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AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
127TH ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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Cover: The football world mourned the passing of Australian Football Hall of Fame Legend Ron Barassi in Melbourne on September 16. One of football's most iconic figures, Barassi left a lasting legacy as a player, coach, media identity and passionate promoter of the national game.

Back Cover: Erin Phillips, the AFLW's most decorated player, called time on her outstanding career in 2023 after six seasons with the Adelaide Crows and two with Port Adelaide.

▲ Collingwood won its 16th AFL/WFL premiership while the Brisbane Lions claimed their second AFLW flag.





AFL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

1,264,952

members (up 6.2 per cent on 2022)



**COUNTRY
ROADS TAKE
ME HOME**

Club membership was up 6.2 per cent on the 2022 figure.



AFL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

15 clubs set new all-time membership records in 2023

Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Fremantle, Geelong Cats, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, Melbourne, North Melbourne, Port Adelaide, St Kilda, Sydney Swans and Western Bulldogs. **Collingwood** (106,470), **West Coast Eagles** (103,275), and **Richmond** (101,349) had more than 100,000 members.

The Gold Coast Suns were one of 15 clubs to set a record membership in 2023.





GRAND FINAL ATTENDANCE 100,024

The 2023 Grand Final produced another sellout with 100,024 fans topping up a close contest between Collingwood and the Brisbane Lions.



FINALS ATTENDANCE 664,780

Total attendance for the 2023 AFL Finals was 664,780, second-best ever behind only the 2018 year.



TOTAL SEASON ATTENDANCE

8,139,925

Total Attendance (new record)

TOTAL SEASON ATTENDANCE

A new all-time attendance figure of 8,139,925 was set during the 2023 season.



AFLW HOME & AWAY ATTENDANCE

234,525

Total Attendance

GRAND FINAL ATTENDANCE

12,616

North Melbourne v Brisbane Lions

More than 12,000 fans packed into Ikon Park to watch the Brisbane Lions claim the 2023 AFLW premiership.



PARTICIPATION

526,390

Registered Participants

Community - 384,927

Auskick - 126,786

Alternative Formats - 14,677

Registered Umpires - 17,522

Registered Coaches - 27,504

Participation at community level continues to grow with more than 525,000 registered participants in 2023.





AFL GRAND FINAL VIEWERSHIP

3.75M

HOME & AWAY VIEWERSHIP

Total viewership for the 2023
AFL home and away season was

112M

A total of 3.75 million viewers tuned in to watch the 2023 Grand Final as Collingwood, led by Norm Smith medalist Bobby Hill, won a thriller over the Brisbane Lions.



AFL AWARDS



BROWNLOW MEDAL

LACHIE NEALE
Brisbane Lions



NORM SMITH MEDAL

BOBBY HILL
Collingwood



COLEMAN MEDAL

CHARLIE CURNOW
Carlton



AFL RISING STAR

HARRY SHEEZEL
North Melbourne

Brisbane Lions star Lachie Neale claimed his second Brownlow Medal in a close count. He was the 16th multiple winner of football's most coveted individual award.





AFLW AWARDS



BEST AND FAIREST

MONIQUE CONTI
Richmond



GRAND FINAL BEST ON GROUND

BREANNA KOENEN
Brisbane Lions



LEADING GOALKICKER

EDEN ZANKER & KATE HORE
Melbourne



RISING STAR

ZARLIE GOLDSWORTHY
GWS Giants

Richmond's Monique Conti became the first Tiger to win the AFLW Best and Fairest, dominating the count to win by a massive seven votes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

RICHARD GOYDER
CHAIRMAN



Our game of Australian Football had an outstanding year in 2023, thanks to the continuing long-term support from fans around our country, with key decisions made that will further strengthen us into the future.

More than 1.2 million people are members of AFL clubs - one in every 21 Australians - while participation numbers and interest continue to build nationally, particularly in our growth states in New South Wales and Queensland.

In 2023, our existing 18 clubs voted to welcome a Tasmania team into our competition, while a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was secured with our male and female player groups - the first joint CBA in our history.

Football is privileged to have many great supporters and I thank our outstanding broadcast partners and all our commercial partners. In 2023, Toyota extended its agreement with our game for a further four years, and this relationship now stretches beyond two decades.

I want to thank all clubs and players for their commitment to our two elite competitions and acknowledge the contributions of retiring Presidents Dale Alcock (Fremantle), Tony Cochrane (Gold Coast Suns) and Tony Shepherd (GWS Giants). AFL Chief Executive Gillon McLachlan retired in September 2023 having made an extraordinary contribution to our game, and his replacement Andrew Dillon continues that strong leadership.

Congratulations to Collingwood and the Brisbane Lions for their respective successes in the AFL and AFLW competitions in 2023. The AFL is positioned as well as it has ever been through strong community engagement, and exciting elite competitions, to continue to grow and thrive.

Through strong community engagement, the AFL is growing elite competitions around the country.



Team for Tasmania

On May 3, 2023, in an historic day for football in Tasmania, the AFL announced the awarding of a 19th licence to the state for the AFL and AFLW competitions, after receiving the support and endorsement of the Presidents and Chairs of all 18 AFL clubs and unanimous support of all members of the AFL Commission.

A key part of the team's entry was conditions that ensured it could be built for success, including list build, training and administration base, AFL and government funding and its stadium, which would be critical to long-term financial sustainability.

The AFL signed binding commitments with the Tasmanian Government, including partnering with the Federal Government for the construction of a 23,000-seat roofed stadium at Macquarie Point.

The AFL men's team is expected to enter the competition in the 2028 Toyota Premiership Season, with a similar timeline for a women's team entry into the NAB AFLW Competition.

The establishment Board for the club was later named, comprising Grant O'Brien (chair), Roger Curtis, Graeme Gardner, James Henderson, Alicia Leis, Alastair Lynch, Laura McBain, Kath McCann and Kathy Schaefer. The club continues its ongoing work to prepare for entry.

▽ Tasmanians celebrated an historic day on May 3 when the AFL granted a 19th licence to the state for both the AFL and AFLW competitions.

Premier Partner Toyota

The AFL's Premier Partner Toyota extended its agreement with our game for a further four years in 2023, which now extends out to 24 years as the largest sporting partnership in the country.

A vital part of this partnership is Toyota's commitment to community clubs, and our Premier Partner has been instrumental in supporting and growing football from the grassroots to the elite men's and women's competitions.

A central part of its contribution to the game has been the Toyota Good for Footy Raffle, which has raised almost \$11 million for grassroots footy clubs, and our game is indebted to President and Chief Executive Matt Callachor and his wider executive team for their support of our game.

ON MAY 3, 2023, IN AN HISTORIC DAY FOR FOOTBALL IN TASMANIA, THE AFL ANNOUNCED THE AWARDING OF A 19TH LICENCE TO THE STATE.



Hawthorn Investigation

The independent investigation of allegations of serious misconduct at the Hawthorn FC was terminated in May 2023. This is covered in further detail within the Chief Executive's report, with no adverse findings against the individual respondents and with no claims to be made against the AFL by the First Nation Complainants.

As part of the agreement, the AFL also made a general apology to persons who have suffered racism, marginalisation, hurt or discrimination over the long history of the game. Our game is committed to devoting significantly increased resources to its continuous improvement model focused on measures to combat racism and the improvement of cultural safety of First Nations players and their families in the AFL and AFLW.

Appointment of New Commissioners

After an extensive search process, experienced administrator and former VFL player Andrew Ireland and 200-game Fremantle and GWS Giants player Matt de Boer were nominated to join the AFL Commission in October 2023.

The pair will add strong playing and administrative experience to the skillset of the wider commission, with their positions to be formally confirmed at the 2024 AGM. The nominations committee for these important roles comprised AFL Commissioner Simone Wilkie and myself, joined by club Presidents Dale Alcock (Fremantle), David Koch (Port Adelaide), Andrew Pridham (Sydney Swans), Kylie Watson-Wheeler (Western Bulldogs) and Andrew Wellington (Brisbane Lions).

△ Toyota ambassadors Maddy Prespakis and Jonathan Brown at the announcement of Toyota extending its partnership with the AFL for a further four years.

Broadcast Partners

The AFL is privileged to have outstanding relationships with our broadcast partners, the Seven Network and Foxtel. I particularly want to thank Kerry Stokes for his long-term commitment to our game, and a true partnership that has helped grow Australian Football around the nation. On behalf of the AFL Commission, I also wish to thank Ryan Stokes and James Warburton at Seven, Siobhan McKenna and Patrick Delany at Foxtel and Michael Miller at News Ltd for their support of our AFLW and AFL competitions, and football at all levels.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Industrial harmony between the game and our elite players has been incredibly important to the continued growth and success of Australian Football across the past two decades. The players, clubs and administration of the game have worked to build the game to a position of strength and deliver a powerful connection with fans all over the country.

In 2023, the competition reached agreement on an historic single Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) to cover both AFL and AFLW players.

The CBA is covered in more detail in the Chief Executive's report but will see a 10 per cent uplift in player payments for male players and a further 29 per cent increase for AFLW players.

The five-year CBA is the largest investment in women's sport of any domestic league while the injury and hardship fund for past players will receive a \$40 million boost, to ensure that more players are supported post-career.

**TASMANIA.
OUR TIME HAS COME.**



Gather Round

For the first time in since the introduction of the national competition, all nine games were played in the one state in 2023 with the introduction of Gather Round in South Australia.

Using Adelaide Oval and new AFL venues at Norwood Oval and Mt Barker, the Festival of Football was an overwhelming success with all matches sold out and a total attendance of more than 260,000.

More than 46,000 fans travelled into South Australia and the SA Government confirmed an agreement for a further three years to the end of 2026.

It is intended in future years to take matches into the Barossa region, along with the establishment of a football legacy fund to benefit local clubs.

Legend of the Game - Ron Barassi

Our game lost the most important figure in football since World War II, with the passing of Ron Barassi during the 2023 finals series.

One of the 12 inaugural Legends of the Game inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame, Barassi's career and contribution as champion player, innovative coach, long-time media commentator and evangelist for the wider game was unmatched.

A life member at the four clubs where he played and coached, Barassi always had a vision for the game to be the dominant national sport, and this defined his contribution to football.

At his passing, the tribute from the AFL read -

"He revolutionised the game as a player - created the position of ruck-rover - built premiership success at clubs as a coach and then was our first great evangelist to take the game north and grow it to become what we have today."

In 2023, the game also suffered the sad passing of Hall of Fame members Geoff Motley and Austin Robertson, greats of the SANFL and WAFL in the state league era. Motley and Robertson are among the greatest to have played in their respective states and are recognised in the CEO's report, while other leading contributors to the game are acknowledged in the farewells within this report.

Brisbane Lions Win Second AFLW Flag

The Brisbane Lions claimed a second AFLW premiership, defeating North Melbourne in the Grand Final at Ikon Park in front of more than 12,000 fans.

The Lions stormed home with four last-quarter goals to win 7.2 (44) to 4.3 (27), after trailing at the last change.

Congratulations to coach Craig Starcevic, President Andrew Wellington and CEO Greg Swann and the entire club, and commiserations to North Melbourne. Playing in their first Grand Final, the Kangaroos are strongly led by President Dr Sonja Hood, CEO Jen Watt and captain Emma Kearney.

▽ The Brisbane Lions claimed their second AFLW premiership and Best on Ground medalist Bre Koenen lapped up the celebrations.

Congratulations to Collingwood

The 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final was one of the greatest matches in Grand Final history. Collingwood secured a 16th AFL/VFL premiership by just four points, in a game filled with highlights and multiple lead changes.

The Magpies won by four points, with small forward Bobby Hill clinching the Norm Smith Medal. Congratulations to coach Craig McRae and captain Darcy Moore and the club's administration led by President Jeff Browne and chief executive Craig Kelly.

Congratulations also to the Brisbane Lions, who performed superbly across the season, led by President Andrew Wellington, chief executive Greg Swann, coach Chris Fagan, and captains Harris Andrews and Brownlow medallist Lachie Neale.

Vale Graeme John and Dick Seddon

Former Commissioners Graeme John and Dick Seddon both passed away in 2023. The AFL pays tribute to both men for their service and contribution to our game.

John represented both WA and Victoria at state level, as well as coaching at league level, serving as club President at South Melbourne and then later joining the AFL Commission during a stellar business career.

Seddon was one of the inaugural members of the AFL Commission in 1985, having previously worked as club secretary at Melbourne, bringing Ron Barassi back to the Demons after his long absence from his original club.



Retiring Greats

Lance Franklin, the greatest forward of the modern era, retired during 2023, finishing his career as the fourth-highest goalkicker (1066 goals from 354 games) in AFL/VFL history.

Just one of five players to have been named in eight separate All-Australian sides, Franklin will be remembered for decades to come for kicking the most extraordinary goals, running like the wind despite his size, terrorising opposition defenders and leaving fans gasping at the things he did.

The other retiring greats of our game with at least 200 senior games are acknowledged within this report in our farewells section including Trent Cotchin, Ben Cunnington, Ed Curnow, Phil Davis, Michael Hibberd, Shannon Hurn, Tom Jonas, Nic Naitanui, Daniel Rich, Jack Riewoldt, Isaac Smith, Luke Shuey, Robbie Tarrant and Jack Ziebell.

Allen Aylett Medal

To honour his immense contribution as both player and administrator, in 2023 the AFL commissioned the Allen Aylett Medal, which is now awarded annually to the No.1 selection at the men's National Draft. Aylett, who passed away in September 2022, was a Hall of Fame champion rover for North Melbourne and visionary President of the VFL, who instituted many of the steps that are now staples of the national competition - expansion, Friday night football, Sunday football and live Grand Final telecasts.

Finals' viewership and attendance

Collingwood's heart-stopping four-point victory in the Grand Final was the culmination of a brilliant month of finals' action.

The Grand Final was watched by 3.83 million fans, with the largest audience for an AFL game in Brisbane since the club's last Grand Final in 2004. The two preliminary finals - Collingwood v GWS Giants (2.04 million) and Brisbane Lions v Carlton (2.28 million) - both strongly out-rated last season while the total finals attendance across the nine games was 664,780.

With a series of close finishes across September, this represented the second-highest attended finals series ever and the average margin across all finals was 14.6 points - the lowest in more than 40 years - with five matches were decided by seven points or less.

All clubs in the top eight must be congratulated for the quality of football they displayed this season.



△ North Melbourne's Jack Ziebell was one of several star players to hang up the boots in 2023.

Club membership record

AFL clubs continue to do extraordinary work in the connection they build with fans of our game around the country. In 2023, the game achieved a new record membership mark of 1,264,952 members across our 18 clubs, emphasising the connection of fans with our game.

One in 21 Australians is a member of an AFL club and AFL club membership has increased 30 times in the past 32 years, save only for 2000 when the season was impacted by the Sydney Olympics and the heavily-impacted COVID year of 2020.

A total of 15 clubs broke their all-time records while Collingwood, Richmond and West Coast all surpassed 100,000 memberships.

THE GAME ACHIEVED A NEW RECORD MEMBERSHIP MARK OF 1,264,952 MEMBERS ACROSS OUR 18 CLUBS.

New Life Members

The AFL congratulates the 10 people who earned life membership of the game in 2023. Luke Breust, Dustin Martin, Luke Parker, Isaac Smith, Callan Ward and Jack Ziebell all qualified under player games' rules while Life Membership for wider service to the game was awarded to SANFL star and former Adelaide Crows' coach Neil Craig, retired Richmond President Peggy O'Neal, long-time player pathway talent specialist Kevin Sheehan and three-time club CEO Greg Swann.

Volunteers/Australia Day honours

Our game owes an incredible debt to the many thousands of volunteers around the country who drive our clubs and leagues at all levels of the game. The AFL congratulates all those who were recognised in the Australia Day honours, including AFL Commissioner Professor Helen Milroy, and thanks every volunteer who gives their time to help develop and build our game.

AM recipients: Frederick Alale, Belinda Duarte, Professor Helen Milroy, Mary Patetsos.

DAM recipients: Howard Branson, Paul Crate, Ashley Donaldson, Carmel Gould, Daryl Gould, Maureen Hafey, Ivo Havard, Noel Holdsworth, Dennis Jorman, Colin Jones, Yasseen Musa, David Michelson, Julia Saunders, Paul Stevens, Kenneth White, Glenn Wright.

▽ Hawthorn triple premiership forward Luke Breust was awarded AFL life membership in 2023.

Appointment of Andrew Dillon/Retirement of Gillon McLachlan

In May 2023, Andrew Dillon was appointed as Chief Executive Officer-elect to replace the retiring Gillon McLachlan. Dillon assumed the role after the 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final, after a two-decade career at AFL House as an exceptional football person involved in virtually every major decision across the game in recent years.

Andrew is a highly-respected leader with great support across the industry for his calm, considered and collaborative approach. He will expertly guide the game to a new era of growth of further build on the work done by Gillon McLachlan.

Gillon was farewelled officially at the Grand Final and the AFL Commission acknowledged his extraordinary contribution, noting that 'the team he had overseen had instilled the AFL's values and integrity which were the hallmark of the competition and organisation, with particular mention to his contribution during the COVID-19 impacted seasons of 2020 and 2021'.

As part of the renewal of the AFL Executive team, Dillon announced an expanded portfolio for AFL EGM Customer and Commercial Kylie Rogers, with Laura Kane (EGM Football Operations), Matthew Chun (EGM Finance Clubs and Infrastructure) and Stephen Meade (General Counsel) joining the executive team. Long-time senior executive Travis Auld resigned after more than a decade of outstanding service, to take the role as Chief Executive of the Australian Grand Prix.



Financial results

The AFL's revenue increased by \$104.5 million due to a combination of improved commercial returns from Marvel Stadium and sponsorship, the introduction of Gather Round and contractual increases in broadcast revenue. Operating expenditure increased by \$10.6 million due largely to revenue-related increases.

Distributions increased by \$96.7 million, largely due to the new Collective Bargaining Agreement across the men's and women's competitions and increased Game Development investment following the Commission's resolution to commit 10 per cent of football revenue to community football.

After all revenue, operating expenditure and distributions, the AFL recorded an underlying operating surplus of \$27.7 million, compared to an underlying operating surplus of \$20.7 million in 2022.

Bob Skilton - Sport Australia Hall of Fame

Legend of the Game Bob Skilton was honoured in 2023 when he was elevated to Legend status in the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. Skilton - a three-time Brownlow medalist and one of the 12 inaugural Legends of the Game - is just the fourth person from our game to be recognised as the highest level within Sport Australia, alongside Ron Barassi, Leigh Matthews and Ted Whitten.

△ Former Swans great Bob Skilton was elevated to Legend status in the Sport Australia Hall of Fame.

Club Presidents and Chairs/ my fellow Commissioners

On behalf of the AFL Commission, I wish to thank each board member, staff member, player, coach and volunteer from across our clubs for their contribution to a record-breaking 2023 year. Club presidents, chairs and board members devote countless hours to the game and play pivotal roles in the success of football.

I thank those club leaders who have now concluded their roles - Dale Alcock (Fremantle), Tony Cochrane (Gold Coast Suns) and Tony Shepherd (GWS Giants).

I wish to also personally thank my fellow commissioners - Paul Bassat, Robin Bishop, Matt de Boer, Andrew Ireland, Professor Helen Milroy, Andrew Newbold, Gab Trainor and Simone Wilkie - for their considerable support, advice and time in their roles.

The AFL executive and staff continue to produce outstanding results for the game, working with clubs, partners and governments to build football in every part of Australia.

The game belongs to every fan and every person involved in our sport.

Richard Goyder, AO
Chairman



CEO'S REPORT

ANDREW DILLON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



It was an extremely busy agenda for football in 2023, with long-term decisions that will strengthen our foundations for the future.

On the field, at the elite level, the quality of the game was outstanding for both men and women, with premiership success for Collingwood (AFL) and the Brisbane Lions (AFLW).

Off the field, an all-time record was set for attendance for a men's season of more than eight million fans while AFLW attendances reached record levels with 234,525 fans across the 90 matches throughout the course of the season.

Participation numbers and interest in the game at the community level continues to grow around the country, albeit with areas that continue to need our support, working with state and community leagues.

A generational decision for the future was made with the decision to grant a licence for a Tasmanian-based team, for both the AFL and AFLW competitions, while a first-ever joint CBA for both male and female players will reward our elite talent for the next five years.

Toyota, naming rights partner for the men's competition, extended its agreement with the game for a further four years, stretching now beyond two decades, and the AFL and football thank our many corporate partners, and our outstanding broadcast partners, for their long-term support of our game.

Our clubs, players and coaches continue to build strong relationships with members and fans around the country, who remain the lifeblood of our game.

It is a privilege to step into this role after Gillon McLachlan and the core role for the AFL is to build and protect our game at all levels and ensure our pathway to ongoing growth and success.

The Brisbane Lions enjoyed an outstanding year in 2023 finishing runners-up (AFL) and premiers (AFLW). Rising star Kaidan Coleman was one of the Lions' best on AFL Grand Final day.





Licence for Tasmanian team

The AFL and AFLW competitions will expand to 19 teams with the historic decision in 2023 to award a licence for a Tasmanian team.

With the support and endorsement of the Presidents and Chairs of all 18 AFL clubs and the unanimous support of all members of the AFL Commission, Tasmania is expected to enter the competition for the 2028 AFL and AFLW seasons.

The AFL signed binding commitments with the Tasmanian Government, including partnering with the Federal Government for the construction of a 23,000-seat roofed stadium at Macquarie Point.

At the time of the announcement, the AFL said it was 'an important and historic day, for football in Tasmania, for football in Australia, for footy supporters all around the country'.

After years of planning and work by so many within Tasmania, the decision now means that a foundation football state will have the opportunity to unite the state and unite behind a single cause.

First-ever AFL/AFLW joint CBA

For the first time, a single CBA now covers both the AFL and AFLW players, after agreement on a five-year partnership was reached in September 2023.

The men's competition will see an uplift of 10 per cent in Total Player Payments, while all AFLW players now receive an additional 29 per cent uplift, taking average pay up to \$82,000 by 2027.

Along with significant increases to the past players injury and hardship fund, the agreement allows for more five-day breaks (three per club) to allow greater fixture flexibility, including the ability to schedule more Thursday night matches, along with increased media access to players.

Discussions will continue with clubs and the AFLPA on a mid-season trade period for the AFL competition.

The AFLW season length will also increase with the NAB AFLW season expanding to 12 home and away rounds by 2025, and potentially 14 home and away rounds during the term of the deal, based on achievement of key audience metrics.

< The AFL continues to support and grow the game at all levels, which creates opportunities for young players to live out their football dreams.

Record-breaking AFL and AFLW Attendances

The 2023 Toyota AFL season was the best-attended in competition history, with 8,139,925 fans attending home and away games and finals. While one extra round of football was played for the first time, the all-time record was broken comfortably on a head-to-head basis, eclipsing the previous mark of 7,595,165 fans who attended during the 2018 year.

The game set an all-time home and away attendance record, with 7,475,145 fans. There were nine matches with crowds of more than 80,000 and, across the competition, all 18 clubs improved on their 2022 home match attendance, with 12 clubs equalling or exceeding their pre-COVID home match attendances. Collingwood and Melbourne set all-time home attendance records for their respective clubs while total attendance for the 2023 AFL Finals was 664,780, second-best ever behind only the 2018 year.

The AFLW competition also boasted outstanding results for its eighth season as an elite competition as attendances reached record levels with 234,525 fans across the 90 matches throughout the course of the season.

A total of 13 clubs increased their average attendances year-on-year, with the Sydney Swans and Adelaide Crows' home attendances both exceeding 4000 fans per match. The AFLW Grand Final on December 3 at Ikon Park saw all tickets sold, with an attendance of 12,616.

Toyota AFL Premiership Season and Finals - television audiences

It was an outstanding finals series, highlighted further by tremendous viewership numbers for our showcase matches of the season.

Collingwood's thrilling four-point Grand Final victory over the Brisbane Lions was watched by 3.75m people nationally and was the largest audience for any AFL game in Brisbane since the 2004 Grand Final - the last Grand Final appearance by the Lions.

Both preliminary finals drew more than 2m viewers, with the Collingwood v GWS Giants game (2.04m) up 14 per cent against the 2022 Friday night preliminary final while Saturday's Brisbane Lions v Carlton match (2.28m), was the second-best preliminary final of the past six years, behind only the 2022 meeting between Collingwood and the Sydney Swans.

Total viewership for the 2023 AFL home and away season was 112 million. Queensland and South Australia experienced free-to-air audience growth, up nine per cent and eight per cent respectively on 2022, correlating with the on-field success of the Brisbane Lions and Port Adelaide. Tasmania free-to-air ratings also grew substantially with momentum around the awarding of the 19th licence.

NAB AFLW viewership

Total home and away viewership for the 2023 season was 4.95m, averaging 54,969 viewers per game. Fixturing for the season focused on Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon matches, to build at-game attendance, which did impact viewer numbers with a reduced amount of Saturday night matches.

There was a proactive approach to broadcaster engagement in order to create an engaging and differentiated viewing experience for AFLW, as the league continues to mature.

Toyota partnership

A four-year extension with our great partners Toyota will take our relationship to 24 years, building on what has been one of the world's strongest sporting partnerships for the last two decades.

Toyota continue as the League's official community partner, which includes the Toyota Good for Footy program, as well as continuing as official automotive partner of the NAB AFLW competition.

The partnership also sees Toyota support the National Volunteer Awards, the National Inclusion Carnival and the National Wheelchair Championships, and we thank President and CEO Matt Callachor, and his wider team, for their continued support of our game.

Gather Round

The first-ever Gather Round, featuring all nine matches played in the one state, was an enormous success and was immediately extended for a further three years with the South Australian Government.

Six games were played at Adelaide Oval with new AFL venues also used in the Adelaide Hills at Mount Barker and historic Norwood Oval in the inner eastern suburbs. All nine games were sold out, with more than 268,000 fans attending matches and some 46,000 interstate visitors making their way to SA.

The SA Government reported a strong uplift in economic activity, with more than 82,000 fans attending the Footy Festival at Pinky Flat, combined with boosted participation numbers.

Thanks to all our clubs and players for their investment in this initiative, which saw more than 30 clinics conducted, open training sessions for all clubs, more than 1000 players appearances and some 10,000 footballs distributed to young fans.



▲ AFLW games averaged almost 55,000 viewers per match in 2023 while total viewership was just under five million.

Hawthorn FC Investigation

As referenced in the Chairman's report, the independent investigation of allegations of serious misconduct at the Hawthorn FC was terminated in May 2023.

From the moment that the Hawthorn Football Club's Binmada report was leaked without any opportunity for input from the persons against whom serious allegations were made, this was a period of high distress for all parties.

The full statement, as agreed between the AFL and the six complainants who took part in the process, with the endorsement of the Independent Panel including panel Chairman Bernard Quinn KC, resolved as follows:

- No adverse findings have been made in the Independent Investigation against any of the individuals against whom allegations have been made.
- The Complainants wish to resolve all differences with the AFL.
- As a result of this agreement, the Complainants do not wish to pursue the Independent Panel Investigation (which they wholeheartedly supported), or make any claims against the AFL in any other process (including the AHRC) or Court in relation to their allegations.
- The Complainants agree that their allegations should not be further investigated by the Independent Panel.
- The AFL terminated the Independent Panel Investigation with the consent of the Complainants with no charges to be brought against any Person subject to the AFL Rules as a result of the Independent Investigation.



The Parties make the following acknowledgements:

- The AFL acknowledges each one of the Complainants feels hurt, pain and anguish following their time at the Hawthorn FC.
- The Parties acknowledge that the manner in which their allegations were leaked to the media was not in any party's best interests.
- The Complainants acknowledge that the Independent Panel established by the AFL was a positive and constructive process for their allegations to be fully and fairly investigated in a culturally safe way and that they have only agreed to the termination of that process because of this agreement.

▲ The AFL's first Gather Round was an overwhelming success with fans treated to a 'Festival of Footy' and some great entertainment in and around Adelaide.

As part of the agreement, the AFL also committed to devoting significantly increased resources to its continuous improvement model focused on measures to combat racism and the improvement of cultural safety of First Nations players and their families in the AFL and AFLW.



Club Membership

AFL club membership has increased in 30 of the past 32 years, save only for the brought-forward season of 2000 (Sydney Olympics) and the COVID-interrupted season of 2020.

The AFL thanks every person who committed to be a club member and congratulates our clubs, players, coaches and administrators for the relationships they build with fans around the nation, resulting in this record tally of 1,264,952 members.

The 2023 total number consists of 852,678 adults, 103,966 concession members and 308,308 juniors.

Ticket price freezes

As part of the game's commitment to affordability, ticket prices were frozen on all entry level tickets for all matches at each venue of the 2023 Toyota AFL Finals Series, including the Grand Final. In 2023, entry prices remained frozen at 2016 prices for the eighth consecutive year - \$35 in weeks one and two and \$65 in week three.

In addition, General Admission (GA) prices for all matches at the MCG and Marvel Stadium were frozen during the Toyota AFL Premiership Season, having been held since 2019 at the following prices - \$27 (adult), \$18 (concession) and \$5 (child).

△ With ticket prices frozen and club membership numbers soaring in 2023, little wonder fans were rushing to get to see the action.

Geof Motley and Austin Robertson - state league greats

Two greats of the state league era and members of the Australian Football Hall of Fame, Geof Motley and Austin Robertson, both passed away in 2023.

Motley was a nine-time premiership player with Port Adelaide, long-time state player and 1964 Magarey medallist, while Robertson's record goal tally in the WAFL is unlikely to ever be surpassed.

Both gave extraordinary service to the respective SANFL and WAFL competitions in the era when those state leagues were the pinnacle of our game, and all in football extend our sincere condolences to their family and friends.

The passing of Hall of Fame Legend Ron Barassi is referenced in the Chairman's report and also in our Farewells.

Concussion

The management of concussion is a core issue for football at all levels.

The game's Guidelines for the Management of Concussion are continually modified and enhanced in line with evolving scientific evidence, to protect the short and long-term welfare of all AFL/AFLW players, as well as community guidelines for other levels of the sport.

The 11-step return-to-play program consists of three distinct stages - rest, recovery and graded return to training and play.

The guidelines also insist on a more conservative approach in cases with "modifying" factors, including young players, where there is a history of learning disorders or mood disturbance, or a history of multiple concussions, particularly those with prolonged recovery, and previous concussion/s in the same season.

The game will continue to monitor the advice of leading world specialists and evolve our Guidelines as required.

North Melbourne assistance package

The AFL Commission approved an assistance package for North Melbourne FC, after a submission to improve its on-field performance. The club was provided with an end round one selection for the 2023 National Draft, two end round one selections for the 2024 National Draft and an additional two rookie spots.

Australian Football Hall of Fame

Seven greats of the game were inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2023. Dual Norwood premiership player and 1981 Magarey medallist Michael Aish, three-time Geelong premiership teammates Jimmy Bartel and Corey Enright, pre-War champion ruckman the late Tom Leahy, four-time Hawthorn premiership centreman Sam Mitchell, Port Adelaide premiership player and coach Mark Williams and Channel 7 commentary icon Bruce McAvaney.

St Kilda champion forward Nick Riewoldt was also selected for inclusion and will be inducted at the 2024 ceremony, upon his return from overseas. Each of our new Hall of Fame inductees is profiled later in this report.

SEVEN GREATS OF THE GAME WERE INDUCTED INTO THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME IN 2023.



△ Legendary broadcaster Bruce McAvaney was among seven greats of the game to be inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2023.

△ Thanks to the support of Telstra, local football clubs will receive an \$8 million boost over the next four years.

Support for Community Clubs

Local football clubs across Australia will receive an \$8 million boost over the next four years with the support of Telstra.

Eligible regional and metropolitan clubs can apply for grants up to \$20,000 - targeted directly at clubs to make volunteering easier, diversify and broaden our participation and ensure our game is truly welcoming and inclusive.

This follows from the AFL's commitment in 2022 to invest a minimum of 10 per cent of the game's annual assessable revenue enshrined to go towards game development.

Key financial notes

The AFL's revenue increased by \$104.5 million due to a combination of improved commercial returns from Marvel Stadium and sponsorship, the introduction of Gather Round and contractual increases in broadcast revenue. The revenue assisted in covering the following costs:

- ▶ \$393.8 million to AFL clubs;
- ▶ \$89.7 million to Game Development, following the Commission's resolution to enshrine 10 per cent of football revenue towards community football;
- ▶ \$57.2 million in running the AFLW competition;
- ▶ \$41.5 million to the AFLPA;
- ▶ \$14.4 million to infrastructure comprising of elite and community facilities and contributions for stadia redevelopments; and
- ▶ \$0.9 million to corporate and social responsibility initiatives.

Women/Girls Action Plan

The AFL appointed a Leadership Advisory Group in 2023 to provide guidance and assist the game in delivering the outcomes of the Women and Girls Action Plan at community level. The Game Development plan aims to create equal opportunities for women to play, coach, umpire, officiate, administer and govern the game.

The AFL's Women's Football Vision is to strive for equal participation and representation by the end of this decade. The Group is Susan Alberti (co-chair), Rob Auld (co-chair), Amber Banfield, Tamara Bardon, Kerrie Brewer, Helen Langenberg, Meghan McDonald, Helen Ockerby, Rebecca Randazzo, Ben Scales and Kerry Turner.

Gillon McLachlan retirement - Executive Team changes

It is my privilege to assume the role of chief executive from my predecessor Gillon McLachlan. Gillon has been a colleague, but also a great friend for more than 20 years, and he filled the role with distinction to leave our game in a position of strength. Travis Auld announced his departure, having also made a remarkable contribution during his time within the game, and we wish him every success in his new role at the Australian Grand Prix.

During the CEO transition period, I reviewed our Executive Team, to now include the appointments of Laura Kane (EGM Football), Matthew Chun (EGM Finance, Clubs and Infrastructure) and Stephen Meade (General Counsel), and each will be key contributors for the next stage of our game's growth.

Laura is the first woman in the history of the VFL/AFL to head up Football Operations, having performed outstandingly both as an executive at North Melbourne and then while acting in the role before confirmation of her appointment. Matthew and Stephen have both been high-quality managers at the AFL and will be key members of the Executive Team.



△ The Women and Girls Action Plan will create equal opportunities for women to be involved in all aspects of the game at community level.

LAURA (KANE) IS THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE VFL/AFL TO HEAD UP FOOTBALL OPERATIONS.



McClelland Trophy to recognise joint AFL/AFLW performance

In 2023, the McClelland Trophy criteria was altered to recognise the best-performed club across both the Toyota AFL and NAB AFLW competitions.

The first winner was the Melbourne FC, which received \$1 million to be split between the two player groups and the club.

The McClelland Trophy was originally instituted more than 70 years ago recognise club performance across seniors, reserves and under-19s when clubs fielded multiple teams, but had recently recognised only the men's home and away competition.

△ Melbourne won the 2023 McClelland Trophy which underwent a change of criteria and now recognises the best-performed club across both the AFL and AFLW competitions.

AFL Commission and club leaders

I wish to thank all club leaders - Presidents and Chief Executives in particular - for their key roles in the game. Clubs, working with their players, coaches and staff, do an outstanding job in developing relationships with members and fans around the country. All club leaders have committed to the wider growth plan for the game and are a key part of our ongoing success.

In 2023, Collingwood's Mark Anderson and Hawthorn's Justin Reeves both finished in their roles after excellent service to the game.

I wish to thank my Chair Richard Goyder and all members of the Commission for their support and guidance to both me and the members of our Executive Team. We have an outstanding game, from the community level to the elite level, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure we continue to be strong well into the future.

Andrew Dillon
Chief Executive Officer

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

LAURA KANE
EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER OF FOOTBALL



The Football Department delivered an outstanding year of competitions in 2023, including the successful Toyota AFL Premiership Season, NAB AFLW Season, Smithy's VFL, rebel VFLW, Coates Talent League and talent pathway competitions for boys and girls.

We continue to look for ways to be innovative and provide additional data analytics for our clubs, along with delivering new insights for our fans. We have progressed ball tracking technology in partnership with Sportable and completed the lab testing phase and will now begin testing with all 18 AFL clubs in 2024.

As a broader department with a wide scope of work, the Football Department continues to administer game analysis, player movement, talent pathways, mental health and wellbeing across the industry.

The umpiring department implemented a major change to the AFL competition in 2023 with the introduction of four umpires. This resulted in more than 30 per cent less high-end running for our officials, which allowed some of our top performing umpires to double up on games during the season.

As we continue to prioritise the implementation of the Women and Girls Action Plan, we have pleasingly seen an increase in the number of female umpires at community level (up 28 per cent on 2022) and also at the elite level in the AFLW, which had 30 per cent representation of female umpires. Overall umpire registrations across the country are up 15 per cent year-on-year.

Ally Anderson (with cup) and Orla O'Dwyer led the celebrations after the Brisbane Lions won their second AFLW premiership, defeating North Melbourne in the Grand Final at Ron Park.





AFL

The AFL competition has had its best season yet with an increase in competitively balanced matches, notable in 24 per cent of games being decided by under 10 points or less, up from 17 per cent in 2022. There has been faster ball movement through the corridor, we witnessed an exciting race to the top eight and an incredibly tight finals series with five out of nine games decided by seven points or less.

A key focus of the AFL is to ensure we have evenly balanced competitions and as such, the AFL Commission approved an assistance package for North Melbourne in September aimed at helping the club become more competitive on the field.

AFLW

The NAB AFLW season improved on previous seasons in many aspects of the on-field product. A number of rule adjustments were implemented that resulted in an increase in scoring (up 30 per cent) and improvement of skills (10 per cent more disposals per turnover), as well as increased competitive tension and more teams vying for finals positions.

We were proud to introduce equal prizemoney across the AFL and AFLW competitions, meaning our AFLW players would receive nearly double the amount of prizemoney than previous seasons. We also announced an historic uniform change by removing white shorts from on field uniforms for all teams across the AFLW, VFLW, AFLW Under-18 National Championships, and any AFL-managed women and girls talent pathways activity.

△ Melbourne's AFLW team helped the Demons secure the 2023 McClelland Trophy which is now awarded to the club that has the most combined AFL and AFLW victories.

AFL and AFLW combined Champion Club

In 2023, the AFL announced the McClelland Trophy would now represent a combined award to the 'Champion Club' and presented to the best-performed club across both the Toyota AFL and NAB AFLW competitions. It was previously awarded for only the men's home and away season in recent years, since the end of the reserves and under-19 competitions.

Melbourne received \$1 million, shared across the player groups and administration, as the inaugural club winner.

Before the start of the 2023 NAB AFLW Season, the AFL announced equal player prizemoney for both the AFL and AFLW competitions, meaning AFLW players would receive nearly double the prizemoney compared with the previous season.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

In 2023, the Mental Health and Wellbeing team undertook an extensive consultation process, to inform the future four-year strategic direction for mental health and wellbeing in Australian Football - the 2024-2027 AFL Industry Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Two initiatives had broad impact across community. The AFL November Ahead of the Game partnership led to the delivery of mental health literacy and resilience to more than 5500 community participants throughout Australia. Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence for Youth Mental Health, and the AFL, partnered to release the second edition of a world-leading evidence guide for best practice in mental health promotion and early intervention.

With the increase in racial vilification having serious impacts on players' mental health and wellbeing, the Mental Health team collaborated with Indigenous mental health experts and the Indigenous Player Development Managers to develop a Social, Emotional and Cultural Wellbeing Framework for the AFL.

