rookie Me worked with industry experts to align the platform with the AFL Coaching curriculum and accreditation program, with the mobile platform designed to provide remote learning and development opportunities for community coaches into the future.



## Changes to AFL Talent Pathways Programs

AFL Talent Pathway Programs were remodelled to align and simplify the talent calendar, to provide boys' and girls' programs with the same opportunities for elite development while also increasing their connection to community football.

The Talent Programs will continue to focus on identifying and developing players from across Australia and best preparing them for AFL and AFLW competition with the age groups for all AFL Talent Pathway Programs, including the NAB League Girls and Boys and the NAB AFL/AFLW National Championships, to be re-focused from under-16 and under-18 levels to under-17 and under-19 in 2021.

The draft age will remain at 18 for both the Toyota AFL and NAB AFLW competitions.



## AFL restructure - changes for Game Development Area

As part of the AFL restructure that was enacted from November 2020 in response to the impact of COVID-19, there were key impacts for work of the game development team across the country:

- ▶ A strong focus on nationally co-ordinated programs and local delivery, with a clear mandate to continue to invest in community football and grow participation in all states;
- ▶ An enhanced focus on diversity and inclusion across our workforce, talent programs and participation;
- ▶ A revised model in 2021 for second-tier competitions, along with NAB AFL and NAB AFLW pathways to drive greater alignment from community football up to the elite game;
- ▶ Continued investment in female football at all levels;
- ▶ AFL state offices across NSW (headed by Tiffany Robertson), Victoria (Brad Scott), Queensland (Trish Squires), Tasmania (Damian Gill) and the Northern Territory (Stu Totham) were re-structured to focus more on community football, participation and facility development.

## Graham Farmer/Danny Frawley CTE diagnosis

The Australian Sports Brain Bank at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital made a CTE diagnosis in regard to Legend of the Game Graham 'Polly' Farmer and former St Kilda captain Danny Frawley.

The AFL is thankful to both the Farmer family and the Frawley family for their important contribution to research in this area, which further enhances the legacy within the game of both these former greats, and welcomed the learnings that may come from their ongoing research.

The safety and health of players in the game is paramount and, as knowledge and understanding of concussion has increased, the AFL has strengthened match-day protocols, changed the Laws of the Game to discourage high contact and worked to improve the identification of potential concussive incidents through the use of video.

◀ Young draft hopefuls were put through their paces at the NAB League testing day in March.

## Adelaide Crows player sanctions

Adelaide Crows' players Tyson Stengle and Brad Crouch were determined to have breached AFL Rule 2.3 (a) for '... conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the interest or reputation of the AFL ...', after being found in possession of an illicit substance by South Australian police after the Crows had completed their season.

After an AFL investigation, Stengle was suspended for the first four matches of the 2021 Toyota AFL Premiership Season while Crouch was suspended for the first two matches.

Both players were to be required to attend a Drug and Alcohol Education Course before the 2021 season; and both players' conduct constituted a notifiable adverse finding under the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy.

## Elijah Taylor standown and delisting

Sydney Swans player Elijah Taylor was stood down by his club in the latter part of the season after charges were laid against him by WA police. The AFL supported the club's move, while it awaited court proceedings.

After he pleaded guilty at his court appearance at the end of 2020, the club determined he could no longer remain with the Swans and he was released.

Taylor had earlier been suspended for breaching the AFL's Return to Play protocols and WA quarantine regulations, and wishes to again state for the record that the game condemns any violence against women. Through the legal process, the safety, welfare and care of those involved remained the priority and the AFL Integrity Unit was liaising with WA police and the club to provide support.

▽ Brad Crouch will miss the first two matches of the 2021 season when he lines up for his new club St Kilda while stars such as Lance Franklin (right) had to adapt to hub life in 2020.

## AFL Player Rules sanction

The Geelong Cats were sanctioned \$40,000 for breaching the AFL Player Rules, relating to Total Player Payment (TPP) lodgement rules. The club voluntarily advised all required information and its full co-operation was taken into account when assessing penalty.

### Player Sanctions - Hub Protocol Breaches

The operation of strict protocols around the Hubs used for the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season was incredibly important for the competition to be able to resume and then continue after the shutdown caused by the onset of COVID-19.

The support of state governments and health authorities for the AFL to play its season was never under-valued and hence the competition took an extremely serious view of breaches when they occurred.

The adoption of these protocols provided the AFL and clubs with the social licence to continue our season, particularly in difficult periods when freedoms for many members of the community were severely restricted. A number of serious sanctions were imposed through the course of the year when breaches unfortunately occurred:

- ▶ Adelaide Crows assistant coach Ben Hart was stood down for six weeks while 16 Crows players received a one-match suspended sanction for an unauthorised club training session before the resumption of the season;
- ▶ Hawthorn was sanctioned \$50,000, with \$25,000 suspended, for club breaches;
- ▶ Carlton, North Melbourne and Richmond were each sanctioned \$45,000, with \$25,000 suspended, for club breaches;
- ▶ Collingwood was sanctioned \$50,000, with \$25,000 suspended, for a breach by senior coaching staff Nathan Buckley and Brenton Sanderson;
- ▶ Port Adelaide player Ollie Wines was suspended for one game before round two after a breach;
- ▶ Essendon player Brandon Zerk-Thatcher was suspended for one game for round two after self-reporting a breach;
- ▶ Melbourne players Charlie Spargo (two games) and Kysaiah Pickett (one game) were each suspended after round one after a breach;
- ▶ Collingwood players Steele Sidebottom (four games) and Lynden Dunn (one game) were each suspended after round four after a breach;
- ▶ Sydney Swans player Elijah Taylor was suspended for the remainder of the season after round 12 after a breach of both AFL protocols and WA state government COVID-19 quarantine directions;
- ▶ Port Adelaide players Peter Ladhams (three games) and Dan Houston (two games) were suspended after round 12 after a breach while Port Adelaide was sanctioned \$50,000 with \$25,000 suspended;
- ▶ Richmond players Sydney Stack and Callum Coleman-Jones were both suspended for 10 matches and sent home from Queensland after a breach after round 15, while the club was fined \$100,000 - \$75,000 for this breach and a suspended \$25,000 from the earlier breach outlined above.





## Around the Regions

The AFL state offices across NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory have been restructured to focus more on community football, growth in participation and development of facilities.

General Manager - Game Development Sam Graham will lead the team, reporting into EGM Game Development Andrew Dillon.

### AFL state-based leaders:

- ▶ Head of AFL Victoria - Brad Scott
- ▶ Head of AFL Queensland - Trish Squires
- ▶ Head of AFL NSW/ACT - Tiffany Robertson
- ▶ Head of AFL Tasmania - Damian Gill
- ▶ Head of AFL NT - Stuart Totham

△ Volunteers were recognised for their tireless work during the bushfire crisis with a special banner at the Bushfire Relief match at Marvel Stadium.

### NSW/ACT

- ▶ The condensed 2020 NSW/ACT community football season ran from mid-July to mid-October and comprised 8054 games played under strict health protocols of two state/territory jurisdictions.
- ▶ Local club volunteers went above and beyond to execute the season in compliance with COVID-safe plans, demonstrating the dedication and commitment of so many across the state and territory to our game.
- ▶ Community football clubs maintained 97 per cent of pre-COVID participation levels with more than 1600 teams taking the field across NSW/ACT.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT resumed delivering school programming in Term 3 with more than 400 hours of AFL programming in NSW and ACT schools each week.
- ▶ Continued strong growth in the game's alternate formats with a 10 per cent increase in participation in Junior AFLX and more than 300 teams registered to play AFL 9s in spring 2020.
- ▶ After a devastating bushfire season across NSW and the ACT, more than 90 NSW and ACT clubs were awarded Immediate Relief Grants from the AFL Bushfire Relief Fund. Subsequently, a further \$508,272.50 was awarded in Bushfire Relief Grants to 13 clubs in the heavily-affected South Coast Region between Eden and Bomaderry, ensuring they could get their community clubs back on the field in an extremely challenging year.

- ▶ NSW residents affected by the bushfire tragedy were hosted at the AFL Bushfire Relief Match at Marvel Stadium in Melbourne where they were honoured during the pre-game ceremony.
- ▶ NSW hosted six interstate AFL clubs for a period of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. Hubs were set up in Manly, Coogee, Sydney CBD and Wollongong over four weeks to facilitate a block of matches. Games were played at the SCG and Giants Stadium.
- ▶ The Giants selected three NSW players as picks 9, 29, and 42 in the 2020 NAB AFLW Draft - Tarni Evans (Queanbeyan Tigers), Emily Pease (Belconnen Magpies) and Libby Graham (Manly Warringah Wolves).
- ▶ Through strong partnerships with local government and local community clubs, AFL NSW/ACT delivered eight key projects that secured a combined \$930,000 investment from the Australian Football Facilities Fund towards \$30m of total facility development. This included completion of new synthetic oval and amenities extension at Lionel Watts Frenchs Forest, new modular amenities and changerooms at Balgowlah Oval, \$3m upgrade of Jubilee Oval Broken Hill, new amenities and changerooms at Don Small Oval, Tacoma, new lighting at South Kempsey Oval, precinct upgrades at both W.H. Wagener Oval and Weldon Oval, and a \$20m redevelopment of Lavington Sportsground, Albury.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT was successful in securing approximately \$2.5m for two applications from round two of the NSW Government Greater Sydney Sport Facilities Fund (\$940,000 towards rebuilding and widening the playing surface at St Luke's Concord and \$1.5m towards new amenities, storage and electronic scoreboard at Kelso Park North, Panania).
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT partnered with the NSW Department of Education during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver two of its 15 online 'Education Live Series' with stars Nicola Barr and Ollie Florent leading AFL sessions for all NSW public school children.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT hosted its second annual Youth Leaders Program online in April 2020, reaching more than 200 participants in partnership with the NSW Government's Her Sport Her Way Program.

### Victoria

- ▶ In March 2020, the AFL, its 18 clubs and AFL/AFLW players through the AFL Players Association, announced they had collectively raised \$8m for Bushfire Relief to affected areas in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. The figure was comprised of:
  - ▶ \$2.5m by the AFL, its 18 clubs and AFL/AFLW players through the AFLPA.
  - ▶ \$3.9m from the State of Origin double-header event, fundraising collection points at AFLW matches and contributions by AFL corporate partners.
  - ▶ \$1.6m in club-led activities.



△ AFLW players were able to start training in December (top) but competitions such as Victoria's NAB League for girls were scrapped.

- ▶ The AFL Community Relief Fund was established by the AFL to support local communities in fire-affected areas to repair and rebuild their football clubs, including helping footballing families in these impacted communities.
- ▶ The Community Relief Fund distributed \$1,216,481 to community football clubs/leagues in bushfire-affected areas. To date, 35 Victorian clubs and four Auskick centres have received varied levels of financial support to help ease the financial burden and get clubs back to training and preparing for the 2021 season.
- ▶ Football in Victoria was the hardest hit due to COVID-19, with all leagues and competitions forced to cancel their seasons due to Victorian Government restrictions.
- ▶ AFL Victoria's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was always in line with Government and Chief Health Officer advice regarding returning to train and play in a safe environment. The stage three restrictions imposed on Victoria made it very difficult for leagues and competitions to operate as intended. Many leagues and competitions cancelled their seasons in July and August.
- ▶ In August 2020, the AFL reaffirmed its commitment to community football through the \$18m funding announced in September 2019.
- ▶ To address the concerns and develop a long-term plan for football in Gippsland, AFL Victoria engaged ColganBauer to conduct an independent review into the structure of Gippsland Football. The focus was on creating a structure to ensure the sustainability of football in the region going forward, addressing the Gippsland challenges and to determine the appropriate operating structure, including governance and competitions, to ensure long-term growth for community football in the Gippsland region. This report is an important step to continue to move football forward in Gippsland and AFL Victoria will continue to work with and listen to players, coaches, leagues, administrators and volunteers, to ensure we all shape the future of football in the region.
- ▶ 31 girls from Victoria were selected at the 2020 AFL Women's Draft held in October. Elsie McKenzie from the Northern Knights in the NAB League was selected with the No. 1 pick by Richmond while her teammate Jess Fitzgerald was selected with the No. 2 pick by the Western Bulldogs.
- ▶ As part of a Victorian Government announcement of \$2.7 billion in project work across the state, there were a number of outcomes for football:
  - ▶ Grants of up to \$350,000 were available for large state sporting associations with AFL Victoria receiving the full \$350,000.
  - ▶ Grants of up to \$15,000 were available for associations and leagues with more than \$500,000 spread across 51 football leagues.
  - ▶ Grants of \$1000 were available for individual clubs. Almost 800 local clubs received the \$1000 support package grant from the Victorian Government, which was later topped up with a further \$1000 to clubs who received a grant through the first round of funding.



△ Draft prospects were on show at the NAB All-Star match at Thebarton Oval in October.

- ▶ In partnership with WorkSafe Victoria, 15 country football clubs received equipment or up to \$5000 in funding to assist in making improvements to the safety of their grounds or to provide added safety benefits to players and spectators as part of the 2020 WorkSafe Victoria Club Safety Fund. On top of the annual club safety fund contribution, WorkSafe in a one-off capacity, generously supported 12 country clubs with brand new scoreboards and a further 12 country clubs with the complete installation of behind goal safety netting.
  - ▶ Energy Safe Victoria, through Safer Canteens, continued its investment in community football clubs across Victoria. Energy Safe Victoria delivered \$40,000 in funding to 43 community football and netball clubs across Victoria.
- South Australia**
- ▶ SANFL led the way for sport in South Australia in providing insight to SA Health, SAPOL and the state government to ensure football could restart safely in a COVID environment.
  - ▶ SANFL's Return to Play protocols and directions were shared across Australian Football and other sports nationally. Following a six-week postponement of the 2020 season, the SANFL delivered a 14-game home and away men's state league season with an outstanding quality of football.
  - ▶ Despite COVID restrictions significantly impacting the ability to host crowds, more than 75,000 fans attended men's state league games across the minor rounds.
  - ▶ SANFL broadcast partner Channel Seven experienced an eight per cent increase in viewing figures - an excellent result given neither AFL club, Port Adelaide nor the Adelaide Crows, were able to field teams in the competition under the AFL COVID protocols.
  - ▶ Overall, SANFL club membership numbers grew from the previous year - a great credit to the SANFL clubs and a reflection of the loyalty of the SANFL supporter base.



△ Jaide Britton in action during the NAB AFLW under-18 All-Stars match at Provident Financial Oval in September.

- ▶ The 2020 SANFL Statewide Super League Grand Final was played on Sunday, October 18, at Adelaide Oval before a crowd of more than 17,000, with Woodville-West Torrens winning its fourth premiership after a 39-point victory over North Adelaide.
- ▶ The 2020 Magarey Medal, broadcast as a virtual production by Channel Seven was won by North Adelaide's Campbell Combe and attracted its highest viewership numbers since the broadcast started in 2016.
- ▶ A full season (10 minor rounds and a three-week finals series) of the 2020 SANFL Statewide Super Women's League was completed, despite the season being interrupted after four rounds due to COVID-19.
- ▶ North Adelaide won its first SANFLW premiership, defeating reigning dual premier South Adelaide by seven points. The SANFLW Best and Fairest Medal was won jointly by West Adelaide's Rachelle Martin and North Adelaide's Anne Hatchard.
- ▶ More than half of the SANFL's affiliated leagues delivered football seasons. The SANFL also introduced a Limestone Coast Football League, allowing about 300 players from three leagues in the state's south-east region with an opportunity to play football.
- ▶ Auskick registrations reached more than 5700, while the SANFL Schools Competition included almost 140 teams.
- ▶ National Pharmacies SANFL Juniors - a community club-based competition for under-7s through to under-16s in metropolitan Adelaide - completed a 12-round season, with more than 12,300 boys and girls registered in the competition across 643 teams and more than 50 community clubs.
- ▶ The SANFL was proud to be a winner of a Governor's Multicultural Award in recognition of its contribution to multiculturalism, inclusion and social harmony through its multicultural football programs.
- ▶ The SANFL's commercial partners continued their support for the SANFL, in particular state league naming rights partner Statewide Super and Major Partner West End.

- ▶ Despite the onset of COVID-19, SANFL successfully completed its renovation of the former Checkside Tavern at West Lakes, re-launched as the Mosaic Hotel in September 2020. It also partnered with the SACA through Adelaide Oval Stadium Management Authority to develop and open the Oval Hotel at Adelaide Oval.
- ▶ 2020 NAB AFL Draft prospects played in the NAB All-Star Match in October at Thebarton Oval where Team Grundy comfortably accounted for Team Hurn by 54 points. Woodville-West Torrens midfielder Caleb Poulter was a standout for the victors.

**Western Australia**

- ▶ The WAFL competition completed a nine-round home and away season with a three-week finals series. South Fremantle claimed the WAFL premiership defeating Claremont 6.10 (46) to 6.7 (43) to win its first premiership since 2009. For the Tigers, ball magnet Jye Bolton collected 35 disposals and claimed the 2020 Simpson Medal for best afield.
- ▶ The WAFLW moved to a six-team competition and a seven-round home and away season with a two-week finals series. Peel Thunder completed a fairytale season to run out 15-point winners over Subiaco in the Optus WAFLW Grand Final.
- ▶ Sam Fisher (Swan Districts) claimed the 2020 Sandover Medal, while Danika Pisconeri (Subiaco) won her second straight Dhara Kerr Medal.
- ▶ More than 83 per cent of Auskick players were recaptured through the WAFC's Return to Play strategy post COVID-19.
- ▶ Seven WAFL women's players were added to AFLW lists following the NAB AFLW Draft on October 6. This included two first-round selections, with Isabella Lewis (Claremont) being selected with pick No. 3 by West Coast and Sarah Verrier (Peel Thunder) going to Fremantle at pick No. 14.
- ▶ 57 players from the WAFL were selected in an extended 2019/2020 NAB AFL Academy squad.
- ▶ Two NAB AFL Under-18 All-Star matches were held at Leederville Oval to showcase West Australian talent ahead of the 2020 NAB AFL Draft. WA Black secured the first victory of the two NAB AFL Under-18 All-Stars exhibition games, after defeating WA Gold by 55 points at Leederville Oval. The WA Black side led at every change to dominate the exhibition fixture, led by starring roles from Claremont's Joel Western and West Perth's Heath Chapman. WA Gold 18.5 (113) defeated WA Black 8.10 (58) in game two.



**Northern Territory**

- ▶ In a COVID-interrupted year, the Northern Territory Football League in Darwin celebrated season 2019-20 Grand Final Day two days before Northern Territory Government restrictions on mass gatherings came into effect.
- ▶ AFLNT broadcast the Tiwi Island Grand Final on its channels for the first time, after the islands were closed to visitors.
- ▶ The Central Australian Football League in Alice Springs was the first community football competition to resume across Australia post COVID-19 restrictions being eased in late June.
- ▶ Successful and slightly re-jigged community football competitions were run in Katherine (BRFL) and Barkly (BAFL).
- ▶ 2020 saw the first female team from a remote community - the Arnhem Crows - join a weekly community football competition. The Crows went on to win the BRFL premiership in their inaugural year.
- ▶ The 2019-20 NTL season saw the introduction of a new division, with the inaugural Women's Division 2 competition played on Wednesday evenings with six teams.
- ▶ The NAB AFL and AFLW All-Star Under-18 games played in Darwin provided the opportunity for untapped NT talent from remote communities to showcase their talent.
- ▶ Two NT female Indigenous players were drafted to AFLW clubs - Janet Baird (Gold Coast Suns) and Stephanie Williams (Geelong Cats).

△ Stephanie Williams made her AFLW debut in 2020 after being selected by Geelong in the NAB AFLW Draft.

- ▶ Darwin played host to its first AFL double-header weekend of matches, with the Gold Coast Suns playing Carlton on the Friday night at Marrara, followed by Richmond and Essendon on the Saturday evening in the Dreamtime Game for Sir Doug Nicholls Round. Tickets to both games sold out in record time in less than 15 minutes.
- ▶ Alice Springs again hosted an AFL clash with Melbourne taking on St Kilda in a thriller in round 14.
- ▶ TIO Stadium underwent a major refurbishment with new changerooms, bar/kiosk, ticket booths and media and timekeeper rooms being installed.
- ▶ For the first time, lights were installed at the spiritual home of footy in Darwin, Gardens Oval, with the opening game of the 2020-21 NTL season played there for the historic occasion.
- ▶ Installation of a Direct Video Network (DVN) for the first time at TIO Stadium, bringing the Stadium in line with other major stadiums around Australia for the operation of the AFL Review Centre (ARC).
- ▶ 20 students from the Tiwi Islands and Elcho Island took part in the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre's (MLLLC) 'Make Your Mark Leadership Program'.
- ▶ COVID-19 halted the usual MLLLC program but in terms two and three, the facility hosted students from the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School. This allowed the students to continue their learning from the MLLLC rather than returning to Victoria.
- ▶ The MLLLC also started to engage with communities via 'AFL Hour', a live streaming and in-class series of lessons.

- ▶ The AFLNT remote projects were able to keep delivering programs throughout 2020 despite the challenges of COVID-19. The implementation of biosecurity zones and social distancing rules from COVID-19 meant the remote community competitions had to be postponed and adjusted but school-based and youth programs continued.
- ▶ Remote program adjustments included the implementation of online AFL classes to reach remote communities within biosecurity zones, which enabled students throughout areas like Central Australia to stay engaged in footy skills, education sessions and leadership programs.
- ▶ Three new locations were included in the remote projects team in 2020: Daly River, Gunbalanya and the Katherine region.
- ▶ Two new Youth Development Managers joined the AFLNT remote projects team in 2020, including the first female staff member servicing the remote communities of Katherine and the Big Rivers Region.
- ▶ The team delivered a new footy-focused and mentoring program to the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre, which has elements of skill, leadership and mindfulness.

**Queensland**

- ▶ Queensland became the home of the AFL in 2020 with a record 83 AFL games played in the state during the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season - in Brisbane (35), Gold Coast (44) and Cairns (four). This included the history-making 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final at the Gabba - the first time an AFL Grand Final has been played outside of Victoria.
- ▶ The AFL announced \$136.4m of Economic Contribution in Queensland was generated as a result of the AFL activity in Queensland across the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.
- ▶ 16 of the 18 AFL clubs were located in Queensland at one point throughout the season, including the successful relocation and housing of more than 550 players, 750 staff and their families.
- ▶ The economic activity generated by the AFL in Queensland was responsible for supporting 1182 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in Queensland. The Grand Final alone was responsible for supporting around 260 FTE jobs.
- ▶ AFL Queensland worked with peak body QSport and other State Sporting Organisations to develop Return to Play principles (Field Sports Guidelines) which despite the COVID shutdown, AFL Queensland rebooted to successfully deliver junior, youth and senior competitions and programs across all 11 regions from Northern Rivers (NSW) through to Cairns.
- ▶ AFL Queensland worked with Queensland Cricket and Local Government Areas to revise Right of Use arrangements to allow for the completion of the 2020 season.
- ▶ In senior football, Morningside AFC was crowned 2020 QAFL premier, the club's first flag since 2010. Morningside also claimed the reserves premiership.

▽ Young Lion Jack Payne was one of five Queenslanders to make their AFL debut in 2020.

- ▶ Yeronga South Brisbane won the 2020 QAFL premiership with the Grand Final played at Bond University on the Gold Coast.
- ▶ 2020 saw a record number of juniors (13,177) compete in SEQ club football, despite the COVID shutdown with record numbers also delivered across female football.
- ▶ More than 150 teams competed in the AFL Q-Schools Cup (due to COVID-19, only the primary schools division could be delivered).
- ▶ 104 community Auskick centres were run with 4393 participants.
- ▶ AFL Queensland released the new Facilities Plan 2020-25 to drive investment into community facilities over the next five years.
- ▶ Significant new community football projects were delivered at Springfield Central, Maroochydore Regional Multisport Complex, Sandgate and Redcliffe with new Ausco modular facilities installed at Victoria Point and Ferny Grove.
- ▶ The 2020 NAB AFL Draft Combine and NAB AFLW Draft Combine (Queensland) were held on the Gold Coast in October 2020.
- ▶ Five Queenslanders were drafted in the 2020 NAB AFLW Draft, including two from North Queensland and one from the Darling Downs.
- ▶ Five Queenslanders made their AFL debut in 2020 - Connor Budarick (Gold Coast Suns) and Tom Fullerton, Connor Ballendon, Keidean Coleman and Jack Payne (Brisbane Lions).
- ▶ 29 players from the Queensland talent pathway represented Broadbeach and Morningside in the 2020 QAFL Grand Final.
- ▶ The AFL's presence in Queensland drew public attention to the strength of the code and celebrated a number of local community club achievements including:
  - ▶ Yeppoon Swans' 89 consecutive victories, culminating in its sixth straight flag;
  - ▶ Wests juniors' stalwart Keith 'Happy' Wallace celebrated coaching 1000 games;
  - ▶ The Yeronga Devils Women's celebrated a team victory by using Auslan to sing the team song in support of a hearing-impaired teammate;
  - ▶ Sandgate's 'Scoreboard Phil' celebrated 1000 games on the manual scoreboard at Lemke Rd.





### Tasmania

- ▶ Despite the impacts of COVID-19, many leagues across Tasmania managed to deliver seasons in 2020:
  - ▶ The three major junior competitions - NWFL, STJFL and the NTJFA all played successful truncated seasons with participation holding strong in each region.
  - ▶ The Tasmanian State League played a shortened season, with Launceston breaking through and snapping the winning streak of its cross-town rival, North Launceston. Launceston had an extraordinary season as a club, winning the TSL, TSLW, Development League and Under-18s for a clean sweep of the trophies on offer.
  - ▶ The Southern Football League had a terrific season which was capped off in style with two clubs from the Huon Valley - Huonville and Cygnet - playing off in the Grand Final. Huonville overran its neighbours by 28 points while in the SFLW, Claremont was an unstoppable force, going through the season undefeated.
  - ▶ Burnie made it three straight premierships in the NWFL, defeating Devonport by 39 points in a flawless campaign. In the NWFLW, Wynyard defeated Latrobe by 33 points to win the premiership.

△ Tasmania's best young talent was on show during a NAB All-Stars gala day for under-18 girls and boys at UTAS Stadium in Launceston in September.

- ▶ In the Old Scholars Football Association, OHA came from 30 points behind in the Grand Final to defeat minor premier Hutchins and claim the premiership.
- ▶ Motton Preston reigned supreme in the NWFA, defeating Forth in the Grand Final by 42 points, going undefeated in the amended opt-in NWFA roster for season 2020.
- ▶ The NTFA played an opt-in season in 2020 due to COVID-19 and Deloraine won the competition, collecting its first piece of silverware since 1979. The Kangaroos defeated Rocherlea by 38 points and in the NTFW, Scottsdale triumphed over Old Launcestonians.
- ▶ Tasmania's best young talent was showcased in a NAB All-Stars gala day at UTAS Stadium, with matches for the under-18 boys and under-18 girls showcasing the best draft prospects from across the state.
- ▶ North Melbourne selected Launceston's Brooke Brown at pick No. 47, and she joined nine other Tasmanians in the AFLW.

### International

- ▶ Despite the restrictions on sport due to COVID-19, where activity was permitted, nearly 60,000 participants engaged in Australian Football competitions and programs overseas.
- ▶ The AFL continued to partner with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Pacific Sports Partnership (PSP) program to increase participation, build capacity and promote health outcomes and contribute to Australian public diplomacy objectives in Nauru.
- ▶ Adelaide Crows AFLW players Chelsea Randall, Angela Foley and Nikki Gore participated in a digital series to continue promoting women's footy in Nauru along with the importance of participating in physical activity and living a healthy lifestyle. This followed the establishment of the inaugural AFL Nauru women's competition. Eight teams and 350 women competed before the Boe Lions were crowned premiers.
- ▶ After COVID-19 halted activity mid-year, AFL PNG's back to sport protocols were approved in July and the EmNau Nuikick program returned across five of the six development regions in Papua New Guinea. AFL PNG saw nearly 22,000 participants in programs and competitions and an additional 17,000 exposed to the game through promotional activities.
- ▶ Gold Coast Suns international rookie, Hewago Paul Oea from Papua New Guinea, continued to pursue his ambition of playing in the AFL competition by competing against AFL-listed players as part of weekly scrimmages through 2020.
- ▶ The 2019 AFL Under-15 Oceania Cup was held in Suva, Fiji, in December. The Nauru Stars went through undefeated in claiming victory over the Fiji Junior Tribe, Tonga Thunder and Pacific All Stars.

▽ Fiji is one of many countries now offering AFL football to players of all ages and gender.