Delivery of the bespoke AFL Talent Pathways wellbeing program continued with more than 800 talent pathways athletes receiving the wellbeing curriculum in 2023, to foster wellbeing literacy and skills to support young athletes to thrive in football and life.

North Melbourne Assistance Package

Following a club request, the AFL Commission approved an assistance package for the North Melbourne Football Club to help the club improve its on-field performance.

The two-year support package is aimed at helping North Melbourne return to being competitive on the field in the AFL competition after having not finished higher than 17th in the four seasons since 2020.

2023

- ▶ One (1) end of AFL National Draft first round selection 2024

- ▶ Two (2) end of AFL National Draft first round selections

- ▶ An extension of two (2) additional rookie list spots for the 2024 season (previously granted for the 2023 season)

White shorts policy

The AFL will remove white shorts from on-field uniforms for all teams across the AFLW, VFLW, AFLW Under-18 National Championships, and any AFL-managed women and girls talent pathways' activity. The industry-leading approach comes following extensive consultation with AFLW clubs and female players in addressing in-competition performance anxieties in elite athletes, while playing in white uniforms during their menstrual cycles.

Norwood and Adelaide Hills new AFL venues

The advent of Gather Round saw the introduction of two new AFL venues - Norwood Oval and Adelaide Hills as the 49th and 50th ground in competition history for premiership points.

The AFL, together with the SANFL and City of Norwood, funded a number of significant venue upgrades to Norwood Oval, including two new 13-seater coach's boxes, new commentary box, new canteen and a major turf renovation which was supported by the curators at Adelaide Oval.

Windy Hill new AFLW venue

Elite football returned to Windy Hill for the first time in 32 years as Essendon's AFLW home ground.

▽ North Melbourne and the Brisbane Lions featured in the first AFL game played at Adelaide Hills during Gather Round.

▽ The AFL removed white shorts across all major women's competitions after extensive consultation with AFLW clubs and female players.



Umpiring

The AFL communicated three rule interpretation adjustments ahead of the 2023 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

1. Standing the mark

Umpires reinforced the standing the mark rule to ensure the player either stand on the mark or immediately retreat outside the 5m protected area.

2. The mark

Faking the handball in order to draw a 50m penalty in 2023, a 50m penalty was no longer applied when a player 'fakes' a handball while behind the mark. Instead, when this occurred, the mark and stand will be reset.

3. Set shot on goal

Umpires no longer provided players with both a 15-second warning and a 25-second warning, with a reminder at 25 seconds only.

Four rule adjustments were introduced to the 2023 NAB AFLW to improve the quality of the on-field product and competitive balance of the competition, following consultation with AFLW Senior Coaches, the AFLW Competition Committee, and the AFL Players Association.

1. Duration of match and intervals between quarters

Increased quarter length while quarter-time and three-quarter time breaks were reduced.

2. Boundary throw-ins

Boundary umpires moved 10 metres into the playing surface only when the ball went of bounds between the 50-metre arcs.

3. Interchange cap and interchange boards

An interchange cap of 60 rotations per team per match with clubs were permitted to use interchange boards to deliver messages.

4. Runners

Changes to runner access rules during quarters.

Field umpire Brett Rosebury achieved an outstanding individual milestone in 2023 when he officiated his 500th game.

AFL Grand Finals umpires

Field: Matt Stevic, Hayden Gavine, Simon Meredith, Robert Findlay

Boundary: Christopher Gordon, Ian Burrows, Matthew Tomkins, Michael Barlow

Goal: Angus McKenzie-Wills, Adam Wojcik

AFLW Grand Final umpires

Field: Joel Clamp, Matt Adams, Samuel Nippres

Boundary: Adrian Pretorius, Jaco Jansen van Rensburg, Dominic Schilliro, Greta Miller

Goal: Emilie Hill, Georgia Henderson

AFL All-Australian umpires

Field: Rob Findlay

Boundary: Matthew Konetschka

Goal: Adam Wojcik

AFLW All-Australian umpires

Field: Joel Clamp

Boundary: Adrian Pretorius

Goal: Emilie Hill

AFL umpiring milestones

500 games - B. Rosebury (field)

400 - C. Donlon (field), M. Nicholls (field),

A. Coote (boundary), B. Rogers (goal)

300 - M. Marantelli (boundary)

200 - L. Fisher (field), C. Flier (field), N. Foot (field),

A. Stephens (field)

Brett Rosebury celebrated his 500th game and also

broke Shane McInerney's record of the most games officiated in AFL/VFL history (503) in round 21.

AFL and AFLW All-Australian Selection Panels

Eddie Betts joined the AFL All-Australian selection in 2023 after the retirements of Nick Riewoldt and Gerard Healy.

The 2023 AFL All-Australian selection panel was:

Gillon McLachlan (chair), Eddie Betts, Jude Bolton, Nathan Buckley, Kane Cornes, Andrew Dillon, Glen Jakovich, Laura Kane, Cameron Ling, Matthew Pavlich.

The 2023 AFLW All-Australian selection panel was:

Nicole Livingstone (chair), Andrew Dillon, Laura Kane, Jason Bennett, Kelli Underwood, Sarah Black, Katie Loxnes, Narelle Smith, Megan Waters.

Allen Aylett Medal

The AFL announced the Allen Aylett Medal would be awarded to the No. 1 selection in the men's draft, named after the late North Melbourne champion and former VFL president, Dr Allen Aylett.

The 2023 Allen Aylett Medal was awarded to Harley Reid who was selected by the West Coast Eagles.



AFL Rising Star Award

Harry Sheeziel was the winner of the 2023 AFL Rising Star, and was awarded the Ron Evans Medal. Sheeziel polled 54 votes to finish ahead of Brisbane Lions midfielder Will Ashcroft (39 votes) and St Kilda's Mitch Owens (33 votes). He became second North Melbourne player to win the Rising Star, joining Byron Pickett who claimed the award in 1998. Selected with the third pick in the 2022 AFL Draft, Sheeziel played every game in his debut season and averaged 27 disposals, 5.4 marks and 2.9 tackles a game. He also won North Melbourne's best and fairest award, the Syd Barker Medal.

2023 AFL RISING STAR NOMINEES

Rd	Player	AFL Club	Votes
1	Harry Sheeziel	North Melbourne	54
2	Will Ashcroft	Brisbane Lions	39
3	Reuben Ginbey	West Coast Eagles	
4	Mitch Owens	St Kilda	33
5	Max Michalany	Adelaide Crows	3
6	Jai Cullley	West Coast Eagles	
7	Finn Callaghan	GWS Giants	3
8	Mattias Phillipou	St Kilda	
9	Bailey Humphrey	Gold Coast Suns	
10	Josh Weddle	Hawthorn	
11	Jye Amiss	Fremantle	28
12	Jacob van Rooyen	Melbourne	
13	George Wardlaw	North Melbourne	1
14	Darcy Wilnot	Brisbane Lions	4
15	Angus Sheldrick	Sydney Swans	
16	Luke Podlar	Adelaide Crows	
17	Seamus Mitchell	Hawthorn	
18	Judd McVee	Melbourne	
19	Jaspa Fletcher	Brisbane Lions	
20	Mac Andrew	Gold Coast Suns	
21	Ollie Hollands	Carlton	
22	Elijah Hewett	West Coast Eagles	
23	Matthew Johnson	Fremantle	
24	Eddie Ford	North Melbourne	

North Melbourne's Harry Sheeziel proudly displays the Ron Evans Medal after winning the 2023 AFL Rising Star award.





AFLW Rising Star Award

Zarlie Goldsworthy from the GWS Giants was crowned the 2023 AFLW Rising Star. Goldsworthy won the award with 41 votes ahead of the Sydney Swans' Ally Morphet (40 votes), West Coast Eagles' Ella Roberts (23), Port Adelaide's Matilda Scholz (13) and Hawthorn's Jasmine Fleming (7). The 19-year-old kicked a club-high 13 goals and averaged 18.3 disposals, 6.6 tackles and 2.9 score involvements a game to become the first GWS Giants player to win the Rising Star award. Goldsworthy also claimed the Gabrielle Trainor Medal as the Giants' best and fairest player.

Total Player Payments

In the first year of the newly negotiated five-year 2023-27 CBA, the 2023 Total Player Payment Limit was set at \$15.0m per club, representing a 10.96 per cent uplift from 2022. Gross Player Payments increased by 9.04 per cent from \$257.6m in 2022 to \$280.9m in 2023.

Additional Service Agreement payments for the provision of marketing services by players remained relatively flat with an increase of 1.68 per cent, from \$22.5m in 2022 to \$22.8m in 2023. The 2023 Additional Services Agreement Limit was \$1.3m per club, representing a 3.00 per cent uplift from 2022.

In addition to these amounts, players earned \$1.9m from employment and marketing arrangements with associates of clubs. At a consolidated level, across gross player payments, Additional Services Agreements, employment agreements, and marketing arrangements with associates of the clubs, the total earned by players in 2023 was \$305.2m, an increase of 8.68 per cent on the 2022 total of \$280.8m.

The average payment by clubs for a listed player in 2023 was \$441,464 (or \$476,215 for players who played at least one senior match), an increase of 8.71 per cent from 2022.

No club was sanctioned during 2023 for a breach of the TPP rules.

△ Zarlie Goldsworthy capped off an outstanding season when she became the first GWS Giants player to win the AFLW Rising Star award.

2023 AFLW RISING STAR NOMINEES

Rd	Player	AFL Club	Votes
1	Ally Morphet	Sydney Swans	40
	Ella Roberts	West Coast Eagles	23
2	Zarlie Goldsworthy	GWS Giants	41
	Matilda Scholz	Port Adelaide	13
3	Jasmine Fleming	Hawthorn	7
	Keeley Skepper	Carlton	4
4	Steph Wales	Essendon	5
	Rylie Wilcox	Western Bulldogs	
5	Ella Heads	Sydney Swans	
	Lauren Wakfer	West Coast Eagles	
6	Charlotte Baskaran	Hawthorn	
	Amber Clarke	Essendon	
7	Kiera Mueller	Adelaide Crows	
	Emelia Yassir	Richmond	
8	Mia Austin	Carlton	
	Sofia Hurley	Sydney Swans	2
9	Charlotte Mullins	Brisbane Lions	
	Lucy Wales	Hawthorn	
10	Darcie Davies	Gold Coast Suns	
	Zali Friswell	Geelong Cats	

2013-2023 SUMMARY OF AFL PLAYER EARNINGS

Earnings	2013	2013	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019	2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022	2023	2023
	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed	Played	Listed
\$0-\$80,000	0	9	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
\$80,001-\$100,000	48	109	33	90	17	65	21	70	9	38	3	24	5	31	47	113	4	18	0	10	0	0
\$100,001-\$200,000	203	213	177	198	163	188	162	185	112	152	108	159	101	166	165	189	94	133	83	125	64	128
\$200,001-\$300,000	148	156	136	147	143	153	121	131	130	140	129	136	111	124	134	142	106	119	115	126	97	106
\$300,001-\$400,000	114	115	125	128	124	131	137	148	137	148	137	145	118	123	124	131	114	117	106	109	93	96
\$400,001-\$500,000	64	64	75	76	84	85	87	89	87	89	86	88	104	107	58	60	104	109	88	95	89	91
\$500,001-\$600,000	22	22	31	32	44	44	35	40	52	53	44	49	47	48	36	40	68	68	69	71	76	80
\$600,001-\$700,000	19	19	26	26	18	21	22	23	34	34	46	46	41	42	13	13	42	46	37	38	53	54
\$700,001-\$800,000	10	10	10	10	21	21	15	18	23	23	21	24	28	29	4	4	23	24	32	32	41	42
\$800,001-\$900,000	7	7	6	6	3	3	5	5	9	9	15	15	16	16	1	2	11	11	24	24	28	29
\$900,001-\$1,000,000	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	3	10	11	10	10	7	7	1	2	3	3	15	15	15	15
\$1,000,001-\$1,100,000	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	3	4	1	1	2	2	6	6	6	6
\$1,100,001-\$1,200,000	2	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	5	5
\$1,200,001+	3	3	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	0	0	3	3	3	3	8	8
TOTAL	640	729	623	719	623	718	614	718	612	707	605	703	586	702	587	698	575	655	582	659	575	660

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.

2013-2023 AFL TOTAL PLAYER EARNINGS

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Movement %
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	2022-2023
GROSS PLAYER PAYMENTS (GPP)	181,560,623	188,944,114	206,199,109	204,305,000	231,354,738	246,417,857	242,345,042	178,043,949	233,853,380	251,574,837	280,862,089	9.04%
Deductions:												
Fuels/Relocation & Living & other Allowances	2,214,355	2,860,850	2,869,108	2,285,343	3,016,111	3,189,433	3,286,038	2,190,458	4,873,323	4,416,263	4,401,888	-0.34%
Cost of Living and Expenses Allowances	1,791,218	3,047,944	2,367,048	1,891,898	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Veterans' Allowance	7,898,538	6,580,073	6,958,232	6,811,681	348,027	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Other Deductions	4,303,195	4,032,375	4,780,648	4,334,399	1,893,818	3,492,466	3,839,162	3,308,603	4,121,543	5,298,955	10,916,587	186.81%
Underpaid From Previous Years	-	-	1,841,576	784,511	919,288	1,548,438	1,158,113	1,478,875	1,857,817	1,092,197	0	-100.00%
Total Deductions	16,217,306	15,701,183	18,017,612	15,897,824	6,167,244	6,727,315	6,286,314	6,978,734	10,852,283	10,807,514	15,317,600	41.73%
NET PLAYER PAYMENTS	165,343,317	173,242,931	188,181,497	188,407,176	225,187,494	239,690,542	235,058,728	171,065,215	223,001,097	240,767,323	265,544,389	7.61%
Injury Allowance	2,088,007	1,587,906	2,688,871	3,452,128	3,002,187	5,982,835	5,093,340	0	5,729,898	3,543,000	0	-100.00%
NET PLAYER PAYMENTS LESS INJURY ALLOWANCE	163,255,310	171,655,025	185,492,626	184,955,048	222,185,307	233,707,707	229,965,388	171,065,215	217,271,199	237,224,323	265,544,389	9.16%
TPP LIMIT	164,499,080	173,382,660	181,284,120	186,641,640	224,010,504	226,698,624	229,845,710	234,238,626	217,420,290	243,701,874	278,410,004	10.96%
Margin/Excess	1,254,348	1,732,585	1,712,539	1,475,761	1,825,186	405,818	686,322	71,773,411	146,892	47,518	4,865,605	181.94%
Additional Services Agreements (ASAs)	13,874,678	16,237,824	18,638,487	18,257,040	18,864,895	20,120,472	21,088,574	15,486,183	20,143,358	22,458,854	22,834,713	1.09%
Average Gross Player Earnings (including ASAs)**	Listed \$265,178	Listed \$263,029	Listed \$302,194	Listed \$309,208	Listed \$352,470	Listed \$382,471	Listed \$363,430	Listed \$258,651	Listed \$372,224	Listed \$408,925	Listed \$441,464	
	Played \$288,212	Played \$308,841	Played \$314,643	Played \$329,210	Played \$379,697	Played \$398,202	Played \$401,552	Played \$283,237	Played \$395,740	Played \$433,511	Played \$476,215	

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. Both Gross Player Payments (GPP) and the ASA totals include the valuation of excess expenditure over the ASA Limit. This is consistent with CBA and TPP reporting rules, requiring any excess ASA payments over the ASA Limit to be reported in TPP. In 2023 this was valued at \$475,581.

AFL Mark of the Year

The 2023 Four N Twenty Mark of the Year was awarded to the GWS Giants' Harry Himmelberg. He took the Mark of the Year in round one against the Adelaide Crows.

AFLW Mark of the Year

The 2023 Toyota Mark of the Year was awarded to the Brisbane Lions' Courtney Hodder. She took the Mark of the Year in round seven against the Gold Coast Suns.

AFL Goal of the Year

The 2023 rebel Goal of the Year was awarded to the Brisbane Lions' Will Ashcroft. He kicked the Goal of the Year in round seven against Fremantle.

AFLW Goal of the Year

The 2023 rebel Goal of the Year was awarded to Richmond's Caitlin Greiser. She kicked the Goal of the Year in round 10 against Collingwood.

▽ First-year Brisbane Lions star Will Ashcroft was awarded Goal of the Year after a stunning effort against Fremantle in round seven.

▷ The top five picks in the 2023 AFL Draft (left to right) - Nick Watson, Colby McKercher, Harley Reid, Jed Walter and Zane Daurisma.



2023 AFL All-Australian Team

Backs: James Sicily (Hawthorn) Callum Wilkie (St Kilda) Tom Stewart (Geelong)
Half-backs: Jack Sinclair (St Kilda)
 Darcy Moore (Collingwood) Dan Houston (Port Adelaide)
Centres: Errol Gulden (Sydney Swans) Marcus Bontempelli (Western Bulldogs, vice-captain) Josh Daicos (Collingwood)
Half-forwards: Connor Rozee (Port Adelaide) Taylor Walker (Adelaide Crows) Christian Petracca (Melbourne)
Forwards: Charlie Cameron (Brisbane Lions) Charlie Curnow (Carlton) Toby Greene (GWS Giants, captain)
Rucks: Tim English (Western Bulldogs)
 Zak Butters (Port Adelaide) Nick Daicos (Collingwood)
Interchange: Jordan Dawson (Adelaide Crows) Nick Larkey (North Melbourne) Zach Merrett (Essendon) Caleb Serong (Fremantle)
Coach: Craig McRae (Collingwood)

2023 AFLW All-Australian Team

Backs: Charlotte Thomas (West Coast Eagles) Chelsea Biddell (Adelaide Crows)
Half-backs: Emma Kearney (North Melbourne) Emma O'Driscoll (Fremantle) Eilish Sheerin (Richmond)
Centres: Niamh Kelly (Adelaide Crows) Monique Conti (Richmond) Sophie Conway (Brisbane Lions)
Half-forwards: Chloe Molloy (Sydney Swans) Bonnie Toogood (Essendon, vice-captain) Kate Hore (Melbourne, captain)
Forwards: Dakota Davidson (Brisbane Lions) Danielle Ponter (Adelaide Crows)
Followers: Ally Morphett (Sydney Swans) Jasmine Garner (North Melbourne) Ebony Marinoff (Adelaide Crows)
Interchange: Charlie Rowbottom (Gold Coast Suns) Eden Zanker (Melbourne) Ally Anderson (Brisbane Lions) Ash Riddell (North Melbourne) Laura Gardiner (Sydney Swans)
Coach: Craig Starcevich (Brisbane Lions)

2023 AFL National Draft

The 2023 AFL Draft was held at Marvel Stadium on November 20-21. Round one selections were made on the opening night, with all remaining selections made on the second night.

- The draft resulted in the selection of 64 players (up from 59 in 2022), which included:
- ▶ 13 players selected from the Allies' title-winning team at the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships (Colby McKercher, Jed Walter, Ryley Sanders, Ethan Read, Connor O'Sullivan, Phoenix Gothard, Jake Rogers, James Leake, Caiden Cleary, Will Graham, Patrick Snell, Harvey Thomas and Arie Schoenmaker)
 - ▶ Every state having at least four players selected
 - ▶ 38 players drafted from the 13 programs that compete full-time in the Coates Talent League
 - ▶ One player each from the VFL (Shaun Mannagh) and country league Bellarine Football League (Oliver Wiltshire)

2023 AFL DRAFT SELECTIONS (FIRST ROUND)

No.	Club	Player	State League Club	Community Club
1	West Coast Eagles	Harley Reid	Bendigo Pioneers	Tongala
2	North Melbourne	Colby McKercher	Tasmania Devils	Launceston
3	Gold Coast Suns	Jed Walter	Gold Coast Suns Academy	Palm Beach Currumbin
4	North Melbourne	Zane Daurisma	Gippsland Power	Foster
5	Hawthorn	Nick Watson	Eastern Ranges	East Ringwood
6	Western Bulldogs	Ryley Sanders	Sandringham Dragons	North Launceston
7	Melbourne	Caleb Windoor	Eastern Ranges	Lysterfield
8	Adelaide Crows	Daniel Curtin	Claremont	West Coast
9	Gold Coast Suns	Ethan Read	Gold Coast Suns Academy	Palm Beach Currumbin
10	Essendon	Nate Caddy	Northern Knights	Yarrambat
11	Geelong Cats	Connor O'Sullivan	Murray Bushrangers	Albury
12	GWS Giants	Phoenix Gothard	Murray Bushrangers	Albury
13	Melbourne	Katlyn Tholstrup	Subiaco	Newtown Condingup
14	Gold Coast Suns	Jake Rogers	Gold Coast Suns Academy	Broadbeach
15	Western Bulldogs	Jordan Croft	Calder Cannons	Maribyrnong Park
16	Sydney Swans	Will Green	Northern Knights	Northcote
17	GWS Giants	James Leake	Tasmania Devils	Launceston
18	St Kilda	Darcy Wilson	Murray Bushrangers	Wangaratta Rovers
19	Hawthorn	Will McCabe	Central District	Tanunda
20	North Melbourne	Taylor Goad	South Adelaide	Willunga
21	Adelaide Crows	Charlie Edwards	Sandringham Dragons	Sandhurst
22	North Melbourne	Will Dawson	Gippsland Power	Leongatha
23	North Melbourne	Riley Hardeman	Swan Districts	Caversham
24	Sydney Swans	Caiden Cleary	Sydney Swans Academy	Sydney University
25	Collingwood	Harry DeMattia	Dandenong Stingrays	Edithvale-Aspendale
26	Gold Coast Suns	Will Graham	Gold Coast Suns Academy	Palm Beach Currumbin
27	Adelaide Crows	Oscar Ryan	Murray Bushrangers	Shepparton United
28	St Kilda	Lance Colliard	Subiaco	North Beach
29	Carlton	Ashton Moir	Genelg	Plympton





Father-Son Selections

There were three father-son selections in the 2023 AFL Draft.

- ▶ **Jordan Croft** (Western Bulldogs, son of Matthew. Club matched bid made by Sydney Swans)
- ▶ **Will McCabe** (Hawthorn, son of Luke. Club matched bid made by North Melbourne)
- ▶ **Calsher Dear** (Hawthorn, son of Paul)

There was one father-son selection in the 2023 AFL Rookie Draft.

- ▶ **Kynan Brown** (Melbourne, son of Nathan)

One player was pre-selected as a Northern Academy Category B rookie, with the Sydney Swans adding Indihi Kirk, the son of 2005 premiership player Brett Kirk. The West Coast Eagles pre-selected Coen Livingstone as a Next Generation Academy Category B rookie, while Bruce Reville (Brisbane Lions) and Nathan Wardius (GWS Giants) were pre-selected as Queensland and NSW Zone Category B rookies.

Three players from Ireland were selected as Category B International rookies, with Liam O'Connell being signed by St Kilda, while Rob Monahan and Matt Duffy joined Carlton.

2023 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft

Gippsland Power forward Ryan Maric was selected by the West Coast Eagles with the No.1 pick in the 2023 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft. A total of 13 players were selected in the 2023 AFL Mid-Season Draft, with 11 players being added to an AFL list for the first time. The 2023 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft was held on Wednesday, June 1 and broadcast live on AFL.com.au and the AFL Live Official App.

◀ Jordan Croft, pictured with his father and former Bulldogs star Matthew, was one of three father-son selections in the 2023 AFL Draft while Ryan Maric was taken as the No.1 pick in the 2023 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft by the West Coast Eagles.



2023 AFL MID-SEASON ROOKIE DRAFT

The following players were selected in the Mid-Season Rookie Draft

No.	Club	Player	State League Club	Community Club
Round One				
1	West Coast Eagles	Ryan Maric	Gippsland Power	Drouin
2	North Melbourne	Robert Hansen jr	Subiaco	Mines Rovers
3	Hawthorn	Clay Tucker	Eastern Ranges	Rowville Hawks
4	Richmond	Matthew Coulthard	Glenelg	Port Noarlunga
5	Sydney Swans	Harry Arnold	Brisbane Lions VFL	Broadbeach
6	Geelong Cats	Mitchell Hardie	Woodville West Torrens	Leeton Whitton
7	Fremantle	Ethan Stanley	Box Hill Hawks	Frankston YCW
8	Essendon	Jaden Hunter	Perth	Applecross
9	Western Bulldogs	Caleb Poulter	Footscray Bulldogs	Ardrossan
10	Port Adelaide	Quinton Narkle	Essendon VFL	Maddington
11	Hawthorn	Brandon Ryan	Northern Bullants	Maribyrnong Park
12	Richmond	James Trezise	Richmond VFL	Tooradin-Dalmore
13	Sydney Swans	Jack Buller	Claremont	Cottesloe
14	St Kilda	(pass)		
15	Fremantle	Sebit Kuek	East Perth	

PRE-SEASON SUPPLEMENTAL SELECTION PERIOD

The following players were chosen under SSP rules

Club	Player	Selected from
Adelaide Crows	Tyler Brown	Collingwood
Adelaide Crows	Mark Keane	Collingwood
Brisbane Lions	Darragh Joyce	St Kilda
Brisbane Lions	Conor McKenna	Essendon
Carlton	Alex Cincotta	Carlton VFL
Carlton	Hudson O'Keeffe	Oakleigh Chargers
Collingwood	Dieg Markov	Gold Coast Suns
Collingwood	Oscar Steene	West Adelaide
Gold Coast Suns	Jed Anderson	North Melbourne
Gold Coast Suns	Brodie McLaughlin	Frankston
Melbourne	Kye Turner	Frankston
North Melbourne	Liam Shields	Hawthorn
Richmond	Kaelan Bradtke	Sydney Swans VFL
St Kilda	Anthony Caminiti	Northern Knights
St Kilda	Liam Stocker	Carlton
Western Bulldogs	Oskar Baker	Melbourne

MATCHED BIDS FOR FATHER/SON AND ACADEMY PLAYERS

Name	Player Category	Bid Team	Match Team	Bid	Points Value to Match	Selections Matched	Selections Received
Jed Walter	Northern Academy	North Melbourne	Gold Coast Suns	3	1787.2	26, 30, 32	58
Ethan Read	Northern Academy	Geelong Cats	Gold Coast Suns	9	1175.2	34, 38, 40	49
Jake Rogers	Northern Academy	Sydney Swans	Gold Coast Suns	14	928.8	42, 47, 49	65
Jordan Croft	Father-Son	Sydney Swans	Western Bulldogs	15	889.6	44, 46, 47	61
Will McCabe	Father-Son	North Melbourne	Hawthorn	19	758.4	42, 44	73
Caiden Cleary	Northern Academy	Collingwood	Sydney Swans	24	628	47, 48	70
Will Graham	Northern Academy	Adelaide Crows	Gold Coast Suns	26	583.2	47, 51	69

AFL Free Agency

Free Agency operates in the AFL under an agreement between the AFL and the AFLPA.

The following players exercised Free Agency rights:

- ▶ Tom Doedee (Adelaide Crows to Brisbane Lions)
- ▶ Matt Flynn (GWS Giants to West Coast Eagles)
- ▶ Todd Goldstein (North Melbourne to Essendon)
- ▶ Jade Gresham (St Kilda to Essendon)
- ▶ Joel Hamling (Fremantle to Sydney Swans)
- ▶ James Jordan (Melbourne to Sydney Swans)
- ▶ Ben McKay (North Melbourne to Essendon)

2023 Restricted Free Agents

- ▶ Tom Doedee (Adelaide Crows)
- ▶ Jack Crisp (Collingwood)
- ▶ Jeremy Howe (Collingwood)
- ▶ Darcy Parish (Essendon)
- ▶ Mason Redman (Essendon)
- ▶ Harry Himmelberg (GWS Giants)
- ▶ Ben McKay (North Melbourne)
- ▶ Charlie Dixon (Port Adelaide)
- ▶ Jade Gresham (St Kilda)

2023 Unrestricted Free Agents

Adelaide Crows

Tyler Brown*, Matt Crouch, Andrew McPherson*, Paul Seedsman*, Rory Sloane, Taylor Walker

Brisbane Lions

Nakia Cockatoo*, Darragh Joyce*, Ryan Lester*, Rhys Mathieson*, Daniel Rich, Dayne Zorko

Carlton

David Cuninghame, Ed Curnow*, Sam Docherty, Sam Dardin*, Lachie Plowman, Jack Silvagni

Collingwood

Mason Cox, Oleg Markov*, Cooper Murley*, Scott Pendlebury

Essendon

Dyson Heppell, Will Snelling*, Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti

Fremantle

Nat Fyfe, Joel Hamling*, Lachie Schultz*, Michael Walters

Geelong Cats

Mark Blicavs, Jonathon Ceglar*, Tom Hawkins, Sam Menegola*, Isaac Smith, Rhys Stanley

Gold Coast Suns

Jed Anderson*, Connor Blekely*, Levi Cussboul*, Charlie Constable*, Sam Day, Jake Stein*

GWS Giants

Phil Davis*, Matt Flynn, Lachie Keffe*, Daniel Lloyd*, Jacob Wehr*, Hawthorn - Fergus Greene*, Seamus Mitchell*

Melbourne

Luke Dunstan*, James Jordan*, Jake Melksham, Alex Neal-Bullen

North Melbourne

Todd Goldstein, Daniel Howe*, Liam Shields*, Kayne Turner*, Jack Ziebell

▼ Ben McKay joined Essendon from North Melbourne at the end of the 2023 season as a restricted free agent.

Port Adelaide

Travis Boak, Riley Bonner, Trent Dumont*, Tom Jonas, Scott Lycett, Trent McKenzie*, Dylan Williams*

Richmond

Nathan Broad, Trent Cotchin, Dylan Grimes, Kamdyn McIntosh, Ben Miller*, Bigoa Nyuon*, Jack Riewoldt, Robbie Tarrant

St Kilda

Tom Campbell*, Daniel McKenzie, Liam Stocker*, Jimmy Webster, Mason Wood*

Sydney Swans

Lance Franklin, Lewis Melican, Dane Rampa, Sam Reid

West Coast Eagles

Jamie Cripps, Shannon Hurn, Jeremy McGovern, Luke Shuey, Zane Trew*, Isiah Winder*

Western Bulldogs

Oskar Baker*, Taylor Daryea, Tom Liberatore, Toby McLean, Tim O'Brien, Roarke Smith*, Bailey Williams

*Previously delisted

Delisted Free Agents

Four players took advantage of the Free Agency rules for delisted players, allowing them to move to the club of their choice:

- ▶ Drazio Fantasia (Port Adelaide to Carlton)
- ▶ Oscar McDonald (Williamstown/Melbourne to Fremantle)
- ▶ Sam Naismith (Port Melbourne/Sydney Swans to Richmond)
- ▶ Toby Pink (Glenelg/Sydney Swans to North Melbourne)



AFL Trade Period

The following players were traded during the AFL Trade Period following the 2023 AFL season:

Taylor Adams (Collingwood to Sydney Swans); Jack Billings (St Kilda to Melbourne); Tyler Brockman (Hawthorn to West Coast Eagles); Chris Burgess (Gold Coast Suns to Fremantle); Mabior Chol (Gold Coast Suns to Hawthorn); Nick Colfield (St Kilda to Western Bulldogs); Massimo D'Ambrosio (Essendon to Hawthorn); Paddy Dow (Carlton to St Kilda); Xavier Duursma (Port Adelaide to Essendon); Zac Fisher (Carlton to North Melbourne); Tom Fullarton (Brisbane Lions to Melbourne); Jack Ginnivan (Collingwood to Hawthorn); Brodie Grundy (Melbourne to Sydney Swans); Jack Gunston (Brisbane Lions to Hawthorn); James Harmes (Melbourne to Western Bulldogs); Liam Henry (Fremantle to St Kilda); Elijah Hollands (Gold Coast Suns to Carlton); Jacob Koschitzke (Hawthorn to Richmond); Shane McAdam (Adelaide Crows to Melbourne); Bigoa Nyuon (Richmond to North Melbourne); Esava Ratugolea (Geelong Cats to Port Adelaide); Brandon Ryan (Hawthorn to Brisbane Lions); Lachie Schultz (Fremantle to Collingwood); Ivan Soldo (Richmond to Port Adelaide); Dylan Stephens (Sydney Swans to North Melbourne); Jordan Sweet (Western Bulldogs to Port Adelaide); Brandon Zerk-Thatcher (Essendon to Port Adelaide).

▼ Chloe Molloy crossed from Collingwood to the Sydney Swans during the 2023 AFLW Priority Signing Period.

AFLW Trade Period

The following players were traded during the AFLW Trade Period held before the 2023 AFLW Season:

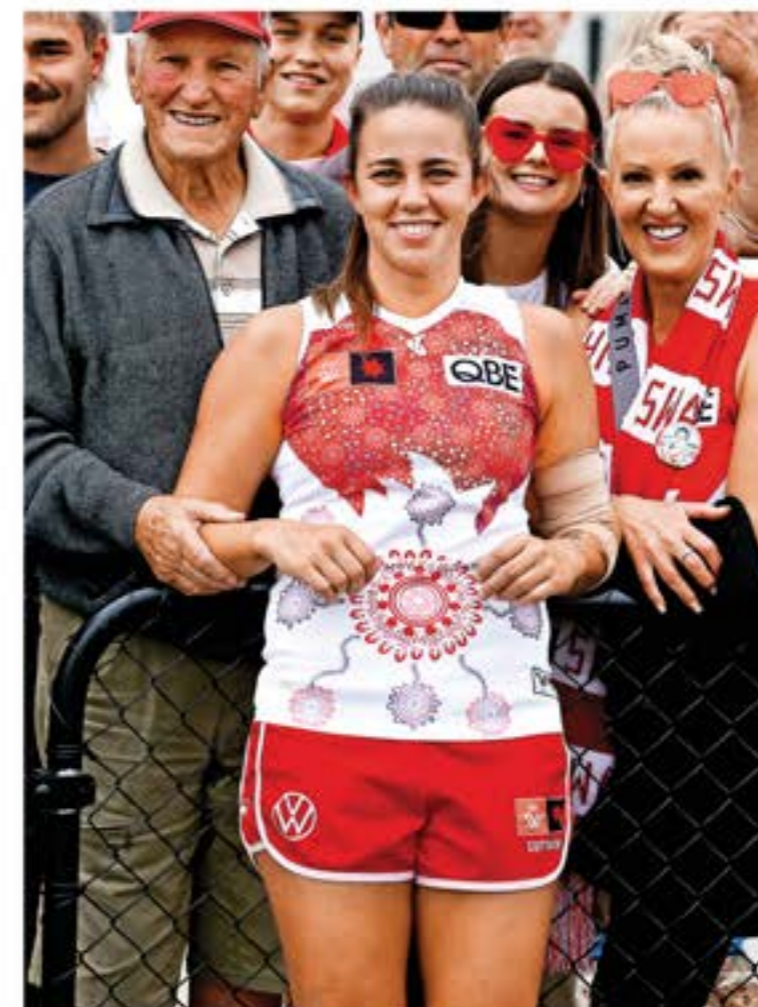
Jessica Allan (GWS Giants to Adelaide Crows); Maddy Brancatisano (Richmond to Gold Coast Suns); Grace Campbell (North Melbourne to Collingwood); Stephanie Chiocci (Collingwood to St Kilda); Molly Eastman (Sydney Swans to Richmond); Harriet Cordner (Richmond to Carlton); Clara Fitzpatrick (St Kilda to Gold Coast Suns); Amy Franklin (Fremantle to West Coast Eagles); Laura Gardiner (Geelong Cats to Sydney Swans); Serena Gibbs (Carlton to Fremantle); Sarah Goodwin (Port Adelaide to Adelaide Crows); Caitlin Greiser (St Kilda to Richmond); Ellie Hampson (Gold Coast Suns to Brisbane Lions); Kodi Jacques (Richmond to Essendon); Courtney Jones (Gold Coast Suns to Richmond); Maddy Keryk (Geelong Cats to Port Adelaide); Jaimee Lambert (Collingwood to St Kilda); Ella Maurer (North Melbourne to Gold Coast Suns); Jordan Membrey (Collingwood to Gold Coast Suns); Neil Morris-Dalton (Western Bulldogs to Collingwood); Natalie Plane (Carlton to St Kilda); Lucinda Pullar (Brisbane Lions to North Melbourne); Tahlia Read (Fremantle to Carlton); Eliza Shannon (Hawthorn to North Melbourne); Kate Shierlaw (St Kilda to North Melbourne); Jasmine Simmons (Adelaide Crows to Port Adelaide); Kate Surman (Port Adelaide to Geelong Cats); Jesse Wardlaw (Brisbane Lions to St Kilda); Brooke Walker (Carlton to Essendon); Serene Watson (Gold Coast Suns to St Kilda); Terri White (St Kilda to Collingwood).

AFLW Priority Signing Period

The AFLW Priority Signing Period (PSP) allowed the four expansion clubs from 2022 (Hawthorn, Essendon, Port Adelaide and Sydney Swans) the ability to sign eligible PSP players before the Sign and Trade Period held before the 2023 AFLW Season.

The following players signed to a new club during the period:

- ▶ Essendon - Brooke Brown (North Melbourne);
- ▶ Hawthorn - Emily Bates (Brisbane Lions), Greta Bodey (Brisbane Lions);
- ▶ Port Adelaide - Janelle Cuthbertson (Fremantle), Matilda Scholz (Glenelg), Ashleigh Woodland (Adelaide Crows);
- ▶ Sydney Swans - Lucy McEvoy (Carlton), Chloe Molloy (Collingwood)



2023 AFLW DRAFT SELECTIONS (FIRST ROUND)

No.	CLUB	PLAYER	STATE LEAGUE CLUB	COMMUNITY CLUB
1	Western Bulldogs	Kristie-Lee Weston-Turner	Western Jets	Sunshine Heights
2	West Coast Eagles	Jessica Rentsch	GWV Rebels	Penshurst
3	GWS Giants	Kaitlyn Srtogj	Peel Thunder	Mandurah Mustangs
4	Western Bulldogs	Brooke Barwick	Tasmania Devils	Glenorchy
5	Melbourne	Alyssia Pisano	Eastern Ranges	Rowville Knights
6	Western Bulldogs	Elaine Grigg	Central District	Broadview
7	Carlton	Lila Keck	Bendigo Pioneers	South Bendigo
8	Collingwood	Georgia Clark	Tasmania Devils	Glenorchy
9	Collingwood	Lucille Cronin	Oakleigh Chargers	Kew Comets
10	St Kilda	Kiera Whaley	Western Jets	Caroline Springs
11	Western Bulldogs	Cleo Buttifant	Turvey Park	Turvey Park Bulldogs
12	Melbourne	Ryleigh Wotherspoon	Sherwood Districts	Eastern Swans
13	Richmond	Isabel Bacon	Sandringham Dragons	Port Melbourne Colts
14	West Coast Eagles	Kayley Kavanagh	Calder Cannons	Strathmore
15	Brisbane Lions	Evie Long	Brisbane Lions Academy	Sandgate
16	Sydney Swans	Sarah Grunden	Calder Cannons	Kelso
17	Hawthorn	Mikayla Williamson	Dandenong Stingrays	Pines
18	Geelong Cats	Chantal Mason	Geelong Falcons	St Joseph's
19	Port Adelaide	Piper Window	Glenelg	Morphettville Park
20	Essendon	Emily Dough	Sandringham Dragons	East Malvern
21	Brisbane Lions	Sophie Peters	Brisbane Lions Academy	Maroochydore

2023 AFLW Draft

A total of 53 players were selected at the AFLW Draft, held at Marvel Stadium in December. The Western Bulldogs selected Kristie-Lee Weston-Turner with the No.1 pick. She was a member of the Western Jets premiership side in 2022 and 2023 AFL National Academy Girls graduate.