- ▶ Despite restrictions on delivering school programs and two separate lockdowns due to COVID-19, AFL New Zealand saw more than 9500 participants (47 per cent female) participating in the AFL NZ KiwiKick program.
- ▶ The USAFL Virtual Nationals event in October saw clubs compete against each other across a range of AFL skills and fitness activities. Special guests involved in covering the virtual event included AFL greats Brad Johnson, Nick Dal Santo, Dermott Brereton and Brent Harvey.
- ▶ AFL Canada and its member clubs secured more than \$65,000 CAD through the Canada Summer Jobs program to grow the game across the country. Despite restrictions due to COVID-19, more than 4000 participants engaged in the game across Canada in some form this year.
- ▶ AFL Europe's Festival of Football in September saw more than 40 teams from 10 countries across the region celebrate getting back out and playing the game they love.
- ▶ Despite restrictions on activity as a result of COVID-19, Australian Football was played in varying capacities across Asia throughout 2020 including programs and competitions in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, India and Pakistan.
- ▶ The planned 2020 International Cup was postponed due to the impacts of COVID-19. This international event remains an important part of developing the game overseas, and as such we will continue to review the ability to stage this tournament in future years.





# COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

**KYLIE ROGERS**  
GENERAL MANAGER COMMERCIAL



The strength of the AFL's long-term relationships with our major corporate partners was a primary reason our game was able to navigate the greatest crisis it had confronted in its history. Forced from our ovals across the country at every level of the game from the community to the elite level, the support of great companies who share the AFL's vision and values was central to the game's successful return from the COVID-19 shutdown.

Our partners equally faced serious challenges nationwide due to the impact of the virus, and the AFL sincerely and formally thanks all of those organisations who have aligned with us, many for decades or more - our naming rights partners, premier partners, major partners and all of our licensee and support partners - for supporting us in such a time of crisis.

In the immediate period after the AFL season was suspended, the department's primary focus was on revenue retention across the industry - corporate partners (AFL, club and Marvel Stadium), Membership (club, AFL and Marvel Stadium), digital advertisers, licensees and retail partners.


As detailed elsewhere in this report, AFL club members were unbelievably loyal and strong in support of their clubs, with total membership for the year only just falling short of the record established in 2019.

Naming rights partners Toyota and NAB both demonstrated strong support of their AFL and AFLW partnerships, with positive sentiment across all 43 partners and a heavy team focus on maintaining regular communications. The majority of partners continued through the year to actively leverage their partnership throughout this period with a number of key new agreements finalised, which are detailed within this report.


Major partner NAB provided the opportunity for 22 Auskickers from across Australia to present the premiership medallions on Grand Final night.




## CORPORATE PARTNERS



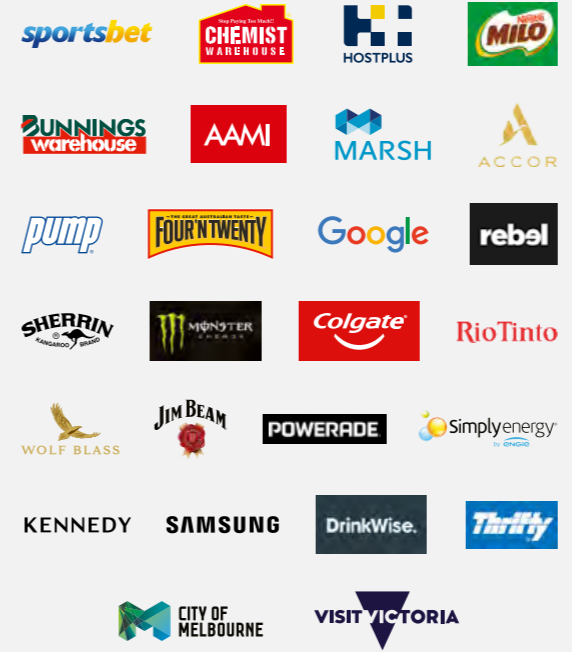
**PREMIER PARTNER**

 **TOYOTA**



**MAJOR PARTNERS**




**OFFICIAL PARTNERS**




**ASSOCIATE PARTNERS**


**PREMIER PARTNER**



**MAJOR PARTNERS**



**OFFICIAL PARTNERS**



**GREAT COMPANIES WHO SHARE THE AFL'S VALUES. WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER**



➤ NAB continues to support pathways programs for boys and girls, including the grassroots of Auskick through to elite competitions.



### Toyota

Toyota, the naming rights partner for the AFL premiership season and AFL finals series, chalked up an extraordinary milestone through 2020 when it surpassed \$10m in fundraising for local community sporting clubs with its 'Toyota Good for Footy' and 'Toyota Good for Cricket' programs.

Across the past two years, more than 750 community football clubs have benefited from Toyota's support. With COVID restrictions and the national bushfire crisis causing significant disruptions in 2020, the money raised by Toyota's raffles was especially important, helping clubs raise critical funds in the absence of live games and community events.

When matches resumed for the 2020 season after the COVID-19 hiatus, Toyota celebrated with its 'We Bounce Back' campaign, centring on a series of simple, introspective moments shared by the football community and narrated by AFL Chief Executive Gillon McLachlan.

△ A Toyota HiLux vehicle was used to transport the 2020 premiership cup on its tour of Queensland before arriving at the Grand Final at the Gabba.

◁ Supporters from local community clubs had the best seats in the house in the Toyota Fan Zone at the Grand Final.

Toyota helped facilitate the Premiership Cup Tour across regional Queensland with a HiLux the vehicle of choice to cover the thousands of kilometres travelled. It concluded with a grand entrance into the stadium on Grand Final day with cup ambassador Simon Black conducting a lap of honour and presenting the cup.

Toyota brought its Fan Zone broadcast integration to life at the Gabba on Grand Final day. Using the veranda within the stadium, Toyota delighted fans from local community clubs for their chance to watch from the best seats in the house.

▷ Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk at the press conference announcing that the Grand Final would be played at the Gabba.



## COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

KYLIE ROGERS

### NAB

The primary partner of AFLW since its inception in 2017, NAB has had a central role around football for women and girls increasing participation by 31 per cent in recent years.

NAB's partnership with the AFL started in 2002 and now supports the female pathway from the grassroots of Auskick to the elite competition, while NAB also supports all the key pathway programs for boys, through to the presentation of the Ron Evans Medal for the NAB AFL Rising Star.

NAB and the AFL continued to strengthen their partnership in 2020, launching the NAB AFL Auskick at Home online clinics designed to keep kids connected to the game during the global pandemic. The online series saw current and former AFL and AFLW footballers, alongside NAB ambassadors Joel Selwood and Katie Brennan, join Auskickers for online clinics and provide tips for backyard drills, exercises and skills-based learning.

NAB continued to play a pivotal role on 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final Day, running a Queensland-based competition which gave 22 footy loving kids a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Thanks to NAB, 22 Auskickers and their families from all over Queensland attended the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final and presented Richmond's players with their premiership medals at the Gabba.

### NAB League

Over four weeks, NAB held an array of online webinars for players and families involved in the NAB League competition. The webinars featured high-profile AFL and AFLW talent, such as Patrick Dangerfield, Lachie Whitfield and Madison Prespakis, providing insight into their pathway to playing at the elite level. The NAB League webinars had more than 2640 families log into the series, and provided exclusive access to the next generation of footballers while also ensuring AFL staff could update the players and families on a regular basis.

▶ Three-time Brisbane Lions premiership star Simon Black escorted the 2020 premiership cup on a 10-day tour of Queensland.

### Accor

The extraordinary circumstances of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season saw all clubs in the competition placed within a hub at some part of the season.

High-level support from Accor was pivotal for the vast majority of accommodation locations for our clubs throughout the season, while the AFL also conducted quarantine hubs on the Gold Coast to enable officials, injured players and family members to join teams when it was apparent matches would not return to Victoria and NSW for some time.

Both on the Gold Coast as a primary location for the majority of clubs for the season, as well as nationally in other locations, Accor provided outstanding support to the competition and to clubs. An incredible level of planning and co-ordination was required to deliver High Performance Centres that supported club operations, families and quarantine requirements to keep the season continuing. Accor delivered High Performance Centres and COVID-safe environments at 22 hotels and resorts through the season.

### Virgin Australia

Virgin Australia provided outstanding support to the game, flying teams and families safely through the many restrictions around COVID-19 that severely impacted travel through the course of the year. The AFL and our clubs frequently relied on specific charter travel for matches as border restrictions and hub environments were in place, and the professionalism of all Virgin Australia staff and operations was vital for matches to continue as planned.

Virgin Australia also supported the pre-Grand Final tour of the premiership cup through Queensland, flying it north to Cairns before it travelled back with Toyota.

▽ Richmond CEO Brendon Gale in his 'office' in the Tigers' hub at the Mercure Resort on the Gold Coast.





△ Geelong's Patrick Dangerfield and Collingwood's Stephanie Chiocci promote healthy produce from official supermarket partner Coles (top); BHP's support of AFLW included a footy clinic in Perth in October (above).

### Coles partnership

Coles has become the official supermarket of the AFLW and AFL for an exclusive five-year period, aligning a healthy lifestyle at the heart of the partnership with the AFL.

The agreement will centre around health, nutrition, inclusion and community support to be prioritised at all levels of the game.

### BHP supports AFLW

BHP will partner with the AFL for the next three years to improve opportunity and equality in both business and sport, focusing on creating more opportunities for women to play, umpire and coach in the AFLW and at community level.

#### Seven key areas will be targeted:

- ▶ Player development managers at the 14 AFLW clubs;
- ▶ A BHP Think Big Leadership Forum for all AFLW players;
- ▶ The BHP AFL Women's Coaching Academy;
- ▶ The BHP AFL Female Umpiring Academy;
- ▶ An annual gender equality roundtable;
- ▶ A Female Football Community Coach of the Year award;
- ▶ Development of National Female Community Football guidelines.

The player development managers will provide support and development plans for female players, including pathways to consider becoming AFL coaches and umpires, as well as academic and/or workplaces pursuits.

### Colgate

Colgate partnered with the AFL as an official partner for both the men's and women's competitions, as well as a supporting partner for the NAB AFL Draft and NAB AFL Auskick program.

Tayla Harris and Eddie Betts headed the agreement as ambassadors with the mantra to positively influence other people, while Colgate supported the AFL Grand Final Sprint at the Gabba. Under the partnership of 'Smile Strong', Colgate provided a donation to Ladder, an AFL player-led charity tackling youth homelessness, in honour of the winner.

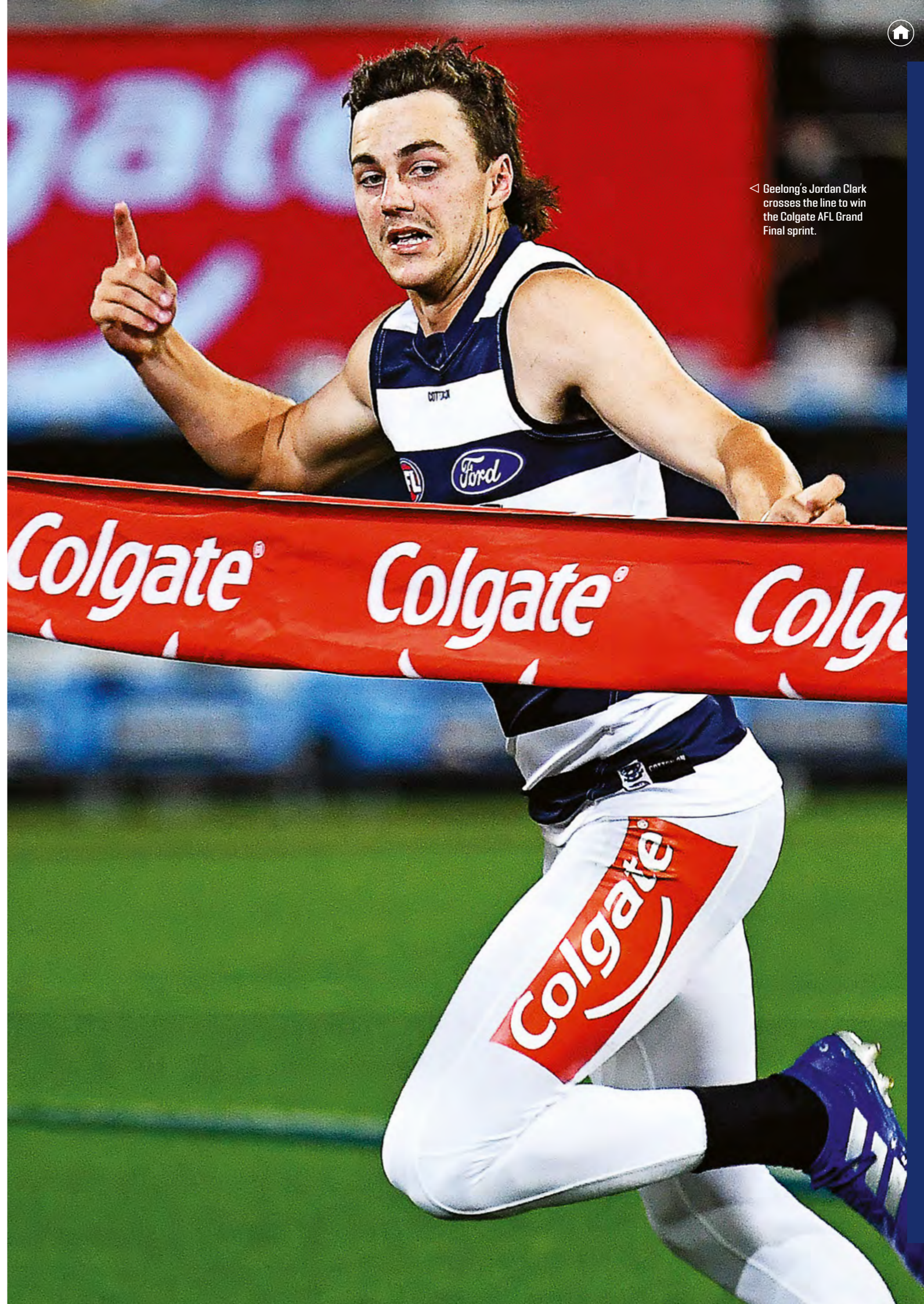
Eight players contested the Colgate AFL Grand Final Sprint - Ben Ainsworth (Gold Coast Suns), Charlie Cameron (Brisbane Lions), Jordan Clark (Geelong Cats), Xavier Duursma (Port Adelaide), Bradley Hill (St Kilda), Ben Keays (Adelaide Crows), Bigoa Nyuon (Richmond) and Josh Thomas (Collingwood).

### Google

Google Australia extended its partnership to the end of 2022, committing to both the women's and men's competitions.

Through powerful storytelling via YouTube, fans can have their say or access all the latest AFL news and information through Google Nest. The AFL and Google are partnered to keep fans informed, entertained and connected.

While it was a challenging year for a new brand to come on board with the game, Monster leveraged the reach and connection across our AFL Media Network with great success through its AFL Exchange Podcast sponsorship and Rapid Replays social content.



◀ Geelong's Jordan Clark crosses the line to win the Colgate AFL Grand Final sprint.

## AFL club membership

AFL club membership reached 992,854 members in 2020 - an extraordinary display of loyalty from club members when considering the lengthy hiatus in the initial part of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season and the restrictions for many members around the country in being able to attend games in person.

The 2020 membership tally was only 6.1 per cent (64,718 members) less than the all-time record of 1,057,572 established in 2019, with five clubs breaking their all-time records (Carlton, the Gold Coast Suns, the GWS Giants, St Kilda and West Coast Eagles).

The Eagles exceeded 100,000 members for the first time and led the AFL membership tally with 100,776 members, the first time a non-Victorian club has topped the table since the Adelaide Crows in 2008.

Richmond passed 100,000 members for the third year running (100,420), while AFLW membership increased again after its fourth season, with an all-time record 20,849 members (up 48.9 per cent).

▽ Giants star Josh Kelly gives the thumbs up to fans, who supported the club in record membership numbers in 2020.

## AFL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

| CLUB (* RECORD)    | 2020           | 2019             | VAR (+/-)            |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Adelaide Crows     | 54,891         | 64,437           | -14.9                |
| Brisbane Lions     | 29,277         | 28,023           | +4.5                 |
| Carlton*           | 67,035         | 64,269           | +4.3                 |
| Collingwood        | 76,862         | 85,226           | -9.8                 |
| Essendon           | 66,686         | 84,237           | -20.8                |
| Fremantle          | 51,577         | 51,431           | +0.3                 |
| Geelong Cats       | 60,066         | 65,063           | -7.6                 |
| Gold Coast Suns*   | 16,236         | 13,649           | +19.0                |
| GWS Giants*        | 30,841         | 30,109           | +2.4                 |
| Hawthorn           | 76,343         | 81,211           | -6.0                 |
| Melbourne          | 40,571         | 52,421           | -22.6                |
| North Melbourne    | 38,667         | 42,419           | -8.8                 |
| Port Adelaide      | 46,820         | 51,951           | -9.9                 |
| Richmond           | 100,420        | 103,358          | -2.8                 |
| St Kilda*          | 48,588         | 43,038           | +12.9                |
| Sydney Swans       | 48,322         | 61,912           | -21.9                |
| West Coast Eagles* | 100,776        | 90,445           | +11.2                |
| Western Bulldogs   | 38,876         | 44,373           | -12.4                |
| <b>Totals</b>      | <b>992,854</b> | <b>1,057,572</b> | <b>-6.1 (64,718)</b> |



## Finals ticket pricing

Ticket prices for the Toyota AFL Finals Series were frozen at 2019 prices for all finals across weeks 1-3 and the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

With the Grand Final relocated from the MCG to the Gabba, the AFL's primary approach was to protect access for club members of the competing clubs. Grand Final allocations were reduced across various industry groups to provide competing club members of Richmond and the Geelong Cats with 16,300 tickets (54 per cent of capacity).

△ Locals at Cape Hillsborough, near Mackay, welcomed the AFL premiership cup on its tour of Queensland leading up to the Grand Final.

## AFL Premiership Cup Tour of Queensland

The 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Cup was taken on an official 10-day tour of Queensland in the lead-up to the historic Grand Final at the Gabba on October 24.

Showcasing some of Queensland's best local areas and footy communities, the Cup travelled from Cairns with stops in Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast, before returning to Brisbane.

Flying to Cairns thanks to Virgin Australia and then travelling back by road via a Toyota HiLux, the Cup was escorted by 2002 Brownlow medallist and three-time Brisbane Lions' premiership star Simon Black.

## Virtual events - 2020 Brownlow Medal presentation and AFL Awards night

To protect the health and wellbeing of AFL players and officials, as well as the wider community, major AFL events were held as virtual ceremonies in 2020.

The 2020 Brownlow Medal count was held as a virtual event, broadcast on Sunday, October 18, on the Seven Network. With players in secure locations around the country, having returned to their home states, Brisbane Lions midfielder Lachie Neale was crowned the 2020 medallist with a runaway victory.

The AFL Awards evening, broadcast by Fox Footy in the bye week before the finals, combined the NAB AFL Rising Star, the announcement of the All-Australian team, the AFL Players Association MVP and the AFL Coaches Association Best Player Award.

## The new economy

A revised AFL structure, following the impact of COVID-19, came into effect late in 2020 to ensure the game had the business model required to ensure the future health of Australian Football at all levels.

For this department, there will be an enhanced focus on our fans and audience - keeping the game affordable and accessible and a focus on growth in northern markets that embraced the game through 2020.

Marvel Stadium will complete a full integration into the AFL with a Stadium Operations team reporting into the EGM.

Commercial Operations will include corporate partnerships, advertising sales, membership, hospitality, ticketing and events and will now oversee marketing, digital media including the AFL's website (AFL.com.au) and app, Marvel Stadium operations and the customer and fan experience.



While COVID-19 restricted attendances, Port Adelaide fans were out in force at Adelaide Oval for the preliminary final against Richmond.

### ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

|                               | 2020             | 2019             | VARIANCE          | %             |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Marsh Community Series        | 93,337           | 93,514           | -177              | -0.2%         |
| Toyota AFL Premiership Season | 820,262          | 6,951,304        | -6,131,042        | -88.2%        |
| Toyota AFL Finals Series      | 206,669          | 563,462          | -356,793          | -63.3%        |
| <b>Totals</b>                 | <b>1,120,268</b> | <b>7,608,280</b> | <b>-6,488,012</b> | <b>-85.3%</b> |

### AFLW HOME GAME ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

| CLUB              | 2020           | AVERAGE     | 2019           | AVERAGE     | % VARIANCE   |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Adelaide Crows    | 13,714         | 6857        | 21,722         | 5431        | 26.3%        |
| Brisbane Lions    | 6299           | 3150        | 9877           | 3292        | -4.3%        |
| Carlton           | 11,400         | 5700        | 9265           | 3088        | 84.6%        |
| Collingwood       | 29,620         | 9873        | 18,396         | 4599        | 114.7%       |
| Fremantle         | 15,591         | 5197        | 22,621         | 5655        | -8.1%        |
| Geelong Cats      | 8762           | 4381        | 29,614         | 9871        | -55.6%       |
| Gold Coast Suns   | 14,082         | 4694        | -              | -           | -            |
| GWS Giants        | 6898           | 2299        | 11,088         | 2772        | -17.1%       |
| Melbourne         | 5300           | 2650        | 8266           | 2755        | -3.8%        |
| North Melbourne   | 8223           | 2741        | 9957           | 3319        | -17.4%       |
| Richmond          | 23,940         | 7980        | -              | -           | -            |
| St Kilda          | 15,882         | 5294        | -              | -           | -            |
| West Coast Eagles | 37,640         | 18,820      | -              | -           | -            |
| Western Bulldogs  | 11,392         | 5696        | 29,809         | 7452        | -23.6%       |
| <b>Totals</b>     | <b>208,743</b> | <b>5964</b> | <b>170,615</b> | <b>4875</b> | <b>22.3%</b> |

### ATTENDANCE BY VENUE

| VENUE                             | 2020 MATCHES | ATTENDANCE     | AVERAGE      | 2019 MATCHES | ATTENDANCE       | AVERAGE       | % VARIANCE    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Adelaide Arena at Jingwan Stadium | -            | -              | -            | 1            | 9412             | 9412          | -             |
| Adelaide Oval                     | 20           | 192,412        | 9621         | 22           | 863,105          | 39,232        | -75.5%        |
| Blundstone Arena                  | -            | -              | -            | 4            | 39,529           | 9,882         | -             |
| Cazalys Stadium                   | 4            | 13,019         | 3255         | -            | -                | -             | -             |
| Gabba                             | 30           | 156,235        | 5208         | 11           | 272,146          | 24,741        | -79.0%        |
| Giants Stadium                    | 9            | 14,403         | 1600         | 8            | 99,291           | 12,411        | -87.1%        |
| GMHBA Stadium                     | 3            | 0              | 0            | 9            | 250,296          | 27,811        | -100.0%       |
| Mars Stadium                      | -            | -              | -            | 2            | 18,599           | 9300          | -             |
| Marvel Stadium                    | 11           | 0              | 0            | 43           | 1,367,331        | 31,798        | -100.0%       |
| MCG                               | 9            | 0              | 0            | 45           | 2,416,563        | 53,701        | -100.0%       |
| Metricon Stadium                  | 43           | 102,463        | 2383         | 10           | 118,344          | 11,834        | -79.9%        |
| Optus Stadium                     | 16           | 319,395        | 19,962       | 22           | 1,038,543        | 47,207        | -57.7%        |
| Riverway Stadium                  | -            | -              | -            | 1            | 7,243            | 7,243         | -             |
| SCG                               | 5            | 9845           | 1969         | 11           | 341,765          | 31,070        | -93.7%        |
| TIO Stadium                       | 2            | 10,573         | 5287         | 1            | 10,634           | 10,634        | -50.3%        |
| TIO Traeger Park                  | 1            | 1917           | 1917         | 1            | 7164             | 7164          | -73.2%        |
| UNSW Canberra Oval                | -            | -              | -            | 3            | 35,651           | 11,884        | -             |
| UTAS Stadium                      | -            | -              | -            | 4            | 55,688           | 13,922        | -             |
| <b>Totals</b>                     | <b>153</b>   | <b>820,262</b> | <b>5,361</b> | <b>198</b>   | <b>6,951,304</b> | <b>35,108</b> | <b>-84.7%</b> |

### HOME GAME ATTENDANCE BY CLUB

| VENUE             | 2020           | AVERAGE      | 2019             | AVERAGE       | % VARIANCE    |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Adelaide Crows    | 90,328         | 10,036       | 489,656          | 44,514        | -77.5%        |
| Brisbane Lions    | 86,140         | 9571         | 272,146          | 24,741        | -61.3%        |
| Carlton           | 31,337         | 3917         | 514,300          | 46,755        | -91.6%        |
| Collingwood       | 16,718         | 2090         | 648,728          | 58,975        | -96.5%        |
| Essendon          | 22,807         | 2851         | 525,049          | 47,732        | -94.0%        |
| Fremantle         | 161,966        | 16,197       | 449,905          | 40,900        | -60.4%        |
| Geelong Cats      | 41,120         | 4569         | 367,459          | 33,405        | -86.3%        |
| Gold Coast Suns   | 26,322         | 2632         | 125,587          | 11,417        | -76.9%        |
| GWS Giants        | 13,923         | 1740         | 134,942          | 12,267        | -85.8%        |
| Hawthorn          | 17,061         | 2437         | 341,846          | 31,077        | -92.2%        |
| Melbourne         | 16,248         | 1805         | 318,652          | 28,968        | -93.8%        |
| North Melbourne   | 8523           | 1065         | 228,895          | 20,809        | -94.9%        |
| Port Adelaide     | 89,879         | 9987         | 373,449          | 33,950        | -70.6%        |
| Richmond          | 23,102         | 2888         | 659,929          | 59,994        | -95.2%        |
| St Kilda          | 17,760         | 2220         | 276,052          | 25,096        | -91.2%        |
| Sydney Swans      | 24,422         | 3053         | 341,765          | 31,070        | -90.2%        |
| West Coast Eagles | 124,716        | 13,857       | 588,638          | 53,513        | -74.1%        |
| Western Bulldogs  | 7890           | 986          | 294,306          | 26,755        | -96.3%        |
| <b>Totals</b>     | <b>820,262</b> | <b>5,361</b> | <b>6,951,304</b> | <b>35,108</b> | <b>-84.7%</b> |

# GROWTH DIGITAL & AUDIENCE

**DARREN BIRCH**  
GENERAL MANAGER GROWTH DIGITAL AND AUDIENCE



The AFL Media Network continues to lead sports publishing in Australia, reaching more than five million Australians across the *AFL.com.au* website, app and social channels.

The AFL Live app comes in second (only to Netflix) as the most engaged video app in the country (Roy Morgan, Facebook video report 2019), providing the most comprehensive coverage of the game, nationally.

With a stronger focus on the celebration of football, the team have pivoted to cover more human-interest subject matter, making the game more accessible to fans and reaching greater numbers of new audience members in the women and youth sectors.

The technology infrastructure behind the network was updated at the end of 2019 and has enabled a more agile approach to content distribution and promotion, helping us to progress the game to all Australians in a more efficient and fast-to-market way.

AFL Media's coverage of the game adopted a stronger focus on the celebration of football, such as West Coast's first AFLW game in round one, 2020.







## AFL OnDemand

On the eve of the 2020 Toyota AFL Finals Series, AFL OnDemand was launched - a free video streaming destination providing fans unlimited access to an extensive catalogue of AFL content - series, documentaries, short films and historical games - available on web and mobile via [AFL.com.au](http://AFL.com.au) and the AFL App with thanks to Telstra.

AFL OnDemand showcases the extraordinary stories from football and provides fans with the emotional connection they are seeking to the game they love.

From recent 2020 content, such as *The Last Time I Cried* and the *Yokayi Footy Show*, through to historic archived matches, an extraordinary range of entertainment options is available for fans.

## Amazon docuseries

Through 2020 year, the AFL combined with Amazon for an extraordinary examination of the most unpredictable season of the game's history by following key figures from six clubs - players Eddie Betts (Carlton), Stephen Coniglio (GWS Giants), Nic Naitanui (West Coast) and Rory Sloane (Adelaide), coach Stuart Dew (Gold Coast) and Richmond trio, president Peggy O'Neal, CEO Brendon Gale and coach Damien Hardwick.

As COVID-19 rapidly unfolded, Amazon was there for unprecedented behind-the-scenes access and the docuseries titled *Making Their Mark* will air on Amazon Prime Video in 2021.

◁ The exhilaration shown by Port Adelaide star Robbie Gray after his match-winning goal against Carlton provided one of the images of the season.

## Anzac Day commemoration

The halting of the season for the COVID-19 pandemic did not interrupt football's determination to pay its respects to our fallen on Anzac Day.

The AFL and the RSL combined with the MCC to record a commemorative Anzac Day ceremony at an empty MCG on April 25, reciting the *Ode of Remembrance* with a lone bugler playing the *Last Post*.

## Old Style, COVID Style

Community messaging was a key part of AFL communications in 2020, taking on an educational role to inform Australians about the importance of social distancing and sanitisation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the start of the Victorian lockdown, indigenous communities were highlighted as a key group at risk of the virus and the AFL sought to create messaging that resonated with the community to ensure their health and safety.

The AFL launched *Old Style, COVID Style* featuring rapper Adam Briggs, Michael O'Loughlin, Adam Goodes, Andrew McLeod and other big names.

Not only entertaining, but an important way for the game to support government messaging during COVID-19.

▽ The AFL and RSL paid its respects to our fallen with a special Anzac Day ceremony at an empty MCG.





### The Last Time I Cried

Nine current and former AFL players joined Hamish McLachlan to reflect on a time when they had to battle their emotions. The series was developed to showcase players away from the field, to share a happy or sad time.

The aim was to break down barriers of expectation around behaviour, supporting better mental wellbeing outcomes, with the likes of Trent Cotchin, Patrick Dangerfield and Tom Boyd featured in the series.

### Using artificial intelligence for content creation

With the use of artificial intelligence technology, the AFL Media team has increased its capacity to produce video content and get the moments that matter most to our fans faster and more efficiently. Leveraging data and technology, we now create highlights at the touch of a button, enabling a richer fan experience across all our channels.

△ Former Hawthorn champion and Collingwood and Brisbane premiership coach Leigh Matthews was among those featured on *The Last Time I Cried* series.

### AFL Evolution

The *AFL Evolution 2* video game was released in 2020, as the sequel to 2017's first edition.

Released across selected consoles including PlayStation 4 and Xbox One, it offered fans a vastly improved gaming experience with enhanced graphics and multi-player modes.

In the midst of the COVID-19 shutdown from March, AFL players swapped Sherrins for on-line competition with the launch of the AFL Gamers network on YouTube via the gaming channel [youtube.com/aflgamersnetwork](https://www.youtube.com/aflgamersnetwork).

Players from across the League, including Jamie Elliott, Jack Viney, Zak Jones, Rory Laird, Connor Rozee, James Sicily, Toby Greene and Lachie Neale, joined player match-ups to live-stream contests, as well offering the opportunity to interact with fans.

Some 30 players were gaming head-to-head in the first *FIFA20* Esports competition, the Lockdown League, as digital platforms and services provided both content and a chance for fans for interact with players in new ways.

### AFL restructure

As part of the AFL restructure required to reset the business and operations for the wider game, the operations of the department were altered from November 1.

Kylie Rogers continued to lead Commercial Operations, including corporate partnerships, membership, premium products, ticketing and events and also expanded her duties to marketing, digital media, including the AFL's website ([AFL.com.au](https://www.afl.com.au)), Marvel Stadium operations and the customer and fan experience

Darren Birch departed the AFL after 15 years of great service to the game, including 10 years as an AFL Executive, after starting in 2005 as AFL Membership Manager. He was General Manager AFL Commercial (2010-17) before taking on the role of General Manager Growth, Digital and Audiences (2017-20).

In his final months with the organisation, he had responsibility for setting up and leading the AFL High Performance Centres in Queensland and WA, which were vital in ensuring our competition was able to resume and play out the remainder of the season.

▽ The *Yokayi Footy Show* was a popular feature on the free video streaming destination, AFL On Demand.

**THE AFL MEDIA TEAM HAS INCREASED ITS CAPACITY TO PRODUCE VIDEO CONTENT AND GET THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER MOST TO OUR FANS**



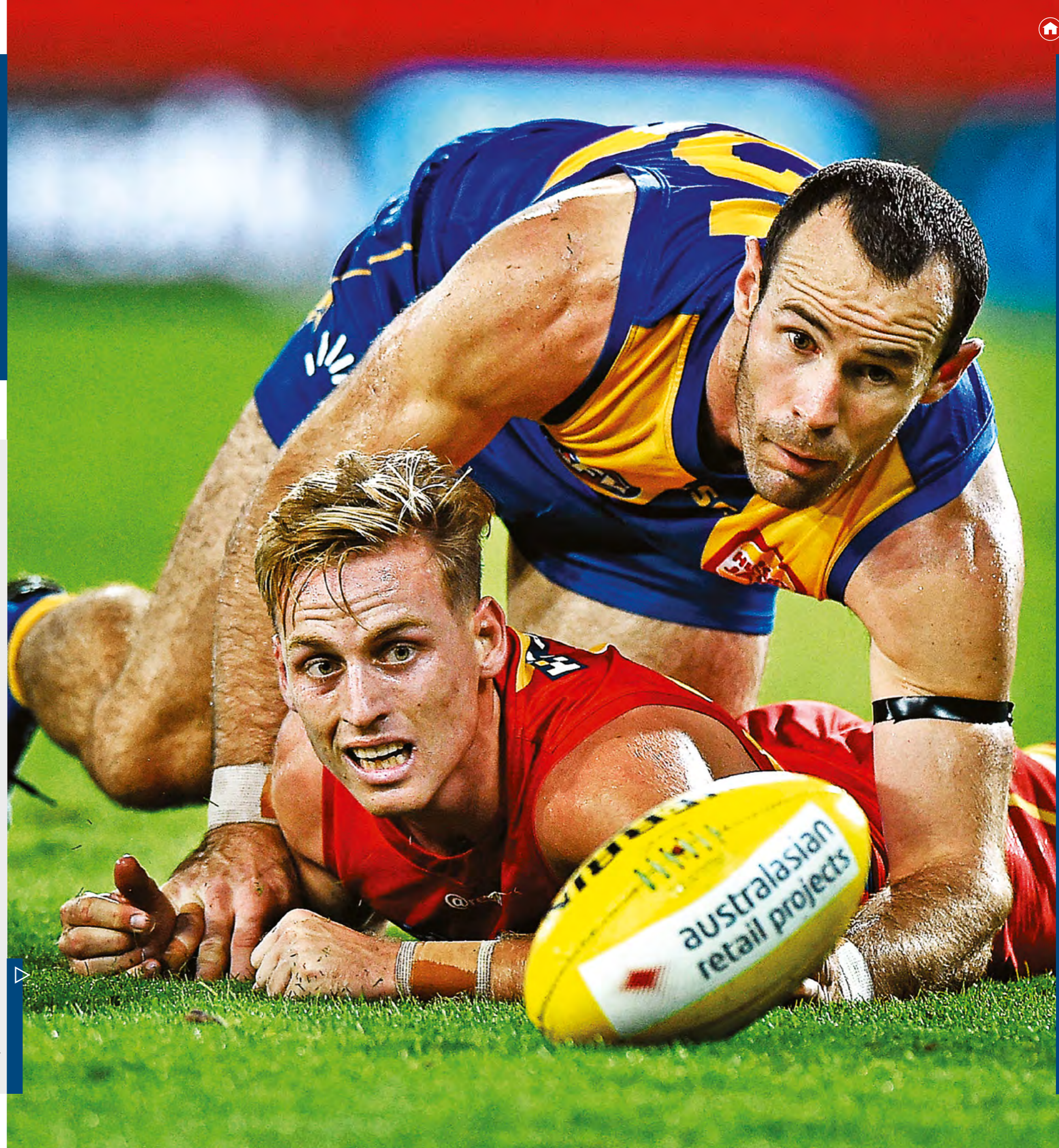
# STRATEGY

**WALTER LEE**  
GENERAL MANAGER STRATEGY



The Strategy team was central in supporting the AFL Commission, clubs and the wider industry in the reset of the game's finances as it confronted the impacts of COVID-19. The team was also pivotal in supporting the major renegotiations of key agreements, including broadcast rights, player Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and partner and state agreements, to work within the competition's new economic conditions, and establish a more affordable and sustainable model for football at all levels.

The football was tough and intense as West Coast veteran Shannon Hurn and Gold Coast's Darcy Macpherson show in this round two clash at Metricon Stadium.



## AFL finances/major renegotiations

The team undertook significant work in supporting the restructure of both AFL and industry finances, for the game to be able to prosper in changed economic and competition conditions. This work was centred around:

### Forward planning

- ▶ 2020 cost-out exercise to minimise immediate financial risk and exposure;
- ▶ Re-sizing 2021 expenditures to support business recovery;
- ▶ Scenario modelling and contingency planning;
- ▶ Establishing forecasts for 2021 budgets.

### And major negotiations affecting the whole of the industry

- ▶ Renegotiation of the AFL's broadcast rights;
- ▶ Revised 2020 Collective Bargaining Agreements for the AFL player and umpiring groups;
- ▶ Renegotiation of 2021 Collective Bargaining Agreements for the AFL players; and
- ▶ Assessment of the state government presentations to host the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

## Community football

The significant impact on the game being shut down through the early part of the 2020 season was also strongly felt at community level and threatened the viability of many state and community leagues, as well as placing severe pressure on many grassroots clubs.

The team worked with the Game Development department and state leagues to develop major strategies to support the industry at all levels below the elite level.

A key focus was establishing a more affordable and sustainable model for the game at community, regional and country level, when considering the revised economic conditions around the country.

### This major work included:

- ▶ Second-Tier/State League models - establishing the East Coast competition (combining VFL and NEAFL);
- ▶ Streamlined National Talent Pathways and Game Development models;
- ▶ Re-design of regional Victoria Community Football model, with targeted focus on the Gippsland region.

**THE TEAM UNDERTOOK SIGNIFICANT WORK IN SUPPORTING THE RESTRUCTURE OF BOTH AFL AND INDUSTRY FINANCES**

▽ The shutdown of the game in early 2020 had a significant impact on community football and also saw the cancellation of the AFLW season.

## Strategy and Insights

The Strategy and Insights team provides advice to the Commission and AFL leadership on major issues, relying on strategic analysis, research and planning processes. The Commission's long-term goals for future success require effective planning and implementation in a dynamic and competitive environment, with many stakeholders to be managed.

Major areas where strategic planning support was provided through 2020 included:

- ▶ **Industry member research for the AFL and clubs** - to support development of future member product offering in new economic and health and safety conditions;
- ▶ **Queensland** - to understand the economic impact of the AFL competition being based in Queensland throughout 2020 season;
- ▶ **AFL brand and reputation health** - to support the Executive team with communications/PR positioning during significant period of change/uncertainty;
- ▶ **Fixturing/scheduling** - provided advanced analytics to support the development of the AFL fixtures and schedules and the impact of 2020 initiatives (rolling fixtures, compression periods of matches etc.);
- ▶ **Business operations support** - general analytical support into various league marketing, pricing, product and commercial decisions.

The AFL also undertakes extensive fan and community research to better understand fan preferences, attitudes and behaviours to guide decision-making across the industry. The AFL regularly monitors Brand Health, conducts Fan Focus Groups, surveys the match-day experience of fans and examines the social and economic impact of the game on communities across the country.



## Technology and data/analytics

Technology played a critical role in 2020 in ensuring AFL staff and industry stakeholders stayed connected and productive while working from home and remotely from the office.

With the support of our technology partners, key milestones were met across major technology and data/analytics projects such as the development of a new participation management platform and a major upgrade of the Customer Data Warehouse.

Going forward, the AFL has previously identified five key areas as priorities for the industry:

1. Seamless, digital fan experiences - simplifying how fans engage and transact on digital platforms both in-stadium and at home;
2. Direct-to-customer - develop better relationships and understanding of fans, participants and volunteers through digital, technology, data and analytics;
3. Powering community football - support the growth of community participation while simplifying the administration of community leagues and clubs for volunteers;
4. Unlocking the game - bringing the game closer to fans through better use of match and player statistics, analysis and game vision;
5. Connected workplace - enabling a more productive and collaborative workplace that can work more flexibly and remotely.

With the AFL restructure, we have appointed a new General Manager - Technology to lead the design and implementation of key technology plans. We have also integrated Marvel Stadium technology teams and launched key projects for a major improvement in stadium connectivity, game-day fan experience and fan data/analytics.

**TECHNOLOGY PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN 2020 IN ENSURING AFL STAFF AND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS STAYED CONNECTED**



△ Mitch Lewis and Shaun Burgoyne celebrate a goal in the Hawks' round 18 clash with Gold Coast at Adelaide Oval.



## Industry key relationships

The Strategy team manages the agenda of key meetings with the AFL Commission and Executive with AFL club presidents and CEOs across the year. While in previous years five-seven major meetings of the industry leadership would be scheduled, the unprecedented circumstances of the 2020 year saw a much greater hands-on working relationship between the Commission/AFL Executive and the leadership of the clubs:

- ▶ AFL club presidents/CEOs (five meetings in March, two meetings in April, four meetings in May, three meetings in June, five meetings in July, two meetings in September, one meeting in October and one meeting in November);
- ▶ AFL club CEOs (daily Monday-Friday meetings in the initial stages of the game shutdown, before moving to bi-weekly and then weekly until after the mid-year resumption of the season).

Meetings were heavily focused on the game's financial health and the industry's ability to cope with the impacts of COVID-19, but also covered other major industry issues - the introduction of player/club hubs, ongoing changes to the 2020 fixture as required, player wellbeing and safety (including mental health), 2021 women's football, AFL competition restructure and community football restructure, key partner renegotiations and key state government and federal government health and safety requirements.

△ Regular video hook-ups became the standard way of working in 2020.

## Economic Impact Survey

The Strategy team completed the AFL's annual examination of the game's economic impact in the early part of 2020, providing a clear indication of the game's contribution to national economic activity, before the impact of COVID-19. Key topline numbers were:

- ▶ Reach - 1.72m overall participation, 16,465 teams, 1.05m AFL club members, 7.84m AFL attendees and 16.92m total football attendees.
- ▶ Economic contribution - \$5.6b direct spending, 49,273 industry jobs, \$652m tax contribution.
- ▶ Volunteers - 218k volunteers contribution 17.2m hours and \$385m value.

## AFL operations restructure

The re-structure of AFL operations came into effect on November 1, 2020, after considerable consultation and work across the industry through the course of the season.

The focus was centred on four areas of the AFL business - AFL House, Marvel Stadium, AFL State Entities and AFL Industry Club Shared Services - and how they would operate differently moving into the future.

It was determined the AFL would centre its focus on four key strategic objectives:

- ▶ Rebuilding financial strength;
- ▶ Fan-first;
- ▶ Investment in community football;
- ▶ Investment in technology.

## 2020 Key Industry Meetings

The quickly unfolding COVID-19 pandemic required the AFL Commission, AFL Executive team and the leadership of clubs to be able to respond quickly. Below is a summary of major steps, meetings and decisions through the 2020 year.

### COVID-19 Timeline of large-scale industry-wide decisions and meetings

- 17/3** AFL Commission briefing from Executive on potential COVID-19 impacts for AFL and AFLW seasons.
- 18/3** Meetings that day of AFL Commission, AFL Commission and club chairs, club CEOs. Evening media conference to detail 17-round season, shortened quarters and immediate AFLW top-eight finals series.
- 20/3** Meeting of AFL Commission and club chairs.
- 22/3** Meetings that day of AFL Commission, AFL Commission and club chairs. Evening media conference to announce the immediate suspension of the AFL and AFLW seasons.
- 23/3** Formation of Temporary AFL Commission/Presidents Industry Leadership Council (R Goyder chair, P Bassat, R Bishop, P Gordon, J Kennett, E McGuire, G McLachlan, A Pridham). AFL announces restructure of staff and business operations.
- 25/3** Meeting of AFL Commission and club chairs.
- 27/3** Meeting of Industry Leadership Council to discuss cost reduction measures and impacts on distributions. AFLAFLPA joint announcement on player payment alterations due to COVID-19 impacts.
- 30/3** Industry credit line announcement.
- 31/3** Meeting of AFL Commission and club chairs, credit line and impacts to club funding discussion.
- 2/4** Meetings of the AFL Commission and AFL Commission and club chairs.
- 3/4** AFL and AFL Umpires Association revised umpiring CBA for impact of COVID-19.
- 9/4** Formation of AFL/Senior Coach advisory group (G McLachlan chair, L Beveridge, M Brayshaw, N Buckley, A Clarkson, C Fagan, S Hocking, J Longmire, A Simpson, G Swann, G Walsh).
- 16/4** Meetings of Industry Leadership Council, Senior Coach advisory group and AFL chair-hosted meetings with WAFL and SANFL.
- 22/4** Meeting of AFL Commission. Presentation of AFL Project Return working brief.
- 23/4** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 24/4** Meetings of AFL Commission and AFL Commission/club chairs. Update to industry on the game's return to play, stabilisation of the game's finances and future planning.
- 27/4** Meeting of Industry Leadership Council around return to play and on-going industry finance work.
- 28/4** Meeting of AFL Commission. AFLW Awards held as a virtual event.
- 30/4** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 2/5** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs to update industry on return to play.
- 5/5** Meeting of AFL Commission.
- 7/5** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 11/5** Meetings of AFL Commission and AFL Commission/club chairs for further update on return to play.
- 14/5** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 15/5** Meetings of AFL Commission, Industry Leadership Group and AFL Commission/club chairs. Announcement of return to training date (May 18) and expected game resumption date.
- 21/5** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 22/5** Meeting of AFL Commission.
- 25/5** AFL Commission/club chairs meeting. Release of rounds 2-5 fixture.
- 28/5** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 4/6** Meeting of Senior Coach advisory group.
- 11/6** Meetings of AFL Commission, Industry Leadership Group and AFL Commission/club chairs for Broadcast Rights Arrangements update.
- 12/6** Announcement of revised broadcast rights arrangements.
- 20/6** Meetings of AFL Commission, Industry Leadership Group and AFL Commission/club chairs regarding positive COVID-19 test for an Essendon-listed player. Subsequent media announcement of postponement of Essendon v Melbourne game.
- 23/6** Meetings of AFL Commission and AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs. Public announcement of no change to AFLW 2021 season structure.
- 29/6** AFL/club CEOs meeting to update fixture. Media announcement of fixture update.
- 1/7** AFL Commission meeting to outline use of player/club hubs.
- 2/7** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs to outline use of player/club hubs and provide update outline on fixture.
- 3/7** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs to outline reworked fixture. Media conference to outline reworked fixture.
- 8/7** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs to provide fixture update.
- 13/7** Release of round eight fixture.
- 15/7** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs to provide outline of compressed fixture period. Media conference to outline compressed fixture and extended use of club/player hubs.
- 21/7** Announcement of compressed fixture period for rounds 9-12.
- 24/7** AFL Planning meeting for 2021 AFLW season.
- 27/7** Meeting of AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs on hub protocols and to outline player/club protocol breaches.
- 29/7** Revisions to round 11-12 fixture.
- 31/7** Announcements of sanctions to four clubs for hub protocol breaches.
- 1/8** Announcement of sanctions for WA hub protocol breach.
- 13/8** Meeting of AFL Commission.
- 21/8** Presentations from the SA, WA, NSW and Queensland governments regarding hosting of matches for 2020 AFL Finals Series.
- 1/9** AFL Commission meeting, decision for 2020 Grand Final hosting.
- 2/9** AFL Commission/club chairs and CEOs meeting for 2020 Grand Final hosting. Public announcement of night Grand Final at the Gabba.
- 7/9** AFL/club CEOs meeting on 2020 Finals Series planning.
- 14/9** AFL/club CEOs meeting on post-season club travel arrangements from hubs.
- 21/9** Meetings of AFL Commission and AFL Commission/club chairs to outline 2021 predicted financials.
- 24/9** AFL Awards show held as a virtual event.
- 6/10** AFLW Competition Committee meeting.
- 14/10** Meetings of the AFL Commission and AFL Commission/club chairs. Update on Grand Final planning and planning for virtual presentation of Brownlow Medal.
- 18/10** Brownlow Medal presentation held as a virtual event.
- 24/10** 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final.

# PEOPLE & CULTURE

**SARAH FAIR**  
GENERAL MANAGER PEOPLE



No part of our country was immune to the challenges and uncertainty of COVID-19 that effectively shut down life as we knew it for our organisation, our industry and our communities in a matter of days.

Through 2020, incredibly tough decisions had to be made to fight for our survival and ensure the future of the industry. Many of these decisions have had significant impacts on our staff - from standing our people down early in the year when our game at the elite and community level was suspended, to resetting our business model and restructuring our operations.

Throughout this entire period, the AFL was guided by a very clear set of principles that were set from the outset:

- ▶ Support and care for our people as best as we could;
- ▶ Communicate often and openly and transparently;
- ▶ Provide as much certainty as possible as soon as possible;
- ▶ Be agile and flexible in our approach - review regularly;
- ▶ Protect the financial future of our organisation;
- ▶ Preserve as many jobs as possible.

The restructure saw a 20 per cent reduction of roles across three key areas of the AFL business - AFL House, Marvel Stadium and AFL State Entities. Many talented and passionate people who dedicated a large part of their career to our organisation and industry were sadly impacted by the changes, all of whom will leave a lasting legacy.

Some incredibly tough staffing decisions were made in 2020 to ensure the AFL's survival.



## Caring for our people

Throughout the year, there was significant focus on the health and wellbeing of our people with the following initiatives:

- ▶ Development of specific COVID-19 mental health protocols to complement our existing mental health and wellbeing policies;
- ▶ Expanded access to a national Employee Assistance Program. This included dedicated clinicians 'on call' during weeks of significant workforce changes being announced;
- ▶ Access to a national network of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists;
- ▶ Establishment of a Wellbeing Tracker - senior people leaders completed the tracker on a weekly basis following their proactive 'care and connect' conversations with their team members;
- ▶ Weekly all-team mental wellbeing webinars hosted by the AFL's Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing Dr Kate Hall.

▽ The AFL's values were important in a challenging 2020 season.

Along with the health and wellbeing support, various career and development support was offered to our people including:

- ▶ Short format learning series Think.Make.Break.Repeat was designed in partnership with the AFL's learning partner Phill Nosworthy to inspire and guide our team. World-class thought leaders and contributors shared their experiences and insights into navigating and thriving in challenging times.
- ▶ Adapt 2020 career development training and support program for our people who were stood down from their role and were looking for new temporary employment opportunities.
- ▶ We provided a Career Transition Program to support our people in their transition from the AFL to their next career chapter. This six-part program featured 1:1 coaching plus webinars from coaches, industry mentors and recruiters to help our people navigate this challenging time.

We are incredibly grateful to all of our wonderful partners who stood by us and supported us during this period.



## Executive team changes

As part of the AFL's restructure, Darren Birch departed the organisation after 15 years, Ray Gunston transitioned to an industry advisory role in a consulting capacity. Patrick Keane continued in the role of Office of the CEO, but was no longer on the Executive team.

### EXECUTIVE TEAM - EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1

| EGM People | EGM Commercial & Customer | EGM Football  | EGM Finance, Clubs & Broadcasting |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sarah Fair | Kylie Rogers              | Steve Hocking | Travis Auld                       |

- ▶ AFL Workforce
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Diversity & Inclusion
- ▶ Learning and Development

- ▶ Commercial - Sales, Partnerships and Events, Ticketing, Membership, Premium Products
- ▶ Media, Digital and Marketing
- ▶ Marvel Stadium Operations
- ▶ Customer/Fan Experience

- ▶ Elite Competitions - AFL and AFLW
- ▶ Talent (and diversity programs)
- ▶ Umpiring
- ▶ Mental Health
- ▶ Player Movement

- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Procurement
- ▶ Broadcasting & Fixturing
- ▶ Club Strategy & TPP
- ▶ Marvel/Property Development
- ▶ Operations & Major Projects

| EGM Game Development/General Council | EGM Strategy | EGM Corporate Affairs | EGM Social Policy & Inclusion |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Andrew Dillon                        | Walter Lee   | Brian Walsh           | Tanya Hosch                   |

- ▶ Game Development
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Risk & Compliance
- ▶ Health & Safety
- ▶ AFLPA

- ▶ Strategy
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Data

- ▶ Office of CEO
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Government Relations
- ▶ Corporate Social Responsibility
- ▶ PR

- ▶ Social Policy
- ▶ Inclusion



## Workforce Wellbeing Survey

In a challenging time for all employees, workforce wellbeing surveys were conducted to temperature-check the response to the actions being taken and their impact on our people.

Key questions centred around the confidence of employees in decisions and leadership actions, the wellbeing of affected staff, the information they were receiving, the operation of new ways in working (such as Webex meetings), the impact of working remotely and other personal impacts.

△ There was a significant focus on the health and wellbeing of AFL staff throughout the 2020 season.

## Looking ahead

In the final months of 2020, the AFL re-set its priorities to be delivered by a leaner, agile and more focused team.

We have taken an employee-led approach to this, recognising that all team members had an important part to play in creating the new AFL in 2021 and beyond. This started with an All-Team survey focusing on key themes including:

- ▶ our ways of working,
- ▶ our values and culture,
- ▶ our systems and process.

This once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-set our entire industry and do things differently will ensure as an organisation, we come out the other side stronger and more competitive, with the best years ahead of us.

# INCLUSION & SOCIAL POLICY

**TANYA HOSCH**  
GENERAL MANAGER INCLUSION  
AND SOCIAL POLICY



**A**cross a challenging year, an undoubted highlight for the game was the first Dreamtime match played in Darwin.

With all football forced away from Victoria and the MCG, Sir Doug Nicholls Round saw two matches played back-to-back on consecutive evenings in Darwin at TIO Stadium to a national audience, showcasing both culture and the finest of football to the rest of Australia.

Larrakia Elder Richard Fejo's Welcome to Country was inspirational, highlighting the importance of football in the Top End, which added to the success of this round.

The department's wider work through 2020 served to forward the continued steps taken around diversity and inclusion within the game, ensuring a welcoming and safe environment for all.

The game's ability to speak up and provide a leadership position around key social issues, such as racism, sexism, trolling and violence against women and children, remains pivotal in our society.

Larrakia Elder Richard Fejo delivers an inspirational Welcome to Country at the first Dreamtime game played in Darwin in Sir Doug Nicholls Round.





## Rule 35

With COVID-19 significantly slowing down the completion and sign-off of the key findings and recommendations of Rule 35, this important piece of AFL policy is now complete and ready to be rolled out. Some 75 invitees from across the industry and clubs were asked to complete a submission process specific to the Terms of Reference. For those who could not provide a written submission, an interview was offered to assist in review.

A total of 44 submissions, including all 18 clubs as well as other sectors including gender, sexuality, disability and industry representatives, were received and folded into the key findings and recommendations. The feedback provided spoke of a clear need for greater understanding, leadership and education around the challenges the game has seen in recent years following the treatment of Adam Goodes, growing mental health concerns and the rise of negative aspects of social media.

The recommendations emphasise the work that needs to be invested into community football leagues and the broadness of scope to be considered in relation to the various types of discrimination experienced.

Proudly, it has been agreed the rule requires an identity. As recommended by Michael Long, the rule will now be known as the Peek Rule, named in memory of the late Tony Peek, the original architect of Rule 30, and Rule 35.

▽ Rapper Briggs and former Sydney Swans star Michael O'Loughlin deliver their 'half-time address' in the COVID-19 community service announcement.

## COVID-19 health message

Eleven current and former players joined forces with renowned rapper Briggs to film a community service announcement, designed to rally Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and footy fans around the nation to remain vigilant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With support from the partnership between AFL Media, NITV, Senator Briggs and past and current First Nations players, a football-oriented approach using accessible language and humour was created to great effect. This was helped with a rare appearance of Adam Goodes in the campaign. All past and current players and Senator Briggs volunteered their time to show support and concern for their communities by using football as the key messaging strategy.

Sydney Swans Hall of Fame member Michael O'Loughlin and Briggs stepped into coaching roles to deliver a half-time address to their players to adhere to social distancing measures.

Their team of AFL and AFLW stars - Charlie Cameron, Jarrod Harbrow, Bradley Hill, Neville Jetta, Tim Kelly, Aleisha Newman, Michael Walters and Zac Williams - were joined by two of the greatest players of all time in dual Norm Smith medallist Andrew McLeod and dual Brownlow medallist Adam Goodes.



**"We stand in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters and all people of colour. There is no place for racism. The Knee is an expression of that support.**

**We see strength in diversity; it makes us better as a football club and as a community.**

**We will be there for each other always, especially at a time when many have been impacted by what is happening around the world.**

**We will continue to learn and walk this journey together."**

## Support for Building Balance and Upholding Inclusion

A large part of the industry's successes in recent years have come because of the greater diversity and inclusion across the game at all levels. Through the difficulties of 2020, it was stressed to clubs that changes in our future model could not result in losses in these areas.

It was a key focus to:

- ▶ Developing a consultation model to uphold inclusion in participation and achieving balance across all levels of the game;
- ▶ Access to key culturally-based expertise and psychological services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players and staff;
- ▶ Maintaining contact with Inclusion/Diversity/Indigenous staff across AFL and clubs during the shutdown periods;
- ▶ Ongoing stakeholder engagement and the development of content with AFL Media for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences;
- ▶ Establishment of an Upholding Inclusion and Building Balance subsidy for AFL clubs to assist with the employment of Indigenous staff and women in the non-traditional roles inside football departments.

△ Richmond and Collingwood players take a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign when the season resumed in round two.