Four father-daughter selections were made in 2023 AFLW Draft, with Bryde O'Rourke (Geelong Cats), Jemma Rigoni (Melbourne), Meg Robertson (Carlton) and Charlotte Simpson (St Kilda) all landing at the club their father previously represented, along with seven Academy selections for Brisbane/Gold Coast players.

With a further eight pre-draft selections made by clubs, 61 new players in all joined the 18 clubs.



▷ Kristie-Lee Weston-Turner was presented with her Bulldogs guernsey by club captain Elise Blackburn after being selected No. 1 overall in the 2023 AFLW Draft.

▷ This group of first-round selections were all smiles after the 2023 AFLW Draft.

AFLW SEASON EIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY DRAFT

The following players were chosen under SSP rules:

No.	Club	Player	State League Club	Community Club
1	Geelong Cats	Erin Hoare	Geelong Cats	St Marys
2	Port Adelaide	Jasmin Stewart	Fremantle	Kambalda
3	Fremantle	Tabieah Mulder	South Fremantle	Piara Waters
4	Hawthorn	Matteo Breed	North Adelaide	Darwin Buffaloes
5	Carlton	Lulu Beatty	Northern Knights	Darwin Women's
6	Gold Coast Suns	Cara McCrossan	Casey Demons	-
7	Fremantle	Emmalee Fiedler	East Fremantle	Curtin Uni Wesley
8	GWS Giants	Caitlin Miller	Southport	Southport
9	Carlton	Madeline Hendrie	Western Bulldogs	East Sydney Bulldogs
10	Gold Coast Suns	Maura Girvan	Bond University	-
11	Western Bulldogs	Dominique Carruthers	Western Bulldogs (VFLW)	North Shore Bombers
12	Port Adelaide	Katalyn Pope	West Coast Eagles	Broadview
13	Collingwood	Eleri Morris	Collingwood (VFLW)	Northern Districts Tigers
14	Collingwood	Selena Karlson	St Kilda (AFLW)	Frankston YCM
15	Port Adelaide	George Jaques	Norwood	Ainslie Tricolours
16	Brisbane Lions	Pappy Boltz	Southport	Cairns Saints
17	Fremantle	Joe Flynn	East Fremantle	Rosemoyn
18	Hawthorn	Kristy Stratton	Collingwood	Scoreby
19	Carlton	Marianna Anthony	North Melbourne (VFLW)	Caulfield Grammarians
20	St Kilda	Bethany Pinchin	Brisbane Lions	Broadbeach
21	Fremantle	Joanne Cregg	Subiaco	Wembley
22	GWS Giants	Anriisa Bradfield	Gold Coast Suns	Southport
23	North Melbourne	Ruby Tripodi	Williamstown	Williamstown CYMS
24	Richmond	Shelby Knoll	Casey Demons	Kangaroo Flat
25	Carlton	Chloe Wrigley	Peel Thunder	-
26	Adelaide Crows	Yvonne Bonner	GWS Giants	-



AFL Academy Boys

The 26th intake of the AFL Academy Boys program featured 25 players who went on to be selected by AFL clubs in the 2023 National and Rookie Drafts. The Academy represented Australia in two matches throughout the 2023 season, which included featuring in the inaugural Gather Round in South Australia. The Australian Under-18 side fell to a narrow 10.10 (70) to 8.9 (57) defeat to Port Adelaide's SANFL team at Adelaide Hills in April, with Harley Reid winning the medal as Australia's best player. The Australian Under-18 team bounced back to defeat Carlton's VFL side at Marvel Stadium in May, claiming a 13.8 (86) to 13.4 (82) victory. Jake Rogers gathered 26 disposals and four clearances to win the best-on-ground medal. George Stevens captained the Australian team in both matches.

The following players featured in the 2023 AFL Academy Boys squad:

Lachlan Cabor (NSW/ACT), Nate Caddy (Vic M), Jack Callinan (Tas), Caiden Cleary (NSW/ACT), Daniel Curtin (WA), Jack Delean (SA), Zane Duursma (Vic C), Mitchell Edwards (WA), William Green (Vic M), Riley Hardeman (WA), William Lorenz (Vic M), Kane McAuliffe (SA), Colby McKercher (Tas), Ashton Moir (SA), Connor O'Sullivan (NSW/ACT), William Patton (SA), Nathan Philactides (Vic M), Ethan Read (Qld), Archer Reid (Vic C), Harley Reid (Vic C), Archie Roberts (Vic M), Jake Rogers (Qld), Ryley Sanders (Tas), Cooper Simpson (Vic C), George Stevens (Vic C), Koltyn Tholstrup (WA), Orlando Turner (NT), Jed Walter (Qld), Nick Watson (Vic M), Darcy Wilson (Vic C).

AFL Academy Girls

The sixth intake of the AFLW Academy Girls squad featured a selection of the country's most talented footballers born in 2005 who were eligible for selection in the 2023 AFLW Draft following the 2023 AFLW season. The AFLW Academy Girls took part in three high-performance camps throughout the 2023 season before representing Australia in a clash against an Under-23 All-Stars outfit at Marvel Stadium in June. The Australian Under-18 team went down in a 6.8 (44) to 6.6 (42) thriller, with Mel Staunton winning the medal as Australia's best player. South Australian midfielder Piper Window captained the Australian team.

The following players featured in the 2023 AFL Academy Girls squad:

Brooke Barwick (Tas), Molly Brooksby (SA), Kyanne Campbell (NT), Georgia Clark (Tas), Georgia Cleaver (WA), Rania Crozier (Qld), Darcie Davies (Qld), Amy Gaylor (Vic M), Shineah Goody (SA), Tsharni Graham (NT), Elaine Grigg (SA), Jaime Henry (WA), Lila Keck (Vic C), Bianca Lyne (Vic C), Sienna McMullen (Qld), Olivia Morris (NSW/ACT), Sophie Peters (Qld), Alyssia Pisano (Vic M), Jessica Rentsch (Vic C), Marnie Robinson (NSW/ACT), Matilda Scholz (SA), Kaitlyn Srihoj (WA), Melanie Staunton (NSW/ACT), Laura Stone (Vic M), Jess Vukic (Vic M), Kristie-Lee Weston-Turner (Vic M), Kiera Whitley (Vic M), Mikayla Williamson (Vic C), Piper Window (SA), Lauren Young (SA).



△ The 2023 AFL Academy Girls squad took part in three high-performance camps before representing Australia in a game against an under-23 All-Stars side.

2023 AFL National Championships - U18 Boys

The Allies won the AFL National Under-18 Championships Boys title for the first time after completing an unbeaten run through their four matches. The Allies had never previously won more than one of their four matches since the current format was introduced in 2016. Allies midfielder Ryley Sanders was awarded the Larke Medal as the best and fairest player of the Championships. The Tasmanian collected 142 disposals at an average of 35.5 per match to win the award with 25 votes, finishing ahead of Allies teammate and fellow Tasmanian Colby McKercher, who polled 20 votes.

Team MVPs

Allies: Connor O'Sullivan
South Australia: Sid Draper
Victoria Country: Harley Reid
Victoria Metro: Oliver Murphy
Western Australia: Daniel Curtin

2023 AFL National Championships

U18 Boys All-Australian Team

B: William Patton (SA), Connor O'Sullivan (Allies), Oliver Murphy (Vic M)
HB: Riley Hardeman (WA), Daniel Curtin (WA), Archie Roberts (Vic M)
C: Jake Rogers (Allies), Ryley Sanders (Allies, capt), Colby McKercher (Allies)
HF: Sid Draper (SA), Jed Walter (Allies), Zane Duursma (Vic C)
F: Koen Sanchez (WA), Harley Reid (Vic C), Nick Watson (Vic M)
FOLL: Ethan Read (Allies), Clay Hall (WA), Caiden Cleary (Allies)
INT: Levi Ashcroft (Vic M), William Green (Vic M), James Leake (Allies), Finn O'Sullivan (Vic C), George Stevens (Vic C)
COACH: Mark McVeigh (Allies)



△ Evie Cowcher was named Western Australia's MVP at the AFL National Under-18 Championships, despite still being eligible for the Under-16 Championships. She also won All-Australian selection at both championships.

2023 AFL National Championships - U18 Girls

South Australia claimed the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships Girls title after producing an unbeaten run across its three matches. Queensland ruck and forward Havana Harris was awarded the best and fairest player award. She polled 18 votes to finish three ahead of South Australian midfielder Shineah Goody. A total of 12 bottom-age players were selected in the All-Australian team, highlighted by Queensland pair Dekota Baron and Ava Usher and Western Australia defender Evie Cowcher earning selection after also being named in the 2023 AFL National Development Under-16 Championships All-Australian team.

Team MVPs

Allies: Marnie Robinson
Queensland: Havana Harris
South Australia: India Rasheed
Victoria Country: Ash Centra
Victoria Metro: Kayley Kavanagh
Western Australia: Evie Cowcher

2023 AFL National Championships

U18 Girls All-Australian Team

B: Marnie Robinson (Allies), Kiara Bischa (Qld), Evie Cowcher (WA)
HB: Laura Stone (Vic M), Poppy Scholz (SA), Zipporah Fish (WA)
C: Kaitlyn Srihoj (WA), Shineah Goody (SA), Sara Howley (Vic C)
HF: Ashley Centra (Vic C), Dekota Baron (Qld), India Rasheed (SA)
F: Emma McDonald (Vic M), Lauren Young (SA), Elaine Grigg (SA)
FOLL: Havana Harris (Qld), Piper Window (SA, capt), Ava Usher (Qld)
INT: Brooke Boileau (SA), Kayley Kavanagh (Vic M), Molly O'Hehir (WA), Jemma Whittington-Charity (SA), Mikayla Williamson (Vic C)
COACH: Jason Rivett (SA)

2023 AFL National Development Championships - U16 Boys

Victoria Metro and Brisbane Lions Academy were the title winners at the 2023 AFL National Development Championships - Under-16 Boys. Victoria Metro took out the Pool A title by winning two of its three matches in the round-robin series. Western Australia also finished with a 2-1 record, with the title awarded to Victoria Metro after defeating Western Australia in their head-to-head clash.

Brisbane Lions Academy claimed the Pool B title after winning all three matches to finish four points ahead of the GWS Giants Academy and Gold Coast Suns Academy.

South Australian midfielder Dyson Sharp claimed the Kevin Sheehan Medal as the best and fairest for Pool A, while Beau Addinsall from the Gold Coast Suns Academy took out Alan McLean Medal as the Pool B best and fairest.

Team MVPs

Brisbane Lions Academy: Daniel Annable
Gold Coast Suns Academy: Beau Addinsall
GWS Giants Academy: Ryder Corrigan
Northern Territory: Taj Murray
South Australia: Dyson Sharp
Sydney Swans Academy: Lachlan Carmichael
Tasmania: Jasper Hay
Victoria Country: Willem Duursma
Victoria Metro: Jack Dalton
Western Australia: Basil Hart

2023 AFL National Development Championships U16 Boys All-Australian Team

B: Lachlan Carmichael (Sydney Swans Acad), Willem Duursma (Vic C), Lucas Wootton (Tas)
HB: Harrison Wilson (GWS Giants Acad), Kalari White (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Harrison Bridge (Brisbane Lions Acad)
C: Zeke Umland (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Jack Dalton (Vic M), Dylan Patterson (Gold Coast Suns Acad)
HF: Jai Murray, (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Noah Chamberlain (Sydney Swans Acad), Beau Addinsall (Gold Coast Suns Acad)
F: Oliver Greevas (Vic M), Archie Ludowyke (Vic M), Basil Hart (WA)
FOL: Louis Emmett, (Vic M), Dyson Sharp (SA), Ryder Corrigan (GWS Giants Acad)
INT: Daniel Annable (Brisbane Lions Acad), Lachy Dovaston (Vic M), Jasper Hay (Tas), Taj Murray (NT), Joshua Reichelt (SA)
COACH: Andrew Sturgess (Vic M)



2023 AFL National Development Championships - U16 Girls

South Australia and Brisbane Lions secured title wins at the 2023 AFL National Development Championships - Under-16 Girls, which was played as an interstate carnival for the first time. South Australia took out the Pool A title by winning both games in the round-robin series. Brisbane Lions Academy claimed the Pool B title, edging out the Gold Coast Suns Academy on percentage after both sides finished with a 2-0 record.

Western Australia midfielder Mia Russo was named the best and fairest for Pool A, while Ava Usher from the Gold Coast Suns Academy took out Pool B best and fairest.

Team MVPs

Brisbane Lions Academy: Molly Ferguson
Gold Coast Suns Academy: Alannah Welsh
GWS Giants Academy: Molly McLaren
Northern Territory: Shakaila Gardiner-Dunn
South Australia: Sophie Eaton
Sydney Swans Academy: Kiera Yerbury
Tasmania: Harriet Bingley
Victoria Country: Ella Stoddart
Victoria Metro: Chloe Baker-West
Western Australia: Mia Russo

△ South Australia's Sid Draper was awarded the Jack Collins-Alan Schwab AFL Life Members Scholarship in 2023 to assist with his education and personal development in 2024. He is pictured with AFL Life Members' president Des Tuddenham (left) and AFL National Talent Advisor Kevin Sheehan.

2023 AFL National Development Championships U16 Girls All-Australian Team

B: Chloe Baker-West (Vic M), Olivia Crane (WA), Alannah Welsh (Gold Coast Suns Acad)
HB: Mia Geere (Brisbane Lions Acad), Evie Cowcher (WA), Ella Stoddart (Vic C)
C: Sunny Lappin (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Mia Russo (WA), Eloise Mackereth (SA)
HF: Marlo Graham (Vic M), Olivia Wolmarans (WA), Tayla McMillan (Vic M)
F: Alicia Blizzard (WA), Georja Davies (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Priya Bowering (Tas)
R: Chloe Tonkin (SA), Ava Usher (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Sophie Eaton (SA)
INT: India Bonadeo (WA), Dekota Baron (Gold Coast Suns Acad), Charli Hazelhurst (SA), Stella Huxtable (Vic C), Stephanie Tredwell (SA)

Jack Collins-Alan Schwab AFL Life Members Scholarship

Sid Draper was awarded the 2023 Jack Collins-Alan Schwab AFL Life Members scholarship, joining an elite group of previous winners which includes Joel Selwood, Luke Hodge, Nic Naitanui, Lachie Whitfield, Sam Walsh and 2023 No. 1 draft pick Harley Reid.

Draper received a \$10,000 prize to assist his education and personal development during his draft year in 2024.



△ South Australia won the 2023 AFL National Development Under-16 Championships Pool A title. Sophie Eaton (left, holding the trophy) was her state's MVP.

BROADCASTING/ INFRASTRUCTURE

MATTHEW CHUN

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER FINANCE, CLUBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE



What a year for the AFL. The game is in great shape both on and off the field, with thriving elite men's and women's competitions attracting huge audience numbers across all mediums, as well as significant progress on the infrastructure front.

As referenced earlier in this report, an historic joint Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was finalised in September which will underpin the future of the game and provide certainty for the industry from 2023 through to 2027.

Following on-going discussions with club presidents, CEOs and senior coaches in November 2023 we also announced an increase to the AFL Soft Cap limit for 2024, including a partial senior coach deduction among other policy updates.

The commitment and support of our broadcasters was once again of paramount importance to the success of the game, and we thank all partners who are with us for all parts of our game through a record-breaking year.

In a year that saw record attendance and membership, the game experienced strong total broadcast audience growth across both the men's and women's competitions.

We have continued to work closely with our media partners and the success of these relationships is reflected in the incredible access for fans and the strength of the game across the country. All stakeholders should be proud of what the future holds after a very successful 2023.

The Anzac Eve match between Melbourne and Richmond continues to gather momentum and almost 84,000 fans attended last year's clash.





Historic Collective Bargaining Agreement

On September 21, 2023, the AFL and AFL Players Association (AFLPA) announced the finalisation of a new and historic joint Collective Bargaining Agreement to cover AFL and AFLW players. The landmark agreement is a long-term five-year deal providing certainty for the industry from 2023 through to 2027.

Key highlights of the new deal include a further 29 per cent pay uplift for AFLW players, effective in Season Eight, as well as an increase in the season length to 12 rounds in 2025, and potentially up to 14 rounds if key growth metrics are met.

Under the revised CBA, it is estimated that more than 90 of the top AFLW players will be paid more than \$100,000 for the 2023 season (inclusive of ASAs) - up from 40 players last season (Season Seven) and 12 players in Season Six.

△ The AFL and the AFL Players Association announced the finalisation of a new and historic joint Collective Bargaining Agreement for AFL and AFLW players from 2023-27.

The men's competition will see an uplift of 10 per cent in Total Player Payments, effective immediately and back paid for the 2023 season.

The past players injury and hardship fund will also receive a \$40 million boost, with \$60 million invested in the fund over five years - up from \$20 million in the last CBA - to ensure that more players, including those suffering long-term impacts of concussion, are able to access funding to support them post-career.

The new CBA provides certainty to the players for both competitions, and it recognises their impact and contribution in continuing to make sure we have the greatest game in the world.

2024 Soft Cap review

Following on-going discussions with club presidents, CEOs and senior coaches, the AFL announced an increase to the AFL Soft Cap limit for 2024.

An increase of \$250,000 has been added to the Soft Cap for 2024, bringing the total Soft Cap limit for 2024 to \$7,275 million. A senior coach deduction has also been established allowing clubs to deduct up to 20 per cent of their senior coaches' salary, representing additional 'spend capacity' over and above the Soft Cap limit increase.

The changes were a result of an extensive consultation process with clubs, as well as recognising the important role senior coaches play.

Broadcast Overview - Toyota AFL Premiership Season

The game experienced strong total broadcast audience growth in 2023. The total average audience for the 2023 Toyota Premiership season was 129 million (including finals), a 2.6 per cent increase on 2022.

It was an immediate strong start for the round one opener between Richmond and Carlton, with the match averaging 1.3 million viewers nationally. This was up 26 per cent compared to the 2022 AFL season average and up 19 per cent on the 2022 season opening Thursday night.

The traditional Anzac Day clash between Collingwood and Essendon at the MCG, played on a Tuesday afternoon in 2023, was the highest rating game of the home and away season on the Seven Network, with an average national audience of 1.6 million.

Eventual premier Collingwood featured heavily on the list of most-watched matches in 2023 with its extraordinary streak of exciting matches generating huge television audiences.

In general, Queensland and South Australia experienced significant free-to-air audience growth in 2023, up nine per cent and eight per cent respectively on 2022, correlating with the on-field success of the Brisbane Lions and Port Adelaide.

Tasmania's free-to-air ratings also grew substantially in 2023, with momentum building around the new AFL club licence announced in May.

In addition to the elite game, fans eagerly accessed broadcasts of state league and junior championship games, while vision from these matches was central in explaining the stories and backgrounds of talent selected in the NAB AFL and AFLW Drafts.

▽ Hamish McLachlan hosted another thrilling Brownlow Medal count with Brisbane's Lachie Neale eventually winning by two votes.

Gather Round

The 2023 AFL season saw the introduction of Gather Round in round five, with all matches for the round scheduled in South Australia for a festival of footy.

The inaugural Gather Round was an overwhelming success, with all nine games sold out. More than 268,000 spectators attended matches at Adelaide Oval, Norwood Oval and Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills, and thousands more attended the footy festival on the banks of the River Torrens.

During the round, the AFL facilitated dozens of community club and school visits, held seminars for community club volunteers and delivered more than 10,000 footballs to regional community clubs.

The Gather Round of matches saw a total audience of 5.79 million people nationally and an average national audience of 644,000 across the round, up 23 per cent compared with the 2022 AFL season average.

The highest rating match of the round was the Richmond v Sydney Swans clash on the Friday night, with a national audience of 1.1 million. This match also attracted a local Adelaide audience of 103,000 making it the highest rating game in the state, not featuring a local team, for the last three years.

The Thursday night match featuring the Adelaide Crows v Carlton attracted a local Adelaide audience of 148,000, making it the highest rating non-Showdown match in the state for the last three years.

Brownlow Medal

The 2023 Brownlow Medal count saw 1100 people in attendance at Crown's Palladium Ballroom to celebrate Brisbane co-captain Lachie Neale's claim the medal for the second time at the end of a thrilling vote count.

Neale polled 31 votes to become the 16th player to win multiple Brownlow Medals.

Broadcast nationally on the Seven Network, the 2023 Brownlow Medal telecast was the biggest Brownlow audience since 2017, reaching a total average audience of 1.14 million.



Toyota AFL Finals Series and Toyota AFL Grand Final

The nail-biting 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final between Collingwood and the Brisbane Lions was one of the most watched television programs of 2023, attracting an average total television audience of 3.75 million viewers, including 3.3 million free-to-air viewers nationally and an additional 441,000 viewers live on 7Plus - the biggest ever audience for an AFL match on a streaming platform.

Seven's coverage of the 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final exceeded the previous year's Grand Final by 22 per cent when the Geelong Cats defeated the Sydney Swans.

The free-to-air broadcast on the Seven Network reached a peak national audience of 4.98 million Australians on Channel 7 and 756,000 on 7Plus.

In Melbourne, the Grand Final recorded a 97.4 per cent share of viewers during the game, with Sydney recording a 79.5 per cent share of viewers in its timeslot, and Brisbane an 87.9 per cent share. The Brisbane metro area saw a notable 30 per cent increase in audience year-on-year and the largest Brisbane audience since 2004.

Broadcast Overview - NAB AFLW Premiership Season

Total home and away viewership for the 2023 season was 4.95 million, averaging 54,969 viewers per game. Fixturing for the season focused on Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon matches, to build at-game attendance, which did impact viewer numbers with a reduced amount of Saturday night matches.

There was a proactive approach to broadcaster engagement in order to create an engaging and differentiated viewing experience for AFLW, as the league continues to mature.

▽ The West Coast Eagles scored one of the upsets of the season when they defeated the Western Bulldogs by seven points at Marvel Stadium in round 23.

NAB AFLW Grand Final

Viewership for the 2023 Grand Final, between the Brisbane Lions and North Melbourne at Ikon Park, was 354,949. This was down against the Season Seven Grand Final between the Brisbane Lions and Melbourne, which drew 386,000 viewers.

Marvel Stadium redevelopment

The redevelopment of Marvel Stadium has taken shape as it entered its final phase during 2023.

The team facilities were completed and ready for round one of the AFL season, with the initial new areas of the redevelopment at Stadium Square (Gate Two) and Gate Five commencing during the AFL season, to be utilised for the summer concert and cricket seasons, ahead of the 2024 AFL season.

The stadium remained fully operational throughout works in 2023 to ensure crowd capacity was not compromised and to maintain the match-day experience for fans - an outstanding effort by the delivery team.

As major works were concluded in 2023 and tenancies open early in the new year, we look forward to welcoming fans to the stadium in 2024 to enjoy all the new venues and spaces.

SEVEN'S COVERAGE OF THE 2023 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL EXCEEDED THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S GRAND FINAL BY 22 PERCENT.

MOST WATCHED GAMES FOR 2023 - HOME AND AWAY SEASON

AFL			
Match	Round	Timeslot	Average TV audience
Collingwood v Essendon	6	Tuesday afternoon	1,600,496
Richmond v Carlton	1	Thursday night	1,339,246
Geelong Cats v Collingwood	1	Friday night	1,270,138
Melbourne v Collingwood	13	Monday afternoon	1,263,501
Collingwood v Brisbane Lions	23	Friday night	1,245,588

AFLW			
Match	Round	Timeslot	Average TV audience
Melbourne v Collingwood	1	Friday night	302,284
Hawthorn v Essendon	1	Saturday night	200,338
Western Bulldogs v St Kilda	5	Friday night	141,731
Brisbane Lions v Richmond	1	Sunday afternoon	120,624
Hawthorn v Brisbane Lions	5	Sunday afternoon	118,861

MOST WATCHED AFL GAMES BY MARKET IN 2023

AFL				
Market	Match	Round	Timeslot	Average TV audience
NSW	Sydney Swans v Port Adelaide	4	Saturday night	122,601
QLD	Collingwood v Brisbane Lions	23	Friday night	119,528
VIC	Collingwood v Essendon	6	Tuesday afternoon	515,110
WA	West Coast Eagles v Fremantle	22	Saturday night	196,639
SA	Port Adelaide v Adelaide Crows	3	Saturday night	155,686
TAS	Collingwood v Essendon	6	Tuesday afternoon	58,613

AFLW				
Market	Match	Round	Timeslot	Average TV audience
NSW	Sydney Swans v GWS	1	Sunday afternoon	24,093
QLD	Melbourne v Collingwood	1	Friday night	13,216
VIC	Melbourne v Collingwood	1	Friday night	124,706
WA	West Coast Eagles v Port Adelaide	5	Friday night	36,134
SA	Melbourne v Collingwood	1	Friday night	25,657
TAS	Melbourne v Collingwood	1	Friday night	17,702



▷ The Anzac Day clash between Collingwood and Essendon was the highest rating game of the home and away season with an average national audience of 1.6 million.



GAME DEVELOPMENT

ROB AULD

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER GAME DEVELOPMENT



The Game Development team's focus in 2023 was to rebuild participation levels to achieve our goal of football in every home across the country.

It was a huge year across the board, from NAB AFL Auskick through to the various participation programs, as well as junior and senior local club football.

A driving force behind the game's success and popularity is every one of the 200,000-plus volunteers who power community clubs and communities, ensuring the foundation of footy remains the towns and communities where local clubs bring together people from all walks of life.

The AFL's ongoing commitment is to continue to invest in community football and our administration recognises there are areas of the game doing it tough, which is why we are committed to directing more support than ever before to where it's needed most.

Whether you're a volunteer, player, coach, umpire, administrator, parent or supporter, thank you for the role you played in making footy great in 2023.

The AFL continues to invest in community football, providing support for participants at all levels.



Participation

Overall participation in 2023 reached record levels, with more than 526,000 registered participants across all formats, eclipsing levels from both 2022 and the previous record set in 2019. This included a record 125,000 Auskickers pulling on the boots at centres across the country.

Queensland was a shining light with the game soaring to new heights in the sunshine state. More than 68,000 people registered to participate in Queensland, an increase of more than 10,000 on the previous record set a year prior.

Community football has been incredibly resilient and participation numbers point to a bright future for the game, but this only reinforces the importance of the AFL providing support to ensure a strong base for future growth and prosperity. Tasmania, Victoria, the Northern Territory and Western Australia also experienced overall increases on previous record levels, showing the game is in good shape across the country.

△ There were more than 526,000 registered participants across all formats in 2023, including 125,000 registered Auskickers.

Women and girls footy

Since the inception of the AFLW in 2017, women's and girls' football has gone through tremendous growth. The AFL is committed to reaching our aim set out in the Women's Football Vision of equal participation and representation across all levels of community football by 2030.

Strong progress continued in 2023. Women and girls now make up 20 per cent of community football participants nationally, with more than 75,000 women and girls as registered participants. In the last year alone, participation levels for girls aged 5-9, from NAB AFL Auskick through to junior footy, has grown 13 per cent.

In 2023 there were around 27,500 accredited coaches across Australia, of which just under 2500 were female, a number that has grown significantly. The partnership between the AFL and BHP will be a driving force behind reaching future targets and was extended in 2023 to run through to 2025. BHP's support as a women's coaching partner aims to level the playing field across genders, drive higher female participation and support key game development programs like the BHP Community Coach of the Year Award and Women's Coaching Month.

Community football investment

Following the AFL's announcement in 2022 of a major boost in community football funding, 2023 was the first year in which the enshrined minimum level of annual funding in community football of 10 per cent of the game's revenue came into effect, resulting in an immediate uplift from \$50 million in 2022 to \$67 million in 2023.

This increase has allowed the AFL to sharpen its focus on creating more welcoming and accessible facilities, encouraging more women and girls to play, umpire, coach and administer, expanding the game into Queensland and New South Wales and making it more inclusive for multicultural communities.

Community Camps return

In 2023 the AFL Community Camp program returned to what it was pre-COVID. AFL clubs visited regional communities around the country throughout February and early March, ahead of the 2023 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. More than 700 AFL players were back visiting communities, meeting fans and inspiring the next generation in person.

Disability and inclusion

Toyota National Inclusion Carnival and Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships

Two important events on the AFL's disability inclusion calendar were big successes in 2023. The 2023 Toyota National Inclusion Carnival took place in Ipswich, Queensland in October and brought together the most talented male footballers with an intellectual disability, representative teams from eight states and territories. Tasmania won the state's first Division 1 title while Victoria Country took out Division 2.

Victoria then made it back-to-back national titles for the 'Big V' with victory in the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships, played at Melbourne's State Netball and Hockey Centre in November.

With ongoing support from the AFL's premier partner Toyota, both these events highlight the AFL's commitment to ensuring Australian Football is a sport for all.

New digital resources for disability inclusion

In partnership with Monash University, the AFL launched a refreshed suite of digital 'AllPlay Footy' resources, designed to help more kids with developmental challenges or disability participate in Australian Football.

- ▷ The Game Development team also supports football outside of Australia, here being played in Japan.
- ▷ Tasmania won the state's first Division 1 title at the 2023 Toyota National Inclusion Carnival in Ipswich.
- ▷ Victoria took out the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships at Melbourne's State Netball and Hockey Centre.



Tasmania community footy boost

In May, an historic announcement was made when the AFL granted Tasmania a licence to have its own AFL and AFLW teams. This will be transformational for Tasmania across all levels of footy. As part of the AFL committing \$360 million to support a new team in Tasmania, more than \$90 million of this will go to game development, ensuring the future of the game is bright in the football heartland state.

Young Tasmanians will have the chance to play for a home-grown side after the AFL awarded licences for the state to have its own AFL and AFLW teams.

Refreshed international championships program

With the AFL's international program having been impacted by the pandemic, the AFL confirmed plans to bring international footy competitions back for the first time since 2017 with three international regional championships to be played in 2024. Canada will host the Transatlantic Cup in August before the Pacific Cup and Asia Cup are held in November.

South Australian Football Facilities Fund

In a major boost for grassroots football in South Australia, the AFL teamed up with the South Australian Government and SANFL to provide an \$8 million funding boost for community football facilities in SA, as part of the legacy of the state being the first to host AFL Gather Round.



AFL corporate partner support helping grassroots footy

The support of the AFL's corporate partners in supporting local football continues. In addition to BHP extending its involvement in support of women's football, the AFL has joined forces with corporate partners to direct funding to help at grassroots football through:

- ▶ The Telstra Footy Country Fund, which will provide community footy clubs with \$8 million over the next four years - \$2 million per year.
- ▶ Toyota's 'Good for Footy' program continues to support local community clubs with more than \$11 million raised for grassroots clubs since its inception in 2008, including more than \$1 million raised this year.

Community Umpiring Week

The football industry celebrated Community Umpiring Week across rounds eight and nine of the 2023 Toyota AFL Premiership Season. The campaign highlights the integral role umpires play at all levels of the game, with around 15,000 umpires registered in community football across the field, boundary and goal disciplines in 2023. Highlights included community umpires leading AFL umpires onto grounds for AFL matches, AFL umpires officiating local junior games and returning to community umpire training sessions.

Facilities and infrastructure

To cater for the game's growth, the AFL has set out to build or develop an oval a week every year to build the capacity of community football venues and provide more welcoming, inclusive and gender-friendly facilities. Since the inception of AFLW in 2017, the AFL has invested more than \$117 million to partner with local, state and federal governments to generate more than 2900 venue network improvements, ensuring our grassroots facilities are more welcoming, inclusive and gender-friendly. In that time, we have added more than 420 new playing fields to allow for the growth in girls and boys playing our game.

Significant progress and outcomes were achieved in 2023, including:

- ▶ 100 new venues and more than 130 new playing fields now being utilised
- ▶ Female football is now being played at nearly 100 more venues than in 2022
- ▶ 380 new female friendly player change rooms were created in 2023
- ▶ More than 50 per cent venues now have female-friendly changerooms, up from 44 per cent in 2022 and 22 per cent in 2017
- ▶ Nearly 120 new female-friendly umpire changerooms.



Warrnambool project wins national award

The recently redeveloped Reid Oval in the regional Victorian town of Warrnambool took out the top national honour in the AFL's annual Ken Gannon Community Football Facilities Awards. The \$10.6 million project, completed in 2022, is a shining example of state government and local council coming together with sporting stakeholders to deliver a wonderful outcome for the community.

Working with state and local councils is vital in developing community facilities.

Portable clubrooms for clubs

The AFL teamed up with Ausco Modular to develop and unveil a revolutionary temporary change and clubroom facilities for community football clubs affected by disasters, with Princess Park in Shepparton, Victoria the first location for the project. The \$800,000, AFL-owned portable facility is expected to have a 30-year life cycle and has potential to be located at 15 to 20 different sites, to benefit community football clubs most in need.

Schools

More than 150 teachers from across Australia attended the inaugural AFL Schools Education Summit at Marvel Stadium in October.

Mental health guide launched

Highlighting the importance of mental health and wellbeing, the AFL and Origen, the National Centre of Excellence for Youth Mental Health, partnered to release the second edition of a world-leading evidence guide for best practice in mental health promotion and programs for grassroots footy clubs.

Around the States and Territories

The AFL state and territory offices across NSW/ACT, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory focus on community football, growth in participation and development of facilities.

Executive General Manager Game Development Rob Auld leads the national team.

AFL state-based leaders:

- ▶ Head of AFL Queensland - Trisha Squires
- ▶ Head of AFL NSW/ACT - Tiffany Robertson
- ▶ Head of AFL NT - Sam Gibson
- ▶ Head of AFL Tasmania - Damian Gill
- ▶ Head of AFL Victoria - Greg Madigan

Victoria

- ▶ 2023 was a huge year for community football in Victoria.
 - There were 85 leagues, 1040 clubs and 8750 teams showing how far the game reaches.
 - More than 176,000 registered participants played junior and senior club football, an increase on the 2019 record; there were also more than 7500 umpires and nearly 12,000 coaches.
 - More than 41,000 Auskickers with girls' participation growing to now make up one in four Auskick participants.
- ▶ The disability and inclusion space continues to be a focus area to ensure more people can participate in the game. In 2023, Victoria had two teams (Metro and Country) competed in the Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival in Ipswich for people with an intellectual disability. Vic Country took out the Division 2 title.
- ▶ In the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships played in Melbourne, the Vics made it back-to-back in Division 1.
- ▶ The Robert Rose Foundation Victorian Wheelchair Football League continued in 2023 with Hawthorn enjoying an outstanding season and winning the title. The competition expanded to include a community league while Wheelchair Auskick was launched for the first time.
- ▶ The Victorian Blind Football League was also won by the Hawks.
- ▶ AFL Victoria and School Sport Victoria (SSV) partnered to launch a nine-a-side competition for primary schools across the state, played in June and July.
- ▶ Victoria's strength in Indigenous and multicultural programs was evident through a number of programs:
 - The continuation of the Next Generation Academy, a joint initiative with AFL clubs, increasing opportunities for 12-15-year-olds.
 - The TAC Unity Cup returned with two gala days each showcasing more than 30 teams and more than 300 participants in junior and open age categories.
- ▶ 1989 Hawthorn premiership player Greg Madigan was announced as the new Head of AFL Victoria, bringing extensive commercial leadership experience to the role.
- ▶ A number of important funding programs supported community football in 2023, including:
 - Through the Strategic Community Investment Fund, more than \$2.8 million worth of funding was approved for local clubs;
 - The Country Football and Netball Program, worth \$2.5 million, is a Victorian Government investment program to assist grassroots country football and netball clubs, associations, and umpiring organisations to develop facilities;
 - \$1.5 million was committed by the AFL to new and enhanced facilities in Victoria;
 - A record number of Victorian clubs benefited from the Toyota Good for Footy raffle - with more than 300 clubs generating \$535,000 in ticket sales.

▶ Parade College claimed the 2023 Herald Sun Shield

- ▶ In Victoria, incredible support continues to be provided by long-standing partners WorkSafe, TAC, V/Line and the Victorian Responsible Gaming Foundation, supporting funding and programs such as the WorkSafe Country Club series and WorkSafe Club Safety Fund, TAC Club Rewards, the V/Line Cup and the Love the Game, Not the Odds initiative.
- ▶ The representative football program helps young talent progress through the pathway system and in 2023 this involved the Herald Sun Shield interschool series, Metro Development Series and V/Line Cup.
- ▶ A refreshed AFL Nines and Superkick program was launched in the spring months across the state.
- ▶ The Toyota National Volunteer Awards recognise outstanding contributions to community football on a national scale and this year three categories were taken out by Victorians - Rochester Football Netball Club won Community Club of the Year, Nabil Yassine was honoured as AFL Diversity Ambassador of the Year and Noel Watson won the AFL National Community Football Media Award category.
- ▶ To support the aim of growing the number and capability of women in community football coaching, AFL Victoria launched its Female Coaching Academy, in partnership with BHP.
- ▶ The V/Line Community Umpire Talent Academy in Victoria has produced its first crop of 'graduates', with 46 umpires promoted to officiate at Victorian state league level in 2023 - VFL, VFLW, Coates Talent League Boys and Girls.



- ▶ The 2023 NT Talent Academy season kicked off with the Academy's first high-performance camp in January. More than 90 players from across the NT came to Darwin to participate in the camp. Gold Coast AFLW head coach Cameron Joyce offered players first-hand experience of training at the highest level.
- ▶ NT competed in the Under-16 girls National Championships on the Gold Coast. Shakaila Gardener-Dunn was the MVP. NT also had four Under-18 female players (Annabel Kievit, Kierra Zerafa, Rhania Hewitt, and Sophie Berry) train for a week with the Gold Coast Suns AFLW team.
- ▶ NT had three players selected into National Academies - T'Sharni Graham (AFLW), Kyanna Campbell (AFLW) and Orlando Turner (AFL).
- ▶ Will Rowlands was drafted to Gold Coast Suns in the 2023 Rookie Draft and Patrick Snell was drafted to the Sydney Swans.
- ▶ The Under-18 female team competed in three Coates Talent League Girls games in Melbourne.
- ▶ NT had four male players selected into the Allies squad: Stanley Waistcoat from Tennant Creek, Will Rowlands from Darwin, Orlando Turner from Alice Springs and Clay Shadforth from Darwin/Borroloola.
- ▶ The NT had six female players selected into the Allies squad: Sophie Berry, T'Sharni Graham, Rhania Hewitt and Tatyana Perry from Darwin, Kyanna Campbell from Alice Springs, and Maria Rioli from the Tiwi Islands.
- ▶ AFLNT secured funding from the Federal Government to expand the reach of Indigenous Programs throughout the Northern Territory. The \$4.7 million investment from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has enabled AFLNT to expand to new remote Aboriginal communities and urban First Nations communities.
- ▶ The Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre had its highest student engagement since the COVID-19 pandemic and enhanced program opportunities.