## Gender Diversity Policy

The game updated its Gender Diversity Policy as part of a joint launch by Pride in Sport and Australia's leading national sporting organisations.

This work was guided by the commitment to supporting the inclusion of gender diverse people in the game in a safe and inclusive environment. Australian Football is a game for all.

## Black Lives Matter - player on-field action

The competition's players took a combined lead stance when the effects of the Black Lives Matter campaign were being keenly felt across the world.

When matches returned, all players from rival teams combined to take a knee for 30 seconds to support the ideals of unity and respect across all peoples.

## Online eSafety Campaign - Play It Safe

The AFL and Australia's eSafety Commissioner launched a key social campaign #PlayFairOnline, encouraging fans to be respectful online and consider how their actions can affect others.

The campaign was part of an ongoing collaboration between the AFL and the eSafety Commissioner.

Across Sir Doug Nicholls Round, the next step in education for fans was taken with a video outlining the damaging cycle of abuse that is too often directed at players.

The video featured Richmond's Shai Bolton and Sydney Stack, GWS Giants defender Nick Haynes, Sydney's Aliir Aliir, West Coast captain Luke Shuey, Gold Coast Suns midfielder Hugh Greenwood, and Carlton's AFLW stars Madison Prespakis, Darcy Vescio and Tayla Harris, accompanied by an online safety tool kit to be shared with all senior and grassroots clubs across Australia.

## Sir Doug Nicholls Round

The adjustments to the 2020 fixture saw Sir Doug Nicholls Round positioned in round 13 in late August, with two matches in Darwin and the rare opportunity to take one of the most meaningful games of the season to a new location. The Welcome to Country at the Dreamtime Game was another highlight, as was the live performance by Yirranga, a Yolgnu artist from North East Arnhem land. The Heart of the Nation Game was also honoured by a special Welcome to Country by the Arrrente peoples.

Matches in the round were played in the NT, Queensland, SA and WA, with the Marn Grook game relocated to Optus Stadium between the Sydney Swans and Fremantle.

### Yiooken Trophy voting

**Shai Bolton** (Richmond) - 9 votes (3, 3, 3)  
**Dustin Martin** (Richmond) - 5 votes (2, 2, 1)  
**Zach Merrett** (Essendon) - 3 votes (2, 1)  
**Nick Vlastuin** (Richmond) - 1 vote (1)

## Syd Jackson - Sir Doug Nicholls Round Ambassador

Wongatha man Syd Jackson was the 2020 Doug Nicholls Round honouree.

Jackson, a member of the Indigenous Team of the Century, played 104 games for East Perth, before playing a further 136 games with Carlton in the VFL, including the 1970 and 1972 premierships, and ultimately finishing his career with a season in SA with Glenelg.

Forced to stand out of football for a year to win a clearance to Victoria, Jackson had been removed from his family as a child and, through his working life, has focused on creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Carlton's Syd Jackson Program is named in his honour and seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of diverse communities.

▶ A young Port Adelaide fan shows her support of Indigenous players in the Power's Sir Doug Nicholls Round match against Hawthorn at Adelaide Oval.

▽ Former Carlton star Syd Jackson was honoured as the Sir Doug Nicholls Round ambassador in 2020.



## AFL Restructure - key department outcomes

The late 2020 AFL restructure embraced an enhanced focus on diversity and inclusion across the game's workforce, talent programs, participation and audience engagement.

Investment will continue in football for women and girls at all levels nationally, while a new National Talent Diversity Manager will be appointed to lead Indigenous and multicultural talent programs across the country.

Former Essendon and Melbourne CEO Peter Jackson completed a review of the AFL Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) and will work through 2021 with IAC Chair Paul Briggs and Executive team manager Tanya Hosch to implement its recommendations. A focus will be to ensure alignment from the IAC through to the AFL, clubs, the AFLPA, Past Players Alliance and industry partners for a co-ordinated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agenda.

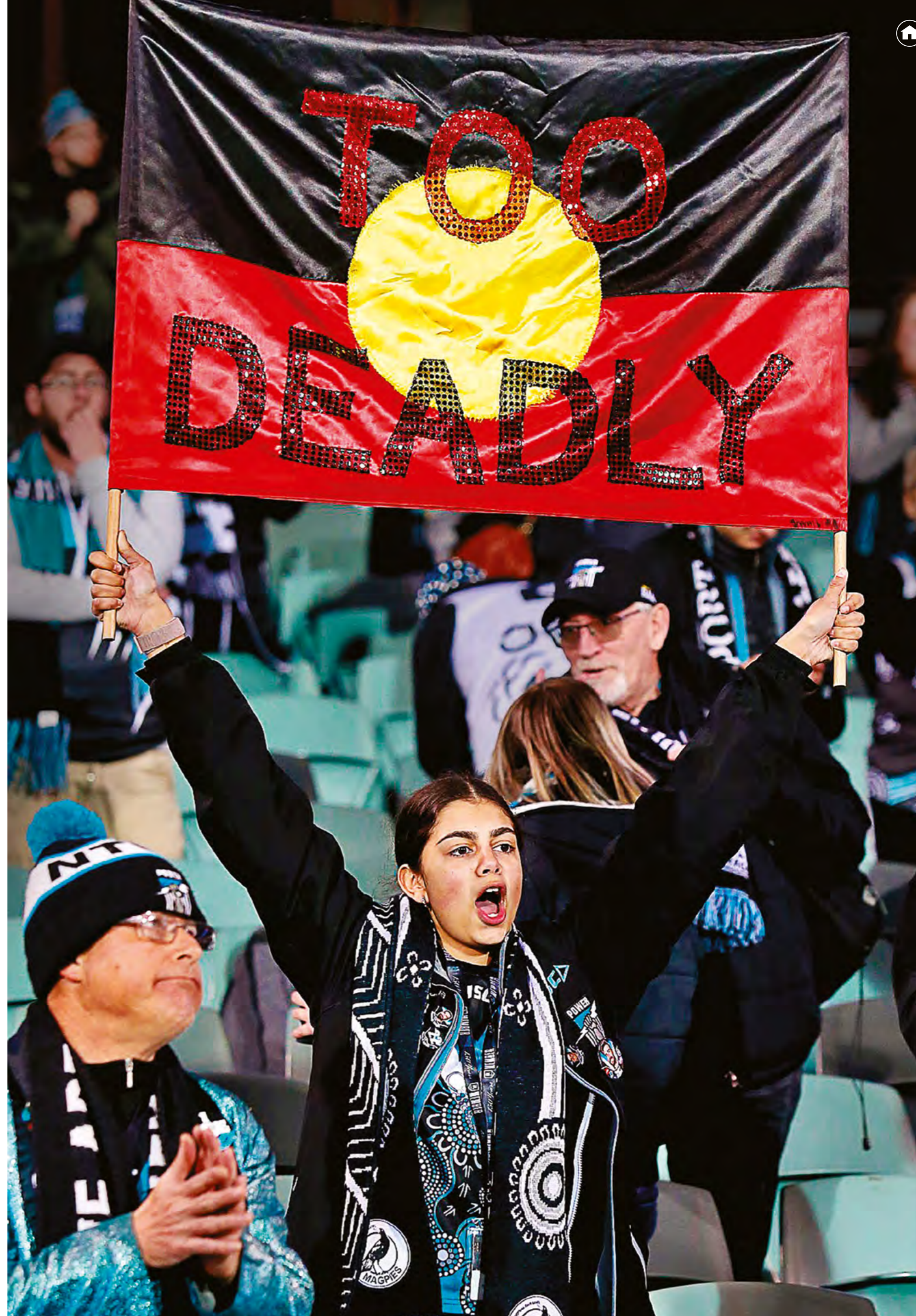
## Robert Muir apology

In 2020, former St Kilda and SANFL player Robert Muir detailed the heartbreaking toll that racism had taken on him since his time as a player at the elite level in Victoria and South Australia during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Muir's treatment both on-field and off-field took a devastating toll on his relationships and personal well-being, with the story detailed by *The Guardian's* Russell Jackson.

Muir belatedly received formal apologies from across the industry, including from his club St Kilda and the AFL, to acknowledge those instances where he had either not been properly supported for the trauma he had faced, or from those clubs where opposing players and fans had subjected him to unacceptable treatment.

In the aftermath of courageously telling his story, Muir said he still wished to reconnect with the game in his own time, and his willingness to provide closure and forgiveness was humbling.



# CORPORATE AFFAIRS

## BRIAN WALSH

GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE AFFAIRS,  
GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS



Since Australian Football began, various forms of media have taken the game to the households of Australians through extensive analysis, commentary, opinion and colour. From its infancy, the game has experienced an interdependency with the media and the growth of the game has mirrored the growth of the media, particularly in recent years.

Season 2020 presented a major challenge to this relationship. As the game moved to be played behind closed doors, the task of taking the colour and theatre of Australian Football to fans across the country required new thinking. The department's focus throughout the year remained on inserting the game into the hearts and minds of all Australians during a time when they could not attend games and support their club or favourite player in ways accustomed to them.

In 2020, the department was required to work in new ways to ensure the coverage of our game continued. With movement and access restricted in traditional forms, the department shifted the media process to be able to ensure strong and continued coverage. Press conferences with coaches and players turned digital, press box numbers were restricted, on-field photographers completed mandatory COVID tests and the AFL took a group of media representatives to Queensland to cover the final stages of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

At the elite level, a dynamic environment requires the leadership of the game to form and maintain strong partnerships across media, government and community, which are vital to the long-term success of both the elite AFL and AFLW competitions, and the wider game at all levels.

At community level, Australian Football draws its strength from the community game and it is both expected and required that the AFL lead on issues of importance to its fans, while supporting community endeavours and using the game's profile to assist in driving charitable and community outcomes.

It was all smiles for captains at the AFLW launch, but unfortunately there was no premier after the season was forced into recess by COVID-19.



## Government relations

The AFL works proactively to build and maintain relationships at federal, state and local government level across the country. The AFL seeks to work closely with all sides of politics, to best represent the interests of Australia's only indigenous game, and to achieve strong outcomes for community and metropolitan leagues, as well as outcomes that will assist the many hundreds of thousands of supporters and members of the game at elite level.

In 2020, the collaboration between the AFL and all forms of government across Australia has allowed the game to be played at all levels with the key priority to respect and adhere to all government and health authority guidelines around managing COVID-19 within the community.

The AFL worked closely with governments and chief health officers at federal and state/territory level to ensure that we were able to establish a set of protocols that not only protected players and staff but also protected the wider community. Working with governments to establish High Performance Centres in various states enabled us to continue to play our season. We remain grateful to the various federal, state and territory leaders and senior ministers for their support in ensuring the AFL season was able to be completed.

▽ Collingwood's All-Stars ruckman Brodie Grundy joined Metropolitan Fire Brigade members in the lead-up to the State of Origin match, which raised funds for bushfire relief.



## State of Origin for Bushfire Relief/grants to affected clubs and regions

People and businesses from all around the country came together to put on a history-making match to recognise the efforts of the thousands of volunteers and service people who aided Australian communities during the early 2020 bushfire crisis, as a major fundraising initiative to support fire-affected regions.

The State of Origin game was played in front of a 51,052-strong crowd at Marvel Stadium and the communications team worked with both sides and their coaches and players to drive interest through open training sessions, photo opportunities and open media conferences.

The AFL industry fundraising activities raised \$8m, comprising \$6.4m from the initial donations and State of Origin game for the Red Cross and AFL Community Relief Fund, combined with a further \$1.6m in club-led activities.

Through 2020, these monies were then distributed to affected communities and clubs, via an independent Governance Committee headed by retiring Essendon president Lindsay Tanner.

As at mid-December 2020, all 262 community football clubs in bushfire-affected areas had received an initial donation while an additional 49 grants were awarded and distributed across 72 clubs, totalling \$3.81m, in addition to \$1.4m from club-led activities. A \$1m donation was also made to the Red Cross.

The committee continues to work on a recommendation how best to use the remaining \$2.63m balance in the fund, which will be distributed in 2021 and beyond in bushfire-affected areas.

Committee members were Lindsay Tanner (retiring Essendon FC President, chair); Simone Wilkie AO (AFL Commissioner), Andrew Dillon (AFL General Counsel/EGM Game Development), Tom Harley (Sydney Swans CEO), Paul Vandenberg (Port Adelaide FC, Director Aboriginal Programs), Phil Davis (GWS Giants player/AFLPA Vice-President), Meg Downie (Melbourne FC player/AFLPA Board Member).



## Communication through COVID-19

The 2020 season required regular adjustments from the AFL and its clubs to deal with a constantly changing environment. Regular communication with the game's fans was paramount to both sustain hope as the work was done to re-start the season, and then to capitalise on the momentum of our return to the fields across the country.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant difficult and hard decisions were made at all levels of football, and required effective communication to all key stakeholders - the halt to play, the initial lockdown for the community, business restructure, return to train and return to play protocols, season re-start, COVID breaches and rolling fixture announcements were among the major issues tackled in 2020.

Strong and regular collaboration across the 18 clubs, where information on the best methods of engaging supporters and members was readily shared, saw the AFL continue to be strongly represented around the country, even during the period where there were no games.

## Media accreditation

The department handles media accreditation for the AFL and AFLW seasons, along with managing media relationships at major events such as the Season Launch, AFL Finals Launch, virtual award ceremonies including the Brownlow Medal, AFLW Awards, Australian Football Hall of Fame induction and All-Australian awards, plus the AFL and AFLW respective state-based Combines and Drafts and AFL trade period.

Across the combined elite seasons, some 2000 people working in various media roles were accredited to work at AFL match-day venues.

In 2020, additional complexities were presented with the need to adhere to COVID protocols and restricted access in venues across the country.

Access could only be provided to pre-approved working media, requiring the use of an online working registry established to monitor attendance at games and the observance of key protocols.

All on-field photographers completed a COVID test before working at every AFL game in 2020, due to their close working environment with players, umpires and officials located within match-day 'bubbles'.

▽ The AFLW captains came together for the 2020 season launch at the University of Melbourne.

## Captains Day - AFLW and AFL

The AFLW captains gathered at the AFLW Season Launch held at the University of Melbourne, on the eve of their season, to maximise coverage opportunities before the start of matches.

The respective events each gather significant attendance of more than 100 media representatives, with coverage reaching every state and territory.

Before the impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 Toyota AFL Season, the 18 AFL club captains were brought together for the annual Captains Day held at Melbourne's Marvel Stadium. Established in 2003, the event is a key pre-season promotional event on the AFL calendar, launching the season ahead and servicing the AFL's key rights partners across the media industry.

## AFL club media protocols

Media protocols in 2020 allowed only digital interaction or socially-distanced contact between clubs/players and the media. AFL clubs found new and innovative ways of engaging their members and supporters.

Weekly media engagements were held remotely through digital communication technology and clubs targeted exclusive player/coach content through their websites and social media channels. Clubs relocating into High Performance Centres meant strict adherence to protocols surrounding training and matches and interaction with the media at socially-distanced press conferences and interviews.





## Travelling media to Queensland

Following the relocation of AFL matches away from Victoria and then latterly out of other states, a number of media from across Australia relocated to Queensland to cover matches for their home state coverage into print/radio/television and digital outlets. This included members of the Victorian media who joined the AFL Transition Hub on September 1.

Relocated working journalists covered the game on the ground in Queensland until the AFL Grand Final on October 24, relocating away from family for eight weeks.

With revised access protocols in Queensland, the media were able to cover the game in greater detail and depth with some normality returning to media operations.

More than 50 travelling media covered the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final from the media room at the Gabba and we thank all travelling media for their dedication to covering the game.

## AFL major events held in Queensland

As the AFL season relocated to Queensland, a number of major events were held outside of Victoria for the first time in the game's history, separate of course to the Grand Final itself.

The 2020 Toyota AFL Finals Launch, the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final Launch and the pre-match conference with the captains and coaches were held in new locations across southern Queensland.

For the first time, the Grand Final 'footy festival' was launched at Brisbane's South Bank, while the 2020 AFL awards and 2020 Brownlow Medal presentation were held as virtual events for the first time.

△ AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan hosts a press conference on the Gold Coast, attended by media from across Australia who had relocated to the Queensland hub.

## 2020 Grand Final - post-match protocols

Adhering to COVID protocols, non-broadcast media, for the first time, were not permitted to enter the club dressing rooms at any time following the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final. To ensure the strongest coverage possible under the requirements to protect community health, the AFL established an on-field media zone where media were able to interview players and coaches post-game. Media were permitted to move between the club media zones to facilitate interviews and capture content, for coverage in the days after the game.

## AFL economic contribution in Queensland

The AFL announced \$136.4m of economic contribution in Queensland was generated as a result of the AFL activity in the state across the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

A record 83 AFL games were played in Queensland during the season with matches in Brisbane (35), Gold Coast (44) and Cairns (four), while football fans around the nation embraced the Grand Final on October 24. The Grand Final audience for 2020 was 30 per cent up on the 2019 Grand Final, attracting an average TV audience of 3,858,698, and audiences were particularly strong in Victoria and Queensland.

The AFL, Queensland Government, Tourism and Events Queensland and local organisations partnered to establish a world-class model to complete the 2020 AFL season.

Sixteen of our 18 AFL clubs were placed in Queensland at some point throughout the season, including the successful relocation and housing of more than 550 players, 750 staff and their families.

AFL players, officials and families spent more than 101,000 bed nights in the state, used more than 950 bus trips with Queensland companies, clocked up nearly 10,000 rental days for cars and trucks to move people and equipment and took more than 120 charter flights in and out of Queensland for games.



## Corporate social responsibility and charity partners

The AFL has three official charity partnerships.

### FightMND

FightMND was founded in 2014 with the purpose of finding effective treatments and ultimately a cure for Motor Neurone Disease. What FightMND has done since 2014 is be the voice and the guiding star for Australians who want to fight 'The Beast.' The inspirational driving force behind Fight MND is former Essendon champion and Melbourne coach, Neale Daniher. FightMND'S major annual fundraising drive is 'Big Freeze at the G'. As a result of the many challenges experienced by COVID-19, the Big Freeze showpiece at the MCG could not proceed, but the fundraising campaign and the sale of FightMND's popular and iconic blue beanies went ahead, achieving a record-breaking result. The Australian public rallied to the cause in greater numbers than ever before, as the sixth instalment raised an incredible \$11.9m to help fund world-leading research into discovering more effective treatments and a cure for MND.

### Children's Cancer Foundation

Children's Cancer Foundation was founded in 1992 by parents who envisioned more welcoming and spirited treatment environments for children, and practical support for families. Since 2005, the annual Million Dollar Lunch has raised more than \$22.5m, enabling the Foundation to fund crucial programs in therapeutic care, cancer research and family support. In 2020, a virtual fundraiser, the first ever Million Dollar Lunch Giving Day was an incredible success during difficult times, raising more than \$580,000 for children's cancer research and programs.

△ St Kilda's Bradley Hill sports an iconic FightMND blue beanie (above left), while Richmond's Bachar Houli was the recipient of the 2020 Jim Stynes Leadership Award.

### Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Somewhere in Australia, there is a new call to Lifeline every minute. A partnership was established between Lifeline and the AFL in late 2019. The AFL is proud to be part of the conversation that talks openly about mental health and reduces the stigma associated with mental illness. The AFL has committed to the principles of the partnership by encompassing club, community engagement, education and fundraising across the Lifeline network.

## Jim Stynes Leadership Award

The AFL is also a proud supporter of the Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award. The award is an enduring tribute to Jim's standing in the game and his unwavering service and leadership throughout the community and commemorates his legacy as someone who always looked to help others.

Presented each year on Brownlow Medal night by the AFL and the Jim Stynes Foundation, the award recognises current players who demonstrate the same values as personified by Jim. Richmond's Bachar Houli was announced as the winner of the 2020 award.

Houli is a role model through the work of the Bachar Houli Foundation, which focuses on engaging young Muslims in football through a series of community and pathway programs, working in partnership with his club.

Since its establishment, more than 30,000 young people have been involved in some form, while the 2020 bushfires prompted Houli to visit victims in the Gippsland area, working with local agencies to cook and distribute meals.

Runners-up were Tayla Harris (Carlton), Lauren Spark (Western Bulldogs) and Justin Westhoff (Port Adelaide), who were also praised for their commitment to the community.

# INFRASTRUCTURE, MAJOR PROJECTS & INVESTMENT

**RAY GUNSTON**  
GENERAL MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE,  
MAJOR PROJECTS AND INVESTMENT



The AFL was presented with considerable financial challenges to confront after the immediate impact of the COVID-19 shutdown in the early part of the 2020 season.

With the strong support of banking partners NAB and ANZ, the AFL was able to establish appropriate levels of debt facilities to provide the estimated sufficient liquidity, if required, to ensure the solvency of the entire football industry through the pandemic.

The design activities for the Marvel Stadium upgrade project continued through this period to fulfil the transformative vision for the project while being mindful of the short and long-term economic and fan experience impacts of the pandemic. Full project completion is estimated to be around late 2023.

Investment and capital management activities, along with the bank debt actions taken, were predominantly focused on a centralised industry treasury operation to oversee total football industry liquidity and solvency through this season, including all 18 AFL clubs.

The Marvel Stadium and Docklands precinct redevelopment is expected to be completed by late 2023.



## AFL funding facility - response to COVID-19

Strong relationships with the AFL's bankers NAB and ANZ were pivotal for the game to be able to establish appropriate levels of debt facilities to provide the estimated sufficient liquidity, if required, to ensure the solvency of the entire football industry through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support of two of Australia's largest banks was a key first step in the long road for the game to work its way through the crisis by putting in place the financial cashflow certainty base on which then to enable the unfettered decision-making required on the myriad of factors necessary to give our season the best chance of completion.

As the game confronted the prospect of a large financial deficit, these bank debt arrangements enabled both the AFL and clubs to continue operations with their solvency underpinned. With the significant risks to the retention of membership and sponsorship revenues, as well as the potential to not be able to generate ongoing attendance revenues, resulting from the postponement of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, and then the absence of crowds when matches resumed, such financial underpinning allowed the continuity of AFL and club operations.

Even with this support, both the AFL and clubs were required to make extremely hard decisions to drastically and urgently cut costs.

All parts of the industry - the League, clubs, coaches, staff, players, supporters, corporate and broadcast partners and state and community leagues - were required to share these difficult steps to minimise the call on debt funding to keep the game running at a time when virtually all revenue streams had varying levels of the risk of being very significantly impacted.

▽ New eastern and southern entrances and a range of new amenities within and around Marvel Stadium will be featured in the upgrade project.

## Centralised industry treasury operation

Accompanying the exercise of entering into Letters of Financial Support with all 18 AFL clubs under which the clubs could seek access to the bank debt facilities established by the AFL, a centralised industry treasury operation was formed to co-ordinate the industry liquidity management throughout the 2020 year.

Through the co-operation of all clubs, the industry was able to minimise the call on the debt facilities through prudent overview of the AFL and clubs' liquidity in terms of cash balances and debt capacity. Clubs who nominated themselves as assisted clubs were then able to draw on the AFL bank debt facilities as required to underpin their operations. A similar form of such an operation is continuing into the 2021 season.

## Marvel Stadium operations

Marvel Stadium started the new financial year with a raft of diverse events over the summer period that showcased its multipurpose capabilities in dramatic fashion. These included Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Renegade matches, RnB Fridays and U2 concerts, the Jehovah Witnesses World Congress, AUSX open Motorcross event, the annual RMIT Graduation Ceremony and the Marvel Spartan Challenge. On February 28, Marvel Stadium was proud to host more than 50,000 patrons for the AFL Bushfire Relief double-header.

In November 2019, the stadium's turf management team took over the curation services of St Kilda's RSEA Park training grounds, adding to the grounds already curated by our team, including Victoria University Whitten Oval, Ikon Park, Carlton Cricket Club, North Port Oval and Marvel Stadium.

Alongside the AFL Restructure, the operations of the stadium have now been fully integrated into the operations of the AFL.

## Marvel Stadium and precinct ongoing redevelopment work

The Marvel Stadium upgrade project provides a unique opportunity to start the revitalisation of Marvel Stadium as part of a funding agreement with the Victorian State Government.

The upgrade is focused on the eastern and southern entrances of the stadium in addition to a range of stadium upgrades categorised into three elements - City Edge (East), Town Square (South) and stadium upgrades.

Marvel Stadium's harbourside location makes it one of the most highly-connected stadiums in the Southern Hemisphere - a unique urban stadium that is highly accessible with multiple forms of public transport in close proximity. The location also provides a unique opportunity for a range of new amenities within and around the stadium that capitalises on its location and views towards the city and across Victoria Harbour.

The schematic design was completed in 2020 enabling the preparation of a complete tender package for construction tenderers issued in late 2020.

The works will start in 2021 and will be completed in stages, with the final stage completing in late 2023.

### 1 City Edge (east or city side of the stadium)

The redevelopment of the eastern side of Marvel Stadium (labelled 'City Edge') celebrates the stadium as a cultural destination and creates a vibrant new entry that enriches the experience and enhances the venue's functionality.

Designed to work seamlessly with the operation of the existing stadium, layers of new offerings are carefully inserted across multiple levels and linked by a large, daylight-filled atrium space. Physically opening the edge of the stadium to the concourse, the redevelopment creates intuitive connectivity between the city and stadium precinct, while new lighting and branding opportunities enliven the fan experience of Marvel Stadium.

The area includes an enhanced, flexible concourse space with consolidated ticketing, merchandising and food and beverage offerings and greater weather protection. A new Presidents Club provides a premium experience that is easily accessed and serviced. Upgraded and extended Stark and Parker function rooms provide greater versatility for events and take advantage of views to the Melbourne CBD.

### 2 Town Square (south or Bourke St end of the stadium)

At the heart of the redevelopment at the south of Marvel Stadium is the Town Square - a protected, semi-outdoor public space. Designed to work seamlessly with the existing stadium, the Town Square enhances the venue's functionality by creating a memorable and intuitive gathering space and entry.

The edges of the stadium that frame the Town Square are carefully refurbished to enhance functionality while offering new opportunities for public benefit and year-round amenity, supporting the day-to-day life of the stadium precinct, while providing increased weather protection for user comfort.

This area provides a flexible public space, external concourse facing food and beverage offerings, consolidated new central entry Gate 2 and 3, and an amenities hub at Gate 1. The Level 2 refurbishment frames the entry space below and creates daylight-filled circulation spaces that link new food and beverage tenancies, protected winter-garden terraces and breakout spaces that engage with the field of play.

### 3 Stadium upgrades

The stadium upgrades consist of several components including new inner bowl videoboards, upgrades to the match-production suite, thematic and sports lighting and an upgrade to the existing team facilities.

The proposed design of the stadium upgrades has been closely developed with the aim to enhance the spectator in-bowl experience and the facilities for the different sporting codes and teams that use the stadium.

### 685 Latrobe St

As part of a broader precinct approach, the AFL entered into a contract in December 2019 to acquire a vacant site at 685 Latrobe St, adjoining the northern end of the concourse and were due to settle at the end of March 2020.

Due to the early stages of COVID-19, the AFL agreed to novate the sale contract to Grocon, which has acquired the site and will develop a number of residential towers. The AFL has an opportunity to potentially lease a range of retail outlets on the ground floor abutting the concourse as part of the novation of the sale contract.

## AFLPA revised CBA agreement around COVID-19

In the immediate period after the season was initially halted in March 2020, the AFL and AFLPA reached an agreement on revised salary arrangements to apply in the 2020 season for the player group. The willingness of players to help the clubs and the wider industry limit financial losses being faced was greatly appreciated.

At the time when it was unknown when and if matches would resume, an agreement was reached in days when normally months of negotiation would be required, providing the necessary agility and flexibility to play the remaining 144 games of the premiership season, with consideration to extend the season into December if that was required.

With ongoing uncertainty as to how the 2021 season might eventuate, together with the significant prospect of further disruption to revenues, an amended 2021 CBA was negotiated with the players and the AFLPA to provide some certainty to players on pay levels with the prospect for improved revenue potential upside sharing should revenues be stronger than expected during the year. The AFL and AFLPA have agreed to meet in the first half of 2021 to consider CBA arrangements for 2022 and beyond.

## AFL restructure

From late 2020, the restructure of the AFL determined the Marvel Stadium/Docklands precinct redevelopment would be led going forward by Travis Auld as EGM Finance, Clubs and Broadcasting.

The dedicated redevelopment team will be led by General Manager of Property Development Matthew Chun.

The Marvel Stadium operations will, under the new structure after the restructure, be led by Kylie Rogers, with Michael Green reporting to Kylie as the Head of Stadium Operations.

Ray Gunston, after an outstanding contribution as a member of the executive team, transitioned to an investment and capital management advisory role to the AFL industry in a consulting capacity.



# AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

It was the longest road trip in the history of the game.

On October 24, 2020, in the latest Grand Final played in a season in the game's history, and the first played outside of Victoria, Richmond claimed back-to-back premierships with a 31-point win over the Geelong Cats at the Gabba.

Having been relocated out of Victoria more than three months beforehand, there were ups and downs along the way before the Tigers officially stamped themselves as a great side of the modern era, to rival the recent dynasties established by the likes of the Brisbane Lions, Geelong Cats and Hawthorn.

Led by the unstoppable Dustin Martin, who won his third Norm Smith Medal, the Tigers trailed at half-time but were going away from the Cats when the final siren rang on that October night.

Coach Damien Hardwick now has five premierships in all to his name, after two as a player, while Trent Cotchin is in rare air as a triple premiership skipper.

The Cats fought bravely, seeking to farewell modern great Gary Ablett in style, but there was no fairytale for Geelong or Ablett on the night, with disappointment for the men in hoops and Ablett bravely finishing his last game with a damaged shoulder.

COVID-19 required all clubs to consider things never done before in the pursuit of the premiership - hub life/compressed fixture periods/shortened games to name a few.

Unfortunately, for the AFLW, the nationwide lockdown in the early part of 2020 prevented the conclusion to the women's season, with the AFL Commission ruling no premiership would be awarded with four teams still in contention when the season was halted.

At the time the season was halted, North Melbourne, Fremantle, Carlton and Melbourne had won their way into the semi-finals.

Young Carlton midfielder Madison Prespakis, in just her second year of senior football, claimed the competition best and fairest and already has two Blues club awards to her name in that time.

Rebecca Privitelli from the GWS Giants claimed Mark of the Year, while Melbourne's Kate Hore kicked the Goal of the Year as playing standards across the competition continued to impress.

John Kennedy snr was named the 29th Legend of the Game at a virtual ceremony for the Australian Football Hall of Fame mid-year, accepting his award before passing away later in 2020.

Alongside his elevation to the game's highest honour, seven people were welcomed into the Hall of Fame as new inductees - John Ablett, Simon Black, Jonathan Brown, Dennis Cometti, Dean Cox, Lenny Hayes and Greg Phillips.

Trent Cotchin joined a select group of triple premiership captains when he led Richmond to the 2020 flag.







Richmond star Dustin Martin claimed his third Norm Smith Medal and coach Damien Hardwick collected his third Jock McHale Medal.

## The Premiers

Three flags in four years makes a dynasty and the discussion for Richmond supporters all summer was which of the 2017, 2019 and 2020 premierships was the most hard-won.

There is a strong case to mount that the 2020 flag tops the lot. Making the Grand Final was hard enough for the Tigers after their drama-filled year, both in Victoria and their Gold Coast hub.

But they faced some duress on the night as well in what was a history-making flag-decider - the first played outside Victoria and the first under lights.

In the opening few minutes, important defender Nick Vlastuin was felled by an errant, but in-play, flying elbow from Geelong's Patrick Dangerfield that left him concussed and unable to finish the game.

It left the Tiger backline disorganised and under siege for the next 50 minutes and, in that time, the Cats dominated possession and inside-50 entries and by time-on in the second term were out to a 21-point lead.

But a late, opportunistic goal to superstar Dustin Martin stemmed the tide and the momentum was back with the Tigers by half-time.

And it continued that way in the second half, which Richmond dominated, kicking nine goals to two to win convincingly by 31 points to register the club's 13th premiership.

Martin with four goals - each of them spellbinding - was the best-on-ground, but the Tigers were also well-served by Shane Edwards, Jayden Short and skipper Trent Cotchin.

### 2020 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL

|                 |     |     |     |           |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| <b>Richmond</b> | 2.1 | 3.2 | 7.4 | 12.9 (81) |
| Geelong         | 2.2 | 5.5 | 6.8 | 7.8 (50)  |

**BEST: Richmond** - Martin, Short, Edwards, Prestia, Cotchin, Bolton.  
**Geelong** - Duncan, Stewart, Selwood, Menegola, Dahlhaus.

**GOALS: Richmond** - Martin 4, Prestia 2, Riewoldt 2, Castagna, Lambert, Lynch, McIntosh. **Geelong** - Menegola 2, Dangerfield, Duncan, C. Guthrie, Hawkins, Miers.

**Umpires:** M. Stevic, S. Meredith, C. Flear.

**Crowd:** 29,707 at the Gabba.

Shai Bolton and Jason Castagna also played key roles in the second half, while erstwhile key defender Noah Balta was moved to the ruck after the main break and added mobility and drive around the ground.

It was a great piece of coaching from Damien Hardwick.

The Cats were in their first Grand Final in nine years and were hoping desperately to send club icon Gary Ablett into retirement on a high note and give Dangerfield an elusive premierships medal, about the only silverware missing from his burgeoning trophy cabinet.

Ablett ended up hurting his shoulder - in the same passage of play as Vlastuin - and struggled to make an impact when he returned, while the Cats played Dangerfield primarily out of the forward line, only moving him on to the ball in the final term when it was probably too late.

Mitch Duncan and Tom Stewart were great for Geelong and skipper Joel Selwood scrapped hard, but the belief heading into the Grand Final was that the Tigers had the edge in talent and system, and so it proved.

### TEAMS AS SELECTED

| Richmond v Geelong Cats |   |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>F</b>                | <b>Tom Lynch</b>  | <b>Jack Riewoldt</b>  | <b>Shai Bolton</b>       |
| <b>B</b>                | Jack Henry  | Harry Taylor          | Jake Kolodjashnij        |
| <b>HF</b>               | <b>Kane Lambert</b>   | <b>Jason Castagna</b> | <b>Dustin Martin</b>     |
| <b>HB</b>               | Lachie Henderson  | Mark Blicavs          | Tom Stewart              |
| <b>C</b>                | <b>Kamdyn McIntosh</b>  | <b>Dion Prestia</b>   | <b>Marlion Pickett</b>   |
| <b>C</b>                | Mitch Duncan  | Joel Selwood (c)      | Sam Menegola             |
| <b>HB</b>               | <b>Liam Baker</b>   | <b>Nick Vlastuin</b>  | <b>Bachar Houli</b>      |
| <b>HF</b>               | Luke Dahlhaus   | Gary Rohan            | Gryan Miers              |
| <b>B</b>                | <b>Nathan Broad</b>   | <b>Dylan Grimes</b>   | <b>Noah Balta</b>        |
| <b>F</b>                | Mark O'Connor   | Tom Hawkins           | Sam Simpson              |
| <b>R</b>                | <b>Toby Nankervis</b>   | <b>Shane Edwards</b>  | <b>Trent Cotchin (c)</b> |
| <b>R</b>                | Rhys Stanley  | Patrick Dangerfield   | Cameron Guthrie          |
| <b>I/C</b>              | <b>David Astbury, Jayden Short, Daniel Rioli, Jack Graham</b> |                       |                          |
| <b>EM</b>               | <b>Josh Caddy, Oleg Markov, Jake Aarts, Mabior Chol</b>       |                       |                          |
| <b>Coach</b>            | <b>Damien Hardwick</b>  |                       |                          |
| <b>I/C</b>              | Zach Tuohy, Brandon Parfitt, Gary Ablett, Jed Bews            |                       |                          |
| <b>EM</b>               | Esava Ratugolea, Zach Guthrie, Tom Atkins, Brad Close         |                       |                          |
| <b>Coach</b>            | Chris Scott   |                       |                          |

## Norm Smith Medal

As if there was any doubt, Dustin Martin confirmed his status as the best player in the game and in the discussion for the greatest finals player of all time with a dominant display in the Grand Final that helped steer Richmond to victory and earned him a record third Norm Smith Medal.

Martin backed up his 2017 and 2019 performances and went past dual winners Gary Ayres, Andrew McLeod and Luke Hodge with a virtuoso 21-touch performance.

But what sealed the deal and earned him maximum votes from each of the judges was four goals, including a brilliant snap late in the second quarter after he roved the pack, issued a trademark 'don't argue' and snapped truly around his body.

It brought the margin back to 15 points and all the momentum was back with the Tigers.

He goaled again entering time-on in the third term to give Richmond the lead and kicked two more in the final quarter, including the best of the night when he grabbed the ball, shrugged off Patrick Dangerfield and guided it through.

It was a party trick and it started party time for the Tigers, which in Martin's case, kicked on until well into November.

Martin's heat map from the Grand Final shows he was busy both in the midfield and the forward line, but the coach doesn't need to tell him what to do.

### NORM SMITH MEDAL VOTING

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Leigh Matthews</b><br>(3AW, Channel Seven, chair) | 3 D. Martin (Rich), 2 N. Broad (Rich), 1 S. Edwards (Rich)  |
| <b>Lauren Arnell</b><br>(ABC)                        | 3 D. Martin (Rich), 2 J. Short (Rich), 1 M. Duncan (Geel)   |
| <b>Malcolm Blight</b><br>(SEN)                       | 3 D. Martin (Rich), 2 M. Duncan (Geel), 1 S. Edwards (Rich) |
| <b>Damian Barrett</b><br>(AFL.com.au)                | 3 D. Martin (Rich), 2 J. Short (Rich), 1 S. Edwards (Rich)  |
| <b>Peter Ryan</b><br>(The Age)                       | 3 D. Martin (Rich), 2 J. Short (Rich), 1 S. Edwards (Rich)  |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>15 Martin, 6 Short, 4 Edwards, 3 Duncan, 2 Broad</b>     |

## Jock McHale Medal

An audience with Dustin Martin is about as rare as a solar eclipse, so when the three-time Norm Smith Medal winner speaks, you'd best sit and listen.

The subject was Damien Hardwick, who with three flags under his belt, moved past Dan Minogue to sit behind only Tom Hafey with four as the most successful premierships-winning coach in Richmond's history.

"Where do I start?" Martin said after the Grand Final. "The care that he's got for his players ... ever since we started together 10 years ago, he's almost (been) like a second father to a lot of us."

"He's a friend first and then a coach second and I couldn't be anymore grateful. He's helped me become a better person and, along with all the other boys as well, we'll walk away from this footy club as better people."

Grand Final day seems to bring out the best in Hardwick. He now has three Jock McHale Medals to go with a pair of premierships medals as a player (Essendon 2000, Port Adelaide 2004) and a valued role as a key offside to Alastair Clarkson when the Hawks won their breakthrough flag in 2008.

It was a trying year for Hardwick. He struggled in the first part of the season as the COVID restrictions bit hard but, perhaps more to the point, put limits on the care he provides for his players, and for which he has become renowned.

"The reality was I was really struggling to get my head around it and the reality is if I am struggling the players are going to feed off that energy so I was at my very, very worst early days," he said.

"I was just in a challenging viewpoint, it was detrimental to both me and my coaching and certainly our club."

It took some hard conversations with club leadership, which Hardwick likened to being hit by a "sledgehammer", to get his head back in the game, and once the Tigers relocated to their Gold Coast hub they reclaimed the connectivity they were missing while training in difficult circumstances in Melbourne.

Once there, he coached superbly and pulled the right levers for the rest of the season.

The Tigers lost their qualifying final to Brisbane at the Gabba, but held their nerve and played superbly thereafter.



### Brownlow Medal

Brisbane midfielder Lachie Neale was utterly dominant in 2020 and this was reflected in the ease with which he won the Brownlow Medal. Neale polled 31 votes in 17 games, which included 10 best-on-ground returns, and finished 10 votes clear of Port Adelaide's Travis Boak, with St Kilda's Jack Steele and Melbourne's Christian Petracca a vote further back.

Neale's winning margin was the equal biggest in Brownlow history, while his average of 1.82 votes a game was also a record.

The Brownlow capped off an amazing year for Neale, who also took out the AFL Players Association MVP and the AFL Coaches Association Player of the Year, as well as earning his second All-Australian selection.

He averaged 27.5 disposals, 12.5 contested possessions and 5.3 clearances a game, as well as kicking 11 goals, to help lead the Lions to their first finals victory in more than a decade.

He was the fourth Brisbane player to win the medal, following in the footsteps of Michael Voss (1996), Jason Akermanis (2001) and Simon Black (2002).

The 27-year-old was traded to the Lions from Fremantle at the end of 2018 for three draft picks, including the No. 6 selection, and it was a steal.

### BROWNLOW MEDAL

|                                  | Votes     | 3         | 2        | 1        | Games     |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Lachie Neale (Bris Lions)</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>17</b> |
| Travis Boak (PA)                 | 21        | 5         | 3        | 0        | 17        |
| Christian Petracca (Melb)        | 20        | 6         | 1        | 0        | 17        |
| Jack Steele (StK)                | 20        | 4         | 3        | 2        | 17        |
| Patrick Dangerfield (Geel)       | 15        | 3         | 2        | 2        | 17        |
| Dustin Martin (Rich)             | 15        | 3         | 2        | 2        | 16        |
| Luke Parker (Syd)                | 15        | 2         | 4        | 1        | 17        |
| Jack Macrae (WB)                 | 15        | 2         | 4        | 1        | 17        |
| Cameron Guthrie (Geel)           | 14        | 4         | 0        | 2        | 17        |
| Clayton Oliver (Melb)            | 14        | 2         | 3        | 2        | 17        |
| Tim Kelly (WCE)                  | 14        | 3         | 2        | 1        | 17        |

### Coleman Medal

It took 14 seasons, but 2020 will be remembered as the year star Geelong forward Tom Hawkins finally won the Coleman Medal.

He booted 42 goals in the reduced home and away season to win by 10 from Port Adelaide's Charlie Dixon.

Hawk Jack Gunston and West Coast's Josh Kennedy finished one further back with 31 each.

At 32, Hawkins was the oldest Coleman Medal winner since Tony Lockett in 1998 and the first Cats player since Gary Ablett snr in 1995.

Hawkins has been getting better with age and his 49-goal haul, including finals, in 2020 comes after 56 in 2019 and 60 in 2018.

He might have felt as though he owed the Cats a bit after being suspended for striking and missing the losing preliminary final against Richmond in 2019.

Hawkins, who finished sixth for contested marks in 2020, went on a tear mid-year and in back-to-back 10-goal wins by the Cats in rounds 11 and 12 against St Kilda and Port Adelaide, he kicked 11 goals.

He booted four in the huge win over Collingwood in the second semi-final.

### COLEMAN MEDAL

|                           | Home & Away |           |           | Including Finals |           |           |            |           |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                           | G           | B         | Gms       | G                | B         | %         | Ave        | Gms       |
| <b>Tom Hawkins (Geel)</b> | <b>42</b>   | <b>25</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>49</b>        | <b>36</b> | <b>58</b> | <b>2.3</b> | <b>21</b> |
| Charlie Dixon (PA)        | 32          | 21        | 16        | 34               | 21        | 62        | 1.9        | 18        |
| Jack Gunston (Haw)        | 31          | 21        | 16        | 31               | 21        | 60        | 1.9        | 16        |
| Josh Kennedy (WCE)        | 31          | 18        | 16        | 34               | 22        | 61        | 2          | 17        |
| Matt Taberner (Frem)      | 29          | 13        | 6         | 29               | 13        | 69        | 1.8        | 16        |
| Jack Riewoldt (Rich)      | 28          | 15        | 17        | 33               | 20        | 62        | 1.6        | 21        |
| Tom Lynch (Rich)          | 28          | 20        | 16        | 32               | 27        | 54        | 1.7        | 19        |
| Dan Butler (StK)          | 27          | 11        | 17        | 29               | 12        | 71        | 1.5        | 19        |
| Jack Darling (WCE)        | 27          | 10        | 17        | 30               | 12        | 71        | 1.7        | 18        |
| Tom Pepley (Syd)          | 26          | 27        | 17        | 26               | 27        | 49        | 1.5        | 17        |
| Charlie Cameron (BL)      | 26          | 29        | 22        | 31               | 22        | 58        | 1.6        | 19        |

### McClelland Trophy

Port Adelaide coach Ken Hinkley marked out his team's aspirations (*see quote right*) in the pre-season, that the Power were here to contend for the 2020 flag. After consecutive seasons finishing 10th, Hinkley laid out a clear change of language for the whole club on the eve of its 150th year as a senior club.

Port Adelaide went on to claim the McClelland Trophy for the first time since 2004, built on the best defence in the competition, a powerhouse in Charlie Dixon up forward and five players nominated to be part of the expanded All-Australian squad.

Along with Dixon, others in the running for All-Australian selection were former captain Travis Boak, current captain Tom Jonas, midfielder-forward Zak Butters and defender Darcy Byrne-Jones, with Boak named vice-captain of the team and selected in the centre.

**'THIS CLUB'S HISTORY IS PREMIERSHIPS. SO, THAT'S WHAT WE'RE STARTING OUT TO TRY TO DO.'**

**'WE'RE GOING TO START THIS YEAR WANTING TO WIN THE PREMIERSHIP IN OUR 150TH YEAR.'**

**'WE'RE GOING TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO DO THAT.'**

Ken Hinkley, Port Adelaide coach, February 12, 2020

### 2020 PREMIERSHIP SEASON LADDER

| #  | CLUB              | P  |    |    |     | For |     |      | Against |     |      | Mch Pts | Home |   |   | Away |   |   | Form W/L | Scores High Low |     | Av Margin W L |    | W < L < 7pts 7pts |   | Rd 18 2019 | 1st Year Players | Qtrs Won | 4th Qtrs Won |    |
|----|-------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|---------|-----|------|---------|------|---|---|------|---|---|----------|-----------------|-----|---------------|----|-------------------|---|------------|------------------|----------|--------------|----|
|    |                   | W  | L  | D  | Gls | Beh | Pts | %    | Gls     | Beh | Pts  |         | W    | L | D | W    | L | D |          | W               | L   | W             | L  | W                 | L |            |                  |          |              |    |
| 1  | Port Adelaide     | 17 | 14 | 3  | 0   | 168 | 177 | 1185 | 127     | 107 | 869  | 136.36  | 56   | 8 | 1 | 0    | 6 | 2 | 0        | 5W              | 110 | 31            | 31 | 42                | 1 | 0          | 9                | 2        | 42           | 10 |
| 2  | Brisbane Lions    | 17 | 14 | 3  | 0   | 165 | 194 | 1184 | 139     | 114 | 948  | 124.69  | 56   | 9 | 0 | 0    | 5 | 3 | 0        | 7W              | 96  | 41            | 23 | 32                | 3 | 0          | 2                | 6        | 40           | 7  |
| 3  | Richmond          | 17 | 12 | 4  | 1   | 164 | 151 | 1135 | 124     | 130 | 874  | 129.86  | 50   | 7 | 1 | 0    | 5 | 3 | 1        | 6W              | 105 | 34            | 29 | 22                | 0 | 0          | 5                | 2        | 39           | 8  |
| 4  | Geelong Cats      | 17 | 12 | 5  | 0   | 182 | 141 | 1233 | 129     | 127 | 901  | 136.85  | 48   | 6 | 3 | 0    | 6 | 2 | 0        | 1W              | 108 | 31            | 35 | 18                | 2 | 1          | 1                | 2        | 42           | 12 |
| 5  | West Coast Eagles | 17 | 12 | 5  | 0   | 162 | 123 | 1095 | 133     | 138 | 936  | 116.99  | 48   | 9 | 0 | 0    | 3 | 5 | 0        | 2W              | 111 | 41            | 25 | 30                | 0 | 1          | 3                | 6        | 33           | 6  |
| 6  | St Kilda          | 17 | 10 | 7  | 0   | 171 | 133 | 1159 | 142     | 145 | 997  | 116.25  | 40   | 6 | 2 | 0    | 4 | 5 | 0        | 1W              | 101 | 34            | 29 | 18                | 1 | 4          | 14               | 3        | 39           | 10 |
| 7  | Western Bulldogs  | 17 | 10 | 7  | 0   | 159 | 149 | 1103 | 149     | 140 | 1034 | 106.67  | 40   | 5 | 3 | 0    | 5 | 4 | 0        | 3W              | 111 | 34            | 30 | 33                | 2 | 0          | 12               | 5        | 39           | 12 |
| 8  | Collingwood       | 17 | 9  | 7  | 1   | 139 | 131 | 965  | 131     | 95  | 881  | 109.53  | 38   | 5 | 2 | 1    | 4 | 5 | 0        | 1L              | 86  | 34            | 28 | 25                | 0 | 1          | 4                | 6        | 34           | 10 |
| 9  | Melbourne         | 17 | 9  | 8  | 0   | 155 | 133 | 1063 | 142     | 134 | 986  | 107.81  | 36   | 4 | 5 | 0    | 5 | 3 | 0        | 2W              | 100 | 32            | 28 | 21                | 3 | 2          | 17               | 4        | 34           | 11 |
| 10 | GWS Giants        | 17 | 8  | 9  | 0   | 145 | 137 | 1007 | 151     | 147 | 1053 | 95.63   | 32   | 5 | 3 | 0    | 3 | 6 | 0        | 3L              | 105 | 25            | 19 | 22                | 2 | 1          | 6                | 6        | 35           | 10 |
| 11 | Carlton           | 17 | 7  | 10 | 0   | 146 | 141 | 1017 | 158     | 130 | 1078 | 94.34   | 28   | 2 | 6 | 0    | 5 | 4 | 0        | 2L              | 103 | 39            | 14 | 16                | 4 | 2          | 16               | 4        | 39           | 12 |
| 12 | Fremantle         | 17 | 7  | 10 | 0   | 127 | 104 | 866  | 131     | 138 | 924  | 93.72   | 28   | 4 | 6 | 0    | 3 | 4 | 0        | 1L              | 99  | 16            | 23 | 22                | 1 | 2          | 11               | 6        | 26           | 7  |
| 13 | Essendon          | 17 | 6  | 10 | 1   | 136 | 122 | 938  | 172     | 153 | 1185 | 79.16   | 26   | 2 | 6 | 0    | 4 | 4 | 1        | 4L              | 87  | 28            | 10 | 30                | 3 | 2          | 7                | 3        | 24           | 7  |
| 14 | Gold Coast Suns   | 17 | 5  | 11 | 1   | 142 | 144 | 996  | 160     | 139 | 1099 | 90.63   | 22   | 4 | 5 | 1    | 1 | 6 | 0        | 3L              | 92  | 27            | 41 | 28                | 0 | 2          | 18               | 7        | 28           | 4  |
| 15 | Hawthorn          | 17 | 5  | 12 | 0   | 147 | 122 | 1004 | 175     | 144 | 1184 | 84.09   | 20   | 3 | 4 | 0    | 2 | 8 | 0        | 1W              | 108 | 27            | 29 | 28                | 1 | 0          | 10               | 5        | 27           | 7  |
| 16 | Sydney Swans      | 17 | 5  | 12 | 0   | 128 | 122 | 890  | 153     | 159 | 1077 | 82.64   | 20   | 3 | 5 | 0    | 2 | 7 | 0        | 3L              | 74  | 19            | 16 | 22                | 1 | 3          | 15               | 7        | 25           | 3  |
| 17 | North Melbourne   | 17 | 3  | 14 | 0   | 124 | 114 | 858  | 170     | 185 | 1205 | 71.2    | 12   | 2 | 6 | 0    | 1 | 8 | 0        | 8L              | 119 | 23            | 30 | 31                | 1 | 2          | 13               | 4        | 22           | 7  |
| 18 | Adelaide Crows    | 17 | 3  | 14 | 0   | 116 | 130 | 826  | 190     | 143 | 1283 | 64.38   | 12   | 1 | 8 | 0    | 2 | 6 | 0        | 1L              | 83  | 29            | 21 | 37                | 0 | 2          | 8                | 9        | 22           | 5  |



### AFLW Best and Fairest

In just her second year at senior level, Carlton midfielder Madison Prespakis claimed the 2020 AFL Women's best and fairest.

Winner of the Blues' best and fairest in her debut year and named the competition's NAB AFL Rising Star, Prespakis added another club champion award in the COVID-affected season and improved to the extent she was the dominant player of the competition.

Prespakis won with 15 votes ahead of Fremantle's Kiara Bowers (12 votes) and North Melbourne's Emma Kearney (11 votes).

The dual All-Australian played all seven games, averaging just over 21 disposals (fifth overall in the competition) and four clearances a game.

Prespakis was Carlton's first selection (third overall) in the 2018 NAB AFLW Draft, recruited from the Romsey Junior Football Club, Melbourne University and the Calder Cannons where she was captain and best and fairest in 2018.

She was the first teenager to win football's highest individual honour since Dick Reynolds in 1934, being presented with her award in her backyard by her sister during the first lockdown.

### 2020 AFLW BEST AND FAIREST

|                                    | Votes     |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Madison Prespakis (Carlton)</b> | <b>15</b> |
| Kiara Bowers (Fremantle)           | 12        |
| Emma Kearney (North Melbourne)     | 11        |
| Anne Hatchard (Adelaide)           | 10        |
| Jenna Bruton (North Melbourne)     | 10        |
| Karen Paxman (Melbourne)           | 9         |
| Brittany Bonnici (Collingwood)     | 7         |
| Georgia Patrikios (St Kilda)       | 7         |
| Jaimee Lambert (Collingwood)       | 7         |
| Monique Conti (Rich)               | 7         |
| Alyce Parker (GWS)                 | 6         |
| Cora Staunton (GWS)                | 6         |
| Dana Hooker (WCE)                  | 6         |
| Elle Blackburn (WB)                | 6         |

### NAB AFLW Rising Star

Former No. 1 selection Isabel Huntington claimed the 2020 NAB AFLW Rising Star after moving to a key defensive role with the Western Bulldogs.

Drafted as a forward and hit initially by injury in the early part of her career, Huntington's marking power had her as a standout during the shortened 2020 AFLW season.

Huntington won with 34 votes, finishing ahead of rookie St Kilda forward Caitlin Greiser (30) and Gold Coast Sun Kalinda Howarth (24).

Nominated in round six after 15 possessions and six marks against competition leader Fremantle, Huntington was awarded the NAB AFLW Rising Star Medal, a \$20,000 investment portfolio and a dedicated personal banker.

Recruited from Melbourne University and the Sandringham Dragons, Huntington was the first overall selection at the 2017 NAB AFLW Draft, having played her junior football with East Sandringham and representing Vic Metro through her underage career.

### 2020 NAB AFLW RISING STAR VOTING

|   | Votes     |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Isabel Huntington (Western Bulldogs)</b> | <b>34</b> |
| Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda)                  | 30        |
| Kalinda Howarth (Gold Coast Suns)           | 24        |
| Georgia Patrikios (St Kilda)                | 23        |
| Jesse Wardlaw (Brisbane Lions)              | 5         |
| Grace Egan (Carlton)                        | 2         |
| Lucy McEvoy (Carlton)                       | 1         |
| Roxanne Roux (Fremantle)                    | 1         |



Collingwood's Sharni Layton (left) and Jaimee Lambert made the 2020 All-Australian team together with Melbourne pair Karen Paxman (second from left) and Kate Hore.

### Leading goalkicker

St Kilda first-year player Caitlin Greiser claimed the AFLW goalkicking award with 10 majors for the Saints.

Runner-up in the NAB AFLW Rising Star in her debut season, Greiser impressed with her powerful kicking and accuracy for goal, as well as a strong pair of hands when leading for the ball.

Her efforts also won her a place in the All-Australian side in her debut year, marking her as a player to watch in the emerging St Kilda line-up.

Having previously played soccer, she was nominated as a Rising Star after round three and her signature moment in her debut season came with the Saints down by a point in the final few minutes of their clash with Melbourne at RSEA Park.

Her kick from outside 50 brought the house down and delivered the red, white and black its memorable maiden win.

### Mark and Goal of the Year

Rebecca Privitelli from the GWS Giants claimed the 2020 AFLW Mark of the Year, while Melbourne's Kate Hore won the 2020 Coates Hire Goal of the Year.

Privitelli secured her win, marking in a pack against the Gold Coast Suns in round one, being voted in ahead of fellow finalists Courtney Gum (Adelaide Crows, round two) and Ashley Sharp (Fremantle, round six).

Hore was the standout for Goal of the Year, taking three bounces in a long run to goal against Carlton in round six. Her fellow finalists were Richelle Cranston (Geelong Cats, round one) and Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda, round three) after the AFL W Awards panel determined the overall winner for both awards, while selections made by fans were considered as a single vote in the panel's voting.

### All-Australian team

A total of 11 debutants highlighted a new-look outfit for the 2020 Toyota AFL Women's All-Australian team.

In all, players from 12 different clubs won selection in the final team of 21, comprising 16 players on the field and five interchange players.

Melbourne's Karen Paxman was named captain, with North Melbourne's Emma Kearney as her deputy, making them the only two players in the competition's history to have won All-Australian selection in all four seasons since the inception of the NAB AFL Women's competition in 2017.

Their experience was balanced by the youthful injection of newcomers Sarah Allan (Adelaide Crows), Libby Birch (Melbourne), Isabel Huntington (Western Bulldogs), Jaimee Lambert (Collingwood), Olivia Purcell (Geelong Cats), Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda), Kate Hore (Melbourne), Sharni Layton (Collingwood), Kalinda Howarth (Gold Coast Suns), Alyce Parker (GWS Giants) and Ash Riddell (North Melbourne).