Northern Territory

- ▶ AFLNT had a landmark year for NAB AFL Auskick programs, marking a record-breaking expansion into local, remote, and urban program delivery. The establishment of the first two all-girls community Auskick Centres in Muirhead and Alice Springs signifies a significant stride in inclusivity.
- ▶ AFLNT's commitment to diversity and inclusivity was evident through the continuous implementation of the Footy for Life program in Alice Springs, offering opportunities for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities to engage in the game.
- ▶ The year also witnessed NT's active participation in the Toyota AFL Wheelchair AFL National Championships and the Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival.
- ▶ AFLNT successfully introduced multicultural sessions in schools through a partnership with the Bachar Houli Foundation, serving as a pivotal driving force in introducing the sport to a broader audience while creating opportunities for engagement.
- ▶ The longest 110 NITFL premiership drought - 23 years - was broken with Waratah crowned premiers for the 2022-23 season, defeating Southern Districts in a game that was decided in the last few minutes. Waratah was unable to complete the double with its Women's Premier League side losing the Grand Final to PINT.
- ▶ In 2023, the NITFL had increases in attendances, media audience and game environment outcomes, which is pleasing considering the growth in teams to 158 for the 2022-23 season.

▶ Darwin's Will Rowlands was drafted to Gold Coast Suns via the Rookie Draft while Kierra Zerafa was one of four NT under-18 players to train for a week with the Suns' AFLW team.



New South Wales/ACT

- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT is growing across the board, led by strong participation outcomes in the women's and girls' segment.
- ▶ The state and territory achieved 69 per cent year-on-year growth in girls playing NAB AFL Auskick, with girls now accounting for 30 per cent of total Auskickers. This was led by the South Coast, which saw girls' participation in Auskick grow by 152 per cent compared with 2022 (girls now make up 47 per cent of Auskick registrations on the South Coast).
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT achieved the highest growth in community and after school Auskick programs in the country, building participation by 48 per cent compared with 2022.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT staff delivered AFL School Programs to more than 90,000 school students, a 63 per cent growth on 2022.
- ▶ More than 15,000 students participated in the Paul Kelly Cup, Junior and Senior School Cups.
- ▶ Participation in AFL Nines rose by 148 per cent compared with 2022.
- ▶ Three women from NSW were recognised nationally for exemplary contributions to community competitions, receiving the 2023 Toyota Volunteers of the Year, AFL Community Coach of the Year (female) and BHP Community Coach of the Year.
- ▶ Women umpiring community footy increased by 24 per cent compared with 2022.
- ▶ Teams from NSW/ACT participated in the 2023 Toyota National Inclusion Carnival and the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships, with the Rolling Rams finishing runners-up in Division 2 in the Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT identified and facilitated overnight programs for more than 150 First Nations boys and girls aged 13-16 in Youth Leadership Programs, improving football skills and leadership qualities.
- ▶ Sir Doug Nicholls Round, Pride Round, Road Safety Round, Big Freeze Round, Anzac Day and other themed rounds were conducted with vigour across the community football network.
- ▶ 12 NSW/ACT boys played for the Allies in the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships. The Allies won all four games and clinched the title for the first time. And 16 girls represented NSW/ACT in the Allies in the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships.
- ▶ Seven NSW/ACT players were selected in the 2023 AFL Draft.
- ▶ Following the loss of many Singleton Roosters players and officials in the Greta bus tragedy, the AFL will provide \$250,000 to fund an upgrade to the club's change facilities. AFL NSW/ACT is grateful for the NSW Government's support of the club, offering \$1.7 million to the project, with the Singleton Council to provide the remaining costs of the facility's overhaul.



△ Kylie Nolan named 2023 BHP Community Coach of the Year

- ▶ In addition to the Singleton clubroom redevelopment, AFL NSW/ACT secured almost \$18 million in Government funding for major facilities projects across the state and territory, including the Showring Oval redevelopment in Sydney's Entertainment Quarter.
- ▶ There was a 22 per cent increase in female friendly player change facilities and a 20 per cent increase in number of ovals with appropriate field lighting in NSW/ACT in 2023.
- ▶ AFL NSW/ACT launched the one-off Club Development Grant Program to help clubs with their bounce back following multiple interrupted seasons. A total of 70 clubs received funding between \$2000-\$10,000 with the grant program focusing on initiatives relating to growth and sustainability, building club capability and environment, and healthy and aspirational pathways.

Queensland

- ▶ In 2023, AFL Queensland celebrated a participation record, with more than 68,000 people registered to play Australia's game in Queensland. The 2023 figure has increased by 10,000 participants since 2022 across NAB AFL Auskick, Superstars, junior, youth, senior and social community football from the southern Gold Coast up to Cape York.
- ▶ There were 697 junior teams, 472 youth teams and 279 senior teams across the state.
- ▶ More than 30,000 Auskickers were part of the program - a 45 per cent increase on participants since 2019.
- ▶ Women and girls make up 28 per cent of all registered participants with more than 19,000 women and girls playing football in 2023.
- ▶ The StreetSmarts AFL Schools Cup reached new heights in 2023, with approximately 16,000 students across Queensland participating in games from March through to the three-day finals bonanza in October, held on the Sunshine Coast.



△ Brisbane Lions Academy player Raphael Geesu was awarded the 2023 Troy Clarke Scholarship

- ▶ The state game between Queensland and Tasmania returned in 2023, with men's and women's teams travelling to Hobart in June for the first time since 2010 and 2015 respectively. The women's team won their match, while the men went down narrowly to Tasmania.
- ▶ The intra-state representative game between North Queensland and South Queensland saw the female and male teams travel to Cairns. South Queensland prevailed in the women's match while North Queensland won the men's match.
- ▶ The She Can Coach Program was trialled in Queensland in 2023, with more than 40 participants taking part, which included match-day experiences. Three Queensland coaches participated in the national She Can Coach Program for 2023, with two recruited by the Gold Coast Suns as development coaches.
- ▶ Queensland has continued to see an increase in umpires across the state, with 1848 umpires picking up a whistle in 2023, representing a 48 per cent increase on 2022 with 18 per cent of total registered umpires being female.
- ▶ The South East Queensland Youth Grand Final weekend in September saw 43 Grand Finals played across three days at Southport's Fankhauser Reserve, Yeronga's Leyshon Park and the Maroochydore Multi-Sports Complex.
- ▶ In 2023, the AFL Queensland Wheelchair Football League was formed with four foundation clubs - Morningside Panthers, Ormeau Bulldogs, Redcliffe Tigers, and Beenleigh Buffaloes. Morningside Panthers were crowned the inaugural premiers.
- ▶ The 2023 Bond University QAFL Grand Final day was held at Brighton Homes Arena for the first time. Bond University prevailed over Aspley to be crowned senior premiers.

- ▶ The 2023 QAFL Grand Final day was held at Coorparoo AFC, with Aspley winning back-to-back senior premierships, defeating Redland Victoria Point.
- ▶ More than 80 Grand Finals were held in Queensland across 11 venues and five weekends in August and September.
- ▶ Queensland hosted the Toyota National Inclusion Carnival in 2023. Eight states and territories competed across four days at Springfield Central Sports Complex, with Grand Final day hosted at Brighton Homes Arena.
- ▶ In 2023, the Queensland Football Hall of Fame event returned for the first time since 2008. In front of almost 500 guests at the Gabba, 86 people were inducted into the Queensland Football Hall of Fame with eight people elevated to Legend status.
- ▶ The Brisbane Lions men's side reached their first Grand Final in 19 years, with a narrow loss to Collingwood. The Brisbane Lions and AFL Queensland engaged thousands in the local community with a free open training clinic, Auskick clinics, Auskick mini games, and two live sites at South Bank to watch all the action on Grand Final day.
- ▶ In 2023, six Queensland players were drafted to AFL clubs at the 2023 AFL and Rookie drafts. Gold Coast Suns Academy players Jed Walter, Ethan Read, Jake Rogers and Will Graham were selected by the Gold Coast Suns, with Wilston Grange senior player Patrick Snell and Brisbane Lions VFL player Bruce Reville taken by the Sydney Swans and Brisbane Lions respectively.
- ▶ Brisbane Lions Academy player Raphael Geesu was awarded the 2023 Troy Clarke Scholarship. The scholarship will specifically look to focus and improve Raphael's football, education, and personal development.
- ▶ The Brisbane Lions women's side reached their fifth NAB AFLW Grand Final in 2023 and travelled to Ikon Park to meet North Melbourne, winning their second flag. The Brisbane Lions and Queensland AFL staff engaged the local community with giveaways, merchandise, free Auskick and Superkick clinics, and a live site on Grand Final day to watch the game at South Bank Parklands.
- ▶ The Grand Final Facilities Fund has provided a total financial commitment of \$5,166,600 in funding to support a total project value of \$109.4 million worth of investment in infrastructure since its launch. In 2023, a further 21 projects were supported through \$2.1 million of funds pledged towards \$29 million of total project value.
- ▶ AFL Cape York Houses for boys and girls were at capacity for 2023. There were six graduates, three from each house.
- ▶ Over 12 months, the AFL Cape York Game Development team travelled the equivalent of five-and-a-half trips around Australia to deliver AFL programs to remote communities.

Tasmania

It was an historic year for football with the AFL awarding an AFL licence to Tasmania, marking a transformational moment for football to unite and grow at all levels in the state.

- The AFL signed binding commitments with the Tasmanian Government that committed to delivering AFL and AFLW teams, including partnering with the Federal Government for the construction of a 23,000-seat roofed stadium at Macquarie Point.
- The AFL men's team is expected to enter the competition in the 2028 Toyota Premiership Season, with a proposed timeline for a women's team entry into the NAB AFLW Competition to be worked through. This will follow the introduction of Tasmanian VFL and VFLW teams in the coming years.
- The AFL committed \$360 million to supporting a new club in Tasmania, including investing more than \$90 million in game development and \$33 million in developing young Tasmanian talent.
- ▶ A new talent pathway model for Tasmania will see \$500,000 annually spent on developing home-grown talent, with an initial focus on establishing expanded talent development programs for 12 to 15-year-old boys and girls. To support this, a state talent manager, a dedicated skill acquisition coach and regional development coaches in the south, north and north-west will be appointed.

▽ Colby McKercher was one of four Tasmanians selected in the 2023 National Draft. The Launceston product has joined North Melbourne.



▶ Tasmanian statewide football will now be restructured from 2025 onwards.

- In order to ensure three strong football regions - South, North and North-West - three Premier League divisions will be established in 2025, with the Tasmanian State League (TSL) competition not continuing after 2024.
- Brighton was announced as the successful Southern Football League Club that will be elevated into the Southern Premier League alongside southern-based State League teams.
- AFL Tasmania will continue working with Northern clubs on the structures of the Northern and North-West Premier Leagues from 2025.
- The Tasmania Devils Coates Talent League Boys side, which finished as minor premiers, made a preliminary final for the second year in a row.
- Tasmania also had a strong contingent within the championship-winning Allies team, with North Launceston's Ryley Sanders claiming the Larke Medal as the best-and-fairest player of the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships.
- Sanders, a Devil at under-18 level, was joined by Launceston duo Colby McKercher and James Leake in the tournament's All-Australian side.
- The Coates Talent League Devils girls side put together another strong year and finished seventh overall, with Meg Harrison earning the best and fairest award.
- Mackenzie Williams and Georgia Clark capped stellar seasons with selection in the Coates Talent League Team of the Year.
- The under-16s Tasmania Devils boys and girls teams competed strongly again in 2023, led by coaches Jamie Hayward (boys) and Jodie Clifford (girls). Harriet Bingley took out the girls best and fairest award, while Jasper Hay, an All-Australian selection, won the boys' best and fairest.
- ▶ Four Tasmanians were drafted to the AFL in November, with Launceston players Colby McKercher, Ryley Sanders and James Leake all taken in the first round, marking one of Tasmania's strongest ever draft pools. Fellow Launceston player Arie Schoenmaker was selected at pick 62.
- ▶ State representative football returned in 2023, with the Tasmania men's side notching a remarkable seven-point win over Queensland's representative side. In the women's game, Tasmania had a strong performance but went down to Queensland by 19 points.
- ▶ In community football, Kingborough went one better to be crowned TSL premiers after losing the 2022 decider. Cygnet won the premiership in the Southern Football League men's competition, while North Hobart took out the SFL women's Division 1 competition.
- ▶ Rocherlea took out the premiership in the Northern Tasmania Football Association Premier Division Men's league, while Old Scotch were premiers in the Division 1 senior men's competition. In the Women's Division 1 competition, Deloraine capped a strong season, taking out the premiership.



- ▶ In the NWFL men's competition, Devonport won the men's premiership, while Wynyard was premier in the women's league.
- ▶ 2023 saw the third edition of the Women's All-Star Series, with the SFL claiming its first title following an undefeated campaign.
- ▶ A new Club Sustainability Model launched in 2023, introducing a statewide salary cap to help clubs and promote competitive balance across all competitions.
- ▶ It was an historic year for the state in various disability inclusion programs.
 - At the Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival, Tasmania recorded its inaugural premiership, with a four-point victory over reigning champions South Australia in the final at Brighton Homes Arena in Queensland.
 - Tasmania's wheelchair AFL team also tasted premiership success, winning its first championship in Division 2 of the Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships, held in Melbourne.

△ Richmond captain and Tasmanian Toby Nankervis joined the 2023 Toyota Premiership Cup Tour in his home state.

- ▶ Tasmania was the first stop on the 2023 Toyota Premiership Cup Tour, with Richmond captain and Tasmanian Toby Nankervis bringing the cup to the state in September.
- ▶ Tasmanian volunteers continued to shine in 2023, with local footy legend Will Tatchell recognised for his outstanding contribution to the game, being named the National AFL Community Coach of the Year (male) as part of the 2023 Toyota AFL National Volunteer Awards.
- ▶ The Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame gala dinner returned for the first time since 2018, with 11 new inductees among those recognised. The night was headlined by the elevation of Des James and Chris Fagan to Legend status and Robert 'Tassie' Johnson enshrined as an Icon of Tassie football.

Western Australia

- ▶ In the WAFL, East Fremantle broke a 25-year premiership drought, defeating Peel Thunder by 39 points in the Grand Final in front of more than 27,000 people at Optus Stadium. Milan Murdock was awarded the Simpson Medal as best-on-ground. East Perth's Hamish Brayshaw won the Sandover Medal for his outstanding season, the first winner from his club since 2001.
- ▶ East Fremantle completed the senior premiership double and defeated Claremont by two goals - 4.2 (26) to 2.2 (14) - to win the 2023 WAFLW premiership. Zipporah Fish won the Lou Knitter Medal as best-on-ground. Claremont's Jayme Harken won the competition best and fairest award.
- ▶ Four WA players were selected in the first round of the AFL National Draft - Daniel Curtin (Claremont), Koltyn Tholstrup (Subiaco), Riley Hardeman (Swan Districts) and Lance Collard (Subiaco). Curtin was selected at No. 8 by the Adelaide Crows; Tholstrup was selected at No. 13 by Melbourne; Hardeman was selected at No. 23 by North Melbourne; and Collard was selected at No. 28 by St Kilda.
- ▶ Four WA players were selected in the AFLW Draft - Kaitlyn Srhoj (No. 3, GWS Giants, from Mandurah Mustangs), Ella Slocombe (No. 26, North Melbourne, from Claremont), Georgie Cleaver (No. 39, West Coast, from Rossybone) and Matilda Sergeant (No. 42, West Coast, from Claremont).
- ▶ WA went down narrowly in a tough, high-standard state league clash against South Australia at Adelaide Oval by 13 points.
- ▶ Community football participation numbers in WA were once again strong, with nearly 68,000 registered participants across junior and senior club football, plus a state record of more than 16,000 kids signed up to be part of the NAB AFL Auskick program. Women's and girls' participation continued to go from strength to strength, with more than 15,000 females registered to participate from Auskick through to senior club football.
- ▶ A fresh chapter in country football in WA was marked when the West Australian Country Football League (WACFL) announced its rebranding to Country Football WA.
- ▶ Robert Turner from Kelmscott Football Club won the AFL Disability Inclusion Volunteer award and Nuria Ushoroff took home the AFL School Teacher of the Year (female) prize.
- ▶ The winner of the 2023 Rio Tinto WA Football Volunteer of the Year was Mark Delane, who was recognised for his outstanding work as president of the Dunsborough FC, the largest regional club in the state.
- ▶ Kalgoorlie City Football Club's Eshe Christie was WA's 2023 Chemist Warehouse AFLW Community Ambassador, which recognises members from the football community who have been instrumental in facilitating and nurturing the remarkable growth of women's and girls' football.
- ▶ The Baldviss Sporting Complex was named the inaugural winner of the West Australian Football Facility of the Year Award.

▶ Zipporah Fish was a 2023 All Australian representative for WA at U19 level.

- ▶ The 2023 WA Wheelchair Football League competition was won by Perth, which defeated West Coast by 10 points in the Grand Final.
- ▶ Martina Crowley was appointed as the new WAFC Commissioner for a term of two years, while Ian Callahan, Dixie Marshall and Phil Lamb were reappointed as Commissioners for a term of three years each.
- ▶ Mitchell Edwards (Peel), Clay Hall (Peel), Joe Fonti (Claremont), Zane Zakostelsky (Claremont), Aiden O'Driscoll (Perth), Lawson Humphries (Swan Districts) and Reece Torrent (Peel) were selected from WAFL clubs at the AFL National Draft on the second night of selections.
- ▶ Five West Australians were named in the 2024 AFL and AFLW Academy squads. Peel Thunder product Bo Allan and Subiaco's Malakai Champion have been invited to the AFL Academy, while East Fremantle's Zipporah Fish, Claudia Wright from Claremont and South Fremantle's Molly O'Hehir have been selected for the AFLW Academy program in 2024.
- ▶ Three West Australian umpires were selected for the AFLW Grand Final between North Melbourne and the Brisbane Lions in Melbourne. Field umpires Matt Adams and Gabby Simmonds (emergency), along with boundary umpire Jaco Jansen van Rensburg, were rewarded for their excellent performances in 2023.
- ▶ Three West Australian players earned national selection at the AFL National Inclusion Carnival in Queensland. Midfielder Tyson Worthington (Willetton), forward Lyndsy Ashworth (Coolbinia) and defender David Hallows (Coolbinia) were all presented with the national jumper and certificate following the finals.



▶ Daniel Curtin was named WA's MVP at the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships.

- ▶ WA completed a successful campaign at the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Championships, reaching the Grand Final against Vic Metro in Melbourne.
- ▶ The Bacher Houli State Boys Academy Camp in WA was held at the Perth Football Club, bringing together boys aged 12 to 14, offering them a platform to hone their football skills, learn about leadership and team cohesion, and discuss cultural identity and belonging.
- ▶ The Grand Final of the Bacher Houli Cup for girls culminated in a dramatic one-point victory for Australian Islamic College (AIC) at Mineral Resources Park. More than 70 Muslim girls in Years 5-6 participated in the Cup, which was hailed an overwhelming success.
- ▶ Gippsland Power forward Ryan Maric was selected by the West Coast Eagles with the No. 1 pick in the 2023 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft. Fremantle selected Ethan Stanley (Box Hill Hawks) at pick seven. Robert Hansen jnr (North Melbourne), Jaiden Hunter (Essendon) and Jack Buller (Sydney) were selected as WA-bred players while a further two players from WA were selected in the 2023 AFL Rookie Draft - Ddin Jones (Fremantle) and Xavier Walsh (Port Adelaide) and West Coast picked Next Generation Academy player Coen Livingstone as a Category B rookie.

- ▶ Daniel Curtin, Mitchell Edwards, Riley Hardeman and Koltyn Tholstrup were part of the 2023 AFL Academy Boys squad.
- ▶ Georgie Cleaver, Jaime Henry and Kaitlyn Srhoj were part of the 2023 AFL Academy Girls squad.
- ▶ Daniel Curtin was the WA MVP at the 2023 AFL National Under-18 Championships for boys. Koen Sanchez, Clay Hall, Curtin and Hardeman were selected in the All-Australian team at the end of the championships.
- ▶ Evie Cowcher was the WA MVP at the 2023 National Under-18 Championships for girls, having also been a standout player at the Under-16 National Championships. Cowcher was selected as a defender in the All-Australian team, alongside fellow WA players Zipporah Fish, Kaitlyn Srhoj and Molly O'Hehir.
- ▶ WA finished with a 2-1 record at the AFL National Under-16 Championships for boys, but lost the title to Victoria Metro on head-to-head record. Basil Hart was named as the WA MVP and was also selected in the All-Australian side.
- ▶ West Australian midfielder Mia Russo was named the Best and Fairest at the 2023 National Under-16 Championships for girls, as well as being MVP for WA. She was named in the All-Australian side alongside fellow WA players Olivia Crane, Evie Cowcher (who also made the national under-18 side), Olivia Wolmarans, Alicia Blizzard and India Bonadeo.
- ▶ The AFL Diversity Academies comprise the Indigenous Academy and Multicultural Academy for boys and girls, for participants aged 16-18. The following WA players were members of Academies in 2023:
 - Indigenous Academy Girls squad - Rosie Anderson, Alicia Blizzard, Narayah Cruse, Sienna Gerardi, Jamarah Walley.
 - Multicultural Academy Girls squad - Evie Cowcher, Alira Fotu, Nisreen Marouf.
 - Indigenous Academy Boys squad - Kye Austin, Tyrell Bropho, Lance Collard, Marcus Fitzgerald, Teasia Morrison, Toré Nelson, Caylon Seelander, Jett Sibosado.
 - Multicultural Academy Boys squad - William Akec, Harrison Creighton, Flynn Fulton, David George-Coker, Cody Johnson, Aidan Kavanagh, Bienfait Kihusa, Lucas Naylies-Pereira, Matthew Van Der Westhuizen, Jacob Whan.



- ▶ Bulldogs captain Shelby Smith was named the medallist as best-on-ground in the Grand Final while Glenelg's brilliant teenager Piper Window won the competition best and fairest.
- ▶ South Adelaide won the SANFLW Development League Grand Final, edging out Norwood by seven points in the Grand Final played at the Parade.
- ▶ Four South Australian football greats were inducted into the West End SA Football Hall of Fame in 2023 - Sturt premiership wingman and Central District coach Daryl Hicks, Glenelg great Nick Chigwidden, Central District trailblazer Sonny Morey and inaugural South Adelaide chairman Charles Kingston.
- ▶ South Australia dominated All-Australian selection for the second successive year with eight players and coach Jason Rivett selected after an undefeated National Under-18 Championships for girls.
- ▶ SA defeated Western Australia, Victoria Metro and Queensland in succession under Rivett in his first year in the role.
- ▶ Glenelg's Piper Window was named as the All-Australian captain while being selected as ruck-rover with the other players selected including Glenelg's Poppy Scholz, Woodville-West Torrens' pair Jemma Whittington-Charity and Shineah Goody, Sturt's India Rasheed, West Adelaide's Lauren Young, Central District's Elaine Grigg and South Adelaide's Brooke Boileau.
- ▶ A 32-player squad has been announced for the 2024 SANFL Under-18 Boys Academy, to be overseen by Tony Bamford.
- ▶ The SANFL Under-18 State Academy will include three training sessions a week at Thebarton Oval with a week also scheduled to be spent at the Adelaide Football Club.
- ▶ Sturt claimed an historic hat-trick of premierships when it engineered a stunning comeback to defeat Woodville-West Torrens by five points in the 2023 Novita SANFL Wheelchair League Grand Final.
- ▶ South Australians Will Patton and Sid Draper earned selection in the AFL Under-18 All-Australian team, their consistent campaigns as part of the national championships.
- ▶ Five South Australian greats were inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame - Port Adelaide premiership coach and player Mark Williams, Norwood premiership great Michael Aish, Magarey medallist Tom Leahy, Geelong premiership defender Corey Enright and decorated commentator Bruce McAvaney.
- ▶ A 44-player squad was named for the 2024 SA Under-18 Girls Academy. Coached by former Norwood SANFLW League mentor Brad Snell, they will train weekly during the 2024 Hostplus SANFLW League season.
- ▶ SA will prepare to play four games, with three matches included as part of the 2024 National Under-18 Championships for girls and a match against a mature-age SA under-23 team on the weekend of July 26-28.

△ South Australia went undefeated to win the AFL National Under-18 Championships for girls.

South Australia

- ▶ Glenelg secured its sixth Hostplus SANFL League premiership, defeating Sturt by 24 points at Adelaide Oval in front of more than 33,000 fans.
- ▶ Ken Farmer medallist Lachie Hosie won the Jack Oatey Medal as best of field with six goals.
- ▶ Central District midfielder Harry Grant won the 2023 Magarey Medal, becoming just the seventh Bulldog to earn SANFL's fairest and most brilliant individual award. Grant polled 27 votes to finish in front of Norwood rover Nik Rokahr on 24 votes and Sturt captain James Battersby on 23 votes. North Adelaide midfielder Angus Tully claimed the 2023 McCallum Tomkins Medal for underage players.
- ▶ South Adelaide hung on to win its first Torrens University SANFL Under-18 premiership by edging out Sturt by two points in a thrilling title-decider at Adelaide Oval. Sid Draper won the Alan Stewart Medal as best of field.
- ▶ Central District defeated Sturt by 20 points at Adelaide Oval to claim the club's first Torrens University SANFL Under-16 premiership, with captain Oyson Sharp named best-on-ground.
- ▶ Central District won the Hostplus SANFLW League Grand Final with a three-point triumph over South Adelaide, courtesy of a goal from Caitlen Teague in the dying seconds.

- ▶ The State Government, SANFL and AFL have teamed up to deliver an \$8 million funding program to benefit footy clubs and support the continued growth of the game as part of the legacy as the host state for AFL Gather Round.
- ▶ An annual pool of more than \$2.5 million over the next three years, plus an additional pool of \$500,000 for smaller projects, will be available to football clubs, local councils, umpire associations and schools or tertiary institutions through the new South Australian Football Facilities Fund.
- ▶ Nine of South Australia's brightest young talents have been selected in the 2024 AFL and AFLW Academies, headed by former Collingwood star Tarkyn Lockyer.
- ▶ Selected in the boys' squad were Ben Camporeale and Lucas Camporeale (both Glenelg), Sid Draper (South Adelaide) and Tyler Welsh (Woodville-West Torrens).
- ▶ Selected in the girls' squad were Jasmine Evans (Central District), Georgia McKee (Central District), India Rasheed (Sturt), Charlotte Riggs (Central District) and Poppy Scholz (Glenelg).
- ▶ Field umpire Mitch Scott won the 2023 SANFL Golden Whistle Award.
- ▶ A total of 3462 coaches were registered in SA, including 254 females. Pleasingly, 250 coaches completed their Level 2 Coaching Accreditation, more than double the amount SANFL has ever accredited.
- ▶ Elliston's Chad Fleming won the 2023 Hostplus SANFL Volunteer of the Year Award for his outstanding contribution to grassroots community football, with a two-decade involvement in the game.
- ▶ Former Woodville-West Torrens chief executive officer and club captain Luke Powell was appointed to the SANFL Commission in 2023, after the resignation of David Couzner.
- ▶ Seven SA players were selected at the AFL National Draft - Will McCabe (father-son to Hawthorn/from Central District); Taylor Goad (North Melbourne/South Adelaide); Ashton Moir (Carlton/Glenelg); Kane McAuliffe (Richmond/North Adelaide); Liam Fawcett (Richmond/Central District); Bodie Ryan (Hawthorn/Glenelg) and Jack Delean (Fremantle/South Adelaide).
- ▶ Five SA players were selected at the AFLW National Draft - Elaine Grigg (No. 6, Western Bulldogs from Broadview); Piper Window (No. 19, Port Adelaide from Morphettville Park); Brooke Boileau (No. 22, Adelaide Crows from Mount Compass); Alissa Brook (No. 25, Port Adelaide from Victor Harbour) and Holly Ifould (No. 49, Fremantle from Willunga) while a further three players were pre-selected to Port Adelaide under expansion rules - Molly Brooksby (Golden Grove), Shineah Goody (Henley) and Lauren Young (Goodwood Saints).



△ Glenelg's Ben (left) and Lucas Camporeale were selected in the 2024 AFL Academy.

- ▶ Walkerville Junior Football Club won the 2023 National Pharmacies SANFL Juniors Club of the Year Award, recognising excellence throughout the season in club governance, club development, volunteers and behaviour through a points system. More than 12,500 male and female juniors participated in the SANFL Juniors metropolitan competition.
- ▶ SANFL and Sherrin announced a new multi-year partnership which will see Sherrin become the official match ball of the SANFL from season 2024.
- ▶ The SA state team retained the Haydn Bunt on Junior Cup with a gritty 13-point win against the WAFL at Adelaide Oval. James Rowe was awarded the Fos Williams Medal as best player for the state.
- ▶ SANFL worked with the South Australia Government and AFL to assist with securing the inaugural AFL Gather Round, and ensuring it stayed in SA for at least the next three years.
- ▶ SANFL successfully delivered the AFL Gather Round Community Footy Roadshow - 21 days, 2500km, 52 schools, 12 regional clubs, five community venues, 1600 footballs donated to clubs and 5000 fans reached right across the state.

CUSTOMER & COMMERCIAL

KYLIE ROGERS

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER CUSTOMER AND COMMERCIAL



It was a record-breaking year for the AFL across both the men's and women's seasons in 2023.

The 2023 Toyota AFL Premiership Season saw record revenue and engagement across key fan areas of Club Membership, Attendance, Licensing and Retail, and Digital.

The inaugural AFL Gather Round – A Festival of Footy sold out all nine matches, attracting more than 268,000 spectators. The Toyota AFL Grand Final Day parade returned to the streets which saw thousands of fans in attendance, and we experienced an unforgettable Grand Final with Collingwood winning by four points in front of 100,024 fans.

The 2023 NAB AFLW Season also experienced significant growth, recording the highest home and away season attendance to date. Grand Final day was memorable with 12,616 fans at Ikon Park to see the Brisbane Lions defeat the North Melbourne Tasmanian Kangaroos by 17 points.

Marvel Stadium hosted sold-out concerts, including global superstars Harry Styles and Sir Paul McCartney, and welcomed the introduction of new initiatives including Stadium Golf and "The Runner", just walk out stores powered by Amazon.

The AFL's digital footprint continues to go from strength to strength, with our AFL App and website welcoming six million fans a month. Our new AFL Play website was launched to engage with young fans to get involved in our game, as was the AFL23 console. Our digital channels continue to be the trusted home of football news, with increased viewership across key video and podcast products and a social media engagement surpassing five million followers.

New AFL Studios content series *Gettable* and *Tagged* were launched which continue to capture our fans' attention.

The AFL sincerely and formally thank our premier partners, major partners, official partners, support partners and all these organisations who align with us across both competitions. We are truly better together.

These lucky Auskickers had a day to remember when they presented premiership medals to the successful Collingwood side.



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NAB again supported the highly success of Auskick program which enjoyed 13 per cent growth in 2023.



Toyota

In 2023, Toyota and the AFL extended their long-standing partnership by another four years, making it the largest sports partnership in the AFL's history. The renewal sees Toyota's support as the Premier and Naming Rights Partner of the AFL expanded to become the co-supporting Partner of Ahead of the Game - a mental health literacy and resilience program for young people delivered in conjunction with Movember. Toyota's support for grassroots football continued to thrive in 2023, with the ongoing support of popular programs including AFL National Volunteer Awards, Good for Footy Round, and Good for Footy Raffle that raised \$1.1 million. Toyota also supported the AFL National Inclusion Carnival and Wheelchair AFL National Championships. In addition, Toyota sponsored the annual Premiership Cup Tour that saw the game's silverware travel more than 8000km to communities in Victoria, New South Wales, as well as Canberra and Tasmania for the first time.

△ Toyota sponsored the annual Premiership Cup Tour that saw the cup travel more than 8000km to communities in Victoria including Horsham (left) and Bendigo (above), New South Wales, the ACT and Tasmania.

NAB

NAB renewed its contract as the Premier partner of the NAB AFL Women's competition for a further six years until 2028. NAB's longstanding support of Auskick saw the program break the all-time registered participation record, resulting in an overall participation growth of 13 per cent from 2022 to 125,000 children. In 2023, we also saw the introduction of the Team NAB AFL Auskick competition - an evolution of the NAB Auskicker of the Year competition - which enabled 23 young Auskickers to have a once-in-a-lifetime Grand Final Day experience. In addition, NAB supported the second AFLW Premiership Cup Tour that travelled more than 8400km to schools, Auskick centres and communities in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory, including the Tiwi Islands for the first time.

CUSTOMER AND COMMERCIAL

KYLIE RODERS

Telstra

Telstra announced its ongoing commitment to regional Australia with the introduction of the new Telstra Footy Country Grants Program. The \$8 million grant program will be available for community football clubs to utilise across a variety of areas over the next four years. Telstra continues as the Naming Rights partner of the Telstra Pre-Game and Half-Time Entertainment. KISS, Mark Seymour and The Undertow, Kate Miller-Heidke, William Barton and Jess Hitchcock performed at the AFL Grand Final and G Flip at the AFLW Grand Final.

Gather Round

The inaugural Gather Round welcomed more than 268,000 fans to AFL matches across four days, including 41,262 visitors from interstate and overseas. All nine matches at Adelaide Oval, Norwood Oval and Adelaide Hills were sold out, while fans enjoyed a host of entertainment offerings at the inaugural Pepsi Max Footy Festival at Elder Park. The AFL took over South Australia, with city dressings, fan activations and marketing collateral greeting fans at all touchpoints across the state. Gather Round generated an economic impact of \$55.7 million for the South Australian economy and drove engagement outcomes across various community football programs through AFL coach/player visits, open training sessions and a club development forum.

Carlton United Brewery

'The Carlton Quarter' activation, a joint venture between the AFL and Carlton and United Breweries, was introduced in 2023. The Carlton Quarter was a highlight of the 2023 Footy Festival at Yarra Park with the purpose-built activation hosting three ticketed events.

▶ The 2023 Grand Final Telstra Pre-Game Entertainment featured a memorable performance from iconic American rock band KISS.

▽ NAB supported the second AFLW Premiership Cup Tour which travelled more than 8400km around Australia.

Coles

Coles continued the delivery of the Coles Healthy Kicks program which saw the introduction of stadium clinics held across the country for the first time. The popular Coles Pre-Game Grand Final 100m straight sprint returned in 2023 with the Geelong Cats' Max Holmes crowned champion. In addition, Coles became a co-presenting partner of the Ahead of the Game program that has impacted more than 4700 participants.

Virgin Australia

Virgin Australia was a key contributor to new fan-engagement initiatives throughout the year, including a special Gather Round activation at Adelaide airport and AFL Grand Final activation at Melbourne airport for passengers to meet the 2023 AFL Premiership Cup. Virgin also hosted several fan flights across the country, presenting passengers with team merchandise, in-flight announcements, and ticket giveaways by their favourite players.

McDonald's

The Macca's Kick 2 Kick program returned to venues across the country for the AFL and AFLW seasons. The program provided hundreds of thousands of fans the opportunity to have a kick on the field post-match, including 10 lucky winners who enjoyed a kick with their favourite AFL and AFLW players at the MCG on Grand Final Day.

BHP

BHP and the AFL announced a partnership extension for a further three years until the end of 2025 that builds on the pair's shared ambitions to improve equality in business and sport. The partnership was highlighted by the annual BHP x AFLW Think Big Leadership Forum that presented leading practices and inspiring content for AFLW players and staff from all 18 clubs.





New business

In 2023, the AFL welcomed several new partners, with BWS, Coates, Schweppes, TAC, TAL, and TCL joining the football family. Coates became the Naming Rights partner of the Coates Talent League (formerly the NAB League) and TAC renewed its partnership with Marvel Stadium. BWS became the official Liquor Retail Partner of the AFL, and TCL joined the AFL as its official TV and Whitegoods Partner, in a new deal that saw the TCL Supersuite integration at Marvel Stadium.

Asahi Beverages

The AFL announced a landmark four-year partnership with Asahi Beverages that marked the first occasion a beverages company has been the AFL's official partner across multiple non-alcohol and alcohol-related categories. Pepsi Max and Solo became the AFL's official soft drinks, Cool Ridge became the official water and Gatorade the official sports drink. Gatorade hydration stations returned to clubrooms and Carlton Zero became the AFL's first official non-alcohol beer. The partnership extends across the 18 clubs for all AFL and AFLW season and finals series matches.

TAL

The AFL welcomed TAL as part of an exclusive three-year deal as the official Life Insurance Partner of AFLW. The partnership includes the TAL Assistor Program, and the support the AFL's leading careers and networking platform Workplay, while the TAL logo features on all club doctor and physio vests throughout the AFLW season.

Renewals

The AFL welcomed the renewal of more than a dozen corporate partners in 2023. Accor has extended its long-term partnership as official Accommodation Partner of the AFL and AFLW for a further four-years, while rebel recommitted its support of the AFL and AFLW for a further two years including the VFLW competition. Marsh will continue as the official Business Risk Insurance Broker of the AFL and AFLW until the end of 2026, and expand its partnership to become the Naming Rights partner of the AFL's Key Talent Development Programs - AFL Academy, National Championships, National Futures Matches and National Development Championships. Bunnings has recommitted for a further three years to support the AFL and AFLW competitions, Treasury Wine Estates (official Wine Partner of the AFL, and supplier of official AFL Events) and Painaway (club trainers, doctors and physios for the AFL season) have each extended their support for a further 12 months. Three partners renewed for a further two years until the end of 2025, including AAMI (major partner of the AFL and AFLW), Hostplus (official Superannuation Partner of the AFL/AFLW) and Google (AFL and AFLW partner).

Attendance

For the first time in VFL/AFL history, eight million fans attended matches across the 2023 AFL season and finals series. AFL home and away attendance was up 17 per cent on 2022 levels while a record 15 of 24 rounds during the home and away season had total attendances of more than 300,000. Five matches during the AFL finals series at the MCG achieved crowds of more than 92,000, including a capacity crowd of 100,024 for the AFL Grand Final. The AFLW recorded its highest home and away season attendance of 234,525 and the finals series attendance of 51,455 surpassed that of 2022. The sold-out AFLW Grand Final between the Brisbane Lions and North Melbourne welcomed 12,616 fans.

Ticketing

The AFL froze prices on all entry level tickets for the AFL finals series, including the Grand Final. A freeze on tickets for weeks 1-3 of the AFL finals series continued for the eighth straight year, while entry level ticket prices for the Grand Final remained frozen for the fifth year in a row.

There was also a price freeze on AFLW tickets for adults during the home and away season and final series and free entry for kids under 18.

Record membership

The unwavering support of fans across the country delivered a record 1,264,952 club members in 2023, surpassing the previous benchmark of 1,190,671 in 2022. With an increase of six per cent year-on-year, one in 21 Australians is a member of an AFL club. Fifteen clubs broke their all-time membership records - Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton, Collingwood, Essendon, Fremantle, Geelong Cats, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants, Melbourne, North Melbourne, Port Adelaide, St Kilda, Sydney Swans, and the Western Bulldogs.

Collingwood (106,470), West Coast Eagles (103,275), and Richmond (101,349) surpassed 100,000 members, with Collingwood setting a new all-time club record. AFLW membership continued at strong levels in 2023, with more than 73,000 members across the 18 clubs.

◀ The Macca's Kick 2 Kick program provided hundreds of thousands of fans the opportunity to have a kick on the field post-match at AFL and AFLW venues.

◀ The popular Coles Pre-Game Grand Final Sprint returned in 2023 with Geelong's Max Holmes first across the line.

△ The AFLW Grand Final between the Brisbane Lions and North Melbourne attracted 12,616 fans to Ikon Park in Melbourne.

▷ A record 1,264,952 club members pledged their support in 2023, with Richmond one of three clubs to attract 100,000-plus members.





Grand Final hospitality

More than 10,000 premium packages were delivered for our showpiece games. The AFL's September Club continued to be a world-leading hospitality offering, while the AFL Grand Final Village hosted more than 4000 guests. In 2023, we also saw the introduction of new bespoke Ultimate Suite offerings, taking customers closer to the action than ever before.