Carlton, Melbourne and North Melbourne each supplied three representatives in the team, while the Adelaide Crows, Collingwood and Fremantle had two each.

### 2020 ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

|           |   |  |  |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| <b>B</b>  | <b>Sarah Allan</b><br>Adelaide Crows        | <b>Kate Lutkins</b><br>Brisbane Lions  |  |
| <b>HB</b> | <b>Kerryn Harrington</b><br>Carlton         | <b>Libby Birch</b><br>Melbourne        | <b>Isabel Huntington</b><br>Western Bulldogs |
| <b>C</b>  | <b>Emma Kearney (vc)</b><br>North Melbourne | <b>Kiara Bowers</b><br>Fremantle       | <b>Jaimee Lambert</b><br>Collingwood         |
| <b>HF</b> | <b>Olivia Purcell</b><br>Geelong Cats       | <b>Gemma Houghton</b><br>Fremantle     | <b>Jasmine Garner</b><br>North Melbourne     |
| <b>F</b>  | <b>Caitlin Greiser</b><br>St Kilda          | <b>Kate Hore</b><br>Melbourne          |  |
| <b>R</b>  | <b>Sharni Layton</b><br>Collingwood         | <b>Karen Paxman (c)</b><br>Melbourne   | <b>Madison Prespakis</b><br>Carlton          |
| <b>IC</b> | <b>Kalinda Howarth</b><br>Gold Coast Suns   | <b>Alyce Parker</b><br>GWS Giants      | <b>Tayla Harris</b><br>Carlton               |
|           | <b>Ash Riddell</b><br>North Melbourne       | <b>Anne Hatchard</b><br>Adelaide Crows |  |



◀ Geelong star Patrick Dangerfield was named All-Australian captain after an equal-record eighth selection, while GWS defender Nick Haynes (below) was one of 12 first-timers in the team.

### Virgin Australia All-Australian Team

Geelong champion Patrick Dangerfield was named captain of the 2020 All-Australian team, a fitting reward after earning selection for an equal-record eighth time.

Only five other players in League history have been given the honour eight times.

But that's where the familiarity started and ended. The 2020 team reflected a changing of the guard, with 12 players earning their first blazers.

Five of the debutants were named in the backline, with Darcy Moore, Brad Sheppard, Luke Ryan, Nick Haynes and Darcy Byrne-Jones all being rewarded for fantastic seasons.

Caleb Daniel, another first-timer, was named on the bench.

Other debutants included Charlie Dixon and Liam Ryan, who were both named in the forward line, and midfielders Christian Petracca, Cameron Guthrie, Jack Steele and Taylor Adams.

Port Adelaide veteran Travis Boak was named vice-captain and was one of three players from the Power to earn selection.

Geelong, West Coast and the Western Bulldogs also had three players selected.

The age-old question about whether the team was selected as if it was playing a game was addressed with two ruckmen being named - Nic Naitanui and Max Gawn - while erstwhile midfielders Dustin Martin and Marcus Bontempelli were named as forwards.

"It's very humbling ... I'm lost for words, to be honest," Dangerfield said of the captaincy.

"It's very, very special. Not in my wildest dreams, when I was first drafted, could I have imagined something quite like this.

"It's something that I'm very proud of, especially when you look at the calibre of players and people that are involved in this year's team."

Gary Ablett snr, Gary Ablett jnr, Lance Franklin, Robert Harvey and Mark Ricciuto are the only other players to have been selected eight times.

Matt Stevic was named the All-Australian field umpire for the seventh time.



### VIRGIN AUSTRALIA ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

|               |  |  |   |                              |
|---------------|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| <b>B</b>      | <b>Brad Sheppard</b><br>West Coast Eagles      | <b>Harris Andrews</b><br>Brisbane Lions  | <b>Luke Ryan</b><br>Fremantle                 |                              |
| <b>HB</b>     | <b>Nick Haynes</b><br>GWS Giants               | <b>Darcy Moore</b><br>Collingwood        | <b>Darcy Byrne-Jones</b><br>Port Adelaide     |                              |
| <b>C</b>      | <b>Jack Macrae</b><br>Western Bulldogs         | <b>Travis Boak (vc)</b><br>Port Adelaide | <b>Cameron Guthrie</b><br>Geelong Cats        |                              |
| <b>HF</b>     | <b>Patrick Dangerfield (c)</b><br>Geelong Cats | <b>Charlie Dixon</b><br>Port Adelaide    | <b>Marcus Bontempelli</b><br>Western Bulldogs |                              |
| <b>F</b>      | <b>Liam Ryan</b><br>West Coast Eagles          | <b>Tom Hawkins</b><br>Geelong Cats       | <b>Dustin Martin</b><br>Richmond              |                              |
| <b>R</b>      | <b>Nic Naitanui</b><br>West Coast Eagles       | <b>Christian Petracca</b><br>Melbourne   | <b>Lachie Neale</b><br>Brisbane Lions         |                              |
| <b>IC</b>     | <b>Jack Steele</b><br>St Kilda                 | <b>Taylor Adams</b><br>Collingwood       | <b>Caleb Daniel</b><br>Western Bulldogs       | <b>Max Gawn</b><br>Melbourne |
| <b>Coach</b>  | <b>Damien Hardwick</b><br>Richmond             |  |   |                              |
| <b>Umpire</b> | <b>Matt Stevic</b>                             |  |   |                              |



### Mark and Goal of the Year

Collingwood's Josh Daicos won the 2020 Goal of the Year while fellow emerging youngster Sam Walsh, from fierce rival Carlton, won the 2020 Mark of the Year.

Daicos kicked his goal in round 10 against the Sydney Swans at the Gabba, somehow finding space between his opponents on the boundary and then snapping towards goal.

Walsh claimed Mark of the Year in round seven against Port Adelaide at the Gabba, going with the flight of the ball in the path of Port Adelaide's Charlie Dixon to take a courageous grab in the Blues' narrow loss.

After each round of the season, fans voted for the favourite weekly goals and marks from a selection of three nominated by the AFL.

The All-Australian selection committee voted for their top three marks and goals across the season, for a final decision in both categories. The selectors were Gillon McLachlan (chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Steve Hocking, Glen Jakovich, Chris Johnson, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson and Warren Tredrea.



▷ Josh Daicos (top left and right celebrating) won the Goal of the Year, while Sam Walsh was awarded Mark of the Year.

## HALL OF FAME



### John Abley

**Born:** November 18, 1930

**Died:** August 19, 2011

**Playing career:** 1950-61

**Games:** 212 (Port Adelaide)

**Goals:** 1

Abley is one of just six men in the game's history from the carnival era to win All-Australian selection at three or more carnivals, becoming the last of this elite group to be inducted in 2020, nearly a decade after his death. A member of Port Adelaide's famed 'six in a row' teams of 1954-59, Abley was the premier full-back of his era, winning state selection 23 times for South Australia and was named at full-back in Port's Greatest Team, 1870-2000. A member of seven flag teams in all, Abley only ended up at Alberton after his parents relocated to South Australia, just as he was starting his senior career, having played his junior football with Hawthorn, changing the destiny of football in SA in the 1950s as the best defender in the game.



### Dennis Cometti (Media)

**Born:** March 26, 1949

**Football broadcast history:**

► **1972-85:** ABC Radio

► **1986-2001:** Seven Network

► **2002-06:** Nine Network

► **2007-16:** Seven Network

► **2008-11:** 3AW

► **2012-present:** Triple M

After a 38-game playing career and 65-game coaching career with West Perth, Cometti began his working life as a disc jockey, before turning to calling. Known across the country for his wit and accuracy, Cometti was appointed as a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2019, in the same year he was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. Also renowned as a caller of both cricket and swimming, his media colleagues named him Football Television Caller of the Year on 11 occasions and named him most outstanding media performer overall (the Alf Potter award) in 2006.



### Dean Cox

**Born:** August 1, 1981

**Playing career:** 2000-14

**Games:** 316 (West Coast 290, East Perth 26)

**Goals:** 178 (West Coast 169, East Perth 9)

The dominant ruckman of his time, Cox is the club games record-holder for the West Coast Eagles and a six-time All-Australian. A premiership player in 2006, his combination with Chris Judd, Ben Cousins and Daniel Kerr was one of the most brilliant the game has seen. Kick-started his career with a premiership and Simpson Medal for East Perth in 2000, and now works in coaching with the Sydney Swans, guiding the next generation of the game's big men.



### Greg Phillips

**Born:** March 26, 1959

**Playing career:** 1976-93

**Games:** 427 (Port Adelaide 343, Collingwood 84)

**Goals:** 105 (Port Adelaide 93, Collingwood 12)

The dominant centre half-back of his era in South Australia, Phillips was a member of eight Port Adelaide premiership teams and was named there in the club's Greatest Team. All-Australian in 1980, Phillips was also an automatic selection across 20 state games and captained the club at the back end of his career for his eighth and final premiership in 1992. An inductee into the SANFL Hall of Fame in 2002, Phillips also won a Fos Williams Medal in 1982 and was club best and fairest in 1988 in an era of brilliant Magpies.



### Simon Black

**Born:** April 3, 1979

**Playing career:** 1998-2013

**Games:** 322

**Goals:** 171

Among the most decorated players in AFL history, Black collected virtually every award in the game across a storied career. A triple Brisbane Lions premiership player from 2001-03, Black won the 2002 Brownlow Medal and then added the 2003 Norm Smith Medal. Along the way, he was a triple club best and fairest winner, with two of those Merrett-Murray Medals coming in premiership years. Also a triple All-Australian, Black was named a Hall of Fame inductee in 2019 but was out of Australia and not able to accept his induction until 2020.



### Jonathan Brown

**Born:** October 29, 1981

**Playing career:** 2000-14

**Games:** 256

**Goals:** 594

One of the game's great power forwards, Brown was also a central member of the dominant Brisbane Lions side that claimed a three-peat between 2001-03. An inspiring club captain for seven years, Brown was a triple best and fairest between 2007-09 and a dual All-Australian in that period, leading the club's goalkicking on five occasions and winning the 2007 John Coleman Medal. Winner of Mark of the Year in 2002 for a memorable grab at the MCG against the flow of play, Brown's legendary courage saw him win the Robert Rose award three times.

### JOHN KENNEDY

### LEGEND



### Lenny Hayes

**Born:** January 14, 1980

**Playing career:** 1999-2014

**Games:** 297

**Goals:** 95

A favourite of Saints fans for his mix of hardness and skill, Hayes did everything within his power to bring success to Moorabbin. A triple club best and fairest, Hayes was also awarded the Norm Smith Medal in the 2010 drawn Grand Final, as he tried to will his club across the line. Also a triple All-Australian, Hayes captained the club in 2004 and 2007 and was a part of two pre-season premiership sides.

## AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Seven new inductees were included in the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2020 while former Hawthorn captain and premiership coach, North Melbourne coach and AFL Commission chairman, John Kennedy snr, was made a Legend of the Game. The inductees were John Abley (Port Adelaide great), Simon Black (Brisbane Lions Brownlow and Norm Smith medallist), Jonathan Brown (star Brisbane Lions forward), Dennis Cometti (acclaimed broadcaster), Dean Cox (champion West Coast ruckman), Lenny Hayes (St Kilda Norm Smith medallist) and Greg Phillips (long-serving Port Adelaide and Collingwood defender).

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. Since 1996, the addition of a further 165 inductees has increased the Hall of Fame to 308. Among this number are 29 Australian Football Hall of Fame Legends (a Legend will only be elevated once every two years). In 2013, the AFL Commission endorsed a recommendation from the Hall of Fame selectors that a 'Pioneers' category should recognise those who had pivotal roles in the establishment of the game in its earliest days.

Four pioneers were inducted in 2014 and a further three in 2017. The 2020 Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee was Richard Goyder (chair), Tania Armstrong, Karen Lyon, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin, Michelangelo Rucci, Col Hutchinson (stats/history consultant), Patrick Clifton (secretary).



## LIFE MEMBERS



### Travis Boak

Recruited from the Geelong Falcons with pick five at the 2006 National Draft, Boak now sits at No. 2 on the club's all-time games list at AFL level, and is on track to surpass Kane Cornes' club record mark of 300 games in 2021. Reaching life membership after 283 premiership games and 20 pre-season games for Port Adelaide, Boak led the club from 2013

through to 2018, guiding it out of a dark era when the retirements of the 2004 premiership group saw the Power tumble down the ladder. Boak's decision to reject a return to Geelong re-energised the club as it rebuilt its list and his recent form has been exceptional. All-Australian vice-captain in 2020, he will finish as one of the greats of Albion in the years ahead.



### Matthew Clarke

Becomes the first person in AFL/VFL history to have life membership comprise official AFLW games as part of their playing/coaching record, having led the Adelaide Crows' women's side to the 2019 premiership. A fine tap ruckman across 258 games for the Brisbane Lions, the Adelaide Crows and St Kilda, he had been working at the Crows as ruck coach for the men's program

when he also took on duties with the AFLW squad and led them to the premiership over Carlton. Best and fairest in 1997 and a four-time representative for SA at state level, Clarke's second season in charge in 2020 qualified him for life membership.



### Emmett Dunne

A member of the dominant Richmond premiership side of 1980, Dunne played 129 games for the Tigers and Footscray across a 10-year career. In the 35 years since he retired in 1985, he has served a multitude of administrative and coaching roles, including two decades as a Tribunal jury member.

Now back at Richmond, he has been a director through the club's triple-premiership era, responsible for integrity matters within the club and driving its history and tradition work.



### Tom Hawkins

The dominant forward of the 2020 season, Hawkins qualified for life membership in Geelong's preliminary final win over the Brisbane Lions. A dual premiership player for the Cats in 2009 and 2011, Hawkins has been in outstanding form in the latter part of his career, claiming the Coleman Medal in 2020 and winning All-Australian selection across the past two

seasons. A nine-time winner of the club's goalkicking, Hawkins now has 277 premiership games for the Cats to his name, and his 603 goals sits him behind only Gary Ablett senior and Doug Wade.



### Ken Hinkley

The Port Adelaide mentor qualified for life membership in 2020 with his 178 games as coach complementing his 132 premiership games for Fitzroy and the Geelong Cats. Led the Power to the minor premiership in 2020, having rebuilt the club's list since he inherited the senior role after a playing career in which he was best and fairest for the Cats in 1992,

was a dual All-Australian in 1991-92 and played three games for Victoria. Upon his elevation to life membership, his close bond with his players was demonstrated when they dragged him into their victory song and doused him to celebrate his honour.



### Shannon Hurn

Now the second-longest serving player in West Coast history, Hurn's 286 premiership games have him just four behind Dean Cox's club record. Captain of the 2018 premiership team, Hurn led the Eagles between 2015-19 and has been incredibly consistent and brilliant as his career has progressed, winning All-Australian selection in 2018 and 2019.

Renowned for his long accurate kicking and reliable hands, the South Australian should become the club's first 300-game player in 2021.



### Marc Murphy

A third-generation player at AFL/VFL level, Murphy can join Carlton legends Craig Bradley, Bruce Doull, Kade Simpson, John Nicholls and Stephen Silvagni as a 300-gamer in 2021, after father John Murphy was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame for his brilliance as a player. Freed from the duties of captaincy in recent seasons, having led the Blues between

2013-18, the skilled rover has enjoyed a late-career renaissance. Having played 285 premiership games for Carlton, kicking 189 goals, Murphy is a dual best and fairest in 2011 and 2017, winning All-Australian selection in 2011.



### Shane O'Sullivan

After beginning as an employee in the Carlton football department in 1979, O'Sullivan rose through the ranks to hold senior roles across Carlton, Footscray and then the establishment of the Brisbane Bears. After a decade in front office roles, O'Sullivan returned to Carlton as recruiting manager in 1994, filling that position for a decade, before returning to the club's

football department for a further 13 years. Now in his 42nd year at club level, having been acknowledged with the Jack Titus Award in 2014, O'Sullivan services Carlton's past players and life members and remains an incredibly popular figure across the industry.



### Jack Riewoldt

Qualified for AFL life membership just before the 2020 finals series, having played 283 premiership games for Richmond, kicking 664 goals, as well as 19 pre-season games and two representative games. The celebrations continued for the now-veteran forward through October as he was part of a third Richmond premiership side, to go with three All-Australian

selections in 2010, 2015 and 2018, as well as a trio of Coleman Medals in 2010, 2013 and 2018. Now highly decorated, the Tasmanian is also a dual Jack Dyer medallist and will push hard to join club legends Kevin Bartlett, Jack Dyer and Francis Bourke in the Tigers' 300 club.



### Harry Taylor

A low-fuss but incredibly reliable key defender, Taylor announced his retirement after Geelong's loss to Richmond in the 2020 Grand Final, waiting until the days after the game so as not to take any limelight from retiring teammate Gary Ablett jnr. Recruited in 2008 as a mature-age player from the WAFL, Taylor was a central figure in the 2009 and 2011 flags,

playing 280 premiership games in all for the Cats, kicking 75 goals. A dual All-Australian in 2010 and 2013, Taylor also won the Jim Stynes Medal in the 2015 International Rules Series against Ireland in Ireland.



### Justin Westhoff

With the ability to play in any part of the ground, Westhoff finished his career in 2020 as the third longest-serving player in Port Adelaide's AFL history, retiring with 280 senior games to his name and 313 goals, as well as 23 pre-season games. Best and fairest in 2018, Westhoff provided valuable leadership and experience to an emerging group of talented youngsters

on the occasions he was called into action during the difficult COVID-interrupted year. Quiet by nature, Westhoff was revered at Port for his willingness to embrace all roles and his strong leadership in the community to assist those less fortunate, as a regular nominee for the Jim Stynes community leadership award.



### Darren Wilson

The first boundary umpire to be awarded life membership in AFL/VFL history, after officiating in an astonishing 12 consecutive Grand Finals between 1998 and 2009. Also the first boundary umpire to reach the 400-game mark, Wilson's legendary running abilities also saw him claim the Empire State Building run, and he continues to work in coaching for the next generation of boundary umpires.

## JACK TITUS AWARD



### John Beveridge/Col Hutchinson

For just the third occasion since the Jack Titus Award was struck in 1977, it was shared by two recipients.

Through an interrupted year in 2020 when COVID-19 impacted so many parts of football across the country, the Commission ruled that two people who had given a lifetime of service to the game should be recognised for their work in football recruitment and development, and the game's history, respectively.

John Beveridge began as a junior coach in the Southern Metro Junior League in Melbourne in 1967, before starting a first-ever role at a VFL club with St Kilda in 1982 to develop local junior talent.

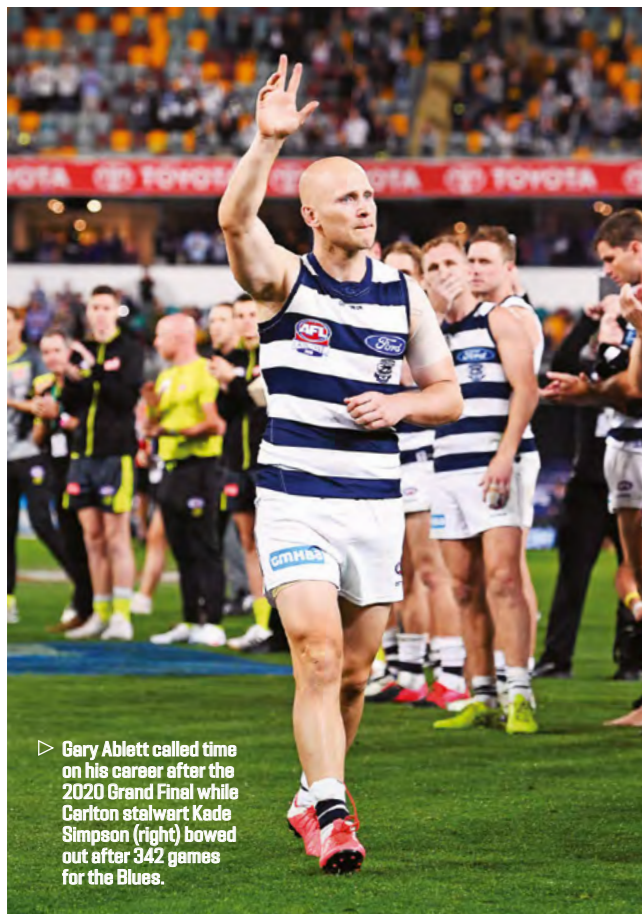
He filled recruiting roles at the Saints from 1991 until last year while son Luke is the premiership-winning coach at the Western Bulldogs.

Beveridge shares the award with Col Hutchinson, one of the foremost historians on the game.

A committed Cats fan, COVID-19 ended a 56-year streak of 1294 consecutive games attended, as well as his work as the AFL and club historian, after starting his working career as a teacher.

A match-day statistician with the club for more than 30 years, Hutchinson also built and maintained the VFL and AFL records until his retirement from full-time work in 2020, to step back to a part-time volunteer role.

## RETIREES



► Gary Ablett called time on his career after the 2020 Grand Final while Carlton stalwart Kade Simpson (right) bowed out after 342 games for the Blues.

The retirement of the greatest player of the modern era, Gary Ablett jnr, headlined a stellar list of greats who left the game at the end of the 2020 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Ablett, who will surely one day achieve Legend status, played the last of 357 senior games in the Grand Final loss to Richmond, bravely battling a shoulder injury sustained in the opening moments.

A dual Brownlow medallist and eight-time All-Australian, the little master won six club best and fairest awards and will be remembered for his amazing ball-handling, wonderful balance, superb skills and deadly finish around goals.

Heath Shaw and Kade Simpson also departed the game as members of the 300 club - Simpson a servant of the Blues his entire career and Shaw equally loved at both Collingwood and the GWS Giants.

Premiership players Lewis Jetta, Nathan Brown, Matthew Suckling, Dayne Beams, Paul Puopolo, Ben Reid, Will Schofield, Ben Stratton, Harry Taylor and Travis Varcoe all called time on their careers, having achieved the ultimate team success while part of the AFL competition. Jetta had the rare privilege of premierships both at the Sydney Swans and West Coast.

Former No. 1 selections Matthew Kreuzer and Jack Watts each elected to hang up the boots, after the ravages of injury had cut deeply for them at times, while Port Adelaide's push for success in 2020 was driven in the hope of giving Brad Ebert and Justin Westhoff a chance at premiership glory.

The pair were both farewelled after Port's preliminary final loss to Richmond at Adelaide Oval, with Ebert again showing the bravery he was renowned for across his time at the elite level.



| Player           | Club/s                         | Games | Goals |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Gary Ablett jnr  | Geelong/Gold Coast             | 357   | 445   |
| Kade Simpson     | Carlton                        | 342   | 139   |
| Heath Shaw       | Collingwood/GWS Giants         | 325   | 42    |
| Harry Taylor     | Geelong                        | 280   | 75    |
| Justin Westhoff  | Port Adelaide                  | 280   | 313   |
| Brad Ebert       | West Coast/Port Adelaide       | 260   | 140   |
| Travis Varcoe    | Geelong/Collingwood            | 230   | 171   |
| Sam Jacobs       | Carlton/Adelaide/GWS Giants    | 208   | 50    |
| Lewis Jetta      | Sydney Swans/West Coast        | 202   | 116   |
| Ben Stratton     | Hawthorn                       | 202   | 2     |
| Lynden Dunn      | Melbourne/Collingwood          | 198   | 99    |
| Paul Puopolo     | Hawthorn                       | 196   | 185   |
| Will Schofield   | West Coast                     | 194   | 22    |
| Jack Steven      | St Kilda/Geelong               | 192   | 113   |
| Matthew Kreuzer  | Carlton                        | 189   | 94    |
| Jackson Trengove | Port Adelaide/Western Bulldogs | 186   | 35    |
| Nathan Brown     | Collingwood/St Kilda           | 183   | 7     |
| Matthew Suckling | Hawthorn/Western Bulldogs      | 178   | 85    |
| Dayne Beams      | Collingwood/Brisbane Lions     | 177   | 172   |
| Jack Watts       | Melbourne/Port Adelaide        | 174   | 161   |
| Pearce Hanley    | Brisbane Lions/Gold Coast      | 169   | 60    |
| Jamie Macmillan  | North Melbourne                | 167   | 46    |
| Shane Savage     | Hawthorn/St Kilda              | 165   | 63    |
| Jasper Pittard   | Port Adelaide/North Melbourne  | 159   | 16    |
| Ricky Henderson  | Adelaide/Hawthorn              | 159   | 79    |
| Ben Reid         | Collingwood                    | 152   | 73    |

## OBITUARIES

### Don Jones

Jones, who was a stalwart for South Adelaide over 10 seasons, died on January 1, 2020, aged 88. Jones played 114 games and kicked six goals mainly as a winger/half-forward for the Panthers between 1950-59.

### Don Gilbourne

Gilbourne, who captained North Adelaide to its 1960 premiership and played in two other flags in 1949 and 1952, died on January 7, 2020, aged 88. Was Roosters skipper for two seasons (1960-61), played 206 games and kicked 79 goals between 1949-62. Played 10 games for South Australia and won the O'Halloran Trophy for being the Croweaters' best player against Victoria in 1957. Member of North Adelaide's Hall of Fame and named in a back pocket of the club's Team of the Century.

### Pat Dalton

The centreman in Perth's premiership teams in 1966, '67 and '68 - the most successful era in the club's history - Dalton died on January 8, 2020, aged 77. Played 217 games and kicked 137 goals for Perth between 1960-71, taking out the Sandover Medal in 1970 and being a dual winner of the Demons' best and fairest award (1964, '70). Recognised with life membership by the Demons in 1968, Dalton was selected on the interchange bench in Perth's Team of the Century in 1999. Made a club legend in 2013 and an inaugural inductee in its Hall of Fame in 2015.

### Irwin Lewis

Lewis, a member of Claremont's 1964 premiership team, died on January 28, 2020, aged 80. After making his WAFL debut in 1958, he played 75 games until retiring in 1965. The skilful and physically robust half-back flanker was only the club's second indigenous player in its history and the first premiership player. His sons, Clayton, Cameron and Chris, followed in his footsteps, with Chris going on to become a dual premiership star with the West Coast Eagles.

### John Blunden

Blunden, a reliable defender who became a respected administrator for North Adelaide, died on February 15, 2020, aged 89. Played 141 games and kicked two goals for the Roosters between 1949-58, including two premierships in 1949 and 1952 and winning consecutive best and fairest awards in 1956-57. Played one game for South Australia in 1951 and was awarded SANFL and North Adelaide life membership in 1959. After retiring as a player, he served on the Roosters' management committee for nine years, was vice-president in 1971 and president between 1972-75.

### Bill Young

Young, the reluctant country full-forward who came to the big smoke and became a star, died in Sale on March 4, 2020, aged 88. A frail-looking full-forward from Stratford who weighed only 73kg, he was a prolific goalkicker in country football and a fine all-round sportsman. Young led St Kilda's goalkicking for five consecutive seasons and ended his 94-game career with 274 goals.

### Peter O'Callaghan

O'Callaghan, who gave 33 years of service to the AFL/VFL on boards and committees, died on March 8, 2020, aged 88. The Queen's Counsel served on the League's Appeals Board between 1987-97, the last five years as chairman. He was also on the AFL Disciplinary Committee between 1993-94. When the AFL Tribunal Appeals Board was introduced in 1998, he was appointed chairman and held that position until 2019.

### John Schneebichler

A high-flying forward and prolific goalkicker with two clubs, Schneebichler died on March 9, 2020, aged 61. After kicking four goals on debut for South Adelaide in 1975, he played 234 games, including the 1979 Grand Final, and booted 351 goals until 1987. Was the Panthers' leading goalkicker in 1983 and captain between 1985-87. Finished his SANFL career with Glenelg, playing 25 games including the 1988 Grand Final, and kicking 26 goals. Represented South Australia on five occasions and was a member of South Adelaide's Hall of Fame.

### Jack Jones

Jones died on March 24, 2020, aged 95. A childhood Essendon supporter who idolised the legendary Dick Reynolds, he played 175 games and kicked 156 goals between 1946-54. Had great speed for his size, was a fine mark and long kick. Served in the Australian Army during World War II and was on the bench in the Bombers' premiership team in his debut season. Went on to play in two more Essendon premiership sides (1949-50) as a half-forward. A member of the Bombers' Hall of Fame, his consecutive games streak of 133 between round 11, 1946, and round 14, 1952, remains a club record.

### John Hyde

Hyde, the centre half-back in Geelong's 1951-52 premiership teams, died on March 26, 2020, aged 89. Recruited from Portarlington in 1948, he was renowned for his aggression and determination, playing 108 games for the Cats and winning the club's best and fairest award in 1950. At the end of 1954, Hyde left Geelong to become captain-coach of WAFL club Claremont, winning the club's best and fairest in 1955. After returning to Victoria, Hyde joined the Cats' committee and remained in that role for 21 years, including a stint as vice-president between 1972-75. Made a life member of Geelong in 1961 and inducted into the club's Hall of Fame in 2002.



## Tony Anderson

A member of Melbourne’s last premiership team in 1964, Anderson died on April 1, 2020, aged 78. Recruited from VAFA club University Blacks, he played 75 games and kicked two goals as an important member of the Demons’ defence between 1963-69. Represented Victoria in one game in 1964.

## John Trethowan

A serviceable ruckman from Rockbank, Trethowan died on April 1, 2020, aged 83. He played 81 games and kicked 13 goals for South Melbourne between 1955-62.

## Quenton Leach

Leach, who played in Fremantle’s first AFL game in 1995, died on April 6, 2020, aged 47. Played 56 games and booted 26 goals between 1995-98, memorably kicking a goal after the siren to steer the Dockers to victory against Brisbane at Subiaco Oval in 1997. Had a strong relationship with Fremantle’s first senior coach Gerard Neesham, playing under him at Claremont which included the Tigers’ 1993 WAFL Grand Final win.

## Michael Bowden

Bowden, a member of Richmond’s 1969 premiership team under Tom Hafey, died on April 11, 2020, aged 73. Recruited from St Kevin’s College, he played 59 games and kicked 20 goals for the Tigers between 1967-71. Was a creative ruck-rover who brought teammates into the play with his intelligent use of handball. Sons Sean, Joel and Patrick also played senior football for Richmond. Bowden received an OAM in 2020 for his work supporting remote indigenous communities through education in the Northern Territory.

## Doug Thomas

A stalwart of his beloved West Adelaide as an outstanding player, coach and administrator, Thomas died on April 20, 2020, aged 87. Played 218 games as a resolute full-back who also performed strongly as a full-forward, kicking 110 goals. A member of West Adelaide’s 1961 premiership team, he captain-coached the Bloods in 1963 and 1964. Between his two stints with West Adelaide (1951-56, 1961-65), he was the captain-coach of Wimmera Football League side Dimboola between 1957-60, winning a premiership in 1959. A West Adelaide life member, he was an inaugural inductee into the Bloods’ Hall of Fame in 2005. Received SANFL life membership in 1997 and was inducted into the SA Football Hall of Fame in 2008.

## Terry O’Connor

O’Connor, a former chairman of the West Coast Eagles and an AFL Commissioner, died on April 25, 2020, aged 82. As a resolute, tough defender, he played about 250 games for WA amateur club University. Joined the Eagles board in 1990 as chairman and was in that role for three years, including the 1992 season when the club won its first AFL premiership. The Queen’s Counsel served on the AFL Commission between 1993-2000.

## Rod Payze

Payze, a long-time key administrator in SA football, died on May 4, 2020, aged 77. His passion for the SANFL began as a player for West Torrens, playing 84 games between 1960-66. Joined the SANFL Commission in 1995 and served as chairman between 2003-10, playing a significant role in the SANFL’s move back to Adelaide Oval. Received SANFL life membership in 2006.

## Glen McPherson

A Glenelg life member who served in the RAAF for almost three years in World War II, McPherson died on May 19, 2020, aged 95. Quick and dangerous around the goals, he played 121 games and kicked 105 goals between 1947-54 as a rover, wingman and small forward.

## Bob Hammond

Hammond, who had a huge impact on the game for six decades as a player, coach and administrator, died on May 30, 2020, aged 78. He played at full-back in North Adelaide’s 1960 premiership team in his debut season, the first of three triumphs as a player for the Roosters in a 234-game SANFL career. He coached Norwood to premierships in 1975 and 1978 before taking over as a caretaker coach for the Sydney Swans in 1984. As the first chairman of the Adelaide Crows, he oversaw their two premierships in 1997-98 before becoming an AFL Commissioner in 2001, a position he held until 2011. A life member of the SANFL and AFL, Hammond received a Member of the Order of Australia in 2003 and was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2015.

## John Leedham

Regarded as one of the greatest Tasmanians, Leedham died on May 30, 2020, aged 92. Played for Campbell Town, North Launceston (124 games, 1946-53) and North Hobart (114 games, 1954-59). At North Launceston he was a key figure in the club’s five consecutive league premierships (1946-50) and state premierships in 1947, 1949 and 1950. He moved to North Hobart in 1954 to become captain-coach and guided the club to a premiership in 1957. Earned All-Australian honours at the 1953 Adelaide carnival and captain-coached Tasmania to wins over South Australia and Western Australia at the 1958 Melbourne carnival. In 2004 Leedham was selected as the ruck-rover and vice-captain in the Tasmanian Team of the Century and in 2005 he was inducted as a legend in the AFL Tasmania Hall of Fame.

## Jim Wright

Wright, a member of West Adelaide’s 1961 premiership team, died on June 18, 2020, aged 87. The energetic rover was the Bloods’ leading goalkicker on three occasions (1955, 1958 and 1959) and booted 360 goals in 208 games for West Adelaide between 1952-64, including a club-record six Grand Finals. Played three games for South Australia and was awarded SANFL life membership in 1962.

## Mark Naley

The speedy rover died on July 6, 2020, aged 59. The 1991 Magarey medallist started his SANFL career with South Adelaide in 1980 and had two stints with the Panthers, playing 236 games and booting 231 goals. Won South Adelaide’s best and fairest in 1984, was awarded life membership, inducted into the club’s Hall of Fame and named in the Panthers’ Greatest Team Ever. Between those stints, he enjoyed a successful career with Carlton, playing 65 games and kicking 74 goals between 1987-90, including a premiership in his first season. An inaugural inductee into the South Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2002, he made 16 appearances for South Australia, was an All-Australian in 1986-87 and won the Tassie Medal in 1987.

## Shane Tuck

Tuck, the son of Hawthorn champion and Australian Football Hall of Famer Michael, died on July 20, 2020, aged 38. Taken by Hawthorn in the 2000 Rookie Draft, Tuck played reserves for the Hawks and played in the SANFL with West Adelaide before being drafted by Richmond in 2003. The tough, courageous midfielder played 104 consecutive games between 2005-09, eventually playing 173 matches and kicking 74 goals for the Tigers until his retirement at the end of 2013.

## Geoff Williams

Williams, a dual best and fairest winner and premiership defender for Geelong, died on July 20, 2020, aged 89. Recruited from Warragul, the speedy half-back was courageous, strong in the air and a long kick, playing 121 games and kicking one goal for the Cats between 1952-59. Won Geelong’s best and fairest award in his debut season as a member of the 1952 premiership team, and again in 1955. A Geelong life member and inducted into the club’s Hall of Fame, he received the Reg Hickey Award for services to Australian Football in 1984.

## Terry Waters

Waters, a Collingwood Hall of Fame inductee, died on July 27, 2020, aged 76. Renowned for his marking and wonderful spring, he was a booming punt kick and had superb judgment. Recruited from VFA club Dandenong, he joined the Magpies as a full-forward and enjoyed early success in that role, but ultimately made his name as a ruck-rover/ defender. He kicked five goals on debut in round two, 1963, and went on to kick 50 for the season. Was the club’s equal leading goalkicker in 1964, won the Copeland Trophy in 1966 and was named in the All-Australian team in 1969. After captaining Collingwood in 1970-71, he retired early in the 1972 season, finishing with 163 games and 181 goals. He represented Victoria eight times and kicked five goals.

## David Darcy

Darcy, who became a star defender after joining Footscray as a key forward, died on August 1, 2020, aged 76. The father of former Bulldogs captain and current director Luke, Darcy was recruited from Sunshine YCW and made his senior debut in the opening round of 1963. A skilful defender and magnificent drop kick, Darcy played 133 games and kicked 47 goals in two stints with the Dogs, 1963-66 and 1968-71. Represented Victoria on four occasions and was a member of the Bulldogs’ night series premiership teams in 1963-64. Spent four seasons with South Adelaide, including two years as captain-coach, and played 44 games.

## Frank Brew

A talented, speedy wingman from East Brunswick, Brew died from COVID-19 on August 13, 2020, aged 92. Released to South Melbourne after being residentially tied to Carlton, he made his debut in round five, 1947, against Geelong at Lake Oval. The left-footer played 87 games and kicked 28 goals between 1947-53. Was also a top cricketer for district club Northcote. A life member of the Carlton Cricket and Football Social Clubs, he was the groundsman at Ikon Park for many years.

## Phil O’Brien

O’Brien, who played a pivotal role as assistant coach to John Kennedy snr in Hawthorn’s first VFL premiership in 1961, died on August 20, 2020, aged 89. Recruited from Donald, O’Brien played 86 games and kicked 71 goals for the Hawks between 1951-58.

## Bill Stephen

Stephen, one of Fitzroy’s greatest players and its longest-serving coach, died on August 23, 2020, aged 92. Recruited from Thornbury YCW, he played 162 games, including two finals in 1952, and kicked four goals until the end of 1957. Won Fitzroy’s best and fairest award twice (1950, ‘54) and was third on two occasions (1951-52). Selected in the back pocket in the Fitzroy Team of the Century in 2001, he represented Victoria 14 times and was chosen in the *Sporting Life* Team of the Year in 1952. Stephen had three stints as Fitzroy coach - as captain-coach between 1955-57, non-playing coach between 1965-70 and again between 1979-80 - for a club record total of 214 games, including two finals in 1979. He also coached Essendon in 1976-77. In 1996 he received the Jack Titus Award for his outstanding service to the game and was an inaugural member of the Brisbane Lions Hall of Fame in 2012.

## Mal Pascoe

Pascoe, who started his career with Essendon and went on to make a huge impact on Tasmanian football, died on August 24, 2020, aged 87. Fearless, a strong mark and acknowledged as one of the game’s best drop kicks, he played 94 games for Essendon between 1953-58, including the Bombers’ Grand Final team in 1957, and kicked 41 goals. Moved to Tasmania and became captain-coach of Hobart, playing 177 games and kicking 341 goals between 1959-66. Played in four TANFL premierships (1959-60, 1963, 1966), won the Leitch Medal in 1959 and was the League’s leading goalkicker for two seasons (1959-60). Inducted into Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame in 2015.

## Neil Sachse

Sachse, whose career was cruelly cut short after being left a quadriplegic in only his second VFL game, died on August 25, 2020, aged 69. He started his senior career in South Australia and was a member of the powerful North Adelaide team in the 1970s, playing 94 games and kicking 115 goals for the Roosters from 1970-74 as a powerful utility. Represented SA on five occasions, including a best-on-ground performance against WA in 1974. Joined Footscray in 1975 and was injured in a heavy collision against Fitzroy, which left him unable to walk. Established the Neil Sachse Foundation in 1994 to increase awareness of disability and spinal injury, raising millions of dollars for research and education.





► Jacinda Barclay, who passed away on October 12, was a foundation AFLW player with the Giants.

## Jeff Dunne

Dunne, a dashing defender and dual best and fairest winner for St Kilda, died on September 14, 2020, aged 64. Recruited from North Ballarat, he joined the Saints as a winger and was used as a forward pocket, half-forward and rover in his first six games before finding his niche as an attacking back pocket. Played 101 games for St Kilda between 1977-83, winning the club's most improved player award in 1978 before taking out the Saints' best and fairest award in 1979-80. Represented Victoria twice in 1980-81. Transferred to Richmond in 1984 but played only one senior game before his job necessitated a move to Tasmania.

## Colin Tully

Tully, renowned for his magnificent kicking, died on September 25, 2020, aged 75. He could execute drop kicks, torpedo punts and stab kicks with precision and great penetration. Recruited from South Bendigo, he was a star junior footballer who made an instant impression at Collingwood, winning the club's best first-year player award in 1965. Started with the Magpies as a centreman/rover before moving to defence, playing 92 games and kicking 43 goals. After playing his last game for Collingwood in the 1970 Grand Final, he moved to WA and joined Claremont, where he played 53 games and kicked 32 goals between 1971-73. Later played for and coached Tasmanian club Glenorchy.

## Jim Read

Read, a winger in St Kilda's only premiership team in 1966, died on October 10, 2020, aged 76. Born in Sydney, he did not start playing football until he was 15 and was recruited from East Brighton. Played 76 games and kicked nine goals for St Kilda between 1962-67.

## Leo Brereton

Recruited from Cohuna, the former Carlton rover died on October 12, 2020, aged 83. Made his senior debut in round one, 1957, against Hawthorn and played 72 games for the Blues between 1957-62. Booted 129 goals and was Carlton's leading goalkicker in 1960 with 44, finishing third in the club's best and fairest award.

## Jacinda Barclay

Barclay, a foundation AFLW player with GWS Giants, died on October 12, 2020, aged 29. Drafted from the UNSW-ES Bulldogs in 2016, she played 23 of a possible 28 games between 2017-20.

## Gary Mousley

Mousley, who was associated with South Adelaide for more than 50 years after starting as a junior, died on October 22, 2020, aged 69. After making his senior debut with the Panthers in 1970, he went on to play 212 games, including the 1979 SANFL Grand Final. The reliable defender, one of only 16 players to have made at least 200 senior appearances for South Adelaide, was deceptively quick and an excellent kick. Moved to Sturt in 1982 and played three games for the Double Blues.

## Peter Beythien

Beythien, second behind club games record-holder Peter Vivian at Central District, died on October 23, 2020, aged 62. The solid ruckman-forward joined the Bulldogs in 1974 and made his senior debut the following year, going on to play 285 games until he retired in 1988. Won Central District's best and fairest award in 1977 and was a SANFL and club life member.

## Bruce Reid

Reid, a club doctor at two AFL clubs and much-loved figure particularly at Essendon, died on October 27, 2020, after a two-year battle with mesothelioma, aged 74. Recruited from North Balwyn Methodists, Reid played three games with Hawthorn in 1966-67 before graduating in medicine in 1968 while playing for Preston in the VFA. Began as a club doctor at Richmond in 1976 and remained at Punt Rd until 1979. Was lured to Essendon by coach Kevin Sheedy in 1982, starting a 39-year association with the Bombers. Received an AFL Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009 and a year later shared the Jack Titus Award with his colleague Ian Reynolds. Inducted into Essendon's Hall of Fame in 2014 and elevated to Legend status just before his death.

## Bob Schmidt

Schmidt, who made his name as a disciplined, rugged and fearless half-back for South Adelaide, died on November 4, 2020, aged 77. A member of the Panthers' 1964 premiership team, he played 164 games between 1962-71 and represented South Australia on 11 occasions. Won South Adelaide's best and fairest award in 1965 and was included in the club's Hall of Fame in 2002 after being chosen on a half-back flank in the Panthers' greatest team.

## Eric Freeman

Affectionately known as 'Fritzzy', the Port Adelaide premiership forward and club life member died on December 14, 2020, aged 76. Freeman played 116 games for Port and kicked 390 goals between 1964-71. Was full-forward in the 1965 premiership team and won the Ken Farmer Medal the following season. Led the club's goalkicking five times and represented South Australia on six occasions, booting 13 goals. Was also an outstanding cricketer, representing Australia in 11 Tests between 1968-70. A fast-medium bowler and hard-hitting batsman, he took 34 wickets at 33.17 and scored 345 runs at 19.16. He was a key member of South Australia's team that won the Sheffield Shield in 1970-71. In 2002 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to sport.

## Lerrel Sharp

A reliable defender who played in a premiership team in his debut season with Collingwood, Sharp died in Tasmania on December 15, 2020, aged 87. Recruited from Scottsdale in Tasmania, he was in a back pocket in the Magpies' 12-point Grand Final win against Geelong in 1953. Played in the losing 1955 and 1956 Grand Finals, but missed the 1958 premiership because of injury. After playing 87 games and kicking one goal for Collingwood, as well as representing Victoria twice, the right-footer returned to Tasmania at the end of 1959 and joined North Launceston. Played in two NTFA premierships (1961, 1963), was twice best and fairest (1960, 1963) and a NTFA representative in 1960-62 and 1964. Inducted into the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame.

## Graham Arthur

The captain of Hawthorn's first premiership team in 1961 and skipper of the Hawks' Team of the Century, Arthur died on January 10, 2021, aged 84. Recruited from Bendigo League club Sandhurst, Arthur played 232 games and kicked 201 goals for Hawthorn, winning the best and fairest award in his debut season in 1955 and again in 1958 and 1962. The brilliant half-forward/centreman was appointed captain in 1960 and held the position until his final season in 1968, including a stint as captain-coach in 1964-65. Represented Victoria on 13 occasions and kicked seven goals. Inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 1996, he was elevated to Legend status at Hawthorn in 2005.

## Peter Aish

Considered the patriarch of the famous Aish family at Norwood, he died on January 11, 2021, aged 85. Started his career as a follower but forged his reputation as a reliable full-back, playing 162 games and kicking nine goals between 1953-62. Installed as the Redlegs' captain in 1960, the same year in which he won the first of two consecutive best and fairest awards. Serving as skipper until 1962, Aish also represented South Australia on five occasions. An inductee of Norwood's Hall of Fame, his sons Michael and Andrew, and grandsons James (now with Fremantle) and Jesse, all played for the Redlegs.

## Michael Bowers

Bowers, who was the Brisbane Lions' chief executive officer during their golden era at the start of this century, died on January 25, 2021, aged 57. Renowned for his hard work and passion for the club, Bowers replaced Andrew Ireland as CEO following the Lions' breakthrough 2001 premiership and was at the helm as they won the next two Grand Finals against Collingwood in 2002-03. Remained with the Lions until 2010 before moving to A-League club Brisbane Roar.

## Ray Lawrence

A key member of Perth's triple premiership teams in the 1960s, Lawrence died on January 31, 2021, a day after his 80th birthday. An outstanding schoolboy athlete, Lawrence played 114 games for the Demons between 1959-68, including the premierships between 1966-68. He formed part of a powerful backline, building an excellent combination with centre half-back Bob Shields and Ian Rothnie on the other flank. Awarded life membership at Perth in 2011, Lawrence later became a coach and commentator.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

**TRAVIS AULD**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



The AFL's operating result and balance sheet was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AFL reported an underlying operating loss of \$22.7 million in 2020, compared with an underlying operating profit of \$27.9 million in 2019, a reduction of \$50.6 million from 2019. This result includes the AFL's controlled state subsidiaries, Marvel Stadium and Champion Data.

The AFL's revenue decreased by \$119.1 million to \$674.8 million due to the shortened AFL men's season and a reduction in crowds with the imposition of government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This revenue was used to fund the following investments:

- ▶ \$230.8 million to AFL clubs;
- ▶ \$66.8 million on the administration of the 2020 men's season, including match day costs and the management of High Performance Centres throughout the season;

- ▶ \$32.0 million to game development; investment in game development was reduced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricting participation at community level in many states;
- ▶ \$18.9 million to the AFLPA;
- ▶ \$13.8 million in running the AFLW Competition;
- ▶ \$11.9 million to infrastructure comprising of elite and community facilities and contributions for stadia redevelopments; and
- ▶ \$2.8 million to corporate and social responsibility initiatives, including a contribution of \$1.35 million to the AFL industry's Bushfire Relief fund. After adding back non-operating items, the AFL's statutory loss was \$8.4 million.

▶ Collingwood star Chloe Molloy and a young Maggie fan show their support for International Women's Day during the 2020 AFLW season.





## AFL clubs' financial results

The AFL operates a Club Funding Model, which provides a base distribution and, subject to meeting certain qualifying criteria, a variable distribution.

Variable distributions are designed to provide support to clubs that cannot fund their football program (playing and non-playing resources) to a competitive level solely based on the base distribution and their own revenue-generating capacity.

Variable funding distributions are determined based on an estimation of revenue-generating disadvantages that may be caused by, among other things, different supporter base sizes, differing commercial arrangements with stadiums, the financial impact of the fixture and access to income from non-football related businesses.

Variable funding was discontinued from April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the cost of football programs was reduced and the AFL-funded match-day and travel costs directly through management of the High Performance Centres.

## AFL's Industry Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The AFL put the following measures in place to manage the financial risk of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020:

- ▶ Reduced the industry's cost base to mitigate the loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ▶ Utilised its capital reserve, totalling \$60 million, in 2020 to help mitigate financial losses across the industry;
- ▶ Created a centralised treasury function to assist clubs with the management of their liquidity;
- ▶ Secured \$660 million in additional borrowing facilities with NAB and ANZ to support industry liquidity.

The reduction in the industry's cost base included reductions in football program costs, administration and player payments. The AFL's expenditure decreased by \$95.7 million to \$663.5 million. The reduction comprised of lower club funding in line with cost savings at club level, reduced program and administration spend at AFL level. These savings were partially offset by the increased costs of completing the 2020 men's season in High Performance Centres.

The AFL established a capital reserve in 2017 to strengthen the balance sheet and position the game for the future. The capital reserve was utilised in the 2020 financial year.

The AFL secured \$660 million in additional borrowing facilities with NAB and ANZ in April 2020 to cover the potential financial exposure of the AFL industry from the pandemic. The completion of the 2020 season, along with the implementation of the measures outlined earlier, allowed the industry to minimise increases in debt, and the AFL's total external debt increased by \$18.1 million in 2020.

◀ Bulldogs captain Elsie Blackburn cut a happy figure when she led the Western Bulldogs on to Whitten Oval in 2020.

## Distributions to AFL clubs

- ▶ The AFL makes a number of distributions to AFL clubs. These distributions totalled \$230.8 million, a decrease of \$83.8 million compared with 2019, and included the following:
- ▶ A base distribution to all clubs which totalled \$161.6 million; and
- ▶ Variable distributions which totalled \$43.0 million.

## 2020 CLUB DISTRIBUTIONS

| Club              | Total (\$'000) |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Adelaide          | 10,398         |
| Brisbane Lions    | 15,043         |
| Carlton           | 13,670         |
| Collingwood       | 12,340         |
| Essendon          | 10,654         |
| Fremantle         | 10,576         |
| Geelong Cats      | 11,394         |
| Gold Coast Suns   | 17,186         |
| GWS Giants        | 15,866         |
| Hawthorn          | 10,056         |
| Melbourne         | 13,538         |
| North Melbourne   | 13,970         |
| Port Adelaide     | 11,930         |
| Richmond          | 12,353         |
| St Kilda          | 16,822         |
| Sydney Swans      | 10,877         |
| West Coast Eagles | 10,185         |
| Western Bulldogs  | 13,945         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>230,803</b> |

Included in the above are the following other distributions to the clubs throughout the 2020 season, including, but not limited to AFLW, travel subsidies, prizemoney, AFL membership-related distributions, AFL commercial partner payments, AFL-facilitated stadium payments and licensing distributions.

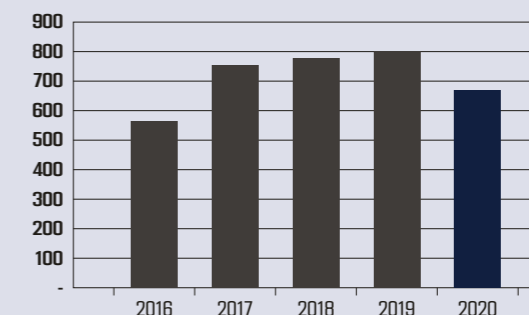
**THE AFL GROUP 2011-2020**

|  | 2011            | 2012           | 2013           | 2014           | 2015           | 2016            | 2017           | 2018           | 2019           | 2020           |
|--|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Profit &amp; Loss (\$ mill)</b>                           |                 |                |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                |
| Revenue  | 382.175         | 471.177        | 502.699        | 528.230        | 558.674        | 569.856         | 752.622        | 778.596        | 793.939        | 674.816        |
| Operating Expenses   | 135.740         | 167.427        | 181.978        | 203.853        | 214.311        | 225.985         | 261.064        | 322.293        | 329.934        | 368.402        |
| Net Financing Income/(Expense)                               | 1.182           | 0.518          | (0.042)        | 0.596          | 0.564          | 0.378           | (5.468)        | (4.091)        | (5.842)        | (19.098)       |
| <b>Operating Surplus</b>                                     | <b>247.617</b>  | <b>304.268</b> | <b>320.679</b> | <b>324.973</b> | <b>344.927</b> | <b>344.249</b>  | <b>486.090</b> | <b>452.212</b> | <b>458.163</b> | <b>287.316</b> |
| Payments to Clubs  | 151.511         | 200.251        | 209.152        | 218.309        | 245.151        | 272.407         | 304.590        | 307.216        | 314.607        | 230.803        |
| Payments to AFLPA  | 21.991          | 21.986         | 21.692         | 22.680         | 30.547         | 22.270          | 36.120         | 36.599         | 37.687         | 18.902         |
| Game Development   | 42.246          | 43.838         | 46.543         | 45.017         | 44.925         | 53.111          | 59.464         | 56.116         | 58.801         | 31.964         |
| Ground Improvements  | 5.065           | 6.025          | 6.071          | 6.389          | 6.851          | 7.031           | 20.510         | 9.675          | 11.872         | 9.101          |
| AFL Foundation   | 0.161           | 0.150          | 0.329          | 0.842          | 1.272          | 1.277           | 1.517          | 1.245          | 1.350          | 2.106          |
| Facilities Development                                       | 6.720           | 7.731          | 5.890          | 7.307          | 5.308          | 3.608           | 3.545          | 15.647         | 5.988          | 2.818          |
| Strategic Partnership  | 1.915           | 1.602          | 1.224          | 1.225          | 0.525          | -               | -              | -              | -              | -              |
| New Markets  | 39.065          | 14.633         | 11.549         | 9.884          | 6.700          | -               | -              | -              | -              | -              |
| <b>Net Profit/(Loss) before Transfers (to)/from Reserves</b> | <b>(21.057)</b> | <b>8.052</b>   | <b>18.229</b>  | <b>13.320</b>  | <b>3.648</b>   | <b>(15.455)</b> | <b>60.344</b>  | <b>25.714</b>  | <b>27.858</b>  | <b>(8.378)</b> |
| Facilities Development Reserve                               | (0.682)         | 1.731          | 0.190          | 0.990          | -              | -               | -              | -              | -              | -              |
| Strategic Partnership Reserve                                | 0.915           | -              | -              | -              | 0.525          | -               | -              | -              | -              | -              |
| Capital Reserve  | -               | -              | -              | -              | -              | -               | (20.000)       | (20.000)       | (20.000)       | 60.000         |
| Future Fund Reserve  | (19.874)        | -              | -              | -              | -              | -               | 89.359         | -              | -              | -              |
| <b>Movement in Retained Earnings</b>                         | <b>-</b>        | <b>9.783</b>   | <b>18.419</b>  | <b>14.310</b>  | <b>4.173</b>   | <b>(15.455)</b> | <b>129.703</b> | <b>5.714</b>   | <b>7.858</b>   | <b>51.622</b>  |
| <b>Balance Sheet (\$ mill)</b>                               |                 |                |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                |
| Total Assets   | 198.700         | 151.726        | 174.648        | 186.191        | 206.260        | 203.678         | 476.649        | 536.090        | 487.487        | 628.097        |
| Total Liabilities  | 101.598         | 46.717         | 51.410         | 49.633         | 66.054         | 78.927          | 291.554        | 325.121        | 248.660        | 397.648        |
| Net Assets   | 97.102          | 105.009        | 123.238        | 136.558        | 140.206        | 124.751         | 185.095        | 210.969        | 238.827        | 230.449        |
| <b>TPP &amp; Club Distribution Statistics (\$ mill)</b>      |                 |                |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                |
| Total Player Payments (TPP)                                  | 139.613         | 158.173        | 164.500        | 173.383        | 181.284        | 186.642         | 224.011        | 226.699        | 229.646        | 163.015        |
| TPP per Club   | 8.213           | 8.787          | 9.139          | 9.632          | 10.071         | 10.369          | 12.445         | 12.594         | 12.758         | 9.056          |
| <b>Attendance Statistics (mill)</b>                          |                 |                |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                |
| Home & Away Season Attendance                                | 6.525           | 6.239          | 6.368          | 6.385          | 6.352          | 6.306           | 6.733          | 6.895          | 6.951          | 0.820          |
| Finals Series Attendance                                     | 0.615           | 0.540          | 0.558          | 0.570          | 0.519          | 0.558           | 0.554          | 0.700          | 0.564          | 0.207          |
| Total Premiership Season Attendance                          | 7.140           | 6.779          | 6.926          | 6.955          | 6.871          | 6.865           | 7.287          | 7.595          | 7.515          | 1.027          |
| <b>Membership Statistics</b>                                 |                 |                |                |                |                |                 |                |                |                |                |
| Total of Club Members  | 699,684         | 707,621        | 756,717        | 804,480        | 836,136        | 875,197         | 907,561        | 1,008,494      | 1,057,572      | 992,854        |
| No. of Clubs in the AFL                                      | 17              | 18             | 18             | 18             | 18             | 18              | 18             | 18             | 18             | 18             |
| Average No. of Members per Club                              | 41,158          | 39,312         | 42,040         | 44,693         | 46,452         | 48,622          | 50,420         | 56,027         | 58,754         | 52,060         |
| Total AFL Members  | 55,216          | 56,595         | 56,513         | 56,510         | 54,983         | 54,808          | 55,557         | 56,797         | 58,021         | 55,766         |

**Revenue**

**DOWN 15%**

to \$674.8 million

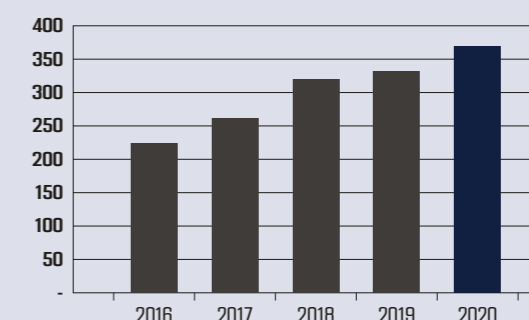


Revenue decreased by \$119.1 million to \$674.8 million due to the shortened AFL men's season and a reduction in crowds due to government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Expenditure**

**UP 12%**

to \$368.4 million

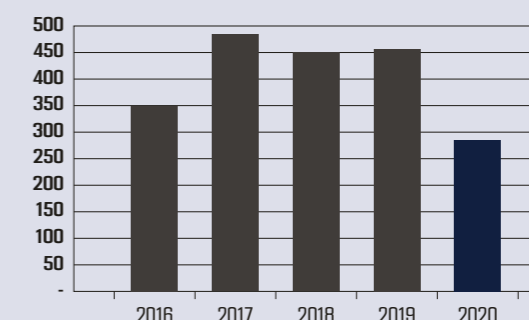


Expenditure increased by \$38.5 million primarily due to the AFL incurring match-day and travel costs for the 2020 men's season, including the costs of clubs staying in High Performance Centres during the season.