Marvel Stadium

Marvel Stadium delivered a record-breaking number of sporting and entertainment events in 2023. The venue hosted international music acts including Harry Styles, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sir Paul McCartney, K-pop's Twice, Def Leppard and Motley Crue and hosted the 24th annual RMIT Graduation. Major sporting events included the Australian SX Global Motor Cross Championship, BBL Season, AFL season, two Melbourne Storm matches, the SoccerAos and a memorable 50,000 plus crowd for the Matildas.

Marvel Stadium's corporate sales program experienced significant growth in all stadium membership categories, with seasonal suite leases achieving full occupancy for the first time, while the Elevate and Stadium Precinct welcomed nearly 500 functions.

In 2023, the Stadium launched new food and beverage initiatives including "The Runner" just walk out outlets in association with Amazon, and Mash Gin outlets with self-serve point of sale technology. More than 4500 fans experienced the hugely popular Stadium Golf. The Marvel Stadium Upgrade Project will see the introduction of new rooftop bars, premium restaurants, stadium bars, retail store, food and beverage options and community amenities, including a sensory room and prayer room.

Consumer Products

AFL Consumer Products set new records in 2023. Growth was largely derived from new business deals including Fanatics and sub-licensee Nick Auditore Represents, with the launch of the AFL's inaugural Mitchell & Ness collaboration. Key rounds including Gather Round, AFL Finals Series, Sir Doug Nicholls Round and AFLW Pride Round generated significant highlights in retail products, with AFL clubs, TLA, PlayBill, AFL Stores and Cotton On delivering new products and engaging retail experiences.

In 2023, the AFL partnered with the Royal Australian Mint, releasing AFL and AFLW minted \$1 coins into circulation and a new collectible program with Australia Post. The AFL, in conjunction with BigAnt, developed the AFL23 console game while mainstay categories including Memorabilia, Trading Cards and On Field experienced strong year-on-year growth.

◀ The AFL Grand Final Village was a popular offering and hosted more than 4000 guests.

▽ G Flip was the headline performer at the 2023 AFLW Grand Final.

Events

Gather Round saw the delivery of several new events in 2023, including the first custom-built Welcome Dinner at Penfolds MacGill Estate, the introduction of nine clubhouse functions, an elevated match-day production headlined by Peking Duk and The Veronicas, and the Pepsi Max Footy Festival live site that welcomed more than 80,000 fans. The AFL Grand Final Parade returned to the streets, undertaking a new route from a 360-degree cubed stage at Grand Slam Oval, along Birrarung Marr, across William Barak Bridge and into Yarra Park.

The Telstra Pre-Game and Half-Time Entertainment saw the largest scale production to date with KISS lighting up the MCG pre-match and Mark Seymour and The Undertow with special guests Kate Miller-Heidke, William Barton and Jess Hitchcock entertaining fans at half-time.

In addition, AFLW welcomed the inaugural Grand Final Eve lunch in 2023 and adopted a fresh approach at the AFLW Season Launch, match-day activations and W Awards.

Marketing

The AFLW brand was reborn in 2023 with a focus on being bold and strengthening ties with local audiences and communities. The AFL, in conjunction with all 18 clubs, delivered the second annual Kids Go Free Month campaign that included increased family entertainment and free match-day activations that attracted more than 215,000 junior attendees across the school holiday period - an increase of 73,000 attendees compared with 2022.

In 2023, AFL Play was launched as the Masterbrand for the participation pathway for AFL and creates a dynamic destination that connects new audiences, players and playmakers with footy anywhere, anytime, through culture and entertainment.





AFL Studios

AFL Studios continued to produce a host of original documentaries and series in 2023, including *The Final Four* (AFLW), *Free the Demons* (AFLW) and *Relentless* (AFL). In 2023, AFL Studios upgraded its facilities. The best in show technology integrates commercial partner branding seamlessly and meets the current and future demands of AFL Studios. The upgrade also includes AI technology used to produce Vodcasts, with the highest production values and increased efficiencies.

△ AFL Trade Radio saw experts such as AFL.com.au's Damian Barrett bring all the latest trade news.

AFL Digital

The AFL Digital ecosystem was the network of choice for fans in 2023. The AFL men's platforms had their best-ever year, achieving a 13.9 per cent growth in weekly users compared with 2022, while the relaunched AFLW website saw strong growth following its integration into AFL.com.au. AFLW fixtures, match centre and stats were also added into the AFL Live app driving significant increases in usage. In 2023, we also welcomed new programs to the AFL Digital ecosystem, with the launch of trade and draft-focused *Gettable* series and *Tagged* podcast. *Gettable* was regularly the most watched show of the week on AFL.com.au while *Tagged* consistently ranked as the most listened-to female-hosted sports podcast in Australia.

Strong viewership numbers were also experienced across key video products including *The Round So Far*, *Footy Feed*, *Friday Knock Offs*, *W Show*, *Access All Areas*, *AFL Daily*, and *Credit to the Girls* podcast. Continental Tyres AFL Trade Radio saw more than 30 million minutes consumed on AFL Platforms while the AFL Draft continued to go from strength to strength, more than doubling its App viewership across the Draft's two nights.

Social media

The League's social media platforms achieved another record year, experiencing 210.2 million social media engagements - a 12.7 per cent increase year-on-year. We surpassed five million social followers for the first time across the AFL, AFLW, AFL Play and Aussie Rules channels and continued to grow our younger audience through our YouTube offerings and TikTok partnership. AFL social lead Anne Fedorowstch won the AFMA Award for Best Diversity and Inclusion Presentation for the memorable video of Joel Selwood and Sam Moorfoot at the 2022 Grand Final.

AFL and AFLW Fantasy

In 2023, Toyota partnered with AFL Fantasy in a year that saw the competition experience its highest engagement rates yet. The AFL Fantasy platform increased its users by seven per cent year-on-year, while the AFL Tipping competition grew to 322,744 participants - an increase of six per cent. Toyota also supported the inaugural AFLW Fantasy competition, with 33,984 users participating for the first time, while the AFLW Tipping competition increased by eight per cent compared with 2022.

▽ The 2023 Toyota Footy Focus amateur photography competition was won by Jack Mirrieles who took this shot of Etthem players celebrating with fans after winning the Northern Football Netball League Division 2 Grand Final.

Streaming

The AFL's commitment to streaming second tier competitions grew in 2023, with the inclusion of SANFL to the AFL Live App and AFL.com.au platform for the first time. More than 680 games were streamed across the Smithy's VFL, rebel VFLW, WAFL, Hostplus SANFL, Coates Talent League and National Under-18 Championships, an increase from 480 in 2022. There was almost three million views across all competitions in 2023 and 30.5 million minutes consumed of state league and talent pathways football on the AFL Network.

AFL Photos

The new AFLPhotos.com.au website was launched, featuring a new image-rich design and higher search capabilities, resulting in a significant increase in print sales revenue. The popular Toyota Footy Focus amateur photography competition returned, receiving almost 6000 entries from more than 1300 photographers.

Chief Photographer Michael Willson received the 2022 Melbourne Press Club Quill Award for Best Sports Photograph of his image of 'Buddy' Franklin's 1000th goal and he received a high commendation at the AFMA Awards for Best Action Photograph.



STRATEGY, TECHNOLOGY & DATA

WALTER LEE

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER STRATEGY, TECHNOLOGY, DATA AND ANALYTICS



It was a remarkable year for football in 2023, with record crowds, participation and the most competitive and exciting football on-field yet.

The collective and collaborative efforts of the 18 clubs, the AFL and the broader football community have helped make the game better than ever. The strategic decisions by the AFL Commission to expand into Gold Coast and Western Sydney, purchase Marvel Stadium, strengthen the Competitive Balance framework, launch the AFLW competition and reinvest funds back into grassroots participation have been some of the critical drivers of the game's success today.

We operate in a rapidly evolving sports and entertainment landscape and it has never been more important to keep adapting to remain relevant.

The Strategy, Technology and Data Analytics team are responsible for ensuring the AFL is equipped to navigate this environment to continue to grow the game.

The Strategy team sets the strategic and operational priorities for the AFL and supports major projects and transactions that provide the foundations for the growth of the game. In addition, the team is responsible for preparation of the research, analysis and information for meetings with the AFL Commission, club Presidents and CEOs, and AFL/W captains.

The Technology and Data Analytics team plays a central role in using data and technology systems to improve fan and customer experience, drive productivity and engagement in our people and power new innovative ways to engage with the broad football community.

The AFL continues to grow the game, ensuring that fans of all ages can enjoy the action - and plenty of fun.

Strategic Planning, Major Agreements and Transactions

Lead highlights for the team's work through the 2023 year included the following outcomes:

- ▶ AFL/W Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) - undertook planning and negotiation to support the development of a joint players CBA, a first in the history for AFL and AFLW players;
- ▶ AFLW brand refresh - supported delivery of a refreshed brand identity and strategy for AFLW to position it for its next phase of growth;
- ▶ 19th AFL licence in Tasmania - supported the analysis, research and processes for approving a new competition licence for an AFL team in Tasmania;
- ▶ Western Sydney Fan Hub - supported the establishment of a marketing and sales team focused on boosting growth in participation in and engagement with football in Sydney;
- ▶ Gabba redevelopment - contributed to planning and analysis for the planned major redevelopment of the Gabba for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics;
- ▶ Environmental sustainability - initiated the development of an environmental sustainability and emissions reduction strategy for the AFL;
- ▶ Government engagement - provided timely responses to assist the Parliamentary inquiry into gambling advertising and the Senate inquiry into concussion in sport;
- ▶ Indigenous engagement - provided strategic support and information to assist consultation processes with the AFL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council (IAC);
- ▶ Revenue growth and diversification - undertook due diligence and provided deal support for various major commercial agreements, investment, and capital raising opportunities.

▽ Carlton star Charlie Curnow tested out one of the two new food and drink outlets at Marvel Stadium which now boast improved technology systems.

AFL Technology and Innovation

The Technology and Data Analytics team use data and technology systems to improve fan and customer experience. We explore new innovative ways to engage with the broad football community and productivity and engagement in our people.

- ▶ Amazon Just Walk Out - trialled and launched two new food and drink outlets at Marvel Stadium in an Australia-first implementation of AI/ML (Machine Learning) and automated retail technology;
- ▶ Marvel Stadium technology and fan experience - delivered a host of new and improved technology systems, including a new advanced retail Point of Sale systems, Marvel Stadium app, IPTV/LED migration and a new match-day suite;
- ▶ Innovation projects - launched the AFL Single Sign-On (SSO) with AFLID and developed the business case for new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system;
- ▶ Customer Relationship Management (CRM)/Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms - drove increased uptake from clubs and the AFL of advanced customer and planning systems;
- ▶ Technology service operations - major improvements in technology service operations, with decreased incidents and increase in satisfaction and delivery of new initiatives;
- ▶ Cybersecurity - continued strengthening of cybersecurity risks and controls.



△ AFL club mascots travelled to Bordertown on the South Australian-Victorian border to help promote the inaugural Gather Round in SA.

Advanced Data and Analytics

There were a number of significant outstanding outcomes from the team through the past 12 months that will have major benefits for our industry.

- ▶ Single Customer View - established a Single Customer View asset for the industry containing six million AFL fans, enriched with third-party customer segmentation and demographic data;
- ▶ Club engagement - drove more innovative use of data analytics with clubs, including completing a pilot with AFL clubs on personalised marketing for AI/ML-driven member churn campaigns;
- ▶ Operational use - created a step-change in the adoption and use of data and analytics in AFL operations, including in game analysis, finance and people reporting, Marvel Stadium, Game Development and the new Western Sydney Fan Hub;
- ▶ Data security - improved security controls to meet data security and governance requirements, including decommissioning of legacy data servers.

"Just Walk Out" at Marvel Stadium

In May, the AFL partnered with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to deliver the southern hemisphere's first in-stadium automated retail with the launch of a "Just Walk Out" system at two food outlets at Marvel Stadium.

Amazon's advanced Just Walk Out technology utilises AI and Machine Learning (ML) video technologies and enables fans at Marvel Stadium to walk in, tap their credit card, pick up the food or drink of their choice, and walk out. Dubbed "The Runner", this new way of getting food and drink at Marvel Stadium allows fans to return to action in their seats as quickly as possible.

The Technology team delivered the build for the first store in three months, and the first store has achieved a 70 per cent reduction in wait time across 80,000 transactions, while achieving 99.96 per cent transaction accuracy. The team continues to work closely with Amazon to understand and further refine the fan experience and the technology, with the aim to rollout to further outlets at Marvel Stadium.

AFL Commission and Club Presidents Meetings

The AFL Commission, AFL Executive team, 18 club Presidents and club CEOs meet regularly across the year to discuss the outlook for the game and responses to major issues and opportunities facing the code.

The AFL Strategy team plays a key role in developing the agenda and preparation materials to support these meetings. In 2023, these groups met in-person three times, and the topics discussed included:

- ▶ New competition licence for Tasmania
- ▶ New AFL and AFLW Players Collective Bargaining Agreement
- ▶ AFL CEO appointment process
- ▶ Strategy and Performance of the code
- ▶ Club and AFL Finances
- ▶ Independent Panel Investigation into Hawthorn Football Club
- ▶ Marvel Stadium redevelopment
- ▶ AFL and club response on referendum vote for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament
- ▶ Gather Round
- ▶ Cybersecurity

Gather Round in South Australia

April 2023 saw the inaugural Gather Round held in South Australia, in which all nine matches were played in one state across four days, creating a festival of football in and around Adelaide.

The new Gather Round aimed to bring the best of AFL football in the country to the state and showcase the amazing passion for the game that exists across the South Australian community.

Considerable planning, preparation, and investment was required to maximise the exposure opportunity for the game and achieve longer-term community outcomes.

Gather Round was a remarkable success, exceeding all expected metrics and leading to a new agreement to hold the round in South Australia through to 2026. Highlights included:

- ▶ Nine out of nine games sold out
- ▶ 268,000 attendance for the round, including 6000 corporate hospitality
- ▶ 46,000 interstate attendees
- ▶ Broadcast ratings lifted by eight per cent
- ▶ Digital platform engagement increased by 23 per cent
- ▶ Participation numbers in the state 100 per cent up on same period in 2022.

The introduction of Gather Round on South Australia saw a major increase in interstate tourism and support for the local economy. The broader impact on the city of Adelaide was clear, with extensive media coverage, city dressing at Adelaide Airport, and more than 30 events across the week, including clinics, open training sessions, a premiership cup tour, game development forums, and numerous events with corporate partners and other industry stakeholders.



PEOPLE & CULTURE

SARAH FAIR
EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER PEOPLE



2023 was an outstanding year in 2023 for our people with many memorable moments, both on and off the field. Australian Football remains a central part of our nation's vibrant and diverse communities and our team members support the game from the elite national level through to grassroots at clubs and leagues in every part of Australia.

Our emphasis in 2023 was to bring out the best in our people and create great daily experiences for all. We've invested in key talent, remained committed to supporting wellbeing and inclusion, and have continued to develop our people through new learning opportunities and enhanced leadership programs. We also seen a significant increase in the representation of women in senior leadership positions.

We know that creating and maintaining a values-led culture where we recognise and celebrate the wins and achievements of our people, as well as supporting their career progression, is core to making the AFL a great place to work - with all our players, supporters, partners, and community benefiting from this as we continue to build on our game's ongoing strength and ensuring it remains welcoming to all.

The sixth Women in Football summit provided a forum for women across the AFL and its clubs to hear from a variety of speakers within and outside the football industry.





Vibe Survey

In 2023 our Vibe Survey focused on helping shape our future direction - our vision, our values and culture - as well as supporting our team members' day-to-day experience at the AFL. We have a highly engaged team who have a strong connection to our purpose, with more than 92 per cent of our people enjoying working at the AFL, as well 88 per cent who love what that do - up two per cent on 2022.

We worked hard at fostering a highly inclusive culture where both men and women are equally engaged and supported and have ensured that the health and wellbeing of people remains front and centre.

Talent and Development

In 2023, we had an enhanced focus on learning and development, with a strong commitment in investing in our key talent, supporting career progression of women, and developing our rising stars. We also empowered all team members to take ownership of their learning journey, via our My Development program. Adopting our 70.20.10 learning framework, all team members had the opportunity to create a development plan to help drive their career and progression within our industry.

AFL Grad Program

Launched in 2023, this groundbreaking initiative creates a dynamic entry point into the AFL and a promising career pathway for early graduates, including the best and brightest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and women graduates. The innovative year-long program is the first of its kind in major Australian sport and underscores our unwavering commitment to enhancing diversity and attracting and retaining the next generation of leadership with the AFL.

Undergoing a comprehensive assessment process, 12 graduates have been selected and will join the AFL and commence their development-rich experience in January 2024.

Speccy Awards

Our peer-nominated Speccy Awards recognise team members who have made a truly outstanding contribution throughout the year, consistently role model our AFL Values and deliver on our purpose.

This year we received a record number of nominations from across our team for the four AFL Values awards (Play to Win, Play with Passion, Play Fair and Play as One Team). Our values-led culture of recognising and acknowledging team members who deliver impact across all they do and play an active role in shaping our culture is core to this.

▲ AFL Executive General Manager Customer and Commercial **Kylie Rogers** addresses AFL staff at the 2023 Speccy Awards.

▲ AFL Talent and Second Tier Competition Media Manager **Samuel Zito** receives his Speccy Award from AFL Chief Executive Officer **Andrew Dillon**.



Enhanced New Starter Induction

In 2023 we increased our investment in our new starter learning journey, assimilating our new starters into the life and culture of the AFL, creating strong connections to our heritage, AFL Purpose and Values and our team. Delivered through a dynamic two-day national induction at Marvel Stadium, we brought together new starters from all our offices and teams from across Australia.

The welcome to our organisation now features new content such as inclusion of cultural awareness training and respectful relationships sessions. This program has created a sense of belonging and enabled our new team members to thrive and contribute to individual, team and organisational success early in their careers with the AFL.

Talent Programs

A key priority has been supporting the representation and acceleration of women in key departments, such as football operations, along with investing in our next generation of leaders, extending valuable opportunities for growth and development within the AFL industry and building a brighter, more inclusive future.

Key programs include:

- ▶ **NEXT Emerging Leadership Program** - accelerating the rise of our future leaders.
- ▶ Participants of NEXT engaged in a four-month learning journey, cultivating leadership readiness, and empowering the next generations of leaders in our industry.
- ▶ **Women in Leadership** - empowering women to lead. A group of talented middle-level women engaged in a powerful five-month personal leadership experience, intentionally designed to empower, challenge, support, build authenticity and confidence and enhance leadership capability. Through this journey, our participants formed a unique bond - creating a lifelong network of support and inspiration for each other.
- ▶ **Talent Accelerator Program** - for our exceptional talent at senior levels. We introduced a new self-paced tailored program providing access to structured career planning, targeted individual development plans and allocated funding for formal learning to support their accelerated development and progression.
- ▶ **NEXTGen Exchange Forum** - fostering cross-generational leadership connections. Our next-generation senior leaders engaged in bi-monthly forums with AFL Executive and club CEOs, having open and honest conversation about leadership, culture, and lessons learnt along the way - building on critical skill sets, visibility and exposure to the executive leadership.
- ▶ **Introduction to Football Operations** - empowering aspiring women in football. Women from across the industry who aspire to work in Football Operations were introduced to the operations and 'Day in the life' of a football department, showcasing women who have paved the way, sharing inspiring stories and advice to develop a career plan and pathway in football.
- ▶ **Women in Football Talent Program** - In November 2023, we commenced a pilot program to accelerate women's participation and progression into key leadership roles within football departments, providing a unique and immersive experience for five emerging leaders from the industry. These women engaged in practical and industry immersion, such as the AFL Draft and match day, preparing and strengthening pathways for women to mark their mark on the game.
- ▶ **The Leadership Game: AFL Executive Program** - Starting in December 2023, next generation Executive leaders engage in intensive six-month talent development experience, elevating their leadership style and capability to effectively build high performing teams, values-based cultures and navigate a complex, challenging and competitive environment, all through immersive off-site experiences, outside the industry.



▲ AFL Publicist **Kirstie Fitzgerald** was joint winner of the **Jill Lindsay Scholarship** with **Richard FC People and Culture Manager Kathryn Stevenson**. Fitzgerald was presented her award from AFL Commissioner **Simone Wilkie AO** while **Geelong Cats' Chief Strategy and Growth Officer Marcus King** was awarded the **Graeme Samuel Scholarship**.

2023 Graeme Samuel Scholarship

Marcus King from the Geelong Cats was the recipient of the Graeme Samuel scholarship, named in honour of the long-time former AFL Commissioner. The scholarship, which offers \$20,000 to further the recipient's career path, is given to senior leaders of AFL clubs who have the aspiration, talent and potential to progress to club CEO or AFL Executive level roles.

King, the Chief Strategy and Growth Officer at the Cats, has been a major contributor to the AFL industry across the past decade and embodies the capabilities, values and ambition to become a long-term senior leader of the AFL or club CEO.

Health and Wellbeing

Our Play Well and Play Safe initiatives have continued to progress our workplace health and wellbeing agenda to ensure they are fit for purpose, remain at the heart of everything we do, and ensure our people can thrive at work and in life. In 2023, we committed our efforts to focusing on creating a psychologically safe, healthy, and thriving workplace for our people.

A key focus for this year has been on understanding and protecting our people from any risks and impact to their psychological health and wellbeing, advancing our workplace practices and policies with evidence-based frameworks and appropriate controls to mitigate any risk to our team. Building mental health literacy has also been a key priority.

- ▶ Supporting our people to take wellness days to hit the reset button, recharge and proactively spend time on doing something that positively impacts their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
- ▶ An additional 90 people leaders and team members gained their mental health first aid accreditation.
- ▶ Established a psychosocial action plan and risk register.
- ▶ Our new Work and Family Thrive Program, supported our parents to thrive, learning practical strategies for supporting family wellbeing and managing day-to-day parenting challenges.
- ▶ We shined a spotlight on men's health, running activations during Movember, along with providing free bowel cancer screening kits for our people.

Workplay

Workplay, powered by John Holland, is an industry-first careers platform that connects AFLW players with flexible employment. Workplay continued to grow in 2023 with an increase in the number of players registered, job opportunities available and partners providing opportunities.

- ▶ 70 AFLW athletes employed at partner organisations, including 20 athletes employed at John Holland.
- ▶ More than 150 jobs listings for players to pursue at more than 28 valued AFL and AFLW partner organisations including John Holland, rebel, Foxtel Group, NAB and Cotton On.
- ▶ Workplay was awarded the Best Wellness Initiative in Sports Award at the 2023 Ministry of Sport Awards.

AFL Women's Summit

In December 2023, the sixth AFL Women's Summit was held which was attended by women from across the AFL and AFL clubs. The summit provided opportunities for them to enhance their relationships with industry peers, share stories and hear from inspiring and talented women from within and outside of the industry. Keynote speakers included The Hon Julie Bishop, recently retired AFLW champion Erin Phillips, North Melbourne CEO Jennifer Watt, as well as AFL executives Laura Kane, Tanya Hosch and CEO Andrew Dillon.

▶ AFL TPP Audit and Club Soft Cap Manager Jennifer McMillan receives the Ray Gunston Scholarship from Mandy Gunston, wife of much-loved AFL colleague Ray Gunston, who passed away in 2022.

2023 Jill Lindsay Scholarship

The Jill Lindsay Scholarship, which honours the AFL's longest-serving female employee, is open to rising star women administrators within the AFL and its 18 clubs who have the aspiration, talent and potential to further progress their careers to the highest levels within the AFL.

The recipient receives \$20,000 to undertake further education or formal development to support their career and a 12-month Executive Coaching Program with Facilitator and Executive Coach, Andi Pert.

The Executive Team made the decision to award the 2023 Scholarship to two outstanding women:

- ▶ Kathryn Stevenson, People and Culture Manager, Richmond Football Club.
- ▶ Kirstie Fitzgerald, AFL Publicist, AFL.
- ▶ AFL Commissioner Simone Wilkie presented Kathryn and Kirstie with their award at the AFL Industry Women's Summit.

2023 Ray Gunston Scholarship

The Ray Gunston Scholarship remembers a much-loved colleague, friend, and valued mentor to many up-and-coming talented leaders across the AFL. Jennifer McMillan, TPP Audit and Club Soft Cap Manager, was awarded the scholarship, which recognises talented middle to senior leaders in the AFL organisation who role model our values and have the aspiration, work ethic and potential to learn, grow and progress to an AFL or Club Executive role. Jennifer receives \$20,000 towards further education and development to support her career aspirations.

Jim Stynes Community Award

Now in its 12th year, the prestigious award is presented to the player who has best demonstrated the values of late Melbourne champion and former Demons president, Jim Stynes.

Carlton's Sam Docherty claimed the 2023 Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award for his commitment to raise awareness and vital funds for cancer research, as well as his ambassador role at Paws4Kids.

He helped raise \$220,000 for the Peter MacCallum Cancer Foundation to support life-saving cancer research and also encouraged more people in the community to book a check-up with their doctor.

The four other finalists for the award were Bailey Banfield (Fremantle), Ben Brown (Melbourne) and Harry Cunningham (Sydney Swans).



INCLUSION & SOCIAL POLICY

TANYA HOSCH

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER INCLUSION AND SOCIAL POLICY



It was a year of considerable challenges in 2023, requiring great effort from the AFL. With increased emphasis on consistency and quality, our code experienced an unprecedented engagement with people from across Australia and all sectors of society.

With the AFL publicly endorsing the Yes campaign for the Referendum, the Inclusion and Social Policy team worked very hard from the beginning of the year to inform AFL staff, clubs, players and the broader industry of what the Referendum was trying to do. However, despite the result, the AFL maxim that the 'game is for everyone' has never been more important in engaging with our communities and stakeholders from across Australia. The Inclusion and Social Policy team will use the experiences of 2023 to build upon our learnings to provide the opportunities for all who participate in our code.

In terms of football legacies, Nicky Winmar commemorated the 30-year anniversary of his iconic stance against racism and Sydney Swans and former Hawthorn champion Lance Franklin retired as one of the champions of the game.

These milestones help us appreciate our history as the Sir Doug Nicholls theme Moments forged by First Nations saw another moment created in the 2023 Grand Final as Collingwood's Bobby Hill was awarded the Norm Smith Medal for best on field.

Another significant moment saw Sherrin re-badge the match-day ball for the first time, using the Tiwi name Yiloga for football. The artist engaged for the ball design was Tiwi artist Jennifer 'Lulu' Coombes, who comes from Pirlangimpi, Melville Island.

In the AFLW, the Indigenous Round was a great success. Sherrin again reinstated its commitment to the round by rebranding the match-day balls with the Koorne word for football, Tidna Partrw. The artist who created the design for the AFLW was Gabriel Stengle, the sister of Sydney Swans' legend Michael O'Loughlin.

Other significant outcomes from the year include Pride Round in the AFLW and the National Inclusion Carnival. First introduced in 2021, the Pride Round has quickly developed into a significant feature of the AFLW season celebrating and recognising the LGBTQI+ community and raising national awareness.

Recommencing in 2022, after a two-year hiatus, the National Inclusion Carnival was played in Brisbane in mid-October. Sponsored by Toyota, Tasmania defeated South Australia in the Division 1 Grand Final to win its first national title.

The role the Inclusion and Social Policy team plays in the AFL is a vitally important one which is both strategic and collaborative in ensuring fans, staff, players and members from diverse communities feel welcome, safe and valued. We look forward to building on the work of 2023 and into the new year to truly make the AFL a game for everyone.

Western Bulldogs forward Jamarra Ugle-Hagan recreated St Kilda great Nicky Winmar's iconic image after a match-winning five-goal haul against Brisbane in round three.



Enhanced management of vilification and discrimination complaints in community football

The Inclusion and Social Policy team worked closely with colleagues in the Game Development and Legal departments to improve the management and resolution of vilification complaints made by community football participants.

Increased resources were allocated by the AFL to assist local leagues and controlling bodies around Australia to respond in a more timely, consistent and constructive manner to complaints of vilification and discrimination - the majority of which were racist or homophobic vilification.

The Vilification Management team - consisting of employees from Inclusion and Social Policy, Game Development, Legal and Integrity - meets weekly to discuss the best response to complaints, to create stronger policies, and to build a body of knowledge and data to continually improve our processes.

As part of this improved management system, the Inclusion and Social Policy team led the appointment of a panel of expert conciliators to hear complaints of vilification. A number of successful conciliations were held between complainants and respondents, with the aim of coming to an agreed outcome. Outcomes included education, match sanctions and apologies.

Adelaide and Western Bulldogs AFLW players look on during the Welcome to Country ceremony before the round seven match at Norwood Oval.

Vilification and Discrimination education module

Funding provided through the partnership between the AFL and Shark Island Productions was used by the Inclusion and Social Policy team to create the AFL's first Vilification and Discrimination education/training module for community football participants. The pressing need for this education was identified as part of the review of the Peek Rule.

The module featured an introduction from Chad Wingard, and personal stories of vilification from Wingard, Darcy Vescio, Bachar Houli and community coach Nic Morgan.

Completion of the module was compulsory for all community coaches around Australia who renewed their accreditation for the 2023 season - more than 20,000 coaches have completed the training. The feedback has been positive, with coaches commenting they had a much greater understanding of vilification and the harm it causes, and ways to make their teams and clubs more welcoming and inclusive.

The module has also been completed by individuals and clubs who have been involved in discrimination or vilification complaints, as part of the education process recommended by the AFL or controlling bodies.

The module has been adapted for community and elite umpires and is freely available for any community football participant through the AFL's Learn platform. In 2024, the module will be adapted and included as part of the education program for AFL and AFLW players.

Sir Doug Nicholls Round

With the 2023 Sir Doug Nicholls Round theme being *Moments Forged By First Nations*, the Dreamtime at the 'G' game was a one-point thriller claimed by host club Essendon while three clubs rebranded themselves with the Traditional Owner names of their clubs: Naarm (Melbourne), Walyup (Fremantle) and Yartapuulti (Port Adelaide).

There were many highlights which included a pre-game *Welcome to Country* by Aunty Joy Murphy Wardin AO and the war cry from both Essendon and Richmond. The pre-game entertainment included Butchulla songman Fred Leone and ARIA-nominated musician and songwriter Mo'Ja, who were joined by Warandjeri dance groups Djirri Djirri and Bandok Tati and Dreamtime Contemporary Dancers.

Yorta Yorta man and former VFL umpire Glenn James OAM was named as the Sir Doug Nicholls Round honoree in 2023. This was great recognition of James service but also provided a great connection to Sir Doug Nicholls, as James knew Sir Doug growing up in Shepparton. James umpired a total of 166 games in the VFL and was the first Indigenous umpire appointed to a VFL/AFL Grand Final in 1982 and again in 1984.

At half-time, Michael Long and Nicky Winmar performed the Archie Roach song *Colour of Your Jumper*, backed by the Archie Roach band, including Archie's son Amos Roach, award-winning singer-songwriter Bumpy, Mo'Ja and singer-songwriter Radical Son.

Essendon's Zach Merrett took out the Yookeen Trophy for best-on-ground.



The annual Dreamtime at 'G' match was another highlight of the season with Essendon scoring a one-point thriller over Richmond.

AFLW Indigenous round

With the 2023 AFLW Indigenous round mirroring the AFL season and running over two consecutive weeks, three clubs rebranded themselves with the Traditional Owner names of their clubs: Naarm (Melbourne), Walyup (Fremantle) and Yartapuulti (Port Adelaide).

Ebony Abbot-McCormack was named the 2023 AFLW Indigenous honoree. Having grown up in Alice Springs, Abbot-McCormack moved to Darwin and had an immediate impact with NT Buffaloes, winning the best-on-ground in the Grand Final and the league medal. Away from the field, Abbot-McCormack is the cultural lead for the regional health network, chair of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and umpires in junior competitions.

All 18 clubs wore Indigenous-designed jumpers and all match-day umpires wore the design of Noongar Wandandi Boodja man and current umpire Joshua James. In 2023, a total of 23 Indigenous women were on team lists in the AFLW and media kits provided valuable information for broadcasters.

Yarning Circle

In mid-September, the first AFL Indigenous Yarning Circle was held in Perth to address and inform past Indigenous players' experiences of concussion. Given the significance that head injury and long-term health impacts have for past players, this was an important step in ensuring Indigenous past players have access to culturally appropriate information relating to concussion. Run by Indigenous doctor Dr Nathan Luies, the Yarning Circle was designed to incorporate Cultural Safety principles and provide an environment that was conducive to the discussion.

The Indigenous past players were made aware of what the AFL has been undertaking and, in turn, players were encouraged to speak of both their concerns and needs that required attention.

The Yarning Circle was the first of other similar forums to be held across the country to provide valuable insights into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and potential treatment going into the future.

Pride in Sport results

The annual Pride in Sport Index Submission is the National benchmarking instrument for LGBTQ+ inclusion in Australian sport and sporting organisations. The AFL received a Bronze Tier status for the work done in 2022.

The process of indexing enables organisations to identify ways to improve the work that is undertaken with the LGBTQ+ Community and grow our year-on-year commitment across the industry and celebrate being inclusive for all.





△ Carlton's Breann Moody and St Kilda's Tyanne Smith pose during a media opportunity at the Victorian Pride Centre ahead of the 2023 AFLW Pride Round.

RAP conclusion

The AFL's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan concluded in March 2023. Significant progress was made against the RAP targets, with the governance overseen for this undertaken by the internal RAP Working Group and RAP Sub-Committee.

The AFL continues to educate staff, celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and use our sphere of influence to raise awareness of reconciliation. As part of our RAP commitments, all permanent and full-time AFL staff must mandatorily complete online Indigenous cultural awareness training, and a specific cultural protocols document has been created for AFL staff to reference and help build their understanding and considerations in application of their role.

The AFL is in the process of reviewing progress and planning for the development of the next RAP.

Review of policies

As part of ensuring that the game of Australian Football remains safe and inclusive for everyone, the Inclusion and Social Policy team undertakes regular internal reviews of relevant policies and rules.

In 2023, this included a review of the AFL's Respect and Responsibility Policy, in partnership with the Integrity and Security team.

In relation to the Uniform Policy, this consultation process was undertaken to examine the intersectionality and challenges that arise in the wearing of celebratory uniforms (such as Pride jumpers) as it relates to religious beliefs among AFLW players.

Engagement with clubs on Voice support

In May 2023, the AFL publicly stated its support for the constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

This support was reached after the AFL conducted briefing sessions with 17 of the 18 clubs (with the final club indicating they were already informed), with EGM Tanya Hosch and members of the Inclusion and Social policy team.

A briefing session with AFL staff was also conducted to assist in providing information and have this fed back to the AFL's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council. After conducting their own internal processes, all 18 AFL clubs also publicly supported the Voice to Parliament.

Advisory Council strategic plan

The AFL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, co-chaired by Commissioner Helen Milroy and Yorta Yorta man, Paul Briggs met three times.

The Council provided strategic advice, guidance and recommendations on key issues this year including the AFL's position on the Voice to Parliament, their views on the implementation of AFL commitments in relation to the Hawthorn agreement on historic club matters, and approval of the Honourees for Sir Doug Nicholls Round and AFLW Indigenous Round including the themes. The Council continues to have discussions around Racism, Cultural Safety and how to contribute to other areas of the code.



△ Nicky Winmar commemorated the 30-year anniversary of his iconic stance against racism before his retirement. St Kilda took on Collingwood at Adelaide Oval during Father Round.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

BRIAN WALSH

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT & COMMUNICATIONS



With more than seven million fans attending the 2023 Toyota AFL home and way season, a record 234,525 supporters heading through the turnstiles at AFLW matches and a record 1.26 million members, there's no doubt it was one of the biggest and highly engaged seasons in our game's history.

Between captains' days, season launches, community footy, themed rounds and unveiling new sponsors, we were also part of delivering the AFL's new ground-breaking opportunities.

The launch of Gather Round in South Australia was an incredible moment for the League and everyone in our corporate affairs team played a role - from media coverage and operations at all venues, PR opportunities and activations to managing government relations. It was a huge undertaking with enormously successful outcomes.

We were proud to see history made during Sir Doug Nicholls Round during Dreamtime at the G as the first Indigenous female broadcaster commentated the game in-language which could be heard via Yolngu radio.

In what was an unpredictable finals series, the corporate affairs team led the promotion and media activity of day-to-day announcements and milestones including the Premiership Cup Tour, unveiling of medal presenters, the Brownlow Medal, Footy Festival, Grand Final Parade, Team NAB AFL Auskick and of course, all the finals matches.

During such a phenomenal year it was critical that our team kept clubs, fans, members, partners, stakeholders and everyone across our industry informed with news updates and all the remarkable stories happening within our game - from grassroots and game development to community and elite.

Carlton captain Patrick Cripps was the centre of attention at the annual captains day.

2023 AFL Footy Festival

Thousands of football fans flocked to Yarra Park across four days in the lead-up to the 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final to enjoy the free footy festival. Opening on Wednesday September 27, the site was packed with entertainment for the whole family including player appearances, giveaways, music, food trucks and bars.

Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade

The 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade returned to the streets, with players travelling in a convoy of HiLux vehicles. The parade started at Melbourne Park Oval which was turned into a live site and included the creation of a new 360-degree stage, allowing fans to get even closer to the action. Making its way down Birrarung Marr, over the bridge and into the Yarra Park Footy Festival, the parade saw more than 100,000 fans enjoy this traditional day on the footy calendar.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan

After appointing a Head of Sustainability, the AFL established its Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan. Partnering with Deloitte Consultants, the AFL aims to deliver its carbon emissions audit. Methodology, learnings and action will support the AFL Industry agenda in addressing sustainability issues and preparing our organisation for the future, at all levels of football.

▼ Former West Coast and Carlton superstar Chris Judd was the 2023 Norm Smith Medal presenter.

▼ More than 100,000 fans enjoyed the entertainment at the Toyota AFL Grand Final Parade which returned to the streets in 2023.

Environmental Sustainability Summit

While the audit by Deloitte is being conducted, working groups have been established by the AFL with representation from all 18 clubs, meeting every month to align on messaging, ideas, education, identify efficiencies and commitment. This led to the AFL industry's first Environmental Sustainability Summit hosted by Richmond Football Club.

2023 Toyota AFL Finals Series Launch

Kicking off the finals series at Toyota's headquarters in Port Melbourne, the 2023 Premiership Cup was unveiled as well as the official presenters for medals and awards during the series. Swans' premiership player Josh Kennedy was the Premiership Cup Ambassador, Hall of Fame member Chris Judd was revealed as the Norm Smith Medal presenter and Geelong Cats' dual premiership coach Mark 'Bomber' Thompson was named to award the Jock McHale Medal.



Football for Climate

The AFL has been working closely with the Football for Climate group, which is comprised of current and former players. This group comes together to align on imbedding sustainable practice in their clubs, local footy clubs and advocating within the wider public.

AFL School Villages

The AFL committed \$560,000 to establish two pilot School Villages in New South Wales to support accessibility and awareness of Australian Football in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Set up in Hurstville and Parramatta, a three-year commitment was made to create a Future Stars program, while five primary schools were identified to receive a qualified PE teacher to support student physical literacy and professional development.

AFL Green Team

Consisting of passionate AFL employees, the AFL Green Team has been re-established and meets regularly to discuss opportunities to implement sustainable action within the workplace. This includes reusable cups in the AFL Café, environmental messaging in e-signatures and introduction of green waste streams within the office.

Responsible Business Policy

In 2023, the AFL introduced its first environmental policy into our Responsible Business Policy which sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected of any organisation that does business with the AFL - including any suppliers, contractors, sponsors and partners. The Marvel Stadium operations team continue to implement a waste reduction strategy, working closely with suppliers, while match day big screen messaging encouraged fans to dispose of waste responsibly. The collaboration across AFL, Marvel, clubs, players and community will be key to our success throughout this journey.

2023 Toyota Premiership Cup Tour

This 2023 Premiership Cup tour visited four states and territories across 21 days in the lead-up to the last Saturday in September. For the first time it travelled to the ACT and Tasmania, along the way visiting local communities, schools, footy clubs and iconic destinations. A host of media opportunities were facilitated, and photos published, creating hype and anticipation as the Cup made its way to its final destination, the MCG.

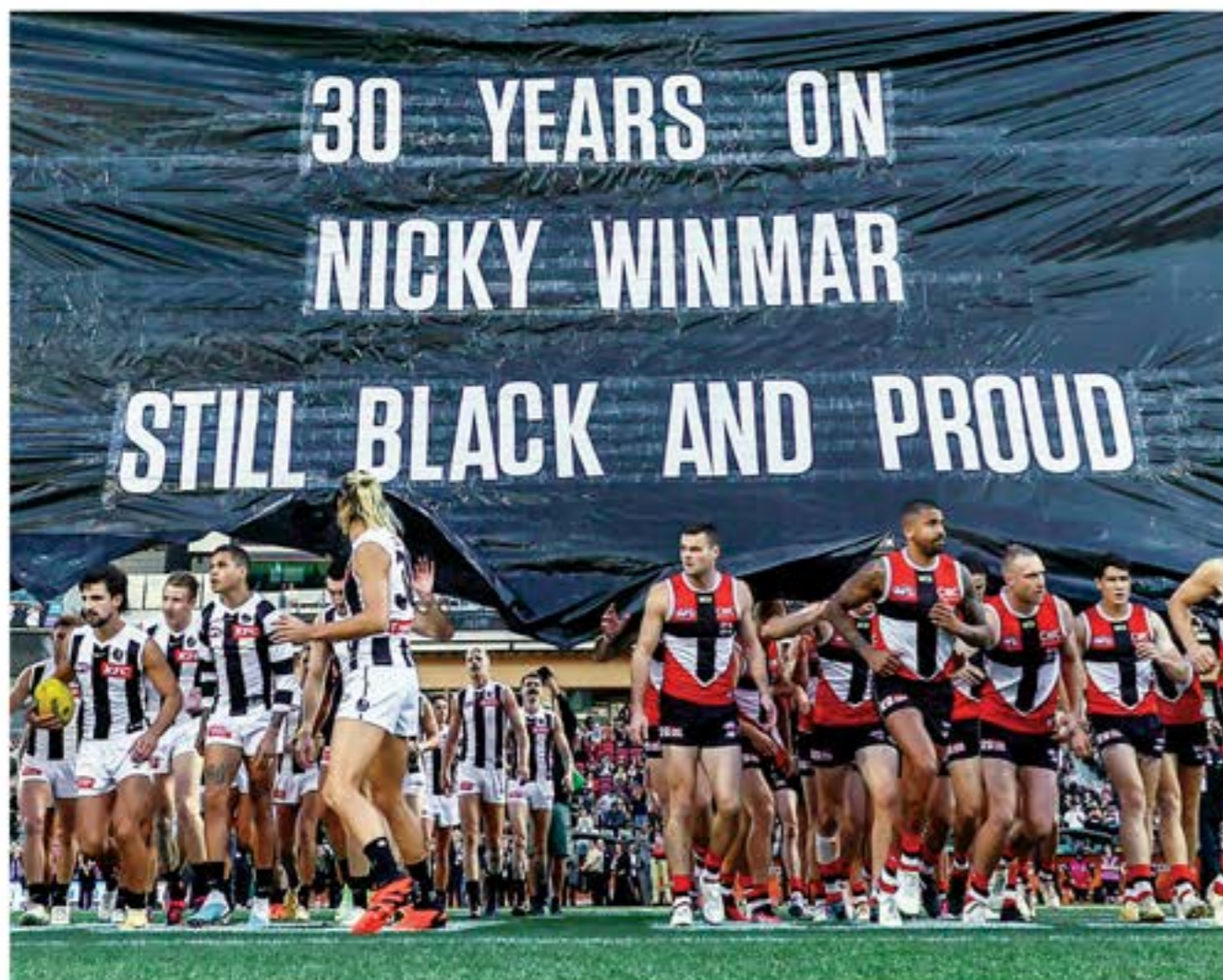


▲ The 2023 Premiership Cup tour visited four states and territories across 21 days in the lead-up to Grand Final day.

AFL games broadcast in First Nations languages

Three AFL matches were broadcast in traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language during the 2023 Sir Doug Nicholls Round, ensuring more First Nations people could access games during the dedicated round. More than 50 remote communities and homelands had the opportunity to listen to the game in their traditional language with games broadcast in Yolngu Matha, Tiwi and Arrernte. In addition, Sylvie Nulpinditj made history becoming the first female commentator to broadcast the Dreamtime at the 'G match in-language on Yolngu radio, which could be heard in six major communities and 15 homelands throughout North-East Arnhem Land and across Darwin and Palmerston.





Sir Doug Nicholls Round

As part of this year's Sir Doug Nicholls Round celebrations the AFL launched a new platform titled 'Moments Forged by First Nations'. It aims to recognise unforgettable moments and contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander footballers and umpires who have paved the way for First Nations people in our game. A video was created and played across rounds 10 and 11 which featured the legacy and impact of players including Eddie Betts, Andrew McLeod, 'Buddy' Franklin and proud football families including the Motlops, Rolis and Krakouers.

Club mascots visit Bordertown

To celebrate the first Gather Round in South Australia, all 18 club mascots travelled to Bordertown - the first stop as you cross the border from Victoria on the Dukes Highway - to kick off the Festival of Footy. The mascots visited the Bordertown Football Club and were accompanied by South Australian-born Bernie Vince, as well as Tatiara District Council Mayor Liz Goosens.

▲ St Kilda and Collingwood players ran through a joint banner during Gather Round to commemorate the 30-year anniversary of Nicky Winmar's iconic stance against racism.

Gather Round for a Cause

The Children's Cancer Foundation was named the official charity partner of Gather Round which was held in Adelaide between April 13-16. Funds raised during the dedicated round go towards supporting families and children who will be treated at the new Australian Bragg Centre for Proton Therapy and Research being built in South Australia. Experiences such as coin tosses, meet and greets with players and money-can't-buy opportunities also put smiles on faces.

Gather Round Footy Festival

The Pepsi Max Footy Festival was held at Elder Park and Pinky Flat precincts to celebrate the inaugural Gather Round. The four-day festival was packed with free activities and entertainment for all ages including a 150m long zip line across the Torrens River. Thousands visited the festival and media hosted live crosses from different sections of the park.

Entertainment announcements

The AFL revealed and promoted an array of entertainment line-ups during the year including pop-rock sisters The Veronicas and electronic duo Peking Duk for Gather Round in SA, while also staging a solid selection of Aussie artists and international rock band KISS for the Toyota AFL Grand Final. Media attended all opportunities with strong outcomes in each market across radio and print.

Gather Round Roadshow

In conjunction with the SANFL, the first Gather Round Roadshow was launched. Starting on March 19, the 24-day roadshow travelled to more than 20 major towns across regional SA, connecting with locals, schools and community groups to create excitement in the lead-up to the round. It also supported a new state-wide initiative that saw 20 brand-new footballs donated to every regional junior football club across South Australia.

Player milestones/statistics

During the season Collingwood's Scott Pendlebury etched his name in the record books when he became the all-time leading disposal winner in VFL/AFL history, notching up than 9657 possessions to surpass St Kilda great, Robert Harvey. A host of footy champions also retired at the end of 2023 including Lance 'Buddy' Franklin, Trent Cotchin, Jack Riewoldt, Phil Davis, Nic Naitanui, Luke Shuey, Tom Jonas, Isaac Smith, Ben Cunnington and Daniel Rich. All milestones were celebrated and promoted.

Captains Day

Both AFL and AFLW captains of all 18 clubs took part in the annual Captains Day in the lead-up to their respective seasons starting. Hosted by the AFL and held at Marvel Stadium, every major media outlet was represented, providing successful media outcomes across TV, newspaper, radio and online. In addition, the day was used to capture photos and promotional material to be utilised across the year, while also facilitating sponsorship requirements.

▲ Club mascots travelled to Bordertown on the Victoria-South Australian border to promote Gather Round.

▶ All 18 clubs were represented at the 2023 AFLW Captains Day.



LEGAL, REGULATORY AND INTEGRITY

STEPHEN MEADE
GENERAL COUNSEL



The Legal, Regulatory and Integrity team has played an important role in our game being run in a safe, secure and fair manner across all levels, from the elite AFL and AFLW competitions through to grassroots.

The work of the team covers Integrity and Security, Risk and Safety, Concussion and Healthcare and Legal areas of the AFL. Major items worked on in 2023 included the Hawthorn Football Club investigation, considerable developments in the industry's management of concussion and other head trauma, the operation of the AFL Tribunal and investigations by the AFL Integrity Unit.

Fans continue to enjoy watching AFL football and supporting their favourite team, knowing the game is run in a safe, secure and fair manner.



Hawthorn Football Club investigation

The independent investigation into serious allegations of racist conduct by and at the Hawthorn Football Club concluded in May, 2023.

The process, which began in late 2022, involved the establishment of an Independent Panel to investigate relevant matters and make recommendations to the AFL. The outcome of the investigation (supported by the Independent Panel and the complainants) included there being no adverse findings against any of the individuals against whom misconduct allegations were made.

In connection with the conclusion of the independent investigation, the AFL apologised for the instances of racism and that players had been marginalised, hurt or discriminated against because of racism over the long history of the game. The AFL also committed to devoting significantly increased resources to its continuous improvement model focused on measures to combat racism and the improvement of cultural safety of First Nations players and their families in the AFL and AFLW.

The AFL's supplementary investigation of Hawthorn in relation to the club's commissioning and oversight of the cultural safety review (that led to the allegations of racist conduct being made) was ongoing at the time of publication.

Concussion innovation and research

The AFL continues to put considerable effort and resources towards its ongoing healthcare and concussion work, with the AFL Concussion Steering Group. The Steering Group represents stakeholder groups from across the industry and is a key part of the governance structure, alongside the Working Groups and the AFL Concussion Scientific Committee.

▽ The AFL is acting to ensure the health and safety of players at all levels is paramount.

Concussion management

A significant development in 2023 included the release of the AFL's updated concussion management guidelines for the elite game and the Strategic Plan for Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football.

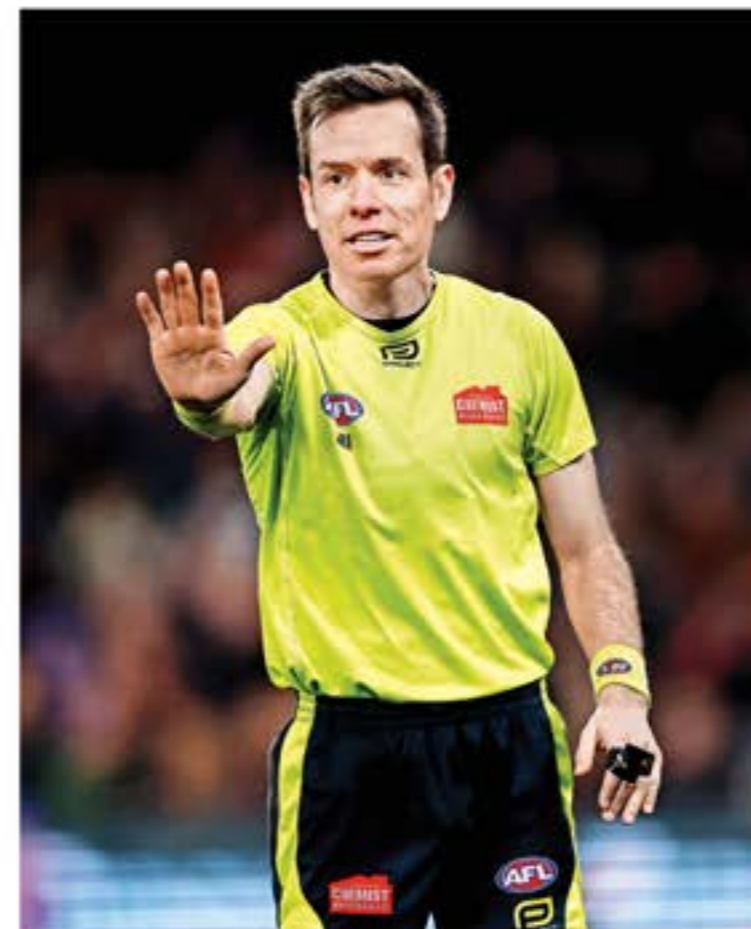
The strategic plan, which is in place for the period to 2026, formalises a guiding framework for the football industry's approach to concussion and head trauma (with the Working Groups responsible for delivering initiatives to further that plan) and affirms the AFL's commitment to the prioritisation of the health and safety of players at all levels while maintaining the fabric of our game.

This includes the further work undertaken in progressing the AFL's Brain Health Initiative (being a longitudinal study of concussion and head trauma in our game) which will commence recruiting participants in 2024.

The AFL actively participated in the Senate Community Affairs References Committee investigation into Concussions and repeated head trauma in contact sports. The AFL welcomed the Committee's report in September, which set out recommendations that were predominantly directed to government.

In December 2023, the State Coroner delivered his findings and recommendations arising from the Coronial investigation of the death of former Richmond player Shane Tuck, who was diagnosed with CTE after his death in 2020.

The AFL is considering numerous recommendations to the AFL including for the reduction of contact training, the AFL's engagement of independent doctors in concussion management at AFL and AFLW matches and the content and delivery of education programs for various cohorts.



AFL Tribunal and other disciplinary action

The AFL's commitment to the health and safety of players was evident in the approach taken to dangerous tackles, with an increased focus on deterrence of a range of dangerous tackles constituting rough conduct during the AFL and AFLW seasons. In the AFL, there were 30 suspensions imposed for dangerous tackles (as compared to seven in the previous season) and in the AFLW there were 15 suspensions (as compared to five in the previous season).

In both competitions there was a noticeable change in player behaviour over the course of the season.

An AFL Tribunal matter closely linked to concussion was the rough conduct charge against Collingwood player Brayden Maynard during the AFL finals. The case generated passionate debate after Maynard was originally handed a three-game suspension and then had his charge dismissed by the independent AFL Tribunal.

While the AFL accepted and did not appeal the decision of the Tribunal, it committed to closely examining the incident at the end of the season, with the health and safety of players in the game the priority. In December, the AFL announced proposed changes to the Tribunal Guidelines in response to the incident.

Four new panel members joined the AFL and AFLW Tribunals in 2023 - Jordan Bannister, Darren Gaspar, Talia Radan and Scott Stevens.

△ Despite some high-profile cases, the AFL will continue to enforce its rules at the Tribunal.

Club Sanction - Concussion Management

A notable matter involving disciplinary action was that involving Port Adelaide and its management of the concussion sustained by player Alir Alir, which resulted in the club being issued with a \$100,000 sanction for failing to undertake appropriate assessment of Alir after his heavy collision with a teammate during a mid-season match against the Adelaide Crows.

Anti-Doping Code

At the time of publication, the matter involving Melbourne player Joel Smith for an alleged breach of the Australian Football Anti-Doping Code was ongoing. An In-Competition sample was collected from Smith after the round 23 match on August 20 and tested positive to Prohibited Substances, namely cocaine and its metabolite.

AFL Integrity Unit

The AFL announced in May that people found to be responsible for vilification within the sport would receive a lifetime ban from AFL matches (with a three-year ban previously applying). A total of 16 lifetime bans were subsequently issued in the 2023 AFL Premiership season.

The AFL Integrity Unit also led an investigation into inappropriate online content involving Collingwood AFL player Jack Crisp, which was distributed without the player's consent. The matter was finalised with Crisp issuing a public apology and ordered to undertake an education program.

Early in 2023, Collingwood player Jack Ginnivan was found guilty of conduct unbecoming under the AFL Rules and suspended for two home and away matches, after admitting to illicit substance use. Ginnivan received a suspended fine and his conduct constituted a notifiable adverse finding under the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy. Later in the year, Elijah Hollands (formerly of the Gold Coast Suns and now a player for Carlton) was given a two-week suspension for conduct unbecoming under the AFL Rules, a suspended fine and an adverse finding under the IDP after a charge of possession of an illicit substance was dealt with by the Southport Magistrates Court.

Throughout 2023, the AFL Integrity Unit provided extensive support for community football in reviewing all matters submitted via the AFL's Integrity Portal, relating to any allegations that may contravene the AFL's Rules and Policies.

AWARDS, RESULTS & FAREWELLS

During a year packed with many highlights and remarkable results, the AFL Grand Final at a packed MCG capped off a sensational season.

In a classic played on a warm spring afternoon, Collingwood outlasted the Brisbane Lions to win by four points.

By securing their 16th VFL/AFL premiership, the Magpies drew level with arch rivals Carlton and Essendon.

Jock McHale medallist Craig McRae won his first AFL premiership as coach after winning three flags as a player with the Lions.

In his first season with Collingwood, Bobby Hill became the Magpies' fourth Norm Smith medallist, scoring a career-best four goals all in the first half.

In his second Grand Final appearance Lachie Neale was left to lament what might have been after starting the week in spectacular fashion.

Neale became a dual Brownlow medallist, polling 31 votes to edge out Western Bulldogs captain Marcus Bontempelli (29) and Magpies star Nick Daicos (28).

Richmond star Morique Conti received 23 of a possible 30 votes to win the AFLW Best and Fairest Award, finishing seven clear of a group of four players - Amy McDonald (Geelong Cats), Chloe Molloy (Sydney Swans), Ash Riddell (North Melbourne) and Claudia Whitfort (Gold Coast Suns).

While their men's combination came so close to success, the Lions women's team celebrated as they took out their second AFLW premiership.

With Ikon Park filled to capacity, the Lions finished strongly to defeat North Melbourne by 17 points with skipper Breanna Koenen a standout for best-afield honours.

Although Melbourne's Toyota AFL Premiership Season fizzled out with consecutive finals defeats, the Demons gained a consolation prize when they earned \$1 million for winning the revamped McClelland Trophy.

For the first time the trophy was presented to the champion club that accumulated the most points in the AFL and AFLW home and away competitions, the Demons scoring 128 points to win by four from the Lions (124).

North Melbourne defender Harry Sheeziel was a clear winner of the AFL Rising Star Award and GWS Giants forward Zarlie Goldsworthy took out the AFLW's Rising Star Award.

Lance 'Buddy' Franklin, only the sixth forward to reach the milestone of 1000 VFL/AFL goals, headed an impressive list of players to finish their careers at the end of the season.

Sadly, the game lost arguably its greatest name, Ron Barassi, who died in September aged 87. Others to pass away in 2023 included Graeme John, Geoff Motley, Kevin Neale, Austin Robertson jnr, Dick Seddon and Jack Sheedy.

Seven new inductees were included in the Australian Football Hall of Fame - Michael Aish, Jimmy Bartel, Corey Enright, Tom Leahy, Bruce McAvaney, Sam Mitchell and Mark Williams.

We did it! Collingwood captain Darcy Moore and coach Craig McRae embrace after the Magpies secured a memorable premiership victory.



The Premiers

The 2023 AFL Grand Final was an epic four-point win to Collingwood over the Brisbane Lions that tested the nerves of every Magpie and Lions supporter.

For the neutrals among the 100,024 fans at the MCG and the millions watching on TV, it was one of the best Grand Finals of all time, with 10 lead changes and so much individual brilliance.

The first half was a shoot-out. The Magpies and Lions combined for 18 goals, making it the highest-scoring opening half in a Grand Final since the similarly epic 1989 Hawthorn-Geelong encounter.

With the temperature nudging 30 degrees, it was also one of the hottest Grand Finals on record, so little wonder the game changed in the second half, as the scoring dried up and it became a battle of will and bodies.

Not much changed in the final quarter, but the slight edge was always with Collingwood, which was able to find something in the key moments.

Two of them came in the frantic final few minutes.

After Brisbane's Charlie Cameron goaled with five-and-a-half minutes remaining to put the Lions in front, two Magpie superstars then took matters into their own hands.

From the ensuing centre bounce, Nick Daicos won the ball and whipped it to Jordan De Goey, who slammed through a goal from outside 50m.

2023 TOYOTA AFL GRAND FINAL

Collingwood	4.4	9.9	10.15	12.18 (90)
Brisbane Lions	3.0	9.3	11.5	13.8 (86)

BEST: Collingwood - Hill, N. Daicos, Crisp, Howe, Mitchell, Pendlebury
Brisbane Lions - McCluggage, Daniher, K. Coleman, Andrews, Bailey, Cameron

GOALS: Collingwood - Hill 4, Crisp 2, De Goey 2, N. Daicos, Mihocek, Pendlebury, Sidebottom
Brisbane Lions - Cameron 3, Daniher 3, Bailey 2, McCarthy 2, McCluggage 2, Robertson

SUBSTITUTES: Collingwood - Lipinski (replaced Murphy)
Brisbane Lions - Lyons (replaced Ah Chee)

Umpires: M. Stevic, H. Gavine, S. Meredith, R. Findlay

Crowd: 100,024 at the MCG

Moments later, Collingwood veteran Steele Sidebottom, together with Scott Pendlebury the only holdovers from the 2010 premiership team, was dragged to the ground after taking a mark on the outer wing.

The resultant 50m penalty took him to the 50m line from where he nailed the set shot to give the Magpies a 10-point lead.

The Lions were not done though. Joe Daniher snapped truly after some deft work from Hugh McCluggage, to bring the margin back to four points.

But the Magpies being the masters of the close finish, they killed the clock from there to register their 16th premiership, drawing them level on the all-time list with Carlton and Essendon.

Magpie small forward Bobby Hill kicked four goals and was named the Norm Smith medallist, while Nick Daicos, Tom Mitchell and Pendlebury were also enormous for Collingwood, especially late.

TEAMS AS SELECTED

Collingwood v Brisbane Lions			
F	Beau McCreery	Jordan De Goey	Josh Daicos
B	Brandon Starcevich	Harris Andrews (c)	Darcy Gardner
HF	Bobby Hill	Brody Mihocek	Jamie Elliott
HB	Conor McKenna	Ryan Lester	Kaidean Coleman
C	Steele Sidebottom	Scott Pendlebury	Oleg Markov
C	Hugh McCluggage	Josh Dunkley	Dayne Zorko
HB	Brayden Maynard	Billy Frampton	Isaac Quaynor
HF	Charlie Cameron	Eric Hipwood	Callum Ah Chee
B	Nathan Murphy	Darcy Moore (c)	Jeremy Howe
F	Cam Rayner	Joe Daniher	Zac Bailey
R	Mason Cox	Nick Daicos	Jack Crisp
R	Oscar McInerney	Lachie Neale (c)	Jarrad Berry
I/C	Tom Mitchell, Darcy Cameron, Will Hoskin-Elliott, Jack Ginnivan		
SUB	Patrick Lipinski		
EM	John Noble, Finlay Macrae, Harvey Harrison		
Coach	Craig McRae		
I/C	Deven Robertson, Lincoln McCarthy, Jespa Fletcher, Darcy Wilmot		
SUB	Jerryd Lyons		
EM	James Tunstall, Darcy Fort, Jack Payne		
Coach	Chris Fagan		

Norm Smith Medal

Stunning would be the best descriptor of Bobby Hill's elevation from fringe player at the GWS Giants to Norm Smith Medal winner for Collingwood, all in the space of 12 months.

Hill played 41 games in four seasons for the Giants, including just 11 in 2022 after being diagnosed with testicular cancer before the season.

He was traded to the Magpies and he thrived, playing 24 games and kicking 33 goals.

He was superb in the qualifying final and his three goals arguably handed the Magpies their tight win over Melbourne.

In the Grand Final, he had 18 disposals, a game-high nine score involvements and kicked 4.2. He was the unanimous choice as best on ground.

He also took eight marks and among them was the mark of the day when he climbed on the back of Brisbane's Brandon Starcevich.

All Hill's goals came in the first half and, on a day in which the quality in front of goal from both teams was from the very top shelf, his fourth goal, when he went to kick on his right foot before switching back to his left, was a classic.

He caused the Lions defence enormous headaches for the rest of the game and was feted afterwards by the Magpies for the spark and excitement he brought to the team all year.

NORM SMITH MEDAL VOTING

Luke Darcy (Channel 7, chair)	3 B. Hill (Coll), 2 N. Daicos (Coll), 1 S. Pendlebury (Coll)
Eddie Betts (Fox Footy)	3 B. Hill (Coll), 2 T. Mitchell (Coll), 1 K. Coleman (Bris)
Jude Bolton (Triple M)	3 B. Hill (Coll), 2 K. Coleman (Bris), 1 T. Mitchell (Coll)
Sarah Dille (afl.com.au)	3 B. Hill (Coll), 2 K. Coleman (Bris), 1 J. Crisp (Coll)
Luke Shuey (2018 winner)	3 B. Hill (Coll), 2 N. Daicos (Coll), 1 J. Crisp (Coll)
TOTALS	15 Hill, 5 K. Coleman, 4 N. Daicos, 3 Mitchell, 2 Crisp, 1 Pendlebury

Jock McHale Medal

The 2023 Grand Final was already an eventful occasion for Collingwood coach Craig McRae well before the opening bounce. His partner Gabrielle went into labour the night before the game and took herself off to hospital without telling McRae, in order that he have a decent night's sleep.

But at 6.30am came the call that he better get to St Vincent's Hospital, where their daughter Maggie was delivered about one hour later.

McRae spent the morning at the hospital before driving straight to the MCG to start preparations for the Grand Final where he delivered another coaching master class to earn the Magpies their 16th premiership.

In the two seasons since he replaced Nathan Buckley, McRae has shown himself to be a brilliant coach in so many aspects of the game.

But no team has been better than Collingwood at managing the close finishes.

The Magpies held out the GWS Giants over nine scoreless minutes to close out the preliminary final and, when Brisbane drew to within four points with 90 seconds remaining in the Grand Final, they were able to pull all the right levers once again.

"I think they're (the close finishes) starting to be a bit of a trend now," McRae said.

"We are pretty good at these moments. In the end it was an incredible management of moments. That's probably the storyline for this team."

"They know how to manage minutes better than anyone I've ever seen in the game."

Success has followed McRae in football. He was a three-time premiership player at Brisbane under Leigh Matthews and after making his name as a development coach - he taught Mason Cox to kick during his first stint at Collingwood - he later became a key assistant to Damien Hardwick at Richmond as that club won three flags in four years. He also coached a VFL flag at the Tigers.

△ Norm Smith medallist Bobby Hill and Collingwood coach Craig McRae were all smiles when they faced the media after the Magpies secured their 16th premiership.



Brownlow Medal

Brisbane Lions star Lachie Neale took out the 2023 Brownlow Medal after one of the most thrilling counts in history. Neale (31 votes) finished on the podium ahead of Western Bulldogs captain Marcus Bontempelli (29) and second-year Collingwood sensation Nick Daicos (28).

Daicos racked up 13 votes after just six rounds and led the count for most of the night but failed to poll a vote over the last month after suffering a leg injury in round 21.

It was Neale's second Brownlow following his 2020 victory and he became the 16th multiple winner and the first since Fremantle's Nat Fyfe (2015 and 2019) to achieve the feat.

The 30-year-old averaged 27.4 disposals, 8.1 clearances and 4.1 tackles a game during the home and away season.

Neale had a couple of games where even he was surprised to receive votes, but few doubted he was a worthy winner.

"There were probably games I thought I would poll through the middle part of the season where I didn't pick up votes or polled one where I thought I might get two or three in that game, so I think it comes around in swings and roundabouts," Neale said.

BROWNLOW MEDAL

Player	Votes	3	2	1	Games
Lachie Neale (BL)	31	7	3	4	23
Marcus Bontempelli (WB)	29	6	5	1	23
Nick Daicos (Coll)	28	7	3	1	20
Zak Butters (PA)	27	7	2	2	23
Errol Gulden (Syd)	27	6	3	3	23
Christian Petracca (Melb)	26	8	2	4	23
Caleb Serong (Frem)*	24	4	5	2	22
Jack Vinay (Melb)	24	7	1	1	22
Noah Anderson (DGS)	22	8	2	0	23
Patrick Crippa (Carl)	22	5	3	1	21

*Ineligible

Coleman Medal

The 2023 Coleman Medal was only decided during the last home and away game for the year.

Evergreen Adelaide spearhead Taylor Walker kicked nine goals in the Crows' season-closing game against West Coast at Optus Stadium.

Walker kicked four in the final quarter to finish the season with a career-high 76 goals.

He set a task for Carlton star Charlie Curnow at Marvel Stadium the following evening when the Blues took on the GWS Giants.

But Curnow took care of business quickly, with three goals in the first term to pull ahead of Walker and win the Coleman Medal for the second successive year.

Teammate Harry McKay was the leading goalkicker in 2021, meaning three straight years of Coleman medallists at Ikon Park.

COLEMAN MEDAL

Player	Home & Away			Including Finals				
	G	B	Gms	G	B	%	Avg	Gms
Charlie Curnow (Carl)	78	41	23	81	44	65	3.1	26
Taylor Walker (Adel)	76	34	22	76	34	69	3.5	22
Nick Larkay (NM)	71	24	23	71	24	75	3.1	23
Toby Greene (GWS)	60	31	21	66	35	65	2.7	24
Jeremy Cameron (Geel)	53	34	20	53	34	61	2.6	20
Oscar Allen (WCE)	53	23	23	53	23	70	2.3	23
Charlie Cameron (BL)	53	23	23	59	27	69	2.3	26
Joe Daniher (BL)	51	34	23	61	37	62	2.3	26
Kyle Langford (Ess)	51	23	23	51	23	69	2.2	23

McClelland Trophy

In 2023, the AFL announced the McClelland Trophy would now represent a combined award to the 'Champion Club' and presented to the best-performed club across both the Toyota AFL and NAB AFLW competitions. It was previously awarded for only the men's home and away season in recent years, since the end of the reserves and under-19 competitions.

Melbourne received \$1 million, shared across the player groups and administration, as the inaugural club winner, based on combined results across the two home and away seasons.

△ Melbourne was awarded the 2023 McClelland Trophy under a new criteria whereby the best-performed club across both the AFL and AFLW competitions is honoured.

2023 PREMIERSHIP SEASON LADDER

#	CLUB	P				For			Against			%	Mch Pts	Home			Away			Streaks	Scores		Av Margin		W + L	7pts	7pts	Players Used	Same Rnd 2022
		W	L	D	0	Gls	Beh	Pts	Gls	Beh	Pts			W	L	D	W	L	D		High	Low	W	L					
1	Collingwood	23	18	5	0	317	240	2142	239	253	1897	126.97	72	10	2	0	8	3	0	1W	135	59	31	22	4	1	37	4	
2	Brisbane	23	17	6	0	316	284	2180	290	211	1771	123.09	68	12	0	0	5	6	0	4W	152	53	33	25	2	1	35	6	
3	Port Adelaide	23	17	6	0	310	289	2149	280	226	1906	112.75	68	10	2	0	7	4	0	3W	151	64	26	25	4	1	37	11	
4	Melbourne	23	16	7	0	305	249	2079	240	220	1660	125.24	64	8	2	0	7	5	0	2W	139	45	30	30	4	3	34	2	
5	Carlton	23	13	9	1	275	272	1922	243	239	1697	113.26	54	5	6	0	8	3	1	1L	152	44	37	29	2	0	37	9	
6	St Kilda	23	13	10	0	260	215	1775	235	237	1647	107.77	52	6	5	0	7	5	0	1L	122	51	25	20	0	1	32	10	
7	GWS	23	13	10	0	264	254	2098	269	271	1895	107.06	52	6	6	0	7	4	0	2W	162	47	27	22	4	1	36	16	
8	Sydney	23	12	10	1	299	256	2050	271	237	1863	110.04	50	5	5	1	7	5	0	1L	205	37	30	25	4	2	38	3	
9	Western Bulldogs	23	12	11	0	276	263	1919	256	230	1768	106.98	48	5	6	0	7	5	0	1W	126	41	29	17	1	3	37	8	
10	Adelaide	23	11	12	0	319	279	2193	272	245	1977	116.84	44	8	4	0	3	8	0	1W	174	40	46	15	1	5	37	14	
11	Essendon	23	11	12	0	267	236	1838	300	250	2050	89.66	44	7	5	0	4	7	0	2L	124	31	22	38	3	3	34	15	
12	Geelong	23	10	12	1	306	252	2099	298	247	1655	112.56	42	8	4	0	2	8	1	3L	136	53	46	19	0	0	38	1	
13	Richmond	23	10	12	1	265	266	1856	287	261	1983	93.69	42	8	5	1	4	7	0	1L	110	48	22	29	2	2	36	7	
14	Fremantle	23	10	13	0	271	209	1835	279	224	1898	96.98	40	5	7	0	5	6	0	1W	134	36	35	31	0	2	36	5	
15	Gold Coast	23	9	14	0	265	248	1839	294	242	2006	91.67	36	7	4	0	2	10	0	4L	113	42	35	34	0	2	40	12	
16	Hawthorn	23	7	16	0	243	228	1688	311	235	2101	80.25	28	5	6	0	2	10	0	2L	142	34	36	41	1	3	38	13	
17	North Melbourne	23	3	20	0	243	199	1657	338	290	2318	71.48	12	2	9	0	1	11	0	1W	132	34	13	35	2	3	43	18	
18	West Coast	23	3	20	0	204	194	1418	383	316	2674	53.03	12	2	9	0	1	11	0	1L	90	26	10	64	1	2	40	17	



All-Australian Team

Toby Greene's rise to one of the champions of the AFL was confirmed with his selection as the All-Australian captain for 2023. He booted 60 goals for the GWS Giants in the home and away season and played a huge role in the club's barnstorming second half of the season, during which it rose from 15th place into the finals, eventually finishing just one point short of making the Grand Final.

Western Bulldogs skipper Marcus Bontempelli was selected for the fifth time and was named vice-captain for the second time. Collingwood brothers Josh and Nick Daicos were among 12 players to receive their first blazers.

Maggie skipper Darcy Moore was named in a key defensive role, giving the 2023 premiers three players in the final 22.

Port Adelaide, with Connor Rozee, Zak Butters and Dan Houston, was the other team to have three players selected.

Geelong defender Tom Stewart earned his fifth All-Australian blazer in six years, while Melbourne's Christian Petracca was named for the fourth successive year.

Carlton's Coleman medallist Charlie Curnow, Adelaide's Taylor Walker and North Melbourne's Nick Larkey were picked as key forwards, with Walker, at 33, named for the first time after his cracking 76-goal season.

Other first-time selections included Tim English (Western Bulldogs), Jordan Dawson (Adelaide), Caleb Serong (Fremantle), James Sicily (Hawthorn), Callum Wilkie (St Kilda) and Errol Gulden (Sydney).



ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

B	James Sicily Hawthorn	Callum Wilkie St Kilda	Tom Stewart Geelong
HB	Jack Sinclair St Kilda	Darcy Moore Collingwood	Dan Houston Port Adelaide
C	Errol Gulden Sydney Swans	Marcus Bontempelli (vc) Western Bulldogs	Josh Daicos Collingwood
HF	Connor Rozee Port Adelaide	Taylor Walker Adelaide	Christian Petracca Melbourne
F	Charlie Cameron Brisbane Lions	Charlie Curnow Carlton	Toby Greene (c) GWS Giants
R	Tim English Western Bulldogs	Zak Butters Port Adelaide	Nick Daicos Collingwood
IC	Jordan Dawson Adelaide	Nick Larkey North Melbourne	Zach Merrett Essendon
			Caleb Serong Fremantle
Coach	Craig McRae Collingwood		
Umpire	Robert Findlay		

△ Just over half the 2023 All-Australian team were first-time selections (12 in total).

▷ Among the All-Australian debutants was Hawthorn captain James Sicily who enjoyed a stellar season for the Hawks.



Mark and Goal of the Year

GWS Giants utility Harry Himmelberg and first-year Brisbane Lions midfielder Will Ashcroft were rewarded for their eye-catching efforts in 2023 at the Brownlow Medal count.

Himmelberg's spectacular leap over Adelaide's Reilly O'Brien in the opening round earned him the Alex Jesaulenko Medal for winning the Four N Twenty Mark of the Year. He also won \$10,000, a pie warmer and a year's supply of pies thanks to Four N Twenty.

For his remarkable feat in mid-air from deep in the forward pocket during the round seven game against Fremantle, Ashcroft received the Phil Manassa Medal and \$10,000 for winning the rebel Goal of the Year.

Himmelberg's mark and Ashcroft's goal were chosen by the All-Australian selectors (counted as 10 votes) and by public voting (counted as one vote). In addition to the 24 weekly Mark and Goal of the Year winners, the Game Analysis Committee selected five additional marks and goals to be considered in deciding the season's top three in each category, which was based on a 5-4-3-2-1 vote by each member of the selection committee. The selectors were Gilon McLachlan (chair), Eddie Betts, Jude Bolton, Nathan Buckley, Kane Cornes, Andrew Dillon, Glen Jakovich, Laura Kane, Cameron Ling and Matthew Pavlich.

△ Greater Western Sydney's Harry Himmelberg (top left) and Brisbane rookie Marcus Ashcroft received their respective Mark and Goal of the Year awards at the Brownlow Medal count.

◁ Himmelberg's scissor over Adelaide's Reilly O'Brien in round one won him the Mark of the Year award.



AFLW All-Australian Team

The 2023 AFLW All-Australian team featured 11 debutants, with players from 10 separate clubs represented in the team of the year.

Minor premiers the Adelaide Crows had the most players selected (four) while North Melbourne captain Emma Kearney made her eighth consecutive All-Australian side, the only player to have received the honour in every season of the competition's history.

League-leading goalkicker and Melbourne captain Kate Hore was named as captain while Essendon co-captain Bonnie Toogood was named as vice-captain.

△ There were 11 debutants in the 2023 AFLW All-Australian side and a total of 10 clubs were represented in the team.

▷ North Melbourne star Emma Kearney confirmed her status as a great of the women's game, making the All-Australian side for the eighth consecutive season.



AFLW ALL-AUSTRALIAN TEAM

B	Charlotte Thomas West Coast Eagles	Chelsea Biddell Adelaide Crows	
HB	Emma Kearney North Melbourne	Emma O'Driscoll Fremantle	Eilish Sheerin Richmond
C	Niamh Kelly Adelaide Crows	Monique Conti Richmond	Sophie Conway Brisbane Lions
HF	Chloe Molloy Sydney Swans	Bonnie Toogood (vc) Essendon	Kate Hore (c) Melbourne
F	Dakota Davidson Brisbane Lions	Danielle Penter Adelaide Crows	
R	Ally Morphett Sydney Swans	Jasmine Garner North Melbourne	Ebony Marinoff Adelaide Crows
IC	Charlie Rowbottom Gold Coast Suns	Eden Zanker Melbourne	Ally Anderson Brisbane Lions
	Ash Riddell North Melbourne	Laura Gardner Sydney Swans	
Coach	Craig Starcevich Brisbane Lions		
Umpire	Joel Clamp		



AFLW Best and Fairest

Richmond's Monique Conti became the first Tiger to win the AFLW Best and Fairest, dominating the count to win by a massive seven votes ahead of Amy McDonald (Geelong Cats), Chloe Molloy (Sydney Swans), Ash Riddell (North Melbourne) and Claudia Whitfort (Gold Coast Suns).