**Operating Surplus**

**DOWN 37%**

to \$287.3 million

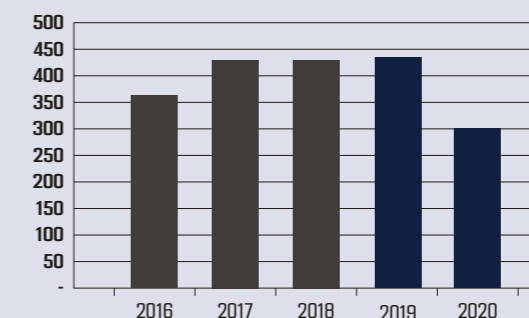


The AFL's Operating Surplus decreased by \$170.8 million to \$287.3 million.

**Distributions**

**DOWN 31%**

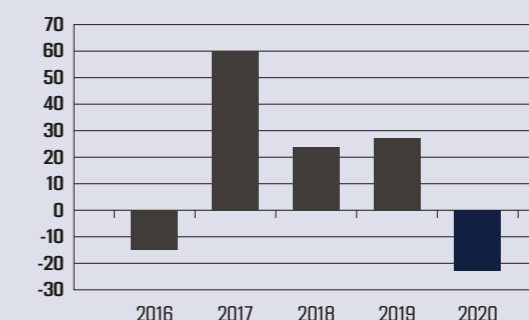
to \$295.7 million



Distributions decreased by \$134.6 million to \$295.7 million.

**Underlying Operating Loss**

**OF \$22.7M**



The AFL's Consolidated result decreased by \$50.6 million from 2019 to 2020.

# CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT

31 OCTOBER 2020

## 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 2020 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 21st 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, Woodside

Chair, Qantas Airways

Chair, Channel 7 Telethon Trust

Chair, West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Chair, JDRF Australia

Former Director, Wesfarmers Ltd

Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

### Mr G A McLachlan

**Chief Executive Officer** – Appointed 5th June 2014

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

Bachelor of Commerce (The University of Adelaide)

**Experience:** AFL Deputy CEO 2012-14

AFL Chief Operating Officer 2008-12

AFL General Manager Broadcasting & Major Projects 2006-08

AFL General Manager Commercial Operations 2003-06

Patron, Children's Cancer Foundation

### Mr P M Bassat

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 20th 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, Wego Pte Ltd

Director, NPCo Pty Ltd

Advisory Board Member, Evans & Partners Global Disruption Fund

Member, Mount Scopus College Foundation

Director, Athena Financial Pty Ltd

Alternate Director, ROKT Pte Ltd

Director, HealthMatch Holdings Pty Ltd

### Mr K L Williams, AM

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 4th March 2014

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Music (The University of Sydney)

Honorary Doctorate of Letters (Macquarie University)

**Experience:** Chair, Thomson Reuters Founders Share Company

Chair, The Copyright Agency

Chair, Vidcorp

Co-chair, NSW State Library Foundation

Director, Myer Family Investments

Director, Australian Music Foundation

Director, Executive Channel International

Board Member, University of Western Sydney Foundation

Director, Australian Schools Plus

### Mr J A Ball

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 25th March 2015

Member of Audit and Risk Committee

**Qualifications:** Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors

**Experience:** Senior Relationship Manager, Ord Minnett Ltd

Senior Relationship Manager, Macquarie Group 2000-18

Director, Sydney Swans Football Club 2007-15

Player, Sydney Swans Football Club 2000-05

Player, West Coast Eagles Football Club 1992-99

### Ms S L Wilkie, AO

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 25th March 2015

Member of Remuneration Committee – Appointed

10th December 2018

Member of Community Relief Fund Governance Committee

Chair, AFLW Competition Committee

Chair, AFL Women's Advisory Group

**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:** 35 years' service in the Army

Director, AFL SportsReady

Member of the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal

### Mr P A Newbold

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 17th March 2016

Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee

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

Bachelor of Economics (Monash University)

**Experience:** Chairman, SEDA

Chairman, Golf Australia Limited

Director, Supra Capital Limited

Chairman, Althea Group Holdings Limited

President, Hawthorn Football Club 2012-2016

Life Member, Hawthorn Football Club

### Ms G M Trainor, AO

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 17th 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:** Commissioner, Sport Australia

Director, Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (VIC)

Chair, National Film & Sound Archive

Director, Infrastructure Australia

Director, Zurich Australia Ltd: One Path Life & General Insurance

Director, WAM Global Ltd

Director, Western Parkland City Authority

Member, ACT City Renewal Authority

Member, Wattle Hill Fund #1 Advisory Board

Member, Public Sector Employment Act Review Panel

Chair, Construction Industry Culture Taskforce

Member, Sydney Review of Books

Member, National Sports Tribunal Panel Selection Committee

Trustee, The Charlie Perkins Trust

Director, Whitlam Institute

Trustee, Western Sydney University Board of Trustees

Director, Western Sydney University Foundation

Chair, Temple Pty Ltd

Member, Dean's Advisory Board, School of Architecture & Building, UTS

Member, Committee for Sydney

Member, Monash Commission 2020

### Mr R M Bishop

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 21st 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

Non-Executive Director, Burnet Institute

Member, Takeovers Panel

### Prof H M Milroy

**Non-Executive Commissioner** – Appointed 14th March 2019

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

(The University of Western Australia)

FRANZCP: CATCAP

**Experience:** Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,

Perth Children's Hospital Foundation

Honorary Research Fellow, Telethon Kids Institute

Commissioner, National Mental Health Commission

Co-chair, Million Minds Research Advisory Board

## 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   | 10                       | 10                    | 2                                 | 2                     | 2                               | 2                     |
| Mr G A McLachlan    | 10                       | 10                    | 2                                 | 2                     | 1                               | 2                     |
| Mr P M Bassat       | 9                        | 10                    | -                                 | -                     | 2                               | 2                     |
| Mr K L Williams, AM | 10                       | 10                    | -                                 | -                     | -                               | -                     |
| Mr J A Ball         | 10                       | 10                    | 2                                 | 2                     | -                               | -                     |
| Ms S L Wilkie, AO   | 10                       | 10                    | -                                 | -                     | 2                               | 2                     |
| Mr P A Newbold      | 10                       | 10                    | 2                                 | 2                     | -                               | -                     |
| Ms G M Trainor, AO  | 10                       | 10                    | -                                 | -                     | -                               | -                     |
| Mr R M Bishop       | 10                       | 10                    | 2                                 | 2                     | 2                               | 2                     |
| Prof H M Milroy     | 10                       | 10                    | -                                 | -                     | -                               | -                     |

\* 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 Commission assurance regarding the preparation and integrity of financial reports, internal controls, policies and procedures that are used to identify and manage business risks and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The AFL's Integrity and Security function also reports to the Audit and Risk Committee on a periodic basis.

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 activities of the Consolidated Entity were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the year ended 31 October 2020. The AFLW season was stopped in March and the AFL season was shortened from 23 rounds to 18. A significant portion of the AFL season was completed in High Performance Centre environments across the country. Community football at all levels was also significantly impacted, with shortened seasons and suspended programs nationally.

## Objectives

While the impacts of COVID-19 have been significant, the major objectives of the Company remain unchanged, and include the following:

- To manage the AFL competitions to ensure that 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 COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sudden and major financial disruption to all levels of football, resulting in the suspension of games, restrictions on crowds and cancellation of some community and school football competitions.

In the face of this crisis, the Company made several key decisions that have ensured the financial stability and operational integrity of the 2020 elite competition including a cost reduction plan to significantly reduce the financial exposure of the Consolidated entity, a review of the Company's organisational structure resulting in a reduction in the Company's workforce compared to pre-COVID-19 levels, and securing \$660 million in additional borrowing facilities with NAB and ANZ to support industry liquidity. The AFL also utilised its capital reserve totalling \$60 million in 2020 to help mitigate the financial losses across the industry.

## Review and results of operations

The Consolidated Entity recorded an underlying operating loss of \$22.7 million, compared with an underlying operating profit of \$27.9 million in 2019. The 2020 result was impacted by grant income from the Victoria Government for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium and the surrounding precinct.

|   | 2020 \$'000    | 2019 \$'000   |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Underlying operating profit/(loss)                                  | (22,748)       | 27,858        |
| Add back: government grants for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium | 14,370         | -             |
| <b>Statutory operating profit/(loss)</b>                            | <b>(8,378)</b> | <b>27,858</b> |

The result includes a loss of \$18.0 million by AFL Stadia Pty Ltd upon consolidation (2019: contribution of \$7.4 million).

## State of affairs

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were significant and have been disclosed throughout this report and the consolidated financial statements. Other than the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the opinion of the Directors any other significant changes in the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity that occurred during the financial year under review have been disclosed in this report or the consolidated financial statements.

## Events subsequent to balance date

The AFL reached a new agreement with broadcast partners Foxtel and Telstra in December 2020 which will see both extend their coverage rights by two years across the 2023 and 2024 seasons. The new extended broadcast deal, along with the Seven Network's extension for the 2023-2024 seasons, will deliver \$946 million to the AFL industry over the two years.

Other than the above, there has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

## Likely developments

The Directors do not anticipate any major changes in the basis of operations of the Consolidated Entity and the future results of those operations in subsequent financial years.

## 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 18 and 20 of the annual financial report.

## Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 307C of The Corporations Act 2001

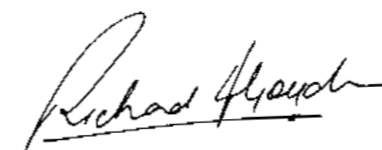
The Lead Auditor's Independence Declaration is set out on Page 155 and forms part of the Directors' report for the year ended 31 October 2020.

## Rounding off

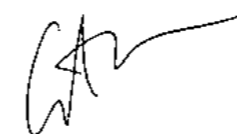
The Company is of a kind referred to in ASIC Corporations (Rounding in Financial/Directors' Reports) Instrument 2016/191 and in accordance with that Instrument, amounts in the financial report and Directors' report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Dated at Melbourne this 10th day of February 2021

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 the Australian Football League

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit of the Australian Football League for the financial year ended 31 October 2020 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



Dean Waters  
Partner  
Melbourne  
10 February 2021

## Statements of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 October 2020

|   | Consolidated   |               |
|---|----------------|---------------|
|   | 2020 \$'000    | 2019 \$'000   |
| Revenue   | 674,816        | 793,939       |
| Net financing expense   | (19,098)       | (5,842)       |
| Expenses from operating activities  | (663,517)      | (759,252)     |
| <b>Profit from operating activities before related income tax expense</b> | <b>(7,799)</b> | <b>28,845</b> |
| Income tax expense relating to operating activities                       | (579)          | (987)         |
| <b>Profit for the year</b>  | <b>(8,378)</b> | <b>27,858</b> |
| Other comprehensive income for the year                                   | -              | -             |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>                            | <b>(8,378)</b> | <b>27,858</b> |
| <b>Profit attributable to:</b>  |                |               |
| Owners of the Company   | (8,711)        | 26,696        |
| Non-controlling interests   | 333            | 1,162         |
| <b>Profit for the year</b>  | <b>(8,378)</b> | <b>27,858</b> |
| <b>Total comprehensive income attributable to:</b>                        |                |               |
| Owners of the Company   | (8,711)        | 26,696        |
| Non-controlling interests   | 333            | 1,162         |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>                            | <b>(8,378)</b> | <b>27,858</b> |

The Statement of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 158 to 159.

### Discussion and Analysis of the Consolidated Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

The underlying operating loss in 2020 was \$22.7 million which compared with a profit of \$27.9 million in 2019. The variance between the underlying operating loss of \$22.7 million and the statutory loss of \$8.4 million is due to recognition of Government grant revenue of \$14.3 million toward the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium and the surrounding precinct.

Revenue decreased by \$119.1 million to \$674.8 million due to the shortened AFL Men's season and a reduction in crowds due to Government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main areas of revenue which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ a decrease in commercial operations revenue totalling \$95.8 million;
- ▶ a decrease in broadcasting and AFL media revenue totalling \$44.7 million.

Net financing costs increased by \$13.3 million to \$19.1 million. The increase is due to the cost of the line of credit secured by the AFL in April 2020.

Expenditure decreased by \$95.7 million to \$663.5 million. A cost reduction exercise was undertaken to mitigate the loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ a decrease in distributions to the AFL clubs totalling \$83.8 million, in line with reductions in club football program expenditure and total player payments to help mitigate losses in commercial and broadcasting revenues. This is partially offset by an increase in football operations expenditure totalling \$57.9 million. This increase is due to the AFL covering costs for moving teams into High Performance Centres, largely comprising of club travel and match-day costs, which are historically covered by the clubs;
- ▶ a decrease in finance and administration costs totalling \$33.7 million;
- ▶ a decrease in game development costs totalling \$23.7 million, due to the suspension of community football around the country;
- ▶ a decrease in AFLPA distributions of \$18.8 million.

## Statements of Financial Position

As at 31 October 2020

|   | Consolidated   |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|
|   | 2020<br>\$'000 | 2019<br>\$'000 |
| <b>Assets</b>   |                |                |
| Cash and cash equivalents   | 223,469        | 184,721        |
| Trade and other receivables                                       | 76,895         | 47,800         |
| Other assets  | 4,158          | 7,441          |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                                       | <b>304,522</b> | <b>239,962</b> |
| Trade and other receivables                                       | 30,115         | 17,008         |
| Property, plant and equipment                                     | 266,150        | 201,079        |
| Intangible assets   | 20,420         | 25,262         |
| Other assets  | 6,890          | 4,176          |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>                                   | <b>323,575</b> | <b>247,525</b> |
| <b>Total assets</b>   | <b>628,097</b> | <b>487,487</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>  |                |                |
| Trade and other payables  | 72,255         | 72,912         |
| Deferred income   | 53,300         | 41,818         |
| Fair value of derivatives   | 6,734          | 4,144          |
| Interest-bearing loans and borrowings                             | 7,252          | 8              |
| Provisions  | 17,304         | 17,912         |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>                                  | <b>156,845</b> | <b>136,794</b> |
| Trade and other payables  | 25,920         | 1,295          |
| Deferred income   | 14,862         | 6,558          |
| Interest-bearing loans and borrowings                             | 191,903        | 95,759         |
| Provisions  | 8,118          | 8,254          |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b>                              | <b>240,803</b> | <b>111,866</b> |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>  | <b>397,648</b> | <b>248,660</b> |
| <b>Net assets</b>   | <b>230,449</b> | <b>238,827</b> |
| <b>Equity</b>   |                |                |
| Member Contributions  | 21             | 21             |
| Reserves  | -              | 60,000         |
| Retained earnings   | 223,377        | 172,088        |
| <b>Total equity attributable to equity holders of the Company</b> | <b>223,398</b> | <b>232,109</b> |
| Non-controlling interest  | 7,051          | 6,718          |
| <b>Total equity</b>   | <b>230,449</b> | <b>238,827</b> |

The Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 158 to 159.

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

The consolidated entity's total assets increased by \$140.6 million to \$628.1 million.

The movement in total assets principally comprised:

- ▶ an increase in property, plant and equipment totalling \$65.1 million due to the recognition of right-of-use assets under AASB 16 Leases;
- ▶ an increase in trade and other receivables totalling \$42.2 million due in part to the timing of receipts relating to the 2020 AFL Finals series;
- ▶ an increase in cash and cash equivalents totalling \$38.8 million. This is due to favourable working capital movements from the retention of funds from corporate partners and members, the benefits of which will be delivered in the 2021 financial year.

The consolidated entity's total liabilities increased by \$148.9 million to \$397.6 million.

The movement in total liabilities principally comprised:

- ▶ an increase in interest-bearing loans and borrowings totalling \$103.4 million due to the recognition of lease liabilities under AASB 16 Leases and drawdowns of loan facilities to assist AFL clubs.

The consolidated entity utilised its capital reserve totalling \$60 million in 2020 to help mitigate the financial losses across the industry.

## Statements of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 October 2020

|  | Consolidated   |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|
|  | 2020<br>\$'000 | 2019<br>\$'000 |
| <b>Total equity at the beginning of the year</b> | 238,827        | 210,969        |
| Total comprehensive income for the year          | (8,378)        | 27,858         |
| <b>Total equity at the end of the year</b>       | <b>230,449</b> | <b>238,827</b> |
| <b>Equity attributable to:</b>                   |                |                |
| Owners of the Company                            | 223,398        | 232,109        |
| Non-controlling interests                        | 7,051          | 6,718          |
| <b>Total equity at the end of the year</b>       | <b>230,449</b> | <b>238,827</b> |

The Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 158 to 159.

## Statements of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 October 2020

|   | Consolidated    |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
|   | 2020<br>\$'000  | 2019<br>\$'000  |
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>                       |                 |                 |
| Cash receipts in the course of operations                         | 704,309         | 791,852         |
| Cash payments in the course of operations                         | (642,591)       | (714,258)       |
| <b>Net cash from operating activities</b>                         | <b>61,718</b>   | <b>77,594</b>   |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>                       |                 |                 |
| Interest received   | 2,450           | 2,292           |
| Payments for property, plant and equipment                        | (21,954)        | (15,375)        |
| <b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>                      | <b>(19,504)</b> | <b>(13,083)</b> |
| <b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>                       |                 |                 |
| Interest paid   | (21,548)        | (8,134)         |
| Net proceeds from external borrowings                             | 18,090          | (80,885)        |
| Payment of finance lease liabilities                              | (8)             | (8)             |
| <b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>                      | <b>(3,466)</b>  | <b>(89,027)</b> |
| Net increase in cash and cash equivalents                         | 38,748          | (24,516)        |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year  | 184,721         | 209,237         |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b> | <b>223,469</b>  | <b>184,721</b>  |

The Statement of Cash Flows is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 158 to 159.

### 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 \$38.8 million.

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

- ▶ funds provided by the operating activities for the year totalling \$61.7 million. The variance between this and the group's underlying operating loss of \$22.7 million is due to the favourable working capital movements from the retention of funds from corporate partners and members, the benefits of which will be delivered in the 2021 financial year. There are also favourable movements due to the timing of payments relating to costs from the 2020 AFL Finals series, the majority of which were paid in the 2021 financial year;
- ▶ purchases of property, plant and equipment totalling \$22.0 million;
- ▶ net interest paid totalling \$19.1 million; and
- ▶ drawdowns of external borrowings of \$18.1 million.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### For the year ended 31 October 2020

#### 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 (refer Note 3 for Revenue), are consistent with those of the previous year.

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. Revenue

|  | Consolidated   |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|
|  | 2020<br>\$'000 | 2019<br>\$'000 |
| <b>Revenue from operating activities</b> |                |                |
| Broadcasting and AFL media               | 352,670        | 397,439        |
| Commercial operations                    | 194,481        | 290,338        |
| Football operations                      | 15,793         | 17,337         |
| Game development                         | 22,282         | 38,367         |
| Other revenue                            | 39,826         | 34,458         |
| Revenue from JobKeeper Payment scheme    | 33,764         | -              |
| Contra advertising revenue               | 16,000         | 16,000         |
|  | <b>674,816</b> | <b>793,939</b> |

#### 3. Parent entity disclosures

As at, and throughout, the financial year ended 31 October 2020 the parent entity of the group was Australian Football League.

|  | Consolidated   |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|
|  | 2020<br>\$'000 | 2019<br>\$'000 |
| <b>Result of the parent entity</b>   |                |                |
| Revenue for the period   | 599,755        | 678,677        |
| Net financing income   | (14,377)       | 891            |
| Expenses from operating activities   | (562,439)      | (631,053)      |
| Profit for the period  | 22,939         | 48,515         |
| Other comprehensive income   | -              | -              |
| <b>Total comprehensive income</b>  | <b>22,939</b>  | <b>48,515</b>  |
| <b>Financial position of the parent entity at year end</b>                           |                |                |
| Current assets   | 259,355        | 195,768        |
| Total assets   | 635,397        | 452,789        |
| Current liabilities  | 113,869        | 95,008         |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>   | <b>356,531</b> | <b>196,862</b> |
| <b>Total equity of the parent entity</b>   |                |                |
| Retained earnings  | 278,866        | 195,927        |
| Capital reserve  | -              | 60,000         |
| <b>Total equity</b>  | <b>278,866</b> | <b>255,927</b> |
| <b>Parent entity contingent liabilities</b>  |                |                |
| Refer to Note 4 for a full list of contingent liabilities held by the parent entity. |                |                |

#### 4. Contingent liabilities

- 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.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Carlton Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$5.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.
- 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 \$3.5 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the North Melbourne Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$3.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the St Kilda Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$6.75 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.

- 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 \$4.55 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with Westpac whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Brisbane Bears-Fitzroy Football Club Limited to Westpac to a maximum of \$8.0 million. This guarantee expires on 31 January 2023.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with NAB whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of the Essendon Football Club Limited to NAB to a maximum of \$8.0 million. This guarantee expires on 1 November 2021.
- 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 6 December 2022.
- 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 \$1.19 million (Transactional Facilities). This guarantee expires on 30 April 2021.
- The Company has entered into an agreement with National Australia Bank whereby the Company guarantees the obligations of GCFC Limited to National Australia Bank to a maximum of \$1.59 million (Corporate Markets Loan). This guarantee expires on 30 April 2022.
- 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 \$1.53 million. This guarantee expires on 30 April 2021.
- 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 2021.
- 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 \$0.15 million. This guarantee expires on 30 April 2021.
- 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 2021.
- 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 2021.

#### 5. Events subsequent to balance date

The AFL reached a new agreement with broadcast partners Foxtel and Telstra in December 2020 which will see both extend their coverage rights by two years across the 2023 and 2024 seasons. The new extended broadcast deal, along with the Seven Network's extension for the 2023-2024 seasons, will deliver \$946 million to the AFL industry over the two years.

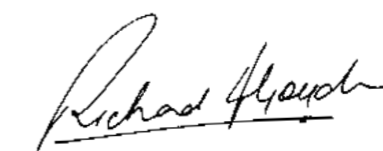
Other than the above, there has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to significantly affect the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

### Directors' Declaration

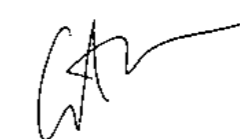
- In the opinion of the Directors of the Australian Football League:
  - The Consolidated Entity's financial statements and notes, set out on pages 155 to 159, are drawn up in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001, including:
    - giving a true and fair view of the Company's and Consolidated Entity's financial position as at 31 October 2020 and of their performance, for the financial year ended on that date; and
    - complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the Corporations Regulations 2001;
  - there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company and the Consolidated Entities will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Dated at Melbourne this 10th day of February 2021.

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 the Australian Football League (the Company) and its controlled entities (the Consolidated Entity) as at 31 October 2020 and for the year ended on that date. The financial statements and related notes in the Concise Financial Report are derived from the audited financial report of the Company as at and for the year ended 31 October 2020 (the Audited Financial Report).

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

The Concise Financial Report comprises:

- ▶ Consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 October 2020
- ▶ Consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, Consolidated statement of changes in equity, and Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- ▶ Discussion and analysis
- ▶ Related notes
- ▶ The Consolidated Entity 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 Consolidated Entity in accordance with 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 (including Independence Standards) (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.

#### Scope of the Concise Financial Report

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

#### The Audited 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 9 February 2021.

#### Other Information

Other Information is financial and non-financial information in the 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 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.

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

The Directors are responsible for:

- ▶ preparing the Concise Financial Report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards 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 responsibility 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 Standards AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

KPMG

**Dean Waters**

Partner

Melbourne

9 February 2021

## AFL Committees

### AFL Football Operations

#### Sub-Committee

Steve Hocking (chair), Rob Auld, Patrick Clifton, Tom Gastin, Jennie Loughnan, Tim Neville, Nadine Rabah, Sophia Samartzis, Jess Smith, Grant Williams.

### AFL Tribunal/Appeals Board

▶ Tribunal/Appeal Board Chairs: David Jones, Ross Howie, Geoff Giudice AO, Murray Kellam QC.

▶ Tribunal Jury Members: Wayne Henwood, Jason Johnson, Stephen Jurica, Richard Loveridge, Stewart Loewe, Peter Matera, David Neitz, David Pittman, Paul Williams and Shane Wakelin.

▶ Appeal Board Panel Members: David Jones, Ross Howie, Geoff Giudice AO, Murray Kellam QC, Wayne Henwood, Stephen Jurica, Richard Loveridge.

▶ Tribunal Counsel: Jeff Gleeson QC, Nick Pane QC, Renee Enbom SC, Andrew Woods.

▶ Secretary: Tom Gastin.

### AFL Competition Committee

Steve Hocking (chair), Rob Auld, Jason Ball, Colin Carter, Stephen Coniglio, Patrick Dangerfield, Chris Davies, Andrew Fagan, Chris Fagan, Andrew Ireland, Nicole Livingstone, Eddie McGuire, Brett Murphy, Peggy O'Neal, Justin Reeves, Kylie Rogers, Craig Vozzo.

### AFLW Competition Committee

Simone Wilkie (chair), Lauren Arnell, Alicia Eva, Mark Evans, Brendon Gale, Phil Harper, Steve Hocking, Laura Kane, Nicole Livingstone, Brett Murphy, Todd Patterson, Peta Searle, Diana Taylor.

### Match Review Officer

Michael Christian.

### AFL Grievance Tribunal

Professor Geoffrey Giudice AO (chair), Murray Kellam AO (deputy chair), David Maddocks, Michael Moncrieff, Kevin Power.

### All-Australian and NAB AFL

#### Rising Star Selectors 2020

Gillon McLachlan (chair), Kevin Bartlett, Luke Darcy, Steve Hocking, Glen Jakovich, Chris Johnson, Cameron Ling, Matthew Richardson, Kevin Sheehan (NAB AFL Rising Star only), Warren Tredrea, Josh Vanderloo (secretary).

### Australian Football Hall of Fame

#### Selection Committee

Richard Goyder (chair), Tania Armstrong, Karen Lyon, Paul Marsh, Bruce McAvaney, David Parkin, Michelangelo Rucci, Col Hutchinson (stats/history consultant), Patrick Clifton (secretary).

### AFL Research Board

Patrick Clifton (chair), Mark Brayshaw, David Buttifant, Damian Farrow, Dr Peter Harcourt, Kate Hall, Tim Harrington, Briana Harvey, Dr Michael Makdissi, Assoc Prof Colin McLeod, Michael Poulton, David Rath, Dr Anthony Schache, Tom Gastin (secretary).

### AFL OHS Committee

Patrick Clifton (chair), Jonathan Edge, James Gallagher, Brent Hedley, Tim Harrington, Charlie Gardiner, Peter Harcourt, Stephen Meade, Laura Sigal, Tom Gastin (secretary).

### AFL Medical Director

Dr Peter Harcourt.

### Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award - Selection Panel

Sam Ludbey-Stynes, Luke Darcy, Andrew Dillon, Jude Donnelly, Sarah Fair, Neil Mitchell, Brett Murphy, Kim Williams.

### AFL Life Member Nominations Committee

Gillon McLachlan (chair), Glenn McFarlane, David Parkin, Patrick Keane (secretary).



**DUSTIN  
MARTIN  
RICHMOND**

2020 PREMIERSHIP  
& NORM SMITH MEDALLIST





~~DON'T~~  
**BELIEVE**  
~~IN NEVER~~