Conti polled 23 of a possible 30 votes from the 10 games of the home and away season, adding the game's highest individual honour to her lengthy list of achievements as a five-time All-Australian, five-time club champion and AFLW Grand Final Best on Ground medallist in the premiership with the Western Bulldogs.

Just 23, Conti averaged 28.5 disposals, 7.3 clearances, 418 metres gained, 5.8 tackles and 3.5 score involvements a game to be crowned as a worthy winner.

2023 AFLW BEST AND FAIREST

Player	Votes
Monique Conti	23
Amy McDonald (GC)	16
Chloe Molloy (Syd)	16
Ashleigh Riddell (Nth)	16
Claudia Whitfort (GCS)	16
Bonnie Toogood (Ess)	15
Ally Anderson (BL)	14
Jasmine Garner (Nth)	14
Georgie Praspakis (GC)	14
Anna Hatchard (Adel)	13



AFLW Rising Star

Zarlie Goldsworthy from the GWS Giants was crowned the 2023 AFLW Rising Star, following a brilliant season which also saw her win the Gabrielle Tractor Medal as the Giants' best and fairest player.

Goldsworthy won the award with 41 votes, finishing ahead of the Sydney Swans' Ally Morphett (40 votes), West Coast Eagles' Ella Roberts (23), Port Adelaide's Matilda Scholz (13) and Hawthorn's Jas Fleming (7).

The 19-year-old kicked a club-high 13 goals and averaged 18.3 disposals, 6.6 tackles and 2.9 score involvements a game to become the first GWS Giants player to win the Rising Star award.

AFLW Mark and Goal of the Year

The 2023 Toyota Mark of the Year was awarded to the Brisbane Lions' Courtney Hodder. A key member of the Lions premiership side, Hodder took the Mark of the Year in round seven against the Gold Coast Suns, jumping with the flight of the ball against oncoming traffic to complete a courageous grab.

The 2023 rebel Goal of the Year was awarded to Richmond's Caitlin Greiser. She kicked the Goal of the Year in round 10 against Collingwood, snapping the ball while running hard towards the boundary and being pressured by an approaching defender.

AFLW Leading Goalkickers

The AFLW leading goalkicker award was split for the first time, in a unique occurrence with Melbourne teammates Eden Zanker and Kate Hore both kicking 20 goals.

Teammates have never tied for the leading goalkicker in either the men's or women's competition and both Hore and Zanker were selected in the AFLW All-Australian side, with Hore named as captain.

Zanker was goalless against Brisbane in the final round of the season, with Hore's sole major enough for the skipper to draw level with her teammate.

The pair's tally of 20 goals was a new mark for the AFLW, beating the previous record of 19 in a home and away season set by Ash Saint (2022 Season Six) and Jesse Wardlaw (2022 Season Seven).

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



**MICHAEL
AISH**

Born: February 21, 1961
Playing career: 1979-93
Games: 307
Goals: 449
Aish is regarded as one of the SANFL's greatest players and one of five legends at Norwood, being the first of only three Redlegs in the club's history to reach 300 games. A member of the SANFL Hall of Fame, he is a three-time All-Australian (1983, 1984, 1986) and represented SA 15 times, captaining the state in 1986 and 1989. Played in two premiership teams (1982, 1984), was a four-time club best and fairest winner (1981, 1983, 1984, 1992), captained Norwood for three seasons (1987-89), won the Magarey Medal in 1981 and the Fos Williams Medal in 1983.



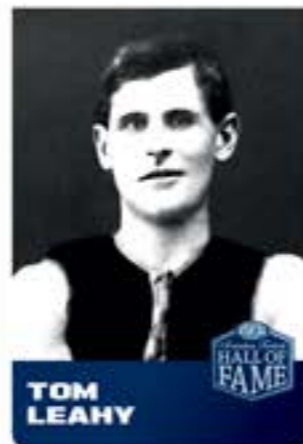
**JIMMY
BARTEL**

Born: December 4, 1983
Playing career: 2002-16
Games: 305
Goals: 202
Tough, courageous and versatile midfielder who was a key member of the powerful Geelong team in the early 2000s. The right-footer played in the Cats' three premiership teams in 2007, 2009 and 2011, winning the Norm Smith Medal in 2011. Won the Brownlow Medal in 2007, runner-up in Geelong's best and fairest twice (2006, 2007), third on three occasions (2008, 2009, 2011) and represented Victoria in State of Origin in 2008. A two-time All-Australian (2007, 2008), AFL Life Member and board member of the GWS Giants, he has high-profile media roles.



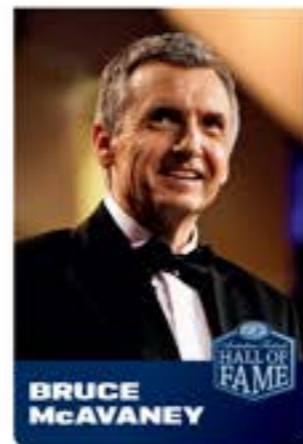
**COREY
ENRIGHT**

Born: September 14, 1981
Playing career: 2001-16
Games: 332
Goals: 66
Hailing from Kimba on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula, the consistent and durable Enright became one of the AFL's best defenders. The three-time Geelong premiership backman won two club best and fairest awards (2009 equal, 2011), was a three-time All-Australian (2012, 2016), was an All-Australian representative on six occasions (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016) and represented the Dream Team in State of Origin in 2008. An AFL Life Member and made a Geelong Legend in 2022, he was an assistant coach with the Cats before moving to St Kilda as an assistant coach.



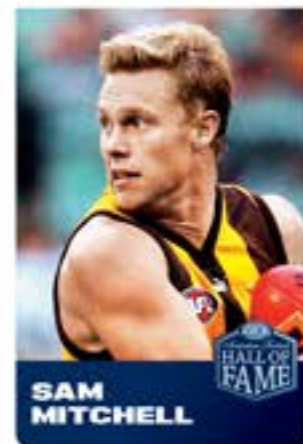
**TOM
LEAHY**

Born: January 13, 1888
Died: May 7, 1964
Playing career: 1905-21
(West Adelaide 1905-09, North Adelaide 1910-15, 1919-21)
Games: 169 (West Adelaide 58, North Adelaide 111)
Goals: 81 (West Adelaide 23, North Adelaide 58)
Coaching record: Norwood 1922-24; premierships 1922-23
Leahy is recognised as the first great ruckman of the early 20th century in South Australia. Playing for West Adelaide and North Adelaide, he was a member of three premiership teams (1908, 1909, 1920). Won the Magarey Medal in 1913, was runner-up on three occasions (1908, 1909, 1911), a three-time best and fairest winner for North Adelaide (1911, 1914, 1919) and captained the club for four seasons (1915, 1919-21). Represented SA on 31 occasions, was captain between 1919-21 and pivotal to the state's only victory at a full carnival in 1908. After retiring as a player, the inaugural SANFL Hall of Fame member went on to become a two-time premiership coach for Norwood (1922-23) and a long-time administrator.



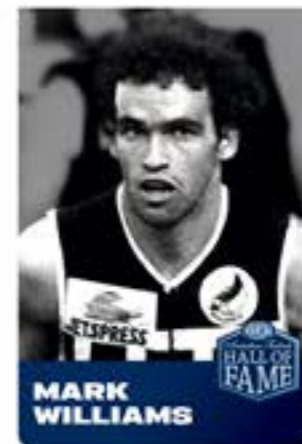
**BRUCE
McAVANEY**

Born: June 22, 1953
In a career encompassing many sports including the Olympic Games and horse racing, McAvaney has called more than 1000 AFL games, including 20 AFL Grand Finals. Began calling football with Channel Seven in Adelaide in 1978 and was the leading SANFL caller between 1981-83 before moving to Network Ten between 1983-89, then returning to Channel Seven. An AFL Life Member and Sport Australia Hall of Fame member, he was the Brownlow Medal host and the Seven Network's major host for all key AFL/industry events.



**SAM
MITCHELL**

Born: October 12, 1982
Playing career: 2002-17
(Hawthorn 2002-16, West Coast 2017)
Games: 329 (Hawthorn 307, West Coast 22)
Goals: 71 (Hawthorn 67, West Coast 4)
Coaching record: Hawthorn 2022 (45 games for 15 wins, 30 losses)
Champion midfielder who captained Hawthorn to its 2008 premiership and played in three more flags with the Hawks (2013, 2014, 2015). The three-time All-Australian (2011, 2013, 2015) won the Brownlow Medal in 2012 and was third in 2015. Was a five-time best and fairest winner with Hawthorn (2006, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016), second in 2009 and third in 2010, 2013 and 2015. An AFL Life Member, he won the AFL Rising Star award in 2003 and was the Liston medallist while playing for Box Hill in 2002. Finished his playing career with West Coast and became an assistant coach with the Eagles before returning to Hawthorn. The Hawks' senior coach since 2022.



**MARK
WILLIAMS**

Born: August 21, 1958
Playing career: 1976-92
(West Adelaide 1976-78, Port Adelaide 1979-80, 1990-92; Collingwood 1981-86; Brisbane Bears 1987-90)
Games: 377 (West Adelaide 65, Port Adelaide 111, Collingwood 135, Brisbane Bears 66)
Goals: 377 (West Adelaide 37, Port Adelaide 104, Collingwood 178, Brisbane Bears 58)
Coaching record: Glenelg 1993-94 (45 games for 22 wins, one draw, 22 losses); Port Adelaide 1999-2010 (256 games for 142 wins, two draws, 112 losses), premiership 2004; also coached Werribee (VFL)
Williams has been involved at top-level football since 1976 and enjoyed plenty of success as a four-time SANFL premiership player with Port Adelaide (1979, 1980, 1990, 1992), AFL premiership coach with the Power (2004) and a two-time Collingwood best and fairest winner (1981, 1985). Also played in a QAL premiership with Windsor-Zillmere in 1988. An All-Australian in 1980, he represented South Australia on eight occasions as well as one appearance for Victoria and Queensland.



A Life Member of the AFL, SANFL, Port Adelaide and Collingwood, he was senior coach with Glenelg (1993-94) and Werribee (2019-20), as well as filling senior AFL assistant coaching roles with Essendon, Port Adelaide, GWS Giants, Richmond and Melbourne. Alongside his father Fos, they are only the third father/son pair in the Hall of Fame.

Seven new inductees were included in the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2023. The inductees were Michael Aish (Magarey medallist and dual Norwood premiership player), Jimmy Bartel (Geelong's Brownlow medallist, Norm Smith medallist and two-time All-Australian), his Cats teammate Corey Enright (dual best and fairest winner and six-time All-Australian), the late Tom Leahy (first great ruckman of the early 20th century in South Australia), Bruce McAvaney (veteran TV commentator), Sam Mitchell (four-time Hawthorn premiership midfielder and five club best and fairest awards) and Mark Williams (Collingwood captain and Port Adelaide premiership player and coach). A total of 136 individuals were inducted in the original class of 1986 across the categories of player,

coach, umpire, administrator or media. There are now 327 members of the Australian Football Hall of Fame and among this number are 31 Legends (elevated 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 another three in 2017. The 2023 Australian Football Hall of Fame selection committee was Richard Goyder (chair), Graham Cornes, Ross Glendinning, Debbie Lee, Karen Lyon, Paul Marsh, Alister Nicholson, Michael O'Loughlin, David Parkin and Patrick Keane (secretary).

LIFE MEMBERS



Luke Breust

Recruited from country NSW as a rookie, Breust has become one of the best small forwards to play the game. Made his senior debut in 2011 and has gone on to play 281 premiership games and kick 528 goals for Hawthorn, as well as 23 pre-season games. Was a member of the Hawks' premiership teams in 2013-15 and played in their losing 2012 Grand Final team. A two-time

All-Australian (2014, 2018), he has been Hawthorn's leading goalkicker on five occasions (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023). Represented Australia twice in International Rules and played one State of Origin game.



Neil Craig

Craig was a star midfielder in the SANFL who has acquired an impressive reputation as a coach. Between 1973-90 he played 319 games and kicked 220 goals for Norwood, Sturt and North Adelaide. At Norwood he played in two premiership teams (1975, 1978), won the club best and fairest award in 1977 and later coached the Redlegs between

1991-95. Captained Sturt for two seasons (1985-86), skippered SA in 1984 and made 11 appearances for the state. A member of the SANFL Hall of Fame, he was an assistant coach with the Adelaide Crows before being elevated to the senior role between 2005-11. Has been involved in coaching roles at Melbourne, Essendon, Carlton and Gold Coast.



Dustin Martin

Martin is a modern-day great who is the only player to win three Norm Smith Medals. A pivotal member of Richmond's three premiership teams this century (2017, 2019, 2020), the four-time All-Australian won the Brownlow Medal in 2017 and was third in 2016. Played 289 premiership games and kicked 328 goals since making his senior debut in 2010, as well as 18 pre-season

games and one State of Origin appearance in 2020. Won the Tigers' best and fairest award in 2016-17, has been runner-up four times and third on three occasions.



Luke Parker

The courageous midfielder embodies the Bloods' culture which has made the Swans such a powerful force this century. The co-captain for the past five seasons, Parker was a member of a premiership team in only his second season with Sydney (2012) and has played in three other Grand Finals (2014, 2016, 2022). Runner-up in the Brownlow Medal and an All-Australian

in 2016, he has won the club's best and fairest award three times (2014, 2017, 2021), second twice (2018, 2020) and third in 2019.



Peggy O'Neal

O'Neal joined Richmond's board in 2005 and became the first female AFL club president when she took over in 2013. Has overseen a successful era for the Tigers, highlighted by three premierships in four years (2017, 2019-20) and record membership figures surpassing 100,000. Chaired the Victorian Minister for Sport's year-long Inquiry into 'Women and

Girls in Sport and Active Recreation' in 2014 and was convener of the Minister's Change Our Game Champions program until June 2018. Enlisted in 2018 to the AFL's inaugural Competition Committee, which advises the AFL Commission on issues regarding the design and future of the competition. In 2019 she was appointed to the Australian Institute of Sport Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement Advisory Committee and became a member of the AFL Mental Health Steering Committee in 2020.



Kevin Sheehan

Sheehan has been involved in junior development and talent pathways for 47 years. Played 108 senior and 98 reserves games for Geelong between 1974-82 after being recruited from Sandhurst. During his playing career with the Cats, he served as the club's promotions officer (1976-79), development manager (1980-83) and assistant coach (1982-83).

Joined the VFL as development manager in 1983, filling that role until 1987. Between 1988-95 he was the VFDF general manager before becoming the AFL development manager from 1996-97. Was the League's national talent manager between 1998-2018 and from 2019 he has been AFL Talent Adviser. The medal awarded to the best player in the boys' Under-16 National Championships each year is named in his honour.



Isaac Smith

Renowned for his speed and endurance, the skilful winger with a powerful left boot provided excellent service to two clubs before his retirement at the end of the 2023 season. Started his AFL career with Hawthorn in 2011, playing 210 games and kicking 165 goals for the Hawks until the end of 2020. Played in four Grand Finals for three premierships with

Hawthorn and was third in the Hawks' best and fairest award in 2018. Switched to Geelong in 2021 as an unrestricted free agent and became the oldest player to win the Norm Smith Medal in 2022 when he starred in the Cats' massive Grand Final win. Played 70 games and kicked 40 goals for Geelong between 2021-23.



Greg Swann

Swann has been Chief Executive Officer at three AFL clubs and is regarded as one of the game's sharpest, most competent administrators. Played 87 games for VFA club Williamstown between 1986-96 and was the club's president between 1992-95. In 1996 he ran Fitzroy while it was in receivership and completed the club's sale to the Brisbane Bears.

During his tenure as Collingwood CEO between 1999-2007, membership doubled and revenue tripled. The Maggies' base moved from Victoria Park to a new centre at Olympic Park and an agreement for the Northern Stand at the MCG was struck. With Carlton between 2007-14 his key achievements included building membership past 50,000, tripling revenue, establishing an elite training facility and reducing historic club debt. In the past 10 seasons with the Brisbane Lions, he has overseen the establishment of the women's team, the move to a new training and administration base at Springfield and a return to profitability.



Callan Ward

The tough, courageous midfielder played his first four AFL seasons with the Western Bulldogs before moving to Sydney and becoming co-captain of the fledgling GWS Giants team. Won the Giants' best and fairest award in his first season (2012), runner-up on four occasions (2013, 2014 (equal), 2017, 2018) and third in 2015. Co-captain between 2012-19,

he has played 235 premiership games and kicked 111 goals for the Giants between 2012-23 to add to his 60 games and 33 goals with the Bulldogs between 2008-11. Has played 19 pre-season games (six for Bulldogs, 13 for Giants) and made two appearances for Australia in International Rules.



Jack Ziebell

The versatile Ziebell captained North Melbourne for six seasons (2017-22). Blessed with elite kicking skills, he retired at the end of the 2023 season after playing 280 premiership games (including eight finals) and kicking 183 goals for the Kangaroos, as well as playing 23 pre-season games. Recruited from the Murray Bushrangers, the fiercely determined right-

footer who made his senior debut in 2009 finished second in the club's best and fairest award in 2016 and equal third in 2021.

JACK TITUS AWARD



Dr Mark Pennings

The Jack Titus Award for service to the game was awarded to renowned historian Dr Mark Pennings. Across a decade, Dr Pennings produced a five-volume history on the early days of the game in Victoria - *Origins of Australian Football* - across the period 1858-96, which is acknowledged by other historians as the comprehensive

work on the key development years of the game. The work of Dr Pennings has been the reference point for clubs as they begin deeper examinations of their history and origins, with his books chronicling the champions, the characters, the servants and the pillars of the clubs from our first days.

RETIREEES



For almost two decades Lance 'Buddy' Franklin thrilled crowds across the country with his incredible athleticism and goalkicking prowess. Franklin sits fourth on the list of the all-time leading VFL/AFL goalkickers with 1066 goals in 354 matches and is only the sixth player to reach the milestone of 1000 VFL/AFL goals.

The left-footer played in two premiership teams with Hawthorn before moving to Sydney at the end of 2013.

Franklin, who earned All-Australian honours on eight occasions and was a four-time Coleman medallist, headed an impressive list of players to finish their careers at the end of the 2023 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

Veteran Richmond pair Trent Cotchin and Jack Riewoldt also announced they would hang up the boots. Cotchin played 306 matches in the yellow and black after making his debut in 2008 and captained Richmond for a record 188 games, including the premiership successes of 2017 and 2019-20. He tied for the Brownlow Medal in 2012 with Hawthorn's Sam Mitchell and was a three-time Jack Dyer medallist.

Riewoldt shared Richmond's triple premierships with Cotchin and only Kevin Bartlett has played more games for the Tigers.

The three-time Coleman medallist and All-Australian won the Jack Dyer Medal twice and led the club goalkicking on 12 occasions, kicking 787 goals in his 347 games.

West Coast farewellled three of its favourite sons - Shannon Hurn, Nic Naitanui and Luke Shuey.

Hurn, a two-time All-Australian defender, captained the Eagles for six seasons including the 2018 premiership win.

Naitanui was dogged by injury during a spectacular career, which included three All-Australian blazers and two John Worsfold Medals.

Shuey replaced Hurn as Eagles skipper in 2020 and finished with 248 matches and 142 goals.

A two-time John Worsfold medallist, he was rewarded for his slashing performance in the 2018 Grand Final with the Norm Smith Medal.

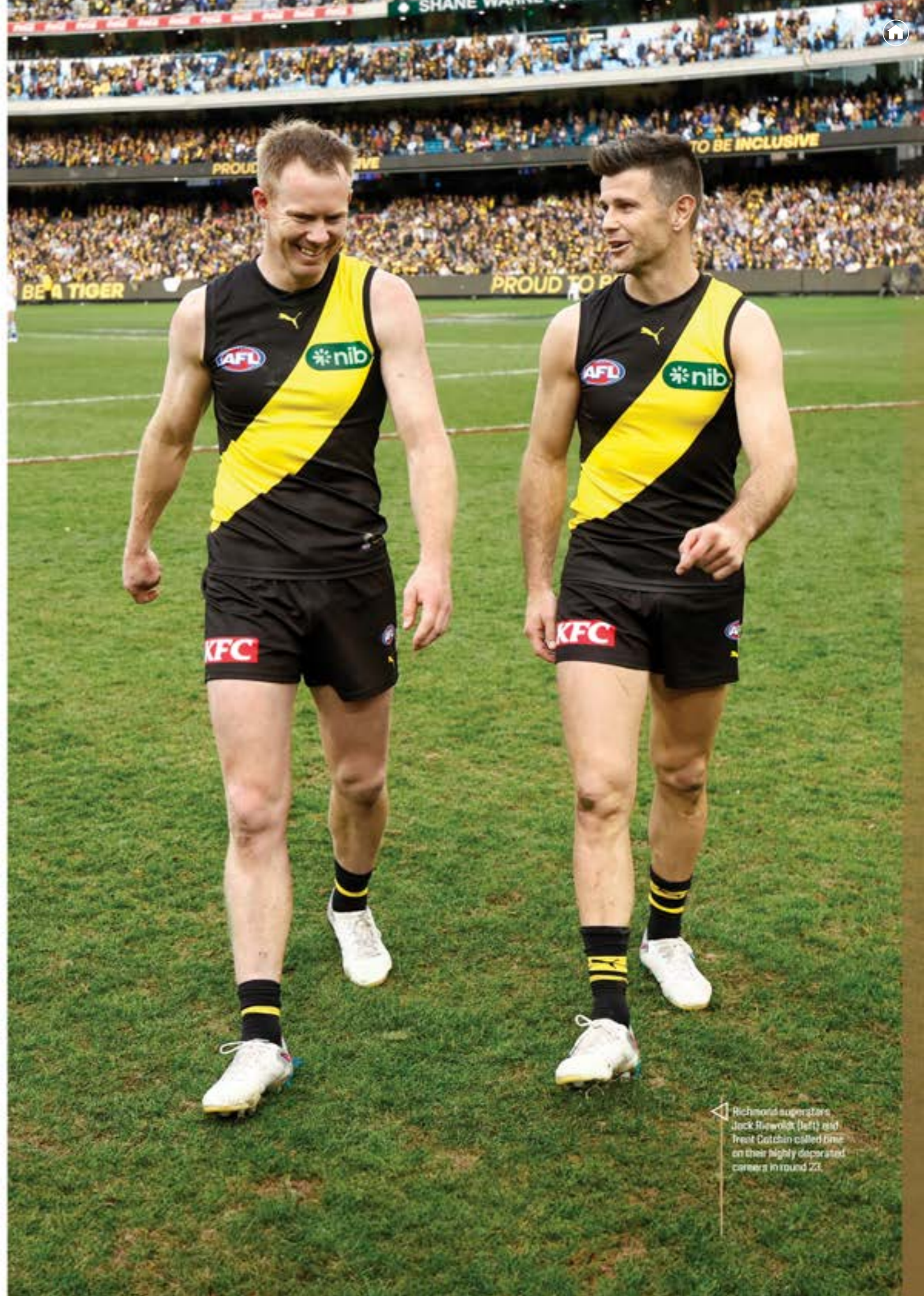
Isaac Smith also won a Norm Smith Medal, becoming the oldest player to win the award with his second club Geelong in 2022.

In 280 matches - 210 with Hawthorn and 70 with the Cats - Smith played in four premiership teams including the Hawks' consecutive victories between 2013-15.

Another eight who played more than 200 matches (including pre-season games) graced an AFL ground for the final time - Ben Cunnington, Ed Curnow, Phil Davis, Michael Hibberd, Tom Jonas, Daniel Rich, Robbie Tarrant and Jack Ziebell.

Player	Club/s	Games
Lance Franklin	Hawthorn/Sydney Swans	354
Jack Riewoldt	Richmond	347
Shannon Hurn	West Coast Eagles	333
Trent Cotchin	Richmond	306
Isaac Smith	Hawthorn/Geelong Cats	280
Jack Ziebell	North Melbourne	280
Daniel Rich	Brisbane Lions	275
Luke Shuey	West Coast Eagles	248
Ben Cunnington	North Melbourne	238
Ed Curnow	Carlton	221
Tom Jonas	Port Adelaide	216
Nic Naitanui	West Coast Eagles	213
Michael Hibberd	Essendon/Melbourne	197
Robbie Tarrant	North Melbourne/Richmond	194
Phil Davis	Adelaide/GWS Gants	192

▲ Isaac Smith bowed out as a triple premiership player with Hawthorn and, in 2022, a premiership star for Geelong, where he played his final game in round 24.



Richmond superstars Jack Riewoldt (left) and Trent Cotchin called time on their highly decorated careers in round 23.

OBITUARIES

John Towner

A reliable defender for Essendon who became a premiership player for West Perth, Towner died on January 19, 2023, aged 89. Recruited from Ascot Vale Youth Centre, he was initially hailed as a possible replacement for champion Bombers full-forward John Coleman, but eventually developed into a dashing, dependable full-back. Blessed with plenty of pace, he was exceptionally strong in the air and possessed excellent judgment. Was on a half-back flank in the 1957 Grand Final and full-back in the 1959 premiership decider, which proved to be his last game for Essendon. Played 87 games and kicked 36 goals for the Bombers between 1953-59 before transferring for work to WA, where he joined West Perth and starred at full-back in the Cardinals' 32-point Grand Final win over East Perth in 1960. Played 35 games for West Perth between 1960-61 before moving to Queensland, where he finished his playing career as captain-coach of Surfers Paradise.

John Devine

Renowned as one of the toughest men to pull on a Geelong jumper and a Legend in Tasmanian Football's Hall of Fame, Devine died on January 29, 2023, aged 82. Nicknamed 'Colac', he was a premiership half-back flanker in 1963 who later went on to coach the Cats. Finished second in Geelong's best and fairest award twice (1960, 1965) and represented Victoria once in 1965. Played 118 games and kicked six goals between 1960-66 before accepting an offer to become captain-coach of Tasmanian Football League club North Hobart. Coached North Hobart to premierships in 1967, 1969 and 1974, the first two as playing coach. Returned to Geelong as coach for three seasons between 1986-88, recording 28 wins, 37 losses and a draw.

Gary Fenton

A respected former TV executive who revolutionised the broadcast coverage of AFL games, Fenton died on January 30, 2023, aged 73. The former long-time head of Seven Sport was a central figure in the creation of content around the game, including Talking Footy. Later headed the Seven Network's Olympic coverage, including the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

George Hams

A Collingwood premiership player in 1953, Hams died on February 2, 2023, aged 94. Recruited as a midfielder/forward from Ivanhoe Amateurs, he shifted to defence soon after making his senior debut in 1948 and developed into a back pocket specialist, finishing third in the Copeland Trophy in 1950. Despite battling numerous injuries, he managed to make the Magpies' Grand Final teams in 1952-53, grabbing a spot as a reserve in the victorious 1953 line-up. Played 108 games and kicked three goals before retiring in 1955. A long-time engineer with the Post Master General's Department (PMG), he received a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1990 for public service, particularly in the field of telecommunications.

Dennis Munari

The second rover to Adrian Gallagher in Carlton's drought-breaking 1968 premiership team, Munari died on February 2, 2023, aged 74. Recruited from Assumption College, he made his senior debut in round eight, 1967, and played in the winning Grand Final team against Essendon the following season. Played 41 games and kicked 20 goals for the Blues between 1967-70. Later reunited with coach Ron Barassi at North Melbourne, playing 13 games between 1974-77.

Barrie Barbary

A North Adelaide premiership player and Magarey medallist in the same season, Barbary died on February 11, 2023, a day after his 84th birthday. Possessing enormous speed and a superb ball handler, the solidly-built winger played 155 games and booted 63 goals for the Roosters between 1955-64, highlighted by kicking the winning goal in the 1960 premiership triumph. Won North Adelaide's best and fairest award twice (1960, 1964) and was runner-up on another two occasions (1961-62). After two seasons as captain-coach of Kybybolite in the Kowrie-Naracoorte Football League, he returned to the SANFL and played 66 games for Woodville between 1967-70. After being captain-coach of Woodville's reserves team in 1971, he served as non-playing coach of the club's seniors in the following two seasons. Inducted to the South Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2002, he represented SA 19 times and was named the state's best player in its famous win over Victoria at the MCG in 1963.

Jack Sheedy

Known as 'Mr Football' in Western Australia, Sheedy died on February 23, 2023, aged 96. A fiery character, he excelled as a player and coach, coaching WA to success in the 1961 Australian Football Carnival. Started his senior WAFL career with East Fremantle, playing 210 games for Old Easts between 1942-55, punctuated by a brief six-game stint with South Melbourne in 1944. Was a four-time winner of East Fremantle's best and fairest award (1943, 1948, 1953, 1955), captain in 1949-50, 1952 and 1955, played in two premierships (1943, 1946) and skipper of the club's Team of the Century. Switched to East Perth in 1956, playing 122 games until 1962. Coached East Perth in 261 games, was playing coach in three premiership teams (1956, 1958, 1959) and captain-coach of the club's post-war Team of the Century. A Legend of the WA Football Hall of Fame and inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2001, he represented WA on 22 occasions and kicked 30 goals.

Pat Astone

A former champion Perth ruckman and captain, Astone died on March 22, 2023, aged 80. Although not tall for a ruckman, he possessed a prodigious leap and was a strong mark. Graduated to senior ranks in 1962 and won the club's best first-year player award. A key member of the Demons' three premiership teams between 1966-68 and skipper in 1970, he played 215 games and kicked 261 goals between 1963-72. Represented WA twice and kicked two goals. Named in Perth's Team of the Century in 1999, he later served as a club director and chairman of selectors.

Ron Joseph

One of the architects of North Melbourne's first successful era in the 1970s, Joseph died on March 22, 2023, aged 77. A life member of North Melbourne and the AFL and an inaugural inductee of the Kangaroos' Hall of Fame, he was renowned as a superb recruiter and administrator. Was part of the three-man group with Allen Aylett and Albert Mantello that landed Ron Barassi as North Melbourne's senior coach which led to the club's maiden VFL premiership in 1975, finalising his contract to sign on the back of a serviette. Elevated to club secretary soon after joining the Kangaroos as a teenager, he served in the role from 1964-74 and again from 1977-86 and 1988-89. Appointed as Sydney Swans chief executive in 1994 and was instrumental in bringing Tony Lockett to the Harbour City to help turn around the club's fortunes. Returned to North Melbourne as a board director between 2007-10, helping ensure the club's base remained at Arden St.

Ron Kitchen

Renowned for his strength, particularly in aerial contests, Kitchen died on April 1, 2023, aged 88. Made his debut for South Adelaide in round one, 1956, and in six seasons with the Panthers (1956-61), he played 101 games and kicked 68 goals. Represented SA at the 1958 Melbourne interstate carnival, playing three games and kicking four goals. Later became Norwood's general manager for several seasons.

Peter Burton

A giant ruckman who helped Subiaco break its 49-year WAFL premiership drought in 1973, Burton died on June 6, 2023, aged 76. Hard working, resilient and agile for his height, he played 182 games and kicked 108 goals between 1967-76. Played three games for WA, won Subiaco's best and fairest award in 1975 and coached the Lions in 1979. Sons Matthew, Jay and Travis also played for Subiaco.

Aif Skuse

A tenacious, talented half-forward/rover, Skuse died on June 8, 2023, aged 81. A natural footballer blessed with blistering speed, he was one of South Adelaide's best players in the 1964 premiership team that defeated Port Adelaide. Played 139 games and kicked 195 goals between 1962-70, being the club's leading goalkicker in 1966 with 38. Inducted into the Panthers' Hall of Fame in 2011, he made nine appearances for SA.

Craig Stewart

A popular big man who played in consecutive Grand Finals for Collingwood in the 1980s, Stewart died on June 8, 2023, aged 66. Recruited to the Magpies in 1978 after displaying excellent form as a forward with VFA club Preston, having won the Bullants' goalkicking award in 1976 and the club's best and fairest award in 1977. Nicknamed 'Snaggles', he made his VFL/AFL debut in round one, 1978, playing 21 games that year and winning the club's best first-year player. Played in the 1980-81 Grand Finals and finished third in the Copeland Trophy in 1980 and 1982. Made 115 appearances for Collingwood before adding another 35 games mainly as a defender for Richmond between 1984-86. His son James has played with two AFL clubs, Greater Western Sydney and Essendon.

Glen Durnthaler

The centre half-forward in East Fremantle's 1974 premiership team died on June 11, 2023, aged 70. Durnthaler played 80 games and kicked 51 goals for Old Easts between 1972-79. His final two WAFL seasons were with Subiaco, playing 17 games and kicking 27 goals between 1980-81.

Bernie Massey

A reliable full-back who played the most games as a Demon without scoring a goal (99), Massey died on June 19, 2023, aged 83. Recruited from Glen Iris, he made his senior debut in round one, 1960, and held down the key defensive spot in Melbourne's Grand Final win over Collingwood in 1964. He played on for another three seasons before pursuing a career as a coach, coaching the Demons' reserves and suburban club Eltham. A life member of Melbourne, Massey was named as a Demon '150 Hero' in 2008.

Don Langdon

A premiership centre half-forward in his first WAFL season, Langdon died on June 22, 2023, aged 85. Made his senior debut for East Perth in 1959 and was a key contributor later that year in the Royals' win over Subiaco in the Grand Final, booting four goals. Gained possession whether in the air or at ground level and then fed it off with quick handballs. Went on to make 69 appearances and kick 98 goals. Booted four goals in the 1961 Grand Final as the Royals lost to Swan Districts before retiring at the end of 1962 to return to the farm. Represented WA five times.

Graeme John

A former star player in two states who dedicated years of service to help grow the game nationally, John died on June 27, 2023, aged 80. Started his career with East Perth, playing 67 games and kicking 48 goals between 1959-63, before joining South Melbourne in 1964. Played mainly as a centre half-forward in six seasons with the Swans, playing 77 games and booting 97 goals. Represented Western Australia and Victoria, winning All-Australian selection at the 1966 Carnival. Later coached South Melbourne for three years (1973-75), was the club's president for another three years (1978-80) and was inducted into the Swans' Hall of Fame in 2011. Served as an AFL Commissioner between 2001-11 and managing director of Australia Post between 1993-2009, as well as being on Racing Victoria's board and a trustee of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. In 2003 he was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia for his services to business and the community.

Matthew Rendell

A former Fitzroy captain and member of the Brisbane Lions/Bears/Fitzroy Hall of Fame, Rendell died on June 28, 2023, aged 64. Was renowned as a superb analyst of football and footballers. As a skilful mobile ruckman/forward, he made his senior debut as a teenager for SANFL club West Torrens in 1977 before moving to Victoria to join Fitzroy in 1981. In 164 games with the Lions between 1981-91, he was captain between 1985-87, kicked 101 goals, won the club best and fairest award twice (1982-83) and was equal third in 1990. His final season was with the Bears in 1992, playing 13 games. Was a dual All-Australian (1983, 1987) who represented South Australia in State of Origin. Went on to forge a successful career as an assistant coach, administrator and recruiter at several clubs, including Adelaide, Collingwood, Melbourne, Port Adelaide, Sydney and St Kilda, as well as working in the media.

Alan Morrow

A tough ruckman who was the most experienced member of St Kilda's only premiership team and took a mark as the final siren sounded in 1966, Morrow died on July 13, 2023, aged 86. At only 183cm he conceded height to most opposing ruckmen, but was blessed with a great spring, worked hard and was a consistent performer. Recruited from Sale, he played 163 games and kicked 151 goals for the Saints between 1957-66, as well as representing Victoria on three occasions. Was injured early in the 1965 Grand Final loss to Essendon and forced to leave the ground. Runner-up in the club's best and fairest on three occasions - in 1959 to Brownlow medallist Verdun Howell and in 1962 and 1963 to Darrel Baldock - and finished third in 1960. Selected in St Kilda's Team of the Century in 2001 and a member of the Saints' Hall of Fame. The 1966 Grand Final was his final appearance for St Kilda, crossing to VFA club Dandenong in 1967 as captain-coach.

Fred Bloch

A gifted midfielder for North Adelaide, Bloch died on July 24, 2023, aged 83. Short and stocky, he was not quick, but was a sure ball handler and had good evasive skills. Made a memorable debut for the Roosters on Anzac Day 1961, going on to play 77 games and kick 17 goals until 1967. In 1964 he was runner-up in the club's best and fairest, despite playing only 12 games because of a broken hand, and won the award the following season. Received an Order of Australia Medal in 1999.

Ron Elleway

A tough, dogged full-back who played in three Port Adelaide premiership teams, Elleway died on July 29, 2023, aged 81. Renowned for his foot skills, speed and aerial ability, he played 204 games between 1961-71, including the Magpies' flags in 1962, 1963 and 1965. The left-footer spent most of his career in defence, but was also used in the ruck. The SANFL life member represented SA nine times and was inducted into Port Adelaide's Hall of Fame in 2019.

Brian Walsh

A member of Carlton's 1973 Grand Final team, Walsh died on August 9, 2023, aged 72. The rover/forward, recruited from Sandhurst, made his debut in the opening round of 1970 and played 64 games for the Blues in six seasons until 1975. Kicked 111 goals for Carlton and was the club's leading goalkicker in 1973 with 60. The right-footer switched to Essendon in 1975, playing 51 games and kicking 100 goals between 1975-78. Finished third twice in the Bombers' best and fairest award (1975, 1977). Ended his playing career at Werribee, winning the club's best and fairest in 1981 when he was captain-coach. Was assistant coach under Robert Walls at Fitzroy and coached Golden Square to three premierships.

Wayne Ryder

An exciting half-forward who delighted Perth fans in the second half of the 1980s, Ryder died on August 11, 2023, aged 59. Quick, skilful, elusive and strong in the air, he made an immediate impact in his debut season of 1985, kicking 51 goals and becoming the perfect foil to spearhead Mick Rea. Injuries restricted him to 75 WAFL games, but he booted 175 goals including 44 from 15 games in his final season of 1989 to be the club's leading goalkicker that year. This included a 10-goal haul in a match against East Perth.

Austin Robertson

One of the game's greatest goalkickers, Robertson died on August 23, 2023, aged 80. During a 251-game career with Subiaco, the full-forward booted 1211 goals, a record in the WAFL. A magnificent set shot for goal, he played one season with South Melbourne in 1966 and led the club goalkicking with 60. The leading WAFL goalkicker in eight seasons and Subiaco's leading goalkicker on 12 occasions (1962-65 and 1967-74), he was a two-time club best and fairest winner (1965, 1966) and a member of the Lions' premiership team in 1973. A legend of Subiaco and member of the club's Team of the Century, he represented WA in 10 games and kicked 44 goals. A member of the Australian Football Hall of Fame and WA Hall of Fame, Robertson was a key figure behind the establishment of World Series Cricket in the late 1970s. His father Austin snr played 154 games and kicked 251 goals for South Melbourne between 1927-37, leading the club's goalkicking three times (1929-31).

Dick Seddon

A football visionary, Seddon died on August 28, 2023, aged 87. As one of four foundation members on the AFL Commission, he made a massive contribution towards the League's evolution in becoming the nation's No. 1 sports organisation. His key reforms included enabling the franchising of clubs as well as the introduction of a salary cap and drafting rules, with the aim of equalising the competition and giving all clubs a chance to be successful. His League football journey started at Melbourne, serving on the Demons' committee between 1974-80 before taking the reins as the club's general manager. One of his most important moves was to engineer the return of club legend Ron Barassi to Melbourne in 1981 as coach. Was instrumental in wooing Brownlow medallists Kelvin Templeton and Peter Moore from Footscray and Collingwood respectively on big deals, as well as recruiting Irishmen Jim Stynes and Sean Wight. Was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to business and Australian Football in 2015.

Ken Bennett

A courageous, talented rover recruited from Dandenong, Bennett died on September 1, 2023, aged 83. Made his senior debut for Collingwood in round 11, 1957, and would go on to play 56 games and kick 37 goals in six seasons. Highlight of his career was the Magpies' successful finals campaign in 1958, when he played all three games after being recalled to the team late in the season, and was one of the best players in the Grand Final win over Melbourne. After finishing at Collingwood in 1962, Bennett headed to Albury as captain-coach and he won the Ovens and Murray League best and fairest.

Noel Gordon

The former chairman of the Brisbane Bears/Lions died on September 14, 2023, aged 85. Born in Euroa, he played football at the Brunswick Boys Club and with Carlton's under 19s before joining the property development industry and moving to Queensland. In 1990 he became club chairman and was a key figure in the merger with Fitzroy in 1996, resulting in the birth of the Brisbane Lions. Resigned as chairman in August 1998, but remained a passionate supporter of the Lions.

Ron Barassi

One of the most important and influential people in the game's history, Barassi died on September 16, 2023, aged 87. One of the most determined players to grace the field, his attack on the ball and inspirational leadership made him a great player and he went on to become one of the game's most successful coaches. Started his career under Norm Smith at Melbourne, playing 204 games and kicking 295 goals between 1953-64. Switched to Carlton in 1965, playing 50 games and kicking 35 goals for the Blues. As a player he was involved in six premiership teams for the Demons (1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1964), the last two as captain. A two-time winner of Melbourne's best and fairest award (1961, 1964), he was the club's leading goalkicker in 1958 and 1959. Melbourne's captain for five seasons, he was skipper of the club's Team of the Century. An Australian Football Hall of Fame Legend, he was in the AFL's Team of the Century. A three-time All-Australian (1956, 1958, 1961 (captain)), he played 19 games and kicked 26 goals for Victoria. As a coach he led Carlton (1968, 1970) and North Melbourne (1975, 1977) to premierships, as well as coaching Melbourne and the Sydney Swans.

Kevin Neale

A hero of St Kilda's 1966 premiership team with five goals at full-forward, Neale died on September 16, 2023, aged 78. Renowned for his immense physical strength, 'Cowboy' was blessed with exceptional skills for a big man which enabled him to play as either a key defender or forward. Recruited from South Warrambool, he made his senior debut in round six, 1965, against North Melbourne and played a club-record 256 games, which was subsequently passed by Barry Breen. Won St Kilda's best and fairest award in 1973, played in the Saints' Grand Final teams in 1965 and 1971 and kicked 301 goals, being the club's leading goalkicker on four occasions (1966-69). After his last game for St Kilda at the end of 1977, he went on to become captain-coach of Ainslie, leading the ACT club to four premierships. Coached SANFL club Central District and Tuggeranong (ACT) before returning to the Saints, working in the marketing department and being president of the club's Past Players Association. A member of St Kilda's Hall of Fame, he was selected in the back pocket in the Saints' Team of the Century in 2001.

Geoff Long

A star centre half-forward who won All-Australian honours in 1956, Long died on September 18, 2023, aged 93. Played in three interstate carnivals for Tasmania in 1953, 1956 and 1958 and is one of the greats of the City South Football Club and the NTFA. Played 229 games for City South between 1950-60, being a member of six premiership teams (1952, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1959, 1960) and winning the club's best and fairest award in 1953. A Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame Legend, he played 29 games for the NTFA and made 16 appearances for Tasmania. After his retirement Long served football for two decades as a coach, selector and administrator.

Geof Motley

A Port Adelaide legend who is the club's most decorated premiership player with nine flags, Motley died on September 26, 2023, aged 88. Versatile player who could play in defence, attack and through the midfield and was never reported during his career. Played 258 games and kicked 156 goals for Port between 1953-86, winning four best and fairest awards – all in premiership years (1958, 1959, 1963, 1965). Captain from 1959-66 and was coach of the 1959 premiership team. A member of the Australian Football and SANFL Halls of Fame, he won the Magarey Medal in 1964. Represented South Australia on 28 occasions and kicked six goals. A member of Port Adelaide's Greatest Team (1870-2000), he also coached North Adelaide between 1967-69. Received a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1992 for services to sport administration and Australian Football.

Ken Timms

A member of Essendon's 1962 premiership team, Timms died on November 4, 2023, aged 85. Recruited from North Essendon Methodists, the versatile Timms played at full-back, but he is best remembered as a ruck-rover/forward, playing 134 games and kicking 112 goals between 1957-65. Made four appearances for Victoria and booted six goals in 1962-63. After leaving the Bombers, he became captain-coach of Colac in 1966 and later joined South Warrnambool between 1967-72.

Ted Hopkins

Arguably the most famous bench-warmer in VFL/AFL history, Hopkins died on November 20, 2023, aged 74. The blond forward/rover emerged as a hero of Carlton's remarkable comeback in the 1970 Grand Final, booting four goals after being brought on in the second half as the Blues overcame a 44-point half-time deficit to defeat Collingwood. Played only one more game after that Grand Final, taking his tally to 29 matches and 10 goals between 1968-71 before retiring from VFL football. Later played with Albury and Yallourn. In 1995 he founded Champion Data, which would become the AFL's official data partner in 1999 and has performed a key role in transforming the use of statistics in football.

Neville Hayes

An eight-time premiership defender with Port Adelaide, Hayes died on December 6, 2023, aged 88. Tough half-back who played in the Magpies' record six consecutive flags between 1954-59 and added two more premierships in 1962-63. Affectionately known as 'Chicken', he played 217 games and kicked 58 goals for Port Adelaide between 1953-65. Won two best and fairest awards (1957, 1960) and is a member of the club's Greatest Team. Made 21 appearances for South Australia and is in the SANFL Hall of Fame.

George Goninon

A star full-forward who was the spearhead in Geelong's consecutive premiership teams in 1951-52, Goninon died on December 7, 2023, aged 96. Started his VFL/AFL career with Essendon after being recruited from Tasmanian club Burnie but struggled for opportunities with the great John Coleman ahead of him, playing nine games and kicking 11 goals for the Bombers between 1948-50. Had an immediate impact with the Cats, topping the League goalkicking table in 1951 and being the club's leading goalkicker for four seasons. In 78 games for Geelong between 1950-54 he kicked 278 goals, including an 11-goal haul in the 1951 second semi-final against Collingwood – still the equal highest individual tally in a VFL/AFL final.

Ron Stockman

A member of the Bulldogs' first VFL/AFL premiership team in 1954, Stockman died on December 29, 2023, aged 89. Recruited from West Footscray, he made his senior debut in round one, 1953, and developed into a handy defender. In the 1954 Grand Final against Melbourne, he played on a half-forward flank and kicked his only goal in League football. Played 73 games for the Bulldogs between 1953-58 before switching to South Melbourne, making 23 appearances with the Swans between 1958-61. Later inducted as a life member of the Bulldogs.

Michael Porter

A tough half-forward who played in Hawthorn's 1971 premiership team, Porter died on December 25, 2023, aged 78. In the 1971 Grand Final he collected St Kilda enforcer Carl Ditterich with a hefty bump that was crucial in changing the course of the game. Recruited from Haileybury College and University Blacks, the right-footer made his senior debut in the opening round of 1966 and played mainly on a half-forward flank, although he occasionally was used in defence. An ankle injury kept him out in 1968, but played 78 games and kicked 59 goals for the Hawks before finishing up in 1972. Later became captain-coach of Ovens and Murray League club North Albury.



Geof Motley was a Port Adelaide legend who played in nine premiership sides and was later inducted to the Australian Football and SANFL Halls of Fame.

FINANCIAL REPORT

MATTHEW CHUN
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



The AFL reported an underlying operating surplus of \$27.7 million in 2023, compared with an underlying operating surplus of \$20.7 million in 2022,

an increase of \$7.0 million. This result includes the AFL's controlled state subsidiaries and Marvel Stadium.

The AFL's operating revenue increased by \$104.5 million due to a combination of improved commercial returns from Marvel Stadium and sponsorship, the introduction of Gather Round and contractual increases in broadcast revenue.

This revenue was used to fund the following investments:

- ▶ \$393.8 million to AFL clubs;
- ▶ \$89.7 million to Game Development, following the Commission's resolution to enshrine 10 per cent of football revenue towards community football;
- ▶ \$57.2 million in running the AFLW competition;
- ▶ \$41.5 million to the AFLPA;
- ▶ \$14.4 million to infrastructure comprising of elite and community facilities and contributions for stadia redevelopments; and
- ▶ \$0.9 million to corporate and social responsibility initiatives.

The AFL's statutory profit of \$126.9 million includes Government grant revenue for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium of \$102.6 million and loss from non-controlling interests of \$3.5 million.

The AFL's cash balance at the end of the financial year was \$164.0 million.

The GWS Giants, led by new standalone captain Toby Greene, finished the season strongly and were agonisingly close to reaching the Grand Final.



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 require additional financial support to fund and maintain their football program (playing and non-playing resources) to a competitive level.

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.

Distributions to AFL clubs

The AFL makes a number of distributions to AFL clubs. These distributions totalled \$393.8 million, an increase of \$56.2 million compared with 2022, and included the following:

- ▶ A base distribution to all clubs which totalled \$205.6 million;
- ▶ Variable distributions which totalled \$82.9 million;
- ▶ AFLW distributions which totalled \$29.2 million and
- ▶ Other commercial distributions which totalled \$76.1 million.

2023 CLUB DISTRIBUTIONS

Club	Total (\$'000)
Adelaide	18,428
Brisbane Lions	27,724
Carlton	19,543
Collingwood	20,605
Essendon	18,484
Fremantle	18,081
Geelong Cats	18,402
Gold Coast Suns	33,114
GWS Giants	32,494
Hawthorn	17,044
Melbourne	21,559
North Melbourne	24,356
Port Adelaide	21,598
Richmond	16,930
St Kilda	24,736
Sydney	22,412
West Coast	15,711
Western Bulldogs	22,526
Total	393,757

Included in the above are the following other distributions to the clubs throughout the 2023 season, including, but not limited to travel subsidies, prizemoney, AFL membership-related distributions, AFL commercial partner payments, AFL-facilitated stadium payments and licensing distributions.

◀ Not all football is played in pristine conditions but the enjoyment factor keeps players coming back week in, week out.

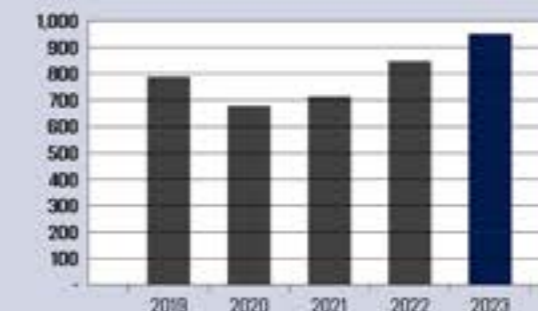
THE AFL GROUP 2014-2023

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Profit & Loss (\$ mill)										
Revenue	528,230	558,674	569,856	752,622	778,596	793,939	674,816	738,137	944,370	1,063,547
Operating Expenses	203,853	214,311	225,985	261,064	322,293	329,934	368,402	320,571	383,612	394,216
Net Financing Income/(Expense)	0.596	0.564	0.378	(5,468)	(4,091)	(5,842)	(19,098)	(8,988)	(3,973)	(2,281)
Operating Surplus	324,973	344,927	344,249	486,090	452,212	458,163	287,316	408,578	556,785	667,050
Payments to Clubs	218,309	245,151	272,407	304,590	307,216	314,607	230,803	300,990	337,523	393,757
Payments to AFLPA	22,880	30,547	22,270	38,120	38,599	37,687	18,902	60,156	27,144	41,496
Game Development	45,017	44,925	53,111	59,464	56,116	58,801	31,964	52,959	60,796	89,688
Ground Improvements	6,389	8,851	7,031	20,510	9,675	11,872	9,101	16,131	10,500	6,500
AFL Foundation	0.842	1,272	1,277	1,517	1,245	1,350	2,106	0,933	0,656	0,858
Facilities Development	7,307	5,308	3,608	3,545	15,647	5,988	2,818	6,896	6,889	7,893
Strategic Partnership	1,225	0,525	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Markets	9,884	6,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Profit/(Loss) before Transfers (to)/from Reserves	13,320	3,648	(15,455)	60,344	25,714	27,858	(8,378)	(29,487)	113,277	126,860
Facilities Development Reserve	0,990	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Partnership Reserve	-	0,525	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Reserve	-	-	-	(20,000)	(20,000)	(20,000)	60,000	-	(10,000)	(20,000)
Future Fund Reserve	-	-	-	89,359	-	-	-	-	-	-
Movement in Retained Earnings	14,310	4,173	(15,455)	129,703	5,714	7,858	51,622	(29,487)	103,277	106,860
Balance Sheet (\$ mill)										
Total Assets	186,191	206,260	203,678	476,649	536,090	487,467	628,097	658,707	754,584	725,002
Total Liabilities	49,633	66,054	78,927	291,554	325,121	248,660	397,648	457,745	440,355	283,903
Net Assets	136,558	140,206	124,751	185,095	210,969	238,827	230,449	200,962	314,239	441,099
TPP & Club Distribution Statistics (\$ mill)										
Total Player Payments (TPP)	173,383	181,284	186,642	224,011	226,699	229,646	163,015	217,271	257,575	280,862
TPP per Club	9,632	10,071	10,369	12,445	12,584	12,758	9,056	12,071	14,310	15,0
Men's Attendance Statistics (mill)										
Home & Away Season Attendance	6,385	6,352	6,306	6,733	6,895	6,951	0,820	3,794	6,106	7,475
Finals Series Attendance	0,570	0,519	0,558	0,554	0,700	0,564	0,207	0,273	0,640	0,665
Total Premiership Season Attendance	6,955	6,871	6,865	7,287	7,595	7,515	1,027	4,067	6,746	8,140
Membership Statistics										
Total of Club Members	804,480	836,136	875,197	907,561	1,008,494	1,057,572	992,854	1,113,441	1,190,671	1,284,952
No. of Clubs in the AFL	18	19	19	19	18	18	19	19	18	19
Average No. of Members per Club	44,693	46,452	48,622	50,420	56,027	58,754	55,159	61,858	66,148	70,275
Total AFL Members	58,510	54,983	54,808	55,557	58,797	58,021	55,796	56,588	57,116	59,699

Operating Revenue

UP 12.2%

to \$961.0 million

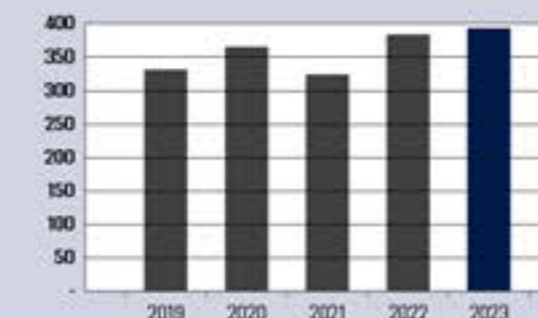


Operating revenue increased by \$104.7 million to \$961 million due to a combination of contractual increases in broadcasting revenue, the introduction of Gather Round and improved returns from Marvel Stadium and sponsorship.

Expenditure

UP 3%

to \$394.2 million

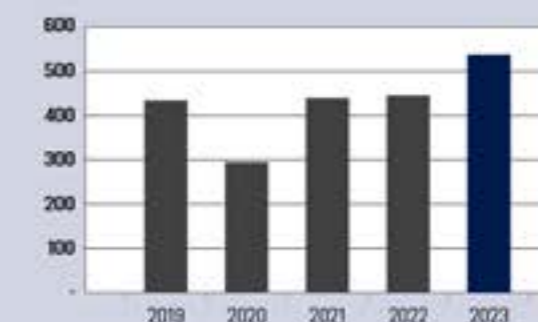


Expenditure increased by \$10.6 million to \$394.2 million due largely revenue-related increases.

Distributions

UP 22%

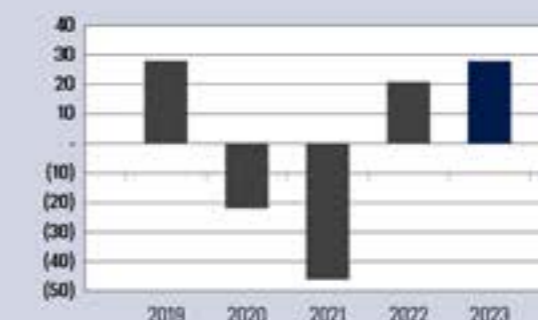
to \$540.2 million



Distributions increased by \$96.7 million to \$540.2 million, largely due to the new Collective Bargaining Agreement across Men's and Women's and increased Game Development investment following the Commission's resolution to commit 10 per cent of football revenue to community football.

Underlying Operating Profit

OF \$27.7M



The AFL's Consolidated result increased by \$7.0 million from 2022 to 2023.

CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT

31 OCTOBER 2023

Directors' Report

The Directors present their report together with the concise 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 2023 and the auditor's report thereon.

Directors

The Directors of the Company for 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

Former Director, Wesfarmers Ltd

Former Director, Fremantle Football Club

Mr G A McLachlan

Chief Executive Officer - Appointed 5th June 2014
until 2nd October 2023

Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Hons.)
(The University of Melbourne)

Bachelor of Commerce (The University of Adelaide)

Experience: AFL Deputy CEO 2012-2014

AFL Chief Operating Officer 2008-2012

AFL General Manager Broadcasting & Major Projects 2006-2008

AFL General Manager Commercial Operations 2003-2006

Patron, Children's Cancer Foundation

Mr A J Dillon

Chief Executive Officer - Appointed 2nd October 2023

Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce and Laws
(The University of Melbourne)

Experience: Executive General Manager,
Football Operations, 2021-2023

Executive General Manager, Game Development, 2017-2021

General Counsel, AFL, 2004-2023

Director, Bachar Houli Foundation Ltd

Director, Michael Long Foundation

Director, Cure for MND Foundation INC

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, Zeller Holdings 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.

Ms S L Wilkie, AO

Non-Executive Commissioner - Appointed 25th March 2015
Member of Remuneration Committee

Member of Community Relief Fund Governance Committee

Member, AFL Competition Committee

Member AFL Nominations Committee

Chair, AFLW Competition Committee

Qualifications: Bachelor of Human Resource Management
(University of New England)

Graduate Diploma of Telecommunications Systems Management
(Swinburne University of Technology)

Graduate Diploma of Strategic Studies (Deakin University)

Master of Defence Studies (University of Canberra)

Advanced Management Program (Harvard Business School)

Experience: 35 years service in the Army

Director, AFL SportsReady - Resigned October 2023

Director, The Beaufort Group

Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group

Mr P A Newbold

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

Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Monash University)

Bachelor of Economics (Monash University)

Experience: Director, 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
Member of Audit and Risk Committee

Member of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council

Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (The University of Melbourne)
Master of Arts in Cultural & Creative Practice

(Western Sydney University)

Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors

Experience: Chair, Infrastructure Australia

Co-chair, Buildskills Australia

Director, Built Group Holdings Pty Ltd

Director, WAM Global Ltd

Chair, Construction Industry Culture Taskforce

Director, Commercial Travellers Association of NSW

Board Member, Western Parklands City Authority

Director, Western Sydney University Foundation

Trustee, Charlie Perkins Trust

Chair, Construction Industry Culture Taskforce

Member, Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

Studies Foundation

Former Director, AFL NSW/ACT Commission

Former Director, Western Sydney Football Club Limited (GWS Giants)

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 AM

Non-Executive Commissioner - Appointed 14th March 2019

Qualifications: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

(The University of Western Australia)

FRANZCP, CATCAP

Experience: Stan Perron Professor Child Psychiatry,

Perth Children's Hospital and University of Western Australia

Honourary Research Fellow, Telethon Kids Institute

Board Member, Beyond Blue

Mr M J de Boer

Non-Executive Commissioner - Appointed 25th
September 2023

Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce

(The University of Western Australia)

Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors

Experience: Co-founder, Athletic Ventures

Player, GWS Giants Football Club, 2016-2022

Player, Fremantle Football Club, 2008-2016

Mr A Ireland

Non-Executive Commissioner - Appointed 25th
September 2023

Qualifications: Bachelor of Science (La Trobe University)

Experience: Director, Redcape Hotel Group Pty Ltd

Director, Talentid.com.au trading as Six Point Consulting

Deputy Chairman, Australian Sports Commission

Former Director, Sydney Swans Football Club, 2015-2023

Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Swans Football Club, 2009-2018

General Manager - Football, Sydney Swans Football Club, 2002-2009

Chief Executive Officer, Brisbane Lions Football Club, 1990-2001

Player, Collingwood Football Club, 1975-1980

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	3	4	2	2
Mr G A McLachlan	9	9	4	4	1	1
Mr A J Dillon	1	1	-	1	-	-
Mr P M Bassat	9	10	-	4	2	2
Ms S L Wilkie, AO	10	10	-	4	2	2
Mr P A Newbold	8	10	3	4	-	-
Ms G M Trainor, AO	10	10	3	4	-	-
Mr R M Bishop	9	10	3	4	1	1
Prof H M Milroy, AM	9	10	-	4	-	-
Mr M J de Boer	1	1	-	1	-	-
Mr A Ireland	1	1	-	1	-	-

* 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.

Objectives

The Company's objective is to promote and encourage Australian Football throughout Australia and, to a limited extent, outside Australia.

Strategy and performance

The major strategy initiatives of the Company include:

- To manage competitions at all levels 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 progress the game to be accessible and inclusive to all.
- 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.

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. There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities of the Consolidated Entity during the year.

Review and results of operations

The Consolidated Entity recorded an underlying operating surplus of \$27.7 million, compared with an underlying operating profit of \$20.7 million in 2022. The Consolidated Entity's statutory profit includes grant income from the Victorian State Government for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium and the surrounding precinct.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Underlying operating surplus	27,698	20,714
Add back: profit from non-controlling interests	(3,468)	4,564
Add back: government grants for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium	102,630	87,999
Statutory operating profit/(loss)	126,860	113,277

The result includes a profit of \$3.9 million by AFL Stadia Pty Ltd upon consolidation (2022: profit of \$8.6 million).

State of affairs

In the opinion of the Directors there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity that occurred during the financial year. The Directors have a reasonable expectation that the Consolidated Entity has adequate resources to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Events subsequent to balance date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

Likely developments

At the time of preparation of this financial report the Directors are not aware of 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 157 and forms part of the Directors' report for the year ended 31 October 2023.

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 5th day of February 2024.
Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:



Mr R J Goyder, AO
Chairman



Mr A J Dillon
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 2023 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.




Dean Waters
Partner
Melbourne
5th February 2024

Statements of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For The Year Ended 31 October 2023

	Consolidated	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Revenue	1,063,547	944,370
Expenses from operating activities	(932,277)	(825,202)
Net financing expense	(2,281)	(3,973)
Profit from operating activities before related income tax expense	128,989	115,195
Income tax expense relating to operating activities	2,129	1,918
Profit for the year	126,860	113,277
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	126,860	113,277
Profit attributable to:		
Owners of the Company	126,629	110,949
Non-controlling interests	(1,769)	2,328
Profit for the year	126,860	113,277
Total comprehensive income attributable to:		
Owners of the Company	126,629	110,949
Non-controlling interests	(1,769)	2,328
Total comprehensive income for the year	126,860	113,277

The Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 156 to 157.

Discussion and Analysis of the Statements of Surplus and Loss and other Comprehensive Income

The underlying operating profit in 2023 was \$27.7 million which compared with a surplus of \$20.7 million in 2022. The variance between the underlying operating profit of \$27.7 million and the statutory profit of \$126.8 million is due to recognition of Government grant revenue of \$102.6 million toward the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium and the surrounding precinct; and \$3.5 million in loss from AFL's non-controlling interests.

Revenue increased by \$119.1 million to \$1,063.5 million. The main areas of revenue which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ an increase in commercial operating revenue totalling \$64.7 million, due to the introduction of Gather Round in the 2023 season, greater returns from sponsorship and improved returns from Marvel Stadium; and
- ▶ an increase in broadcasting and AFL media revenue totalling \$47.7 million, largely due to contractual increases in broadcast agreements.

Expenditure increased by \$107.1 million to \$932.3 million. The main areas of expenditure which contributed to this movement were:

- ▶ an increase in distributions to the AFL clubs totalling \$56.2 million, due to the new Collective Bargaining Agreement for both Men and Women that was entered into in 2023, and club distributions relating to Gather Round.
- ▶ an increase in game development investment of \$26.0 million, following the Commission's resolution to enshrine 10 per cent of football revenue into community football; and
- ▶ an increase in distributions to the AFL Players Association totalling \$14.4 million, related to the new Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 October 2023

	Consolidated	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	163,997	178,214
Restricted cash	11,746	77,918
Trade and other receivables	59,797	82,099
Other assets	6,465	7,494
Total current assets	242,005	345,725
Trade and other receivables	17,439	23,418
Property, plant and equipment	450,287	366,373
Intangible assets	8,015	11,822
Other assets	7,256	7,256
Total non-current assets	482,997	408,869
Total assets	725,002	754,594
Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	80,239	170,616
Deferred income	42,010	127,293
Provisions	25,013	29,759
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	6,141	5,630
Total current liabilities	153,402	333,298
Deferred income	25,779	13,470
Provisions	33,689	22,479
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	71,033	71,108
Total non-current liabilities	130,501	107,057
Total liabilities	283,903	440,355
Net assets	441,099	314,239
Equity		
Reserves	30,000	10,000
Retained earnings	401,968	293,337
Total equity attributable to equity holders of the Company	431,968	303,337
Non-controlling interest	9,133	10,902
Total equity	441,099	314,239

The Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 156 to 157.

Discussion and Analysis of the Statements of Financial Position

The consolidated entity's total assets decreased by \$29.6 million to \$725.0 million.

The movement in total assets principally comprised:

- ▶ an increase in property, plant & equipment of \$83.9 million due to the ongoing redevelopment of Marvel Stadium; offset by
- ▶ a decrease in restricted cash of \$66.2 million, relating to funds received from the Victorian State Government being spent on the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium;
- ▶ a decrease in trade and other receivables of \$28.3 million due to improved collections; and
- ▶ a decrease in cash and cash equivalents totalling \$14.2 million; this is due to payment to the AFL Players Association of their accrued share of revenue from 2017 to 2022, totalling \$55.0 million.

The consolidated entity's total liabilities decreased by \$156.5 million to \$283.9 million.

The movement in total liabilities principally comprised:

- ▶ a decrease in trade and other payables totalling \$90.4 million, which includes the payment to the AFL Players Association of their accrued share of revenue from 2017 to 2022, totalling \$55.0 million and a reduction in operating trade payables of \$35.4m; and
- ▶ a decrease in deferred income totalling \$73.0 million, representing funds received from the Victorian State Government for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium being recognised as revenue in the financial year ended 31 October 2023.

Statements of Changes in Equity

As at 31 October 2023

	Consolidated		
	RETAINED EARNINGS \$'000	RESERVES \$'000	TOTAL EQUITY \$'000
Balance at 1 November 2021	200,962	-	200,962
Total comprehensive income			
Profit for the period	113,277	-	113,277
Total comprehensive income for the period	113,277	-	113,277
Transactions with owners of the Company			
Transfers to reserves	(10,000)	10,000	-
Balance at 31 October 2022	304,239	10,000	314,239
Total comprehensive income			
Profit for the period	126,860	-	126,860
Total comprehensive income for the period	126,860	-	126,860
Transactions with owners of the Company			
Transfers to reserves	(20,000)	20,000	-
Total transactions with owners of the Company	(20,000)	20,000	-
Balance at 31 Oct 2023	411,099	30,000	441,099

The Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 156 to 157.

Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 October 2023

	Consolidated	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash receipts in the course of operations	1,079,856	875,314
Cash payments in the course of operations	(1,073,870)	(826,486)
Net cash from operating activities	5,986	48,828
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	4,161	1,482
Proceeds from Stadium Redevelopment grants	28,750	122,954
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(102,700)	(105,300)
Net cash used in investing activities	(69,789)	19,136
Cash flows from financing activities		
Interest paid	(6,442)	(5,455)
Repayments of external borrowings	-	(90,000)
Payment of lease liabilities	(10,144)	(9,276)
Net cash used in financing activities	(16,586)	(104,731)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(80,389)	(36,767)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	256,132	292,899
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	175,743	256,132

The Statement of Cash Flows is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements set out on pages 156 to 157.

Discussion and Analysis of the Statements of Cash Flows

There was a net decrease in cash holdings of the consolidated entity during the year totalling \$80.4 million.

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

- funds provided by the operating activities for the year totalling \$6.0 million. The variance between this and the group's underlying operating profit of \$27.7 million is largely due to non-cash movements such as depreciation and amortisation, offset by payment to the AFL Players Association of their accrued share of revenue from 2017 to 2022, totalling \$55.0 million;
- proceeds for the redevelopment of Marvel Stadium of \$28.8 million; and
- purchases of property, plant and equipment totalling \$102.7 million, largely relating to the ongoing redevelopment of Marvel Stadium.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 October 2023

1. Basis of Preparation of the Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report has been prepared in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports. The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 have been derived from the consolidated entity's full financial report for the financial year. Other information included in the concise financial report is consistent with the consolidated entity's full financial report. The concise financial report does not, and cannot be expected to, provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the consolidated entity as the full financial report, which is available upon request.

It has been prepared on the basis of historical costs and except where stated, does not take into account changing money values or fair values of non-current assets.

The accounting policies have been consistently applied by each entity in the consolidated entity and, except where there is a change in accounting policy, are consistent with those of the previous year.

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	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Revenue from operating activities		
Broadcasting and AFL media	444,238	396,543
Commercial operations	415,298	350,652
Football operations	16,580	15,075
Game development	33,210	28,752
Stadium redevelopment grants	102,630	87,989
Other revenue	35,591	49,349
Contra advertising revenue	16,000	16,000
	1,063,547	944,370

3. Parent entity disclosures

As at, and throughout, the financial year ended 31 October 2023 the parent entity of the group was Australian Football League.

	Consolidated	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Result of the parent entity		
Revenue for the period	935,808	838,667
Net financing expense	6,433	1,241
Expenses from operating activities	(808,488)	(731,739)
Profit/(loss) for the period	133,753	108,169
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income/ (loss)	133,753	108,169
Financial position of the parent entity at year end		
Current assets	188,716	278,790
Total assets	737,140	758,719
Current liabilities	102,905	281,804
Total liabilities	220,080	375,412
Total equity of the parent entity		
Retained earnings	487,060	373,307
Reserves	30,000	10,000
Parent entity contingent liabilities		
Refer to Note 4 for a full list of contingent liabilities held by the parent entity.		

4. Contingent liabilities

Collective Bargaining Agreement Obligations

The Company has entered into an agreement with the AFL Players' Association Inc. for a period of five years from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2027 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.

Legal Proceedings

On 16 March 2023, the Company was served with a Generally Indorsed Writ filed in the Supreme Court of Victoria in respect of class action proceedings brought against it for personal injury damages allegedly suffered by current and former AFL players and asserted to have arisen from concussion or other head trauma sustained in their playing careers. The Company has also been named as a defendant in five other legal proceedings, including a further class action proceeding, for personal injury damages allegedly suffered by current or former AFL players and asserted to have arisen from concussion or other head trauma. Whilst the further class action proceeding has been issued in the Supreme Court of Victoria, lawyers for the plaintiffs of that class action have sought Court approval to discontinue the class action proceeding. The Company anticipates that only the first class action will proceed and is currently undertaking steps in preparation for the advancement of that class action proceeding in the coming year. The Company is also undertaking steps as required by the Courts in respect of the other legal proceedings.

On 15 January 2024, the Company was served with a Generally Indorsed Writ filed in the Supreme Court of Victoria in respect of class action proceedings brought against it for personal injury damages allegedly suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or people of colour who, between 1975 and 2022, were football players, or employed or engaged by the Company as umpires, officials or other staff and who experienced racism, racial vilification, racial discrimination, racial abuse and/or victimisation in the course of their involvement in playing, or employment or engagement by the Company, in the VFL and/or AFL competitions. The Company is currently undertaking steps in preparation for the advancement of that class action proceeding in the coming year. These legal proceedings have no financial impact on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 October 2023. These are contingent liabilities subject to the uncertain outcome of the legal proceedings which may, or may not, result in an obligation. The potential financial impact of any possible obligation, if any, is unable to be reliably measured.

From time to time the AFL is subject to claims and litigation during the normal course of business. The Directors have given consideration to such matters, which are or may be subject to litigation at year end and, subject to specific provisions raised and contingent liabilities described above, no other material contingent liability exists.

Bank Guarantees

The Company has entered into a number of agreements with banks, whereby the Company guarantees the financial obligations of AFL clubs. As at 31 October 2023, the Company has provided guarantees as follows:

Borrower	Bank	Amount	Expiry
Essendon Football Club	NAB	\$2.5m	30 Nov 2024
Port Adelaide Football Club	Bank SA	\$5.0m	31 Oct 2024
GCFC Limited	NAB	\$1.9m	30 April 2024
Western Sydney Football Club Limited	NAB	\$1.57m	30 April 2024
Sydney Swans Limited	NAB	\$1.71m	30 April 2024
North Melbourne Football Club	Westpac	\$3.0m	31 Dec 2024
St Kilda Football Club	Westpac	\$6.75m	31 Dec 2024
Footscray Football Club	Westpac	\$1.50m	31 Dec 2024
Brisbane Bears-Fitzroy Football Club	Westpac	\$8.0m	31 Dec 2024

5. Events subsequent to balance date

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction, or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Directors of the Company, to affect significantly the operations of the Consolidated Entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Consolidated Entity in future financial years.

Directors' Declaration

- In the opinion of the Directors of the Australian Football League:
 - The Consolidated Entity's financial statements and notes, set out on pages 150 to 157 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 2023 and of their performance, for the financial year ended on that date; and
 - complying with Australian Accounting Standards AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports 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 5th day of February 2024.
Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors:



Mr R J Goyder, AD
Chairman



Mr A J Dillon
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 Group) as at 31 October 2023 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 Group as at and for the year ended 31 October 2023 (the Audited Financial Report).

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

The Concise Financial Report comprises:

- ▶ Consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 October 2023;
- ▶ 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; and
- ▶ Related notes.

The Group consists of the Company and the entities it controlled at the year end or from 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 this Auditors' report.

We are independent of the Company 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 these requirements.

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 auditors' report dated 5 February 2024.

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 the Auditor's Report. The Directors are responsible for the Other Information.

The Other Information we obtained prior to the date of this Auditor's Report was the Directors' Report.

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

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

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

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Concise Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for:

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

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

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



KPMG



Dean Waters
Partner
Melbourne
5 February 2024

AFL Committees

AFL All-Australian and AFL Rising Star Selectors

Andrew Dillon (chair), Eddie Betts, Jude Bolton, Nathan Buckley, Kane Cornes, Glen Jakovich, Laura Kane, Cameron Ling, Matthew Pavlich, Kevin Sheehan (AFL Rising Star only).

AFLW All-Australian and AFLW Rising Star Selectors

Nicole Livingstone (chair), Jason Bennett, Sarah Black, Andrew Dillon, Laura Kane, Katie Loynes, Narelle Smith, Kelli Underwood, Megan Waters.

AFL Audit and Risk Committee

Andrew Newbold (chair), Robin Bishop, Richard Goyder AO, Gabrielle Trainor AO.

AFLW Competition Committee

Simone Wilkie AO (chair), Breanna Brock, Jess Burger, Julia Chiera, Michelle Cowan, Andrew Dillon, Brendon Gale, Bec Goddard, Laura Kane, Nicole Livingstone, Erin Phillips OAM, Hannah Priest, Kate Roffey AM, Diana Taylor AM.

Australian Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee

Richard Goyder AO (chair), Graham Cornes, Ross Glendinning, Debbie Lee, Karen Lyon, Andrew McLeod, Paul Marsh, Alister Nicholson, Michael O'Loughlin, David Parkin, Patrick Keane (secretary).

AFL Heritage Committee

Gabrielle Trainor AO (chair), Darren Arthur, Paul Bassat, Peter Blucher, Colin Carter, Barb Cullen, Dr Greg De Moore, Mike Fitzpatrick, Christine Halbert, Peter Jackson, Glenn McFarlane, Darren Moncrieff, Brian Walsh, Greg Wardell-Johnson, Patrick Keane (secretary).

AFL Indigenous Advisory Council

Paul Briggs (co-chair), Helen Milroy AM (co-chair), Shaun Burgoyne, Xavier Clarke, Tanya Hosch, Alicia Janz, Dr Joe Morrison, Gabrielle Trainor AO, Pat Turner, Paul Vandenberg.

AFL Investment Committee

Richard Goyder AO (chair), Paul Bassat, Robin Bishop, Matthew Chun, Andrew Dillon, Craig Drummond, Walter Lee, Andrew Pridham.

AFL Life Members' Nominations Committee

Andrew Dillon (chair), Glenn McFarlane, David Parkin, Patrick Keane (secretary).

AFL Remuneration Committee

Richard Goyder AO, Paul Bassat, Robin Bishop, Sarah Fair, Simone Wilkie AO.

AFL Sportsready Ltd Board

Steve Drummy (chair), James Montgomery (CEO), Josh Cubillo, Rod Jackson, Madeline Penny, Colin Pidd, Ben Smith, Duan White, Simone Wilkie AO.

AFL and AFLW Tribunals/Appeals Board

- ▶ Tribunal Chair: Jeffrey Gleeson KC and Renee Enbom KC.
- ▶ Tribunal Panel Members: Jordan Bannister, Michelle Dench, Darren Gaspar, Wayne Henwood, Jason Johnson, Stephen Jurica, Richard Loveridge, Stewart Loewe, Shannon McFerran, David Neitz, Talia Radan, Scott Stevens, Shane Wakelin, Paul Williams.
- ▶ Appeal Board Chairs: Murray Kellam KC, John Middleton.
- ▶ Appeal Board Panel Members: Wayne Henwood, Stephen Jurica, Richard Loveridge.
- ▶ AFL Tribunal Counsel: Sam Bird, Sally Flynn KC, Lisa Hannon KC, Nick Pane KC, Andrew Woods.
- ▶ Tribunal Secretary: Matthew Whitaker.
- ▶ Match Review Officer: Michael Christian.
- ▶ Match Review Secretary: Hamish Anderson.
- ▶ Chief Medical Officer: Dr Michael Makdissi.

Jim Stynes Community Award Selection Panel

Trisha Squires (chair), Luke Darcy, Andrew Dillon, Jude Donnelly, Sarah Fair, Sam Ludbey-Stynes, Neil Mitchell, Brett Murphy, Kim Williams.



Sydney Swans fans farewell superstar forward Lance Franklin at the end of the 2023 season. Pictured here with son Rocky, Franklin had a stellar career with the Swans and Hawthorn and is just the sixth player in AFL/VFL history to kick more than 1000 goals.

